

# BOISE WATERSHED

## Eddy Trout Exploration Activity

### WATERSHED KIDS - EDDY TROUT EXPLORATION ACTIVITY!

This worksheet will guide you through a hands-on activity with household items to demonstrate how pollution can impact our Boise River ecosystem along with habitat for fish like Eddy Trout. This activity will help us learn how we can practice stewardship to prevent pollution and protect our environment!

### OVERVIEW

Eddy Trout lives in the Boise River. Eddy Trout needs food, water, shelter and space to survive in the Boise River Habitat. Today, we are going to explore Eddy Trout's habitat and see what happens when we make it dirty. When habitat becomes dirty, it becomes polluted. When the Boise River becomes polluted, Eddy Trout is in trouble! This activity will teach us how we can help keep the Boise River clean and protect Eddy Trout's habitat. Please review the materials needed and follow the instruction to complete the activity.



### CONCEPTS

- Water environment/ecosystem
- Habitat
- Pollution
- Stewardship

### MATERIALS

- 1 reusable plastic tub
- 1 sponge to represent the fish (cut like a fish if desired)
- 3 pollutants
  - Pollutant #1 option: **Chocolate Chips** to represent dog poop
  - Pollutant #2 option: **Small piece of trash from food or drink materials** to represent litter
  - Pollutant #3 option: **Hot chocolate mix** to represent sediment and dirt from erosion

## ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. Fill tub with water and place sponge in water to represent a healthy Boise River Habitat.

Eddy trout's journey begins! Eddy is happy and healthy swimming in clean water in the Boise River. The Boise River runs right through the middle of where we all live, and where fish like Eddy live! In the Boise River, Eddy has a source of clean water, shelter, and space to provide a healthy habitat. Imagine Eddy also has some fish food like macroinvertebrates or insects to eat! Now let's see what happens when we make Eddy's habitat dirty, with pollution.

2. Imagine you are walking in the park with a friend or family member who has a dog. The dog you're walking had a BIG breakfast that morning... So, the dog goes poop in the park! But you forgot the dog bags to pick up the poop. You leave the dog poop in the park. Our parks all around Boise are very close or even connected to the Boise River. While some parks are next to the river, others are connected by storm drains that help water travel from the streets, down the drains, into the river. So, anything that goes down the storm drains, ends up in the river. When the sprinklers come on in the park, the dog poop washes down from the grass, into the Boise River, yuck!

#### **Add chocolate chips to your tub to represent dog poop in the Boise River.**

Dog poop has bacteria and bad germs inside that can harm water quality and make the river unsafe for Eddy trout and for people. Now Eddy's habitat is polluted with dog poop, how do you think Eddy feels about that?

3. Next, imagine you are having a picnic at the park with your friends or family. After you are done eating or drinking, you forget to pick up your trash and leave it in the park. Now that trash is litter! Later, the wind blows, and it starts to rain. The piece of trash moves from the park down to the Boise River. Now, there's trash in the Boise River! Oh no!

#### **Add the small piece of trash to your tub to represent litter in the Boise River.**

Fish can mistake trash as food or get stuck in it. This can be very dangerous for fish like Eddy. How do you think Eddy feels about having litter in the Boise River habitat?

4. Later that afternoon, imagine you go on a hike near a creek that leads into the Boise River. On your hike, someone decides to go off trail and walk by the creek. On their way to the creek, they accidentally kick some dirt and rocks into the creek. This dirt and rocks or loose plant material called sediment, that is now in the creek travels downstream all the way to the Boise River. This is called erosion.

#### **Add hot chocolate mix to your tub to represent erosion and materials in the Boise River.**

When erosion occurs and sediment get into the Boise River, it can change the amount of light that shines in the water and the temperature of the water. This can decrease the amount of plants and food sources in the water. This is bad news for fish like Eddy trout! How do you think Eddy trout feels about all this pollution in the water? What does your Boise River habitat look like?

5. Now that you have followed Eddy's journey through the Boise River and watched it become polluted, let's think of what we can do to prevent this pollution and help Eddy!

#### **Observe your water and the condition of your fish sponge. How does it look?**

You may notice that your water and habitat is no longer healthy for Eddy trout, and your fish may not look very happy anymore. Pollution is not only bad for fish in our river like Eddy, but it is also bad news for us! Would you want to go swimming in the polluted water? Would you want to drink the polluted water? What about grow food with the dirty water? Yuck! But don't worry, we can fix this!

**Brainstorm some ways you can help prevent pollution from entering the Boise River in the first place and share your ideas with someone.**

6. Now that you have come up with ways to prevent pollution and protect our Boise River, you can practice these ideas, and share them with others. You are now a water protector, or what we call at the Boise WaterShed, a water steward! This means you practice stewardship and care for the Boise River habitat! Eddy Trout thanks you, and so do we!

**Give yourself a pat on the back!**

Thanks for exploring with Eddy Trout and the Boise WaterShed!