

5. MY ROOTS GO DOWN



KEY CONCEPT
Sense of home place.



Holly's Story

This song is called “My Roots Go Down”. When you sing it, imagine that you become different living things—a tree, a salmon, a bear, and a bird. We all know that trees have roots. But how do salmon, bear, eagle and humans have roots?

Tree roots go down into the soil, and hold them in place so they stay upright and the wind doesn’t blow them over. The roots draw food and water up into the tree’s trunk and branches and leaves, so they can grow big and tall.

Did you know that the roots of trees give us clean drinking water? When it rains, the raindrops fall onto the ground, and soak into the soil. Tree roots hold the soil in place, so the soil doesn’t wash away; they filter the water, so that when it runs into streams, and lakes, it is pure and clean, and good for us to drink.

This clean water is very important for the salmon who come from the ocean, swim up the rivers so they can spawn, lay their eggs, die... and then start their life cycle all over again. The salmon are food for many other creatures such as bears, wolves, eagles and countless little bugs that eat the salmon carcasses after they die.

We humans use the wood from trees to build our houses, the water from streams to drink, the food from salmon and other animals to eat. We are part of the web of life.

This song reminds us that we humans are connected to all life. Just like a tree, we need a home place where we can put down our roots and grow tall and strong. By looking after the trees, and streams and forests, we are taking care of the things that make our “roots” healthy. We depend on the Earth for our life; our lives are rooted in the Earth.

Can you think of other animals and plants living in your home place that you can make up actions for?

Salmon return from the sea to spawn up coastal rivers. When they die they bring important nutrients to the forest ecosystem—salmon-derived nitrogen. This process is called nutrient transfer.

