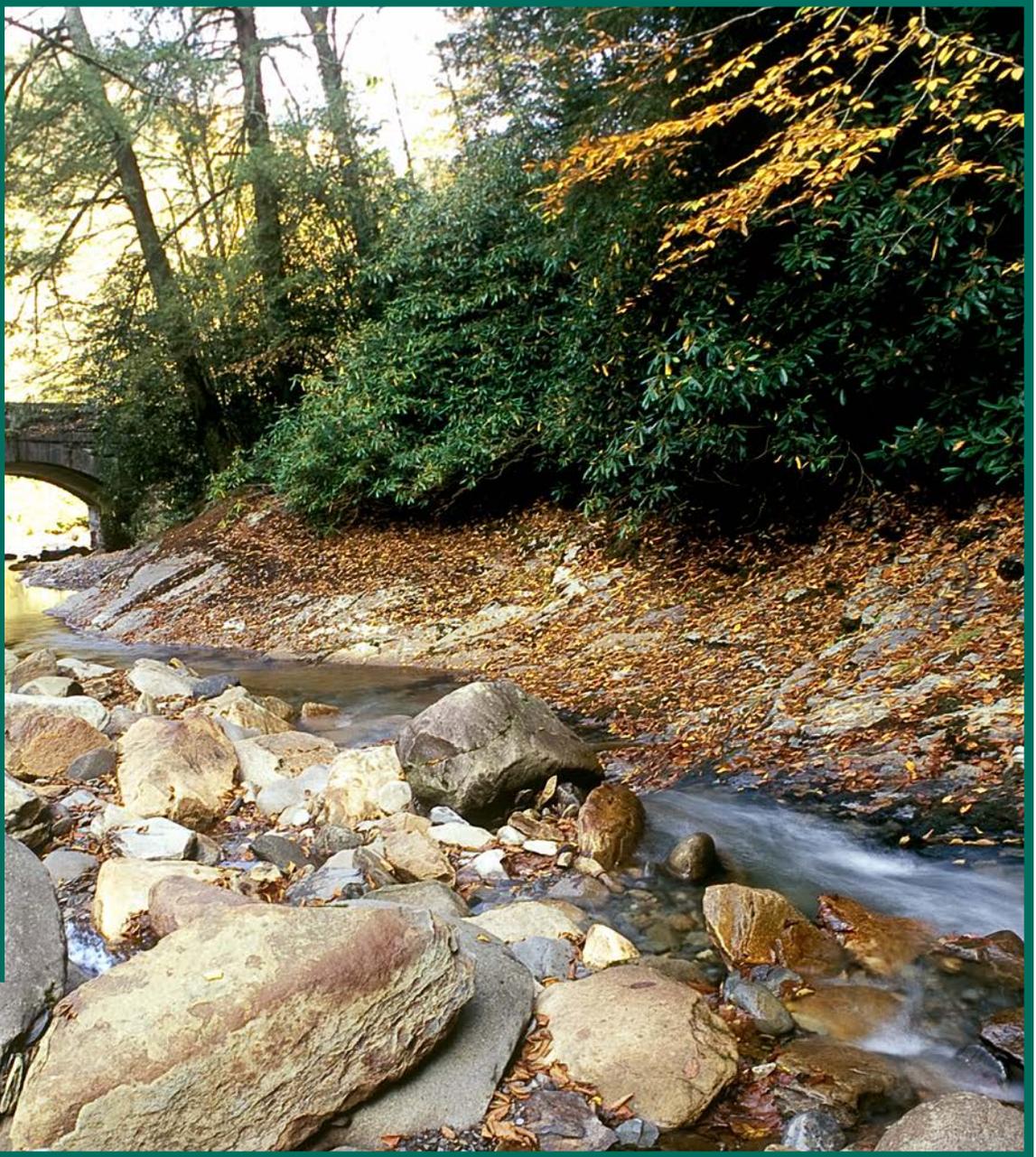


8

History-Social  
Science Standard  
8.4.1.



# Land, Politics, and Expansion in the Early Republic

## **California Education and the Environment Initiative**

Approved by the California State Board of Education, 2010

### **The Education and the Environment Initiative Curriculum is a cooperative endeavor of the following entities:**

California Environmental Protection Agency  
California Natural Resources Agency  
California State Board of Education  
California Department of Education  
Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle)

### **Key Partners:**

Special thanks to **Heal the Bay**, sponsor of the EEI law, for their partnership and participation in reviewing portions of the EEI curriculum.

Valuable assistance with maps, photos, videos and design was provided by the **National Geographic Society** under a contract with the State of California.

