

Lesson Five - Science – Evaluate appropriateness of materials used in a structure designed to float

PREPARATION

The teacher should obtain the following materials: birch bark, cedar, spruce roots (it may be easiest to contact Old Fort William at 577-8461 for these items) and a tub of water. A brief review on the part of the teacher of the “Brief History of Thunder Bay” for the role of the fur trade and the birch bark canoe in the development of our community.

INTRODUCTION

Class discussion of the use of rivers and lakes as transportation routes before roads. Discussion of the First Nations as the first inhabitants of the area and how their means of transportation (showshoe, toboggan, and canoe) were adopted by fur traders.

ACTIVITY

The teacher will ask what early canoes were made of and pursue class discussion until birch bark is given as an answer. The teacher will then explain that the other materials used were cedar (for the ribs and sheathing) and spruce roots (for stitching the bark together).

The question will be posed to the students “Do you think these are good materials to use for building a canoe?”

Students will be asked to discuss the suitability of the materials.

An experiment will be conducted in which the students put each of the materials in water to determine whether or not it will float.