

STICKY SITUATION

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Description

We face dilemmas every day. Sometimes we can't realize the long-term repercussions of our decisions. In this activity, students read real-life dilemmas that they might face and discuss possible solutions and consequences.

Getting Ready**1. Ensure that you have enough copies of the dilemmas for group size.**

Introduction: Every day we face choices. Some of the choices are easy – like whether to eat hot or cold cereal for breakfast. Some are fun – like whether to go to a movie or just rent a DVD. Other choices seem easy and fun until you think about the consequences. Your lifestyle and the decisions you make can have negative or positive influences on the environment. The influence of one person making one decision might seem insignificant, but one decision times the millions of decisions made over a lifetime times the more than 6 billion people on the earth really adds up.

Doing the Activity

1. Divide into small groups. Give each group one or more Sticky Situation cards. You can:

- Give each group the same situation and allow time for discussion.
- Give each group a different situation and allow time for discussion.
- Give each group several situations and let them work through the dilemmas as a group.

2. Bring the class together for wrap-up discussion.**Assessing Student Learning**

Create your own dilemmas. How would your friends, family members, or classmates respond to other tough challenges? Create your own dilemmas and think about what you would do. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Jet skiing is cool – Will you ski right through the hydrilla and break it to pieces? Did you know that fragments of hydrilla can start whole new plants?
- Pets love to wander – Will you keep your pets “on leash” and “on trail” or will you let them run wherever they desire?
- Trails are muddy – Do you walk right through or make a new trail?
- Luck is with you – Your decoys brought in a whole flock of ducks and you had a successful hunt. When you haul in your decoys, will you take the time to clean off the aquatic plants and mud from the lines and anchors?
- Dreams are fulfilled – You’ve always wanted a prairie dog and now your uncle has found a source on the Internet. Will you get this exotic pet, even though they have been made illegal?

Objectives

- Recognize that simple choices we make on a daily basis can have a negative or positive influence on the environment.
- Express personal opinions concerning the choices available and the consequences of those choices.

Grades

6-12

Group Size

Maximum 30, divided into groups of 3-5

Prep Time

Minimal

Activity Time

10-50 minutes

Setting

Anywhere

Materials in Kit

- laminated **Sticky Situation** cards (3 sets of 8 cards)

Materials in Booklet

Sticky Situation cards to copy if you don't have the kit

National Education Standards**Grades 6-8**

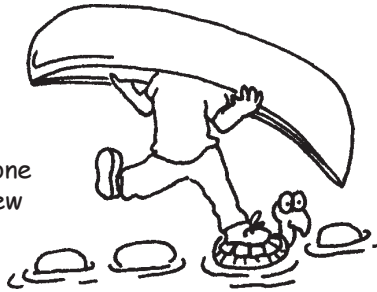
- Environmental Education: 2.4.A - Human/Environment Interactions
- Environmental Education: 4.D - Accepting Personal Responsibility
- Social Studies: IX - Global Connections (d)

Grades 9-12

- Environmental Education: 2.3.A - Individuals and Groups
- Environmental Education: 4.D - Accepting Personal responsibility
- Science: F - Environmental Quality
- Social Studies: IX: Global Connections (d and h)

Sticky Situation 1

Your family loves to canoe camp. Your favorite thing to do is travel from one lake to another. You don't mind the portages, but your dad's obsession with cleaning all the vegetation and aquatic animals off the canoe is driving you crazy. He even makes you clean the mud off your shoes! Now you are old enough to canoe on your own with some friends. You are leaving one lake for a new one. Do you clean the canoe?



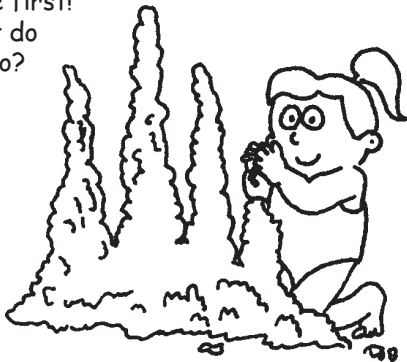
OK, maybe dads can be a little unreasonable at times, but this time Dad has the right idea. Non-native plants and animals move easily from lake to lake on you, your shoes, clothes, packs, tents, canoes, pets, bait buckets, and anything else you use. If everyone was as careful as your dad, we might be able to control the spread of non-natives like zebra mussels, Eurasian milfoil, and spiny water fleas.

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Sticky Situation 2

You can easily see the trail with switchbacks leading down to the shore. The sign says, "Please stay on the trail." Your friends have just taken a well-used shortcut that heads straight for the water. They are going to get there first! What do you do?



Shortcuts are tempting! But the plants growing on shores protect the area and provide valuable habitat. Taking shortcuts increases shoreline erosion. But that's not all! Once the native plants along the shoreline have been disturbed, the likelihood of invasive plants taking root is much higher.

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Sticky Situation 3

You've always wanted to see a desert and now here you are! The colors, shades, and textures are like nothing you've ever experienced. Could the perfect souvenir help you keep this feeling forever? You look around and several things catch your eye: a cactus blooming in the morning sun, a lizard racing across the sand, a spider hanging from a cactus. What should you take home to capture this moment?