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<http://www.CaliforniaEEI.org>

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# Habitat for Humans and Wildlife



A free-flowing river—the last of its kind—winds through 80 miles of rich habitat. Down the western side of the Sierra Nevada and across the Central Valley, the Cosumnes (Cuh-**sum**-ness) River flows through farmland, pastures, rare oak woodlands, and wetlands that support migrating birds. Because no dams block its flow, salmon still spawn in its waters.

Beginning at 8,000 feet in the El Dorado National Forest, the Cosumnes River flows into the Mokelumne River, then into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and finally into the Pacific Ocean. More than a century has passed since other streams and rivers of the Sierras flowed freely into the Delta. Concrete dams now impound the water in the Sierras so it can be used to supply water to the Central Valley.

## Before Europeans Arrived

Before farms, businesses, and homes divided the valley into parcels, this area was rich in natural systems where grass and thick groves of valley oaks covered the valley floor. During the hot summer months, the oaks shaded the grassy hills above the Cosumnes River. In winter,

these oaks lost their leaves. Their bare branches offered resting places for birds that flew south along the Pacific Flyway and wintered along the lower part of the Cosumnes River. During the rainy season, the river often overflowed, flooding the land and depositing silt in the riparian habitats along its banks.

Until the 1800s, the Miwok, southern Maidu (Nisenan), Yokuts, and western Mono Indians lived on the rich peat soil of the Central Valley. They harvested the oaks' acorns, pounding them and soaking them in water to remove the tannin that made them bitter. These California Indians then cooked the ground acorns



Cosumnes River Preserve

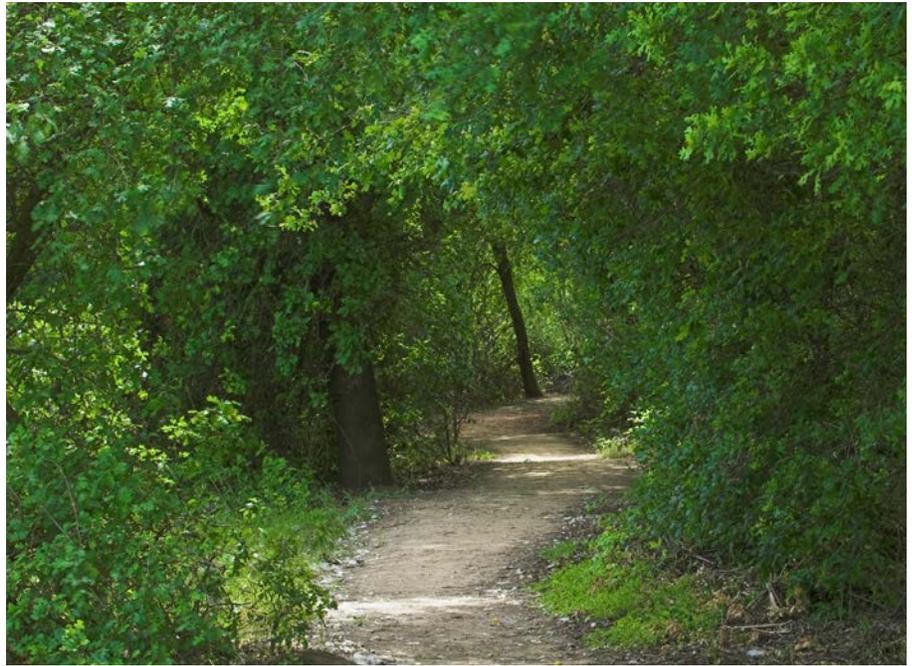
into bread and mush. These people also harvested fish, game, waterfowl, tubers, and seeds. They used tule reeds (strong reeds that grow along waterways) to build huts. Trails and rivers connected villages, which traded their abundant food and supplies. These tribes still live in the region but have very different lifestyles.

### Changing Use

By the mid-1800s, Euro-American settlers had cleared most of the land around the Cosumnes River for farms and ranches. They planted fields of wheat and alfalfa on the floodplain. They cut the huge valley oaks as lumber for the growing city of Sacramento, 20 miles to the north. Wood from the oaks powered California's early steam locomotives. As the woodlands disappeared, wildlife that depended on the oaks, such as deer, jays, and salamanders, had to find new sources of food and shelter.

### Protecting Ecosystems

For more than 150 years, people chopped down the valley oaks and planted crops. By 1984, only 1,500 acres of oak trees remained, a fraction



Valley oak woodland

of the original. The Nature Conservancy, a nonprofit organization, wanted to restore and protect this disappearing ecosystem. The Nature Conservancy works to protect environmentally important land. In 1984, it bought 85 acres of valley oak woodland. By 1987, it had purchased more than 1,400 additional acres. The Conservancy established the Cosumnes River Preserve as an area where habitat and wildlife could survive undisturbed.

