

The Monster Who Came Up the River

One day, a huge monster swam up the river. He came as far as he could up the river. He would open his huge mouth and inhale anything in his path. Soon he had eaten all the fish, including salmon, sturgeon, and eels. He became huge but he still kept eating. He ate all the deer and food animals of the forest. He began eating all the fruits and trees and bushes, including the huckleberries and chokecherries and wild plums. He ate the roots and everything else in the ground and on the ground. Soon there was nothing left for the people and they became hungry. Babies and old people began to die. Finally, someone went to Coyote and told him he would have to kill the monster.

Coyote got a length of vine called coyote's rope. He tied one end around his waist and the other around a rock. He got some sticks and flints for starting a fire. He stood on a hill and called the monster a shameful name, teasing him until the monster decided to eat him. Coyote wanted the monster to eat him so he could set loose all who had been eaten before.

Finally, the monster swallowed Coyote. Coyote had to act fast. First, he built a fire with his sticks. The monster didn't like the smell and heat of the fire. The monster's own fat began dripping into the fire. He was burning up on the inside and would open his mouth to try to get the fire to blow out. Every time the monster opened his mouth, Coyote would throw out some useful thing. He sent the river foods back. He sent the deer, elk, and bighorn sheep back to the mountains. The heat inside was getting very bad, but Coyote got all of the foods out and threw them to where they would do the most good for the people.

The monster was near collapsing. Right before its last gasp, Coyote got away and cut the rope. The fire got so hot that the monster died and his body went back to the sea. But some parts of him clung to the sides of the river bank so the bank was rough like before the Bonneville Dam was built.

*What lessons do you think this story might teach?
What do you think the monster might represent?*