

Water, water... everywhere?

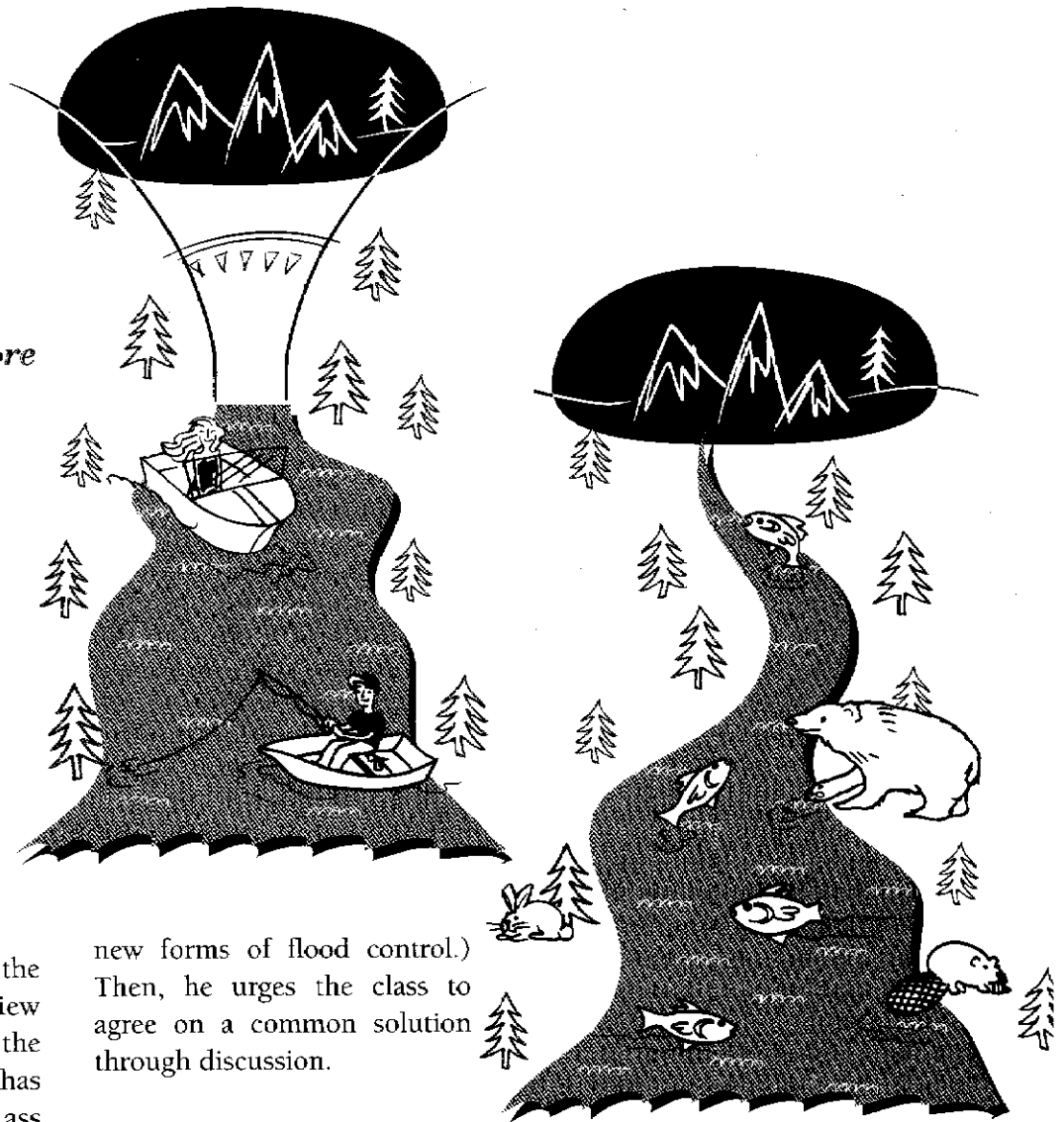
"Rivers are the lifeblood that connects our communities, and the lifeline that connects us to generations past and future."

Vice President Al Gore

Water is a theme in several segments in "Common Ground." In one segment, a group of men debate the need for a new dam on the American River in California. Douglas E. Miller uses this segment both to teach some regional geography and to practice discussion skills.

Step 1: After he shows the segment, he has the class review regional geography, drawing in the American River on maps he has distributed. Then his class researches the issues behind the dam controversy. (Floods in the Sacramento area have been frequent. The Auburn dam was originally authorized in 1965 and suspended after an earthquake in the area. There was a major flood in 1986. The current Folsom Dam cannot control all the flood waters from the Sierra.)

Step 2: After researching the issues, the class brainstorms a number of possible solutions to the debate. (Possible solutions are to do nothing, build the dam, or try



new forms of flood control.) Then, he urges the class to agree on a common solution through discussion.

"Whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting."

Western Lore

What's Your Water Address?

Everyone knows their land address, but what's your water address? Where does your drinking water come from? Have your students research their water address, working back from the faucet to the watershed where their drinking water originates.