Over the years, the preserve has continued to grow. Many groups have joined to protect the watershed of the

Cosumnes River. (A watershed is a river, the streams that feed it, and the land around it.) These groups include nonprofit organizations, state and federal agencies, local governments, private landowners, and community volunteers. Each group has its own reason for joining the preserve.

Ducks Unlimited got involved with the Cosumnes River Preserve in 1988. This nonprofit organization works to protect and restore wetlands. To protect wildlife on private lands, Ducks Unlimited offers “conservation easements” to landowners. A conservation easement is a legal agreement

made by a landowner. The landowner agrees to practice limited development on his or her land. For example, a landowner might agree not to divide a property for houses or build a strip mall on it. In exchange, an owner who has a conservation easement can save money each year on his or her taxes.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) also got involved with the preserve in 1988. The BLM is the federal agency responsible for managing large areas of public lands. At Cosumnes River Preserve, the BLM is creating freshwater wetlands to attract migrating birds. While protecting the preserve's natural ecosystems, the Bureau also wants people to use and enjoy the preserve. It encourages people to use the land for agriculture, recreation, and education. The BLM runs the visitor center, and people come to the preserve for bird watching, photography, nature study, hiking, and kayaking.

In 1990, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) added 840 acres of valley oak woodland and water channels to the preserve. The DFG protects and manages



Sandhill cranes

natural resources according to California law. To carry out the laws, it makes policies. The policies define how the DFG will reach its goals. When making policies, the DFG considers all of the parties and situations that a law will affect. The DFG may decide that one situation is more important than another. For example, it may decide that protecting the endangered sandhill crane is a priority over other issues.

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) also works with the preserve. The WCB is part of the California Department of

Fish and Game. It encourages citizens, landowners, conservation groups, and local governments to work together to save streamside habitat. The rapid growth of cities in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta threatens this type of habitat.

The Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks also helps protect the Cosumnes River Preserve. It added 600 acres of land along the river to the preserve. Its volunteers restore streamside habitat, remove non-native trees, and replant native

grasses. Volunteers also lead nature hikes and river tours. They try to educate people about this natural treasure so close to Sacramento.

### Difficult Choices

One important aspect of the Cosumnes River Preserve is how the preserve both depends upon and helps private landowners. Farmers and ranchers often face tough choices. Due to the increase in development, high land prices have made selling a farm and dividing the land into smaller pieces more profitable than farming. In addition, farmers can make more money planting orchards and vineyards instead of grazing cattle and growing seed crops. However, vineyards and orchards require “deep tilling”—ripping deeply through hard soil to break it up. Such tilling destroys soil structure and wetland habitat.

Farmers and ranchers who want to protect their land from development can work with the Cosumnes River Preserve to place an easement on their land. Then, even if they sell the land, it is protected. As an incentive for placing these limits on the use of the land,

they receive the benefit of paying lower taxes. Farmers and ranchers can also enlarge their farms and ranches by purchasing land that already has a conservation easement on it. They can also lease land from the preserve. A larger farm can help make more money. One farmer working with the preserve said, “Being a part of the preserve... made me a little closer to nature, and nature’s cycles... we can use our farm in a way that complements nature, and actually makes it more economically viable in the end.” (Allan Garcia, Farmer, Living Farms)

Today, the preserve protects more than 46,000 acres of

land. It includes important Central Valley habitats and the animals that depend on them. The Cosumnes River Preserve is one of the few conservation projects in the world that tries to protect an entire watershed.

Because all the partners work together, the Cosumnes River Preserve is a success. Even though every partner has a different focus, each wants to protect wildlife and restore important natural systems that had almost been lost. The success of the preserve proves that different groups can work together toward a common goal. The Cosumnes River Preserve can both inspire and guide future conservation projects.



Beavers

# Three Views on Land Use

Three groups of people—the Shawnee Indians, land speculators and surveyors, and farmers—wanted the land of the Ohio River Valley. Each viewed the land differently and wanted to use it in a different way.

## The Shawnee: Sharing the Land

In the 1730s, the Shawnee moved from western Pennsylvania to the Ohio Valley looking for resources and trade opportunities.

In the Shawnee culture, individuals did not own land. Instead, they shared land, recognizing each other's right to use the land for farming and hunting.

When farming, the Shawnee stayed close to the fertile soil of river bottoms. They cleared the land with fire. The byproducts from the fire added nutrients to the soil and supported plant growth. But fire did not renew the soil completely. As the soil lost fertility, the Shawnee used new fields.

