

### Activity 3: Community Art Project

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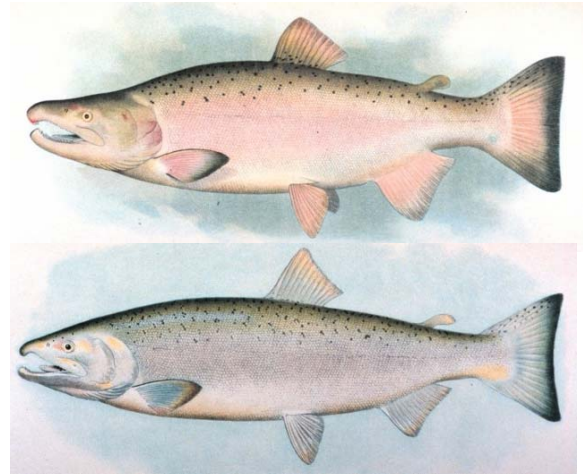
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Adult male Coho salmon in breeding (top) and oceanic (bottom) forms. Illustrations from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### **Overview**

Participants plan and take part in a community art project designed to celebrate salmon and steelhead and their connection to the community. This on-going project will be presented at the conclusion of the unit and may be initiated as part of the celebration in [Activity 1: Getting to Know Salmon and Steelhead](#).

#### **Background Information**

A community art project is an activity that connects students with their community through art. This connection may occur in one or more ways:

- Students work with community members to create the art.
- Students use the community as a subject of the art.
- Students create pieces of art to show or give to the community.

In this activity, the community art project has an added purpose: to strengthen the connection between their community and salmon and steelhead.

By taking part in a community art project, participants gain a positive sense of themselves as valued and contributing members of the community. They also gain an appreciation of salmon and steelhead and these fish's connection to the community.

For more information about community art projects, see [The Arts Resources Network "Community Art" pages](#).

#### **Objectives**

Participants will: (1) create a piece of art that celebrates salmon and steelhead, (2) learn about the physical characteristics, life cycle, and behavior of salmon and steelhead, and (3) present their art to the community.

#### **Time**

One group session to introduce the project, with additional time as necessary over the course of the unit to complete project.

## Materials

KWLR chart (started in [Activity 1: Getting to Know Salmon and Steelhead](#))

Everything needed for chosen art project

Camera

## Advance Preparation

1. Collect ideas for a community art project celebrating salmon and steelhead. Possibilities include:
  - Salmon Tiles – a mural or mosaic (see [example of salmon tiles](#) made by middle school students).
  - Salmon Mural – mural painted on wall or paper (see [sample procedure](#)).
  - Fotonovela – picture stories about salmon (see [sample instructions from Harvard School of Public Health](#), or in Spanish – [Estudiantes Transformando Historias en Fotonovelas](#)).
  - Salmon Flash Animation – salmon story or life cycle (see [sample project](#)).
  - Salmon Quilt – with individual participants making squares (see [sample class quilt procedure](#)).
  - Salmon and Steelhead Sculptures – Decorate molded forms (see [sample salmon sculptures](#) or check out a source of [tabletop-size unpainted steelhead forms](#)).
  - Art Cards for Fundraiser – Make cards to raise money for a restoration project (see [sample procedure](#)).
  - Salmon Batik Banners – depicting different impressions of salmon and steelhead or the salmon life cycle (see [sample salmon batiks](#)).
  
2. Look for an artist to partner with you on the project:
  - If you already have an artist-in-residence program at your school or district, find out about including this project as part of the program.
  - Have participants ask around – one of their neighbors or a friend’s grandparent may be an artist.
  - Check with local art centers or museums for an artist who might want to work with your group.
  - Contact city, county, or state art commissions for artist-in-residence programs or lists of local arts organizations.
  - Call the art department at your local college or university. Senior or graduate students are often looking for community art projects to be involved in.

3. When you and your participants have found an artist to work with, explain your goals and have the artist make suggestions for the project. Let him or her know what will be workable and what may be a challenge for your participants or setting.
4. If you won't be working with an artist, find a parent or other community member to help manage the project.
5. Explore possible funding for the project, either through your normal budget process or from the community. You might seek donations or a small grant from the local arts commission, educational institution, or local service clubs or businesses.
6. Break down the project into manageable steps. Consider what participants will need to know about salmon and steelhead to successfully complete the project, and plan the schedule of unit activities and project work accordingly.
7. Depending on your project, find a venue for temporarily or permanently displaying the finished project. Designate an area for displaying and storing work mid-project.
8. Ask parents and participants to help collect materials for the project. Whenever possible, use recycled or reusable materials.
9. Plan to "unveil" the completed project as part of the Community Celebration (see [Activity 13: Community Celebration](#)).

### **Setting the Stage**

1. Tell participants that they will be planning and doing a community art project on salmon and steelhead. Explain to the participants the purpose of the activity. Ask, "What is community art? Why do people do community art?"
2. Describe the project ideas you have collected (see [Advance Preparation](#)), and have the group help you select one of the projects to do.

### **Conducting the Activity**

Note: If you are working with an artist, do these steps together with the artist.

1. If you are working with an artist, introduce participants both to the artist and to his or her work.
2. Show participants the KWLR chart and ask, "What do we need to know about salmon and steelhead to do our chosen project?" For example, if participants will be making salmon banners, they may need to have an accurate idea of what salmon look like. If they will be creating ceramic tiles depicting the salmon life cycle, they will need to know the stages of the life cycle.

3. Add their ideas to the “W” sheet. Share your plan for the unit activities (see [Advance Preparation, step #6](#)) and make sure that it includes the necessary information participants have identified.
4. Work with participants to develop a project plan so that everyone has a clear idea of their contribution to the project. If participants will be creating individual parts to make a whole, make sure that the parts will coordinate with each other.
5. Allow plenty of time to start and complete the project you’ve planned. If the project will take several group sessions, display works-in-progress in the spot you’ve designated for that (see [Advance Preparation](#)). Take photos at different stages of the project.

### **Wrap-Up**

1. Display the completed art projects either temporarily or permanently as planned (see [Advance Preparation](#)). Include the project as part of [Activity 13: Community Celebration](#) at the end of the unit.
2. Lead a discussion about the project.
  - How did you like being part of a community art project?
  - What did you find challenging about this project?
  - How does this art project benefit the community?
  - How might it benefit salmon and steelhead?
  - What did you learn through the art project?
  - What other art projects would you like to do?

### **Enrichment**

Participants create a web page about the project to post on the school or program website. They include digital photos (from digital camera or scanned from prints) to document the project and write text describing the process.