

Big Meadow Creek Watershed

Duration: 2 Sessions - 90 minutes each

Group Size: variable

Setting: Classroom

The purpose of this activity is to give students the opportunity experience the give-and-take that occurs when representatives of competing interests participate in a collaborative Rangeland planning simulation.

Goals:

Students will:

1. Experience the give and take that occurs during planning/management.
2. Explore personal values.
3. Explore creative solutions in disputes over rangeland resources.

Materials Needed:

Handout

Process:

Provide overview of problem and planning activity instructions.

Assign students to the different representatives.

Handout the provided overview, history, representatives, rules, and map.

Put groups together to debate.

Go over results and how they got there.

Rangeland Planning Simulation

Part 1: General Plan

The mayor of Westerly has called for the creation of the Big Meadow Advisory Panel (B-MAP) to solve environmental conflicts that arise in the Big Meadow Creek Watershed. This watershed does not exist, but is modeled on a real landscape in south-central Idaho. Conflicts will be addressed in the following steps:

1. Overview the History of Big Meadow Creek Watershed.
2. Meetings of the groups participating in the B-MAP.
3. The first meeting of the B-MAP will focus on introductions of the groups represented and each group will present their values, beliefs, and preferences for rangeland use.

4. The second meeting of the B-MAP will be dedicated to managing several problems that have arisen, and then, reporting back to the Mayor.
5. Additional meeting of the B-MAP will address a serious issue that involves a conflict between and endangered bird species and the livestock that graze land in that bird's habitat. Final management plans will be developed and presented to a Judge that has been appointed to make a decision in the case.

Part 2: Conflicting Representatives

The past few decades have seen changes in how people value Big Meadow Valley, and how they believe it should be managed. The mayor of Westerly has called for the formation of a Big Meadow Advisory Panel to seek solutions to conflicts before they result in law suits and ill feelings in the community. The advisory panel consists of representatives from the following organizations:

The Big Meadow Creek Livestock Association consists of the eleven ranching families who own the deeded land along Bog Meadow Creek. Most of these ranches have been operating in the Big Meadow Creek Watershed for three or four generations. Historically, there were a few sheep operations in the association; however today, all the members of the association own only cattle. All eleven families have a representative in B-MAP although usually no more than three show up for an one meeting.

The Westerly Horizons Development Council (WHDC) was created several years ago by the city council to encourage development of Westerly. The council, made up of local business owners and entrepreneurs, want to encourage growth. They are especially interested in promoting the area's recreation potential through upscale shops, restaurants, and motels to serve the hikers, campers, and anglers who might visit Big Meadow Creek Watershed.

The Rugged Mountain Recreationists are a group of local residents who like to recreate in the mountains and valleys of Big Meadow Creek. This group gets together every month to share hunting and fishing stories and learn how to do recreational activities such as fly fishing, back packing, bird watching, low-impact camping, ect.

The Northwestern Environmental Coalition (NVEC) is a regional environmental organization concerned with preserving the health and western rangelands. The "preservation" goal of NVEC yields several campaigns to limit the use of public lands for grazing, timber, and recreation. Several members of NVEC live in Westerly and focus on monitoring wildlife species and encouraging wise management of lands. They keep a close eye on the activities of public land agencies and try to discourage use and development of the Big Meadow Creek Watershed. NVEC is also concerned with maintaining open space for wildlife and people.

The Retired Citizens of Westerly (RCW), if possible. RCW is a diverse group of citizens that once owned businesses and ranches in Westerly and the Big Meadow Creek Watershed. They have seen the valley change over the last 70 years and have a deep concern and love for the beauty and health of Big Meadow Creek. They also want to see Westerly prosper and become a well known and revered city in Idaho.

The Public Lands Agencies include the USFS, BLM, and IDL which all manage land in the Big Meadow Creek Watershed. They have a difficult job because they need to ensure the health and integrity of the ecosystems but they also have to mandate for "multiple use" management. This means that they must try to manage for recreation, ranching, wildlife, timber, and water all at the same times. The land managers in these agencies went to the University and obtained degrees in rangeland management so they understand the biological constraints and opportunities of the system. Each B-MAP will include a member of the state land management agency and occasionally a member of one of the federal agencies.