



What's It Worth To You?

Objective: The purpose of this activity is to examine values associated with wetlands. Students will learn six different value categories and recognize why each is important to different groups of people.

Grade Level:

4-8

Subject Areas:

Social Studies, Science,
Reading

Setting:

Classroom

Skills:

Analysis, Classification,
Identifying, Comparison

Prior Preparation:

Check local newspapers for stories that pertain to wetlands restoration or destruction. Have students discuss the reasons why wetlands are valuable to wildlife and plants, then ask students to write a list or reasons that wetlands are disappearing all over the earth. Tie their lists into the activity.

Vocabulary:

economic, aesthetic,
recreation, education,
egocentric, ecologic, value

**South Dakota Education
Standards for 4th grade:**

Social Studies

4.US.1.2; 4.G.2.1; 4.C.2.1;

4.E.1.1

Science

4.L.2.1

Reading

4.R.2.1; 4.R.3.3; 4.R.5.2

Materials:

One set of [value cards](#) (18 cards per set)

Copy of Wetlands Category [worksheet](#)

Pencils

Background:

What is a wetland worth? Each of us value an environmental area for different reasons. It's a matter of perspective. Some recognize the money to be made, while others enjoy its beauty. Individuals may value an area from a recreation, education, egocentric, ecologic, economic, and/or aesthetic point of view. While many of these are linked, others are diametrically opposed and are therefore the source of conflict.

Procedure:

- This activity can be completed in small groups or single students.
- Introduce the definition of values. Discuss with the students the six different value categories, giving an example of each. Encourage class discussion of each example.
- Hand out one set of value cards per group or per student. If the class is divided into small groups, you will need to hand out one copy of the Wetlands Category Worksheet per group. Otherwise, make a copy for each student.
- Have student (or group) begin by placing the value cards on the worksheet, explaining that some cards may belong under more than one category.
- After a student (or group) have placed their cards on the categories that they feel are important to each value, discuss why they made the choices in each category and encourage students to discuss why their choices may not be the ONLY choice possible.

Vocabulary Glossary:

aesthetic: Worth in terms of appreciation of the beauty of the natural surroundings.
Example: This wetland is a sea of color and sound.

ecologic: Worth in terms of maintaining the integrity of natural systems. Example:
This wetland is a place where 300 Canada geese nest every spring, and 20,000 stop at on their migration south for winter.

economic: Worth in terms of dollars and cents. Example: This wetland is valued at one-million dollars for development purposes or tourism potential.

education: Worth in terms of learning/instructional benefit. Example: This wetland is a place where my fourth grade class goes to learn about adaptations.

egocentric: Worth in terms of what it offers an individual. Example: This wetland is my favorite place to sit and read.

recreation: Worth in terms of leisure time uses. Example: This wetland is the best place to hunt ducks in the county.

value: The relative worth placed on an object or area.

Extensions:

- Contact the US Fish and Wildlife Service or your state's Game, Fish and Parks Department and invite a representative to your classroom to visit with students about the US Clean Water Act and how it affects wetlands both in your area and nationwide.
- Have your class research whether your location is in a flyway to any of the many waterfowl that migrate annually. Schedule a field trip to your nearest wetland in conjunction with the migration and have students observe, count and classify what types of waterfowl are migrating and whether they use your wetland area as a resting place.
- Reserve your school's cooking area for a fun day of making wetlands munchies. Recipes for wetland food can be found in *Wading Into Wetlands*, Ranger Rick's Nature Scope published by the National Wildlife Federation and in *WOW! Wonders of Wetlands, an educator's guide* produced by the Environmental Concern Inc. and The Watercourse. While students are preparing and eating the snacks, lead them in a discussion of ways that wetlands are valuable to humans both now and in the past.