

# *Shade for Strider*

**Title:** Shade for Strider

**Subject:** Science

**Grade Level:** Three

**Overview:**

The purpose of the following activity is providing the grade three students with an opportunity to:

1. Gain knowledge about the some of the characteristics of the Brookland Elementary floodplain and Washbrook through observation and a story of the present day plant life.
2. Students will gain an understanding of the effects of human disturbance on a natural area.

**Outcome: (Activity 1)**

According to the student expectation guideline outlined in the Atlantic Canada Science Curriculum: Grade Three in the section on Plant Growth and Changes the students will match the outcomes by:

1. Learning about what is unique about the floodplain habitat, a brief lesson in natural history.
2. Why the Washbrook became a garden habitat. The story included looks at one example of life needs of plants.

**Description (Teacher to student):**

Today you will learn about the Brookland Elementary floodplain habitat including the Washbrook. What is a habitat? A habitat by definition from Collins Gem English Dictionary is “a natural area for a plant or animal.” Habitats can be large or small and can change in very short distances. For example this habitat, although people have disturbed it, is full of plants, a few trees, and lots of insects, birds, and the Washbrook which is home to many other water bugs and some fish. While across the road is the soccer field. The soccer field has very little flora (plants) or fauna (animals). In other words there are no trees, shrubs or plants and you may only see a few bugs, insects or worms if you dig up a piece of the grass. Further up the road is the Baille Ard Trail. This natural area or habitat is a forest. This area is rich with older trees like birch, maple, beech, fir, and pine along with other smaller trees, shrubs and lots of plants, which are home to

many different insects, birds and small mammals. This habitat looks like the land you would have seen here at the Washbrook many years ago. Now you will take part in a story about a water bug named Strider who tells the story about why your learning center has the trees, shrubs and plants you see now. Strider also talks about why it is important to have trees, shrubs and plants and clean water and how people can make a difference. As the story begins we will walk down to the Washbrook and take a look at Strider and his friends in the water and watch them talk with one another while they skate on water! Listen closely and imagine Strider and his friends tell their story about how people can change the land and how they work together so everyone is happy and healthy at the end of the day.

**Key Words:**

Habitat

## **Shade for Strider!**

-by Margie Amos

This story is about an insect named "Strider," sometimes his friends are calling him by his nickname, "Skeeter." Strider is a water bug that lives within the Washbrook here at Brookland Elementary. He takes great pride in his neighborhood, but most of all he loves to share stories about the trees, shrubs and plants in the area and about his home. This area has not always looked this way and Strider is going to tell you why; but before he tells this story it is important to understand how Strider and his friends talk with one another, let's go and see! (Take kids down to the Washbrook edge and view the Striders. Have them notice the ripples sent out from around the Strider and how they move across the water. Explain to the class how they communicate: The female strider will decide by the ripple signal if she will mate with the male or not. The ripple is

also used to tell the strider what food has fallen onto the water and if there are predators in the immediate area. Aside from the ripples the strider also has sharp eyesight. Take a look at the strider sample and take notice of its large eyes! )

Once upon a time, on the land at Brookland Elementary there was no school, no houses, not near as many people and lots of trees, shrubs and other plants that covered the area. Throughout the woodland there were lots of little brooks and streams weaving in and around the forest. All of this water made for great habitat for Strider's family to live, and so the story begins...

Strider's great grandfather once roamed this land and throughout the years his family saw and experienced many changes toward the land. Because of these changes in the land they had to move from home to home, in all the while creating new memories and meeting new friends. What do you think happened to Strider's great grandfather's home?

Well, over time more people moved to Sydney. With families moving in there was a need to start cutting away some of the trees, shrubs and plants for building and heating houses. Land was also needed for farmland and gardens so that people could grow their own food. At that time the Washbrook, that you see right now, was used for the people to clean their dirty work clothes once in a while. Strider has a very important story to tell you about soapy water so keep listening!

In the meantime, the years rolled on the land kept changing. Take a look around you, what do you see? Over the years the little brooks and streams turned into ditches that ran alongside roads and the only real waterway became the Washbrook. This eventually became home for Strider, his family and his friends.

The Washbrook was a fine place for the water bugs to live for the first little while. However, as the days grew hotter and more people used the Washbrook for cleaning it started making Strider and his friends feel rather tired and dizzy and full of gas. The water bugs were burping and burping and burping all day long. Not only did they grow tired of burping but also the burping bubbles made them lose their balance and their legs would fall through the water. One day Strider woke up and noticed that all of the water bugs were stuck in the Washbrook water, not a single bug could skate; it was time to call out for some help from the people! What do you think was happening?

The people of Sydney heard the news and felt bad for Strider and friends so they wanted to help. They stopped everything they were doing including washing their clothes in the Washbrook and immediately set out to work to make the water bugs feel better. What do you like to receive when you're feeling sick? The people thought that by bringing flowers from their gardens and planting them over by the Washbrook as close to Strider and his pals as possible that the colors would cheer them up, then they would start dancing on top of the water once again. This is Strider's very important story!

That next morning people were so busy digging garden plants and trees from their yards that weren't too big or heavy to carry over to the Washbrook. Strider and his friends watched the people work hard and were growing very excited as each person placed a new tree, shrub or plant next to their living space. Strider and his friends missed the colors, smells and the safety of the forest. All along they were missing the protection that the plants and shrubs provided them from the hot sun and predators. Having shade from the plants and trees should help prevent Strider and his friends from becoming dizzy from the sun. Now these colors and smells were coming to life once again, even the

water looked cleaner that day. The people of Sydney were also quite pleased to see this new garden bring joy to their town. They forgot what it was like to have an abundance of plant life even though it was not the same as the plant life that grew there many years ago. It was a busy day in Sydney, the sun went down and everything went still and quiet for the night.

The next day the people returned to the Washbrook to see if the water bugs were feeling better. Strider and all the rest were busy skating about feeling happy and healthy again. Not only were their legs free from the water but also their bubble burps were cured. The water bugs' dizziness was cured by the plant life blocking some of the sun so that Strider and his friends could find relief in the shade, but what do you suppose caused the bubble burps? That's right, it was the soapy water! When water becomes oily or soapy, it makes it really difficult for Strider and his family to skate around because the water becomes sticky. When they get stuck they drink too much of the water and they burp out soapy water bubbles. The people figured this out with Strider and they agreed to stop using the Washbrook for cleaning their dirty work clothes. Instead they would come down to the water and enjoy the new plants and all the smells and colors and say hello to Strider and his friends every other day. Strider and his pals could not thank the people of Sydney enough for making their new home healthy again. What do you think these plants need in order to live? If you were a tree, shrub or plant that loved water where would you live? Where would you live if you were a tree, shrub or plant that didn't need a lot of water? What would the area look like if the people didn't take the time to plant the trees, shrubs and flowers? Would anything grow? What was your favorite part about the story? Make this your drawing. How did the Washbrook get its name?