

READ ACTIVELY

Visualize What would it be like to be a part of the Gold Rush? What would you see?

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Predict What methods would you suggest to preserve and conserve natural resources in the West?

Resources and Population With the California Gold Rush in 1849, the population of the region exploded. The sleepy port of San Francisco boomed into a prosperous city. Hopeful miners arrived there, bought supplies, and headed off to the Sierra Nevada expecting to strike it rich.

A gold strike in Colorado led to the founding of the city of Denver. Further discoveries of valuable minerals drew more and more people to the region. New settlers here needed homes, and the place to find timber to build them was in the Pacific Northwest. After the Civil War, logging camps, sawmills, and paper mills sprang up in Washington, Oregon, and northern California.

At first, the resources of the West seemed unlimited. The use of these resources did create wealth and many jobs. However, it also created new challenges.

Managing Resources in the Sierras Do you know the story of the goose that laid the golden egg? Its owner cut the goose open to see what was inside. For many years, people treated the Sierra Nevada in a similar way. The forty-miners, the first miners of the Gold Rush, washed small bits of gold from the streams. To get at larger deposits, big mining companies brought in water cannons that could blast away entire hillsides. They got their gold but left behind huge, ugly piles of rock.

After the Gold Rush, California's population soared. To meet the demand for new houses, loggers leveled many forests. Engineers built dams to send water through pipes to coastal cities. Next to the dams, they built hydroelectric (hy droh ee lek trik) plants. Cities like San Francisco got water and power this way, but the dams flooded whole valleys of the Sierras.



▼ The magnificent views at Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona attract crowds of tourists from all over the world.



To save parts of the West as natural wilderness, Congress created several national parks and forests. Yet these, too, have developed problems. Yosemite (yoh SEM ut ee) National Park now gets so many visitors that it has traffic jams and air pollution in the summer.

Westerners are wrestling with new ways to manage the West's resources. For example, Yosemite now limits the number of campers in the park. Dam-building has stopped. Laws protect the habitats of certain animals. In addition, logging companies are limited in the amount of timber they can cut down.

The Urban West

Most Westerners today are not miners, farmers, or loggers. Rather, they work and live in cities. Their challenge is to figure out how to use natural resources wisely.

Portland, Oregon "Your town or mine?" two land developers asked each other in 1845. The two developers were at the same site and predicted the development of a major port city. With such a great location near the junction of the Willamette and Columbia rivers, how could they lose? Francis W. Peitigrove of Portland, Maine, won the coin toss. He named the site after his hometown in the East.

Portland became a trade center for lumber, furs, grain, salmon, and wool. In the 1930s, new dams produced cheap electricity. Portland attracted many manufacturing industries. Over time, the factories polluted the Willamette River. Federal, state, and local governments—and industries—have worked to clean up this valuable resource.



Many Westerners are working to preserve the land areas where black bears and other wild animals live. Parts of the West have been made into national parks, forests, and wilderness areas. In addition, logging companies are working to preserve the environment by planting new trees to replace the ones that have been cut down.

Phoenix, Arizona



Half of Arizona's people live in Phoenix, which is Arizona's capital and an important industrial center. As the city has grown, it has sprawled out across the surrounding desert.

San Jose, California Urban sprawl is a problem in San Jose. The area around San Jose was known as "Valley of the Heart's Delight" for its beautiful orchards and farms. Now it is called "Silicon Valley," because it is the heart of the computer industry.

Instead of good soil and climate, San Jose's most valuable resource is its people. They come from all parts of the world. The greater population density has created crowded freeways and air pollution. To counter these problems, San Jose has built a light-rail mass transit system. Mass transit replaces individual cars with energy-saving buses or trains.

CITIZEN HEROES

To Be a Leader Cesar Chavez and his family made a living as migrant farmworkers. Pay was low, and working conditions were hard. Chavez wanted to build a better future for migrant farmworkers. He helped to set up a farmworkers' union. Chavez's union organized national boycotts of farm products. As a result, farm owners agreed to improve pay and working conditions. Chavez had achieved his goal—fair treatment of migrant farmworkers.

SECTION 4 REVIEW

- 1. Define** (a) forty-niner;
(b) mass transit.
- 2. Identify** (a) Sierra Nevada,
(b) Pacific Northwest,
(c) Portland, (d) San Jose.
- 3. (a)** How have people used the resources of the West?
(b) How are these resources being protected today?
Portland a good location for a city?
- Critical Thinking Cause and Effect** How has rapid urban growth affected the natural resources of the West?

- Activity**
- 6. Writing to Learn** Do you think that there are better ways to use natural resources in your community? Write a letter to your representative in Congress expressing your ideas. To help you in this task, think about the efforts in the West to preserve and conserve resources.