The Shawnee grew only what their families could eat. They planted corn, beans, and squash together. Corn stalks provided beans a pole on which to climb and grow. Squash leaves shaded the



Shawnee hunting buffalo

ground and kept weeds from growing. And beans returned nitrogen, which fertilized the corn, to the soil. Planting these crops together helped them grow better.

The land of the Ohio River Valley provided many ecosystem services like habitat for bears, turkeys, and deer. During the winter, the Shawnee hunted for game. They needed this ecosystem good for food and hides. They also profited by trading the excess with Europeans and

Americans for manufactured goods like guns, knives, kettles, and shirts of linen and cotton.

## Speculators and Surveyors: Putting a Price on Nature

A land speculator is someone who uses land to make a profit. The speculator buys land at a low price and then sells it for a higher price. In the mid-to-late-1700s, most farmers could not afford to buy large amounts of land. Instead, land speculators bought large plots of land from American

Indians or the government. Then they sold smaller plots to settlers, charging more per acre than they had paid for it. In this way, the settlers got land, and speculators earned a profit.

Many speculators knew a lot about the land because they had also worked as land surveyors. A land surveyor is someone who measures and maps the land. Surveyors who knew the land could encourage people to buy it by making it sound irresistible.

Sometimes speculators improved the land to increase its value. They might pay someone

to cut down trees to prepare the land for farming before selling it. Alternatively, they might give some land to a settler. That settler cleared the land and planted crops, attracting others to buy the nearby lands and plant their own.

Some speculators believed that they were doing good work by making land available for farmers. Others were dishonest, taking money for land they did not own. However, the goal of all land speculators was to profit from the land. Speculators and surveyors priced the land, which had never before

been priced. Their dreams of profit drove their desires for expansion.

### Farmers: Providing for Self and Market

Most early settlers moved west to farm. At first, farmers wanted to practice subsistence farming, providing food and goods for their families. They acquired land either through purchase or by squatting. Squatters are people who live on the land even though they do not legally have the right to do so. When settlers migrated from the East, they usually brought horses, oxen,



Stone farm fence

## Three Views on Land Use

Lesson 2 | page 3 of 3



Reenactment of colonial farming

cows, sheep, and pigs with them. The settlers used these animals for food and work.

After acquiring land, new settlers removed the trees so that they could plant crops. Some farmers were lucky and grabbed lands changed by burnings done by the Shawnee and other Indians. If the land was not already clear, farmers cut the trees down with a saw and ax, or “girdled” the trees. To girdle a tree meant to remove a ring of bark from the tree trunk and then wait for the tree to die. Once settlers chopped down the trees, they used some of the wood for building and heating,

but because wood was plentiful, they simply burned the rest.

Usually settlers planted corn first and later added other crops. When the soil no longer produced good crops, farmers moved to a new section of land. Later, farmers practiced crop rotation, first planting corn, then oats, then wheat, then rye, then clover, and then starting over again with corn. Crop rotation helped avoid depleting nutrients by letting the soil “rest.”

Most farmers also wanted to produce enough food and goods to sell. They grew wheat, apples, and peaches

for profit. They shipped some ripe fruit to marketplaces, but usually farmers made cider or brandy from their fruit, and whiskey from their corn. It was easier to preserve these goods for market in liquid form.

Corn was also important for raising livestock, another source of profit for farmers. The Shawnee only domesticated the dog, but American settlers arrived to the Ohio River Valley with many domesticated animals. Pigs that ate corn became fat and valuable. Some settlers started cattle ranches. Sheep also brought money to farmers for their meat, milk, and wool.

