

Dear Visiting Teacher,

Thank you for choosing the Beaver Town Council program. This program is set up as a role play scenario. You, your students and the Forest Valley staff all participate in different roles.

The Scenario

A fictitious consulting firm has been “hired” to coordinate a meeting of concerned parties regarding a complaint about beavers on the Don River at Forest Valley. The complainant is requesting that the beaver in question be removed from the Forest Valley environment through mechanical or non-mechanical means.

The Roles (Arranged Pre-Visit)

- The Forest Valley Staff and the visiting school Teacher(s) represent “Clear Vision Consulting”
- Your students take on various roles representing different sides of this complex issue
 - The Beaver
 - Community Group A (who lodged the complaint)
 - Community Group B (concerned students)
 - Federation of Ontario Naturalists
 - Ontario Nature
 - Sub-Committee of the Municipal Government
 - The Discovery Channel
 - Ontario Parks and Recreation
 - Toronto Region Conservation Authority
- Each role is filled by a group of 2-3 students.
- In this package, you will find information sheets outlining each of the roles and the position that role has on the issue: *For, Against, Neutral* or a *Combination*.
- Please arrange your students in groups and assign these roles BEFORE you arrive on the day of your visit to Forest Valley.
- Please have students complete the attached RSVP sheet and submit it to Forest Valley via email or internal board courier prior to your trip so we create name tags to make the role play feel as authentic as possible

Pre-Visit

- Engage students in broad spectrum preparatory research by inviting speakers from community organizations that correspond to the roles or issue into the classroom to speak to the students or be interviewed by them.
- Create time for computer lab or library research in order to gain deeper understanding of their roles, the beaver, and issues associated with beavers in an urban area. Documents to support this research are found as links on the Forest Valley website

under Programs, Grade 5, Beaver Town Council. Feel free to augment these resources with others at grade level.

At Forest Valley

The purpose of your visit to Forest Valley is to:

- Gain insight about the issues from the perspective of each role
- Gather information to support each role's position on the issue
- Experience the natural habitat of the beaver

During the Program:

- It is recommended that a photo is taken of the “meeting” setup so it can be replicated in the classroom for the debate. This supports memory recall and authenticity of the role play.
- The students representing the Discovery Channel will have the responsibility of taking photos to document both sides of the issue. These photographs should be made available to all students.

Please Note:

- Cameras used by the “Discovery Channel” to document the day will be provided by Forest Valley. The photographs will be sent to your class on a memory stick via internal board mail. Depending on the date of your trip and board mail, photos should arrive within a maximum of 5 days.
- In order to maximize student time outdoors, we have arranged the day so that the follow up debate is done back at school (please see “Post Visit” section below)

Back at School (Post-Visit)

Using the information gathered at Forest Valley during their “meeting” with the other concerned parties, students will engage in a debate about the issue back at school.

- Use the classroom setup document to help you arrange student desks at school in the same position they were in for their “meeting” at Forest Valley
- Use photographs taken during the trip for the purpose of supporting student arguments during the debate and creating follow-up displays or multimedia presentations.
- Consider inviting your Principal and or VP as well as other grade 5 classes to your class debate as an audience.
- The Beaver Town Council format can serve as a template for other advocacy issues. Students can apply what they have learned about responsible citizenship during their trip to Forest Valley when developing other action plans that address local social or environmental issues.
- If using the Beaver Town Council format for a school-specific issue, be sure to get administration and caretaking staff on board early to offer input and support.

Resources in this Package

- Classroom set-up map (outlines the desk setup for the “meeting” at Forest Valley)
- RSVP letter (fill out the names of your students assigned to each role and “Clear Vision Consulting” will provide name cards for the participants on the day of your visit)
- Thank You letter from “Clear Vision Consulting” (the second page of the RSVP document - to be printed and shared with students after your trip)
- Background information cards for each role in the scenario
- Background information cards for teachers outlining each role in-depth
- Information sheets to support pre-visit research on the issue

We strongly recommend that you include the students in the entire preparation and planning phase of the Beaver Town Council simulation. Early engagement of faculty and administration will also add to the success of the post visit debate activity. Students must have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities to ensure maximum participation and success for the day.

Forest Valley strives to make this activity as realistic and engaging as possible. Through your support in the classroom we can create an amazing, educational experience for your students!

Thanks and looking forward to seeing you soon,

Forest Valley Staff