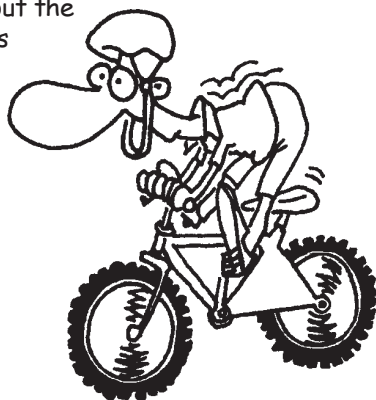
Whoa, let's think this through. If everyone who visited the desert took "something special" home, what would be left? And that's only half the problem! Fast forward a few months or years. What are you going to do with that plant or animal when you get tired of taking care of it, it gets sick, or it escapes? What might happen if you plant it in your garden or set it free outside? Have you considered a nice photo?

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Sticky Situation 4

You're out mountain biking with friends. After that last gravity check, you and your bike are covered with dirt, plants, and blood. You're bonked, so you pack up the bike until another day. You'll go home and do a mud-ectomy on your poor body. But what about the bike? It's covered with mud too!



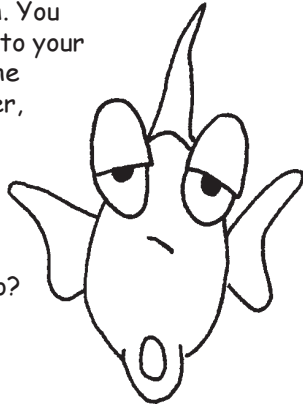
Bike trails are usually disturbed areas - often with a lot of weedy vegetation. Your bike isn't just muddy! It's a moving seed catalog. To avoid carrying seeds and plant parts to other areas, you should clean the bike thoroughly. Even the tread. Be especially careful when moving the bike from one part of the country to another or when traveling into natural areas on bike trails. Oh, and stay on the trails so you don't thrash the surroundings.

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Sticky Situation 5

You and your family are moving across the country. While your parents promised that you could restock your aquarium after the move, they won't let you move your fish. You offered them to your best friend, the science teacher, and a dozen other people. No one is interested. Now what are you going to do?



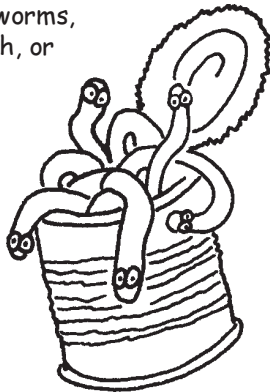
You might be tempted to release them in a local waterway. At least, you figure, they would have a chance. The truth is that they will either quickly die, or they will survive and pose a risk to the plants and animals already living there. If you can't find a hobbyist, museum, zoo, nursing home, school, or anyone to take care of them, try to return them to the store for resale or trade. If that doesn't work, don't be tempted to bury them at sea! Ask a vet to put them to sleep or place them in water and put them in the freezer. This is considered a humane method of euthanasia.

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Sticky Situation 6

Your family likes to joke that you knew how to fish before you could walk. While you prefer lures, you enjoy experimenting with live bait. But at the end of the day, you are never quite sure what to do with leftover worms, larvae, crayfish, or minnows. One friend just dumps them in the water. What will you do?



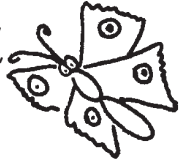
If your friend jumped off a bridge, would you do that too? First, think about where you got the live bait. If you caught it yourself in the spot where you are fishing, it's ok to return it to the water. If you bought the bait at a bait shop or collected it from any other body of water, then you should dispose of any leftover bait in the trash. Never dump leftover worms on the ground. Improper disposal of live bait is one way that invasive species are spreading.

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Sticky Situation 7

Your big sister is finally getting married to that guy she's been dating forever. Of course, they want the perfect wedding: garden setting, string quartet, black tie, sunset. Your "job" is to give each guest a small envelope that contains a live butterfly. On cue, the guests will open their envelopes and the butterflies will swirl around the happy couple. You want the best for your big sister, but something about releasing butterflies is giving you butterflies in your stomach. What do you do?



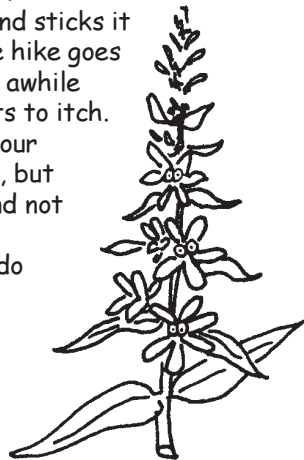
You have good reason to be concerned. Ask your sister to find out about the butterflies she is planning to release and to read about potential problems with releases. Are the butterflies from a licensed butterfly breeder? Is it likely to be warm and sunny when they are released? Is the butterfly species native to the area? If not, they shouldn't be released. Even species that are native to the area but raised from butterflies collected somewhere else can be a problem. When the released butterflies mate with local butterflies, they introduce genes that are not adapted to local conditions. Is her "perfect wedding" more important than the lives of local butterflies?

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Sticky Situation 8

You and your family are taking a long hike into the forest. Dad parks at the trailhead and everyone gets ready to go. Just off the parking lot, there is a beautiful purple flower. Your mom picks one and sticks it in your hair. The hike goes great, but after awhile the flower starts to itch. You carry it in your hand for a while, but it's all droopy and not that beautiful anymore. What do you do with it?



If you guessed that the weed might be purple loosestrife, you could be right. You don't know for sure. It could be invasive; it could be endangered. However, invasives are a lot more common around parking lots where the soil has been disturbed and there is a lot of human activity. Now that you are far from the source, don't drop it on the ground and spread its seeds. Put it in a bag and throw it in the trash when you get home. Remember: It would be best not to pick any wildflower. Period.

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