## Policies to Address Distribution of Western Lands

### Lesson 4

<b>Policy 1</b>	<p>The U.S. government would take steps to improve relations with American Indians and encourage them to be part of “civilization.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Do not allow settlers to purchase land directly from American Indians.</li><li>■ Farming uses less land than hunting. Encourage American Indians to abandon hunting and adopt “civilization,” including Christianity and farming.</li><li>■ Persuade American Indians to cede the rest of their lands to the U.S. government.</li></ul>
<b>Policy 2</b>	<p>Congress should take advantage of America’s abundant natural resources, especially land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Fill the treasury. Sell lands to wealthy land speculators for specie, or coin money. The speculators could then profit by selling parcels to settlers.</li><li>■ Eliminate debt. Give land to former soldiers to pay them for their Revolutionary War service.</li><li>■ Increase the value of the land through farming.</li><li>■ Manufacturing using American natural resources will make America more independent.</li></ul>
<b>Policy 3</b>	<p>The process of western settlement should have the goal of providing for equal political rights and representation for the newly created western states and their (free white male) inhabitants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Establish a location in every state to sell western lands.</li><li>■ Citizens from every state can live on the frontier.</li><li>■ Do not add new territories to any original states. This might give unfair political advantages to those states. Define a process for how territories become new states. New states should have the same rights as the original states.</li></ul>
<b>Policy 4</b>	<p>Survey (measure and map) the western lands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Establish an official survey system for mapping and describing the land before it is sold.</li><li>■ Only sell land that has already been surveyed.</li><li>■ Carefully map and note the location of important resources like minerals and waterways. These lands might provide revenue in the future.</li><li>■ Keep accurate records about land by filing maps with the government.</li></ul>
<b>Policy 5</b>	<p>“Civilize” the frontier.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Make rules for temporary government in the territories.</li><li>■ Teach settlers and children about “republican ideals and civic virtue.”</li></ul>

## Excerpts from Land Ordinances

Lesson 5 | page 1 of 2

<p>Excerpt 1</p>	<p>“The Secretary at War shall ...take by lot...a number of <b>townships</b>, and fractional parts of townships... for the use of the late continental army...” (Land Ordinance of 1785)</p> <p><b>Townships:</b> units of land.</p>
<p>Excerpt 2</p>	<p>“...the Commissioners of the loan office ...shall proceed to sell the townships, or fractional parts of townships ...provided, that none of the lands, within the said territory, be sold under the price of one dollar the acre, to be paid in <b>specie</b>, or loan office certificates... or certificates of liquidated debts of the United States...” (Land Ordinance of 1785)</p> <p><b>Specie:</b> money in the form of coins.</p>
<p>Excerpt 3</p>	<p>“The Secretary at War... transmit to the board of treasury, a certificate specifying the name and rank of the several claimants of the... late continental army, together with the quantity of land each <b>claimant</b> is entitled to, and the township, or fractional part of a township, and range out of which his portion is to be taken; and thereupon the board of treasury shall proceed to execute deeds to such claimants.” (Land Ordinance of 1785)</p> <p><b>Claimant:</b> a person who claims something.</p>
<p>Excerpt 4</p>	<p>“The lines shall be measured with a chain; shall be plainly marked by chaps on the trees and exactly described on a <b>plat</b>; whereon shall be noted by the surveyor, at their proper distances, all mines, salt springs, salt licks and mill seats... and all water courses, mountains and other remarkable and permanent things, over and near which such lines shall pass, and also the quality of the lands.” (Land Ordinance of 1785)</p> <p><b>Plat:</b> a map showing property boundaries and significant physical features of that property.</p>
<p>Excerpt 5</p>	<p>“The Surveyors... shall proceed to divide the said territory into townships of six miles square...The plats of the townships respectively, shall be marked by subdivisions into lots of one mile square, or 640 acres...and numbered from 1 to 36... As soon as seven ranges of townships... shall have been surveyed, the geographer shall transmit plats thereof to the board of treasury...” (Land Ordinance of 1785)</p>

## Excerpts from Land Ordinances

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<p><b>Excerpt 6</b></p>	<p>“Be it ordained by the authority aforesaid, That there shall be appointed from time to time by Congress, a governor, ...for the term of three years, ...There shall be appointed from time to time by Congress, a secretary, ... It shall be his duty to keep and preserve the acts and laws passed by the legislature... There shall also be appointed a court to consist of three judges ...who shall have a common law jurisdiction...” (Northwest Ordinance of 1787)</p>
<p><b>Excerpt 7</b></p>	<p>“...the towns of Gnadenhutten, Schoenbrun and Salem, on the Muskingum... shall be reserved for the sole use of the Christian Indians, who were formerly settled there...” (Land Ordinance of 1785)</p>
<p><b>Excerpt 8</b></p>	<p>“The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress...laws...shall from time to time be made for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them...” (Northwest Ordinance of 1787)</p>
<p><b>Excerpt 9</b></p>	<p>There shall be formed in the said territory, not less than three nor more than five States... And, whenever any of the said States shall have sixty thousand free inhabitants therein, such State shall be admitted, by its delegates, into the Congress of the United States, on an equal footing with the original States in all respects whatever...” (Northwest Ordinance of 1787)</p>
<p><b>Excerpt 10</b></p>	<p>“There shall be reserved the lot N 16, of every township, for the maintenance of public schools, within the said township...” (Land Ordinance of 1785)</p>
<p><b>Excerpt 11</b></p>	<p>“...Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.” (Northwest Ordinance of 1787)</p>







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