

GREAT RIVERS AND THEIR RESOURCES

Wednesdays, January 10 to March 14, 10:00 A.M. to 12 Noon
Fairfield Seniors' Centre, 80 Lothian Avenue, Etobicoke
www.learningunlimitedetobicoke.com

Coordinator and Presenter: Dr. Phillip Wood

Course Overview: Rivers are a magic, moving living part of the earth. We can't live without them and their resources. After a brief study of the geography and history of some of the largest rivers of the world we will delve into the way their resources have been captured and used or misused. Amongst others we will be exploring the mysteries of the Nile, the longest river in the world, the Yangtze and hydroelectric power, the Thames and drinking water, and the Amazon, which has the richest biodiversity of any river in the world.

January 10 Nile: Mystery & Intrigue. The Victorians were mystified to see vast quantities of water coming straight out of the Sahara Desert. The mysteries of the longest river in the world have been gradually unfolded but not without battles and bloodshed.

January 17 Amazon & Ecology. With the richest biodiversity of any river in the world these waters are populated by 2,500 different species of fish, let alone mammals, amphibians and water snakes. Exploitation of the rain forest is putting this region at considerable risk.

January 24 Ganges & Religion. This, the archetype of sacred waters, is worshipped as a goddess by Hindus worldwide. For some the conclusions of official measurements of pollution are alarming.

January 31 Yangtze & Hydro. Here you find the world's largest hydroelectric plant, but there was much controversy during its building.

February 7 Tigris & Euphrates & Civilisation. The cradle of civilisation, the first urban centres started here, in the fertile land between the *Tigris* and *Euphrates* rivers. Led by powerful leaders, kingdoms and dynasties developed here around 3000 B.C. Is the region still "civilised"?

February 14 Congo & Politics. King Leopold persuaded Stanley to go up-river collecting treaties by which he assured the tribes of Belgian protection. These documents were used as evidence at the 1884 Africa Conference that "awarded" Congo to the Belgians.

February 21 Rhine, Main, Danube & Industry. Rivers remain important for commerce and industry in Europe, but tourism is increasing because the waterway passes through many European capitals.

February 28 Thames & Drinking Water. Many rivers are used as a source of drinking water, but rigorous purification is needed, along with an expensive infrastructure. 29% of the population of the world do not have safe drinking-water.

March 7 Mississippi & Flooding. The word 'levee' came into current usage as a result of hurricane Katrina. They can be natural or artificial but even with good maintenance they never solve all the problems of flooding.

March 14 St Lawrence: Our Home. Canada possesses 1/5th of the world's fresh water. Look around you and see how we use the waters around us, and how hurricane Hazel gave us Toronto's ravine system.

Researcher/Committee Contact and Chair: Pamela Guy