

## **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Lesson Plan**

### **Working Together – A Public Meeting**

- Time:** 50 minutes minimum (prefer 2, 50 minute class periods)
- Curriculum:** Focus will be on the effect noxious weeds are having on federal and adjacent lands.
- Objective:** The 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will participate in a class activity and work together to analyze, hypothesize, communicate, and solve a problem regarding noxious weeds and their ecological impact.
- Materials:** Weeds of the West, SRP brochures, JHWMA brochures, Pocket guides, computer stations with internet access (if available), State of WY Noxious Weed list, Teton County's Declared Noxious Weed list.

#### **Wyoming State Standards:**

**Science grades:** 1.4, 2.1, 2.3, 3.2 a, c.

**Language Arts:** 1.1 a-b, 1.2, 1.3 c-d, 3.1 – 3.3, 3.5

**Social Science:** 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2

**Career/Vocation:** 1.1 – 1.4, 2.1 – 2.3, 6.1

- Start-10 minutes:** Introduce a hypothetical problem managing noxious weeds on Federal Land. (You may choose BLM, NPS, or FS. See Yellowstone example) Divide students into small groups. Ask them to make a list of solutions to the problem.
- 10-25 minutes:** Allow group to brainstorm for 15 minutes on as many different ways to solve the problem. Try not to limit their thinking in any way.
- 25-35 minutes:** Write all of their solutions on the board. Give each group a Role Card. Allow them to analyze their roles and answer the following questions:
1. Which solutions suggested in the role card are similar to those suggested by the class?
  2. Which statement made in each role card are facts and which are opinions? (Tell them to watch for “I think or I feel” statements.)
  3. Which of the solutions suggested in the role card appears to be the best?
  4. Can you combine your solution and solutions suggested on the role card to form an even better solution? What is it?
- 35-45 minutes:** Once each group has analyzed their roles and chosen their solution, have each group present this to the class. Allow other groups to ask questions.
- 45-50 minutes:** The class should now vote to decide which solution appears to be the best. Allow the class as a whole the option of deciding to reject all or to combine parts of several solutions into one choice.

## Yellowstone Weeds Spreading like **Wildfire!**

Yellowstone National Park is being invaded by noxious weeds and they are increasing at an alarming rate. These infestations could mean loss of plant and animal diversity in one of the most species rich ecosystems in North America. They are taking over many habitat types in the park from existing wildlife herds, song birds, and even native fish. Noxious weeds are also spreading out of the park onto National Forest and private property where livestock are grazing. Numbers of vegetation staff and control of these plants in the park is minimal due to lack of funding. The cost for control of these invasive species continues to increase each year that they are not controlled.

# Role Cards

**Supervisor of Teton & Park County Weed and Pest** - "We think the only solution is to work as a team with surrounding agencies to help find funding for on the ground weed control. It will also be important to create and Integrated Weed Management plan to lead us through the process. Yellowstone National Park is the world's first national park and should be setting an example to the rest of the parks. This problem needs to be taken care of before there is not any forage left to support the native wildlife herds that this area is known for."

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**Local Rancher** - "My land borders Yellowstone National Park and the weeds are starting to spread through my livestock pastures. I feel that the park service is not doing their job in controlling weeds and now I have to spend my money treating their problem. I do not want these noxious weed taking over the forage that I have worked so hard to establish for my livestock. This problem is jeopardizing my business financially and I feel that the park service should be paying for it. The Federal Government pays for livestock if wolves kill them so why not weeds?"

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**Yellowstone National Park Habitat Biologist** - "The weeds are definitely causing serious habitat problems within the park boundaries. We are aware of this and are treating as many weeds as we can with our current funding. We need surrounding agencies to help us get bills passed in congress in order to get more money to solve this growing problem. There is not anything else we can do right now."

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**Environmentalist** - "I am local to this area and spend countless days in Yellowstone enjoying the wildflowers, wildlife, and birds. I can see that noxious weeds are infesting more and more areas in the park. However, I have not seen the plant and animal species being affected and I feel that we need to let Mother Nature take its course. Spraying chemical all over the park may be killing a few weeds but it is also killing surrounding plants and insects that other animals rely upon for survival. Let work together to find other ways to battle this issue but I still feel strongly that this problem will take care of itself."

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**Park Visitor** - "What is the big deal with these weeds anyway? Nobody even knows they are there and most of them are pretty and fit right in. I don't think that money should be spent on killing things in a National Park. It should be spent on improving these bumpy roads and building more trails or something. That's just the problem with this country, people don't put there money where there mouth is. Oh, what do I know?"