Who Protects the Lakes?

Trace how agreements changed responsibilities for shared waters.

OKH.P.2.1.C "Analyze the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements, by comparing how various governmental powers and responsibilities have changed over time."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the IJC's powers and duties, circle the governments' responsibilities, and number 1909, 1972, and 2012 in time order. Use your marks to track what changed and what stayed the same.

An Agreement Across the Water

1. The U.S. Constitution gives the president the power to make treaties with the consent of two-thirds of the senators present. After both countries completed their approval processes, the United States and Canada put the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 into force in 1910. The treaty addressed disputes over waters along their border. It created the International Joint Commission (IJC), a six-member body with three commissioners from each country. Some projects that would change boundary water levels or flows needed IJC approval. Governments could also ask the IJC to investigate shared problems and recommend solutions.

2. In the 1960s, polluted water and algae became major concerns in the Great Lakes. In 1972, the United States and Canada signed the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Unlike the 1909 treaty, this agreement was not submitted to the U.S. Senate for treaty consent. It committed the two governments to reducing pollution, including phosphorus and wastewater pollution. It also assigned the IJC a role in reviewing progress and reporting on water quality. The IJC could publicly assess how well the governments were doing, but it could not write or enforce pollution laws for either country.

3. In 2012, the two countries updated the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. The revised agreement added commitments on threats such as invasive species, habitat loss, and the effects of climate change. It also called for more cooperation with local communities, including Indigenous peoples, on protecting the lakes. These changes widened the issues the governments agreed to address; they did not give the IJC power to enforce pollution laws. The IJC still reviews progress and offers advice, while U.S. and Canadian authorities remain responsible for carrying out their own laws and agreed actions. Agreements can change responsibilities without rewriting a constitution.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the approval process for the 1909 treaty differ from the process described for the 1972 agreement?

2. Compare a power the IJC received under the 1909 treaty with a responsibility it received under the 1972 agreement.

3. How did the 2012 update change the issues the governments agreed to address compared with the 1972 agreement?

4. What could the IJC still do after the 2012 update, and what responsibility remained with U.S. and Canadian authorities?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Suppose tire dust begins to contaminate a Great Lake in 2028. Write a 70 to 100 word recommendation to U.S. and Canadian officials that explains how the IJC could respond under its existing role, proposes one new duty both governments could adopt in a future agreement, and compares that duty with a responsibility established in 1972 or 2012.

ANSWER KEY

Who Protects the Lakes?

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.P.2.1.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the IJC's powers and duties, circle the governments' responsibilities, and number 1909, 1972, and 2012 in time order. Use your marks to track what changed and what stayed the same. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the approval process for the 1909 treaty differ from the process described for the 1972 agreement?	**The Constitution requires consent from two-thirds of the senators present to make a U.S. treaty. The 1972 agreement was signed by the two countries without being submitted to the U.S. Senate for treaty consent.**
2	Compare a power the IJC received under the 1909 treaty with a responsibility it received under the 1972 agreement.	**Under the 1909 treaty, the IJC could approve certain projects affecting boundary water levels or flows. Under the 1972 agreement, it reviewed and reported on progress toward water quality goals.**
3	How did the 2012 update change the issues the governments agreed to address compared with the 1972 agreement?	**The 1972 agreement committed the governments to reducing pollution, including phosphorus and wastewater pollution. The 2012 update added commitments on threats such as invasive species, habitat loss, and climate change effects.**
4	What could the IJC still do after the 2012 update, and what responsibility remained with U.S. and Canadian authorities?	**The IJC could still review progress and offer advice. U.S. and Canadian authorities remained responsible for carrying out their laws and agreed actions.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The two governments should ask the IJC to investigate tire dust in the lake and recommend solutions. That uses the commission's existing advisory role rather than giving it power to enforce pollution laws. The governments could add a new agreement duty requiring each country to measure tire particles at shoreline sites every year and publish the results. Unlike the 1972 commitment to reduce pollution, this duty would specify a monitoring method and a schedule for this new contaminant. National and local authorities, not the IJC, would carry out the measurements.

Accept other feasible new duties if the response identifies an existing IJC role, compares the proposed duty with a 1972 or 2012 responsibility, and does not claim the IJC can enforce pollution laws.