

Where Have Our Plants and Animals Gone?

Subject: Science

Duration: 45 Minutes

Location: Classroom

Key Vocabulary: Organism, population, extinction

Related Activities: What Extinct or Endangered Species Am I?; And Then There Were None

Florida Sunshine State Standards: SC.4.L.17, SC.5.L.15, SC.6.L.14



Materials

- Copies of “What’s Happening Here?”

Objectives: Students will be able to: a) discuss some of the problems that wild animals and plants face from humans, b) list examples of how personal feelings and beliefs can affect situations involving wild organisms, and c) make decisions about a value-related plant/animal issue.

Method: Students will analyze a hypothetical situation relating to habitat destruction in the Everglades environment using a pencil and paper activity.

Background: South Florida’s national parks are home to fourteen endangered animal species, and additional endangered species live in areas surrounding the parks. The National Park Service works to prevent the extinction of these animals by preserving their habitat. Rangers try to learn more about these creatures through scientific study. Humans are the major cause of habitat destruction to the Everglades/South Florida environment. Students need to become aware of our influence on this unique environment. For more information on endangered species, see the “Natural History” section.

Suggested Procedure

1. Divide the class into groups of 2 - 3 students.
2. Distribute one copy of “What’s Happening Here?” to each group of students.
3. Ask each group to analyze the situation described, and answer the questions.

Evaluation

Discuss each group’s findings with the rest of the class. What populations are most affected by this development? Least affected? How do you know? Would you expect any organisms to become extinct as a result of this development? Which ones? Why do you think they might? Humans interfere with organisms and populations of plants and animals in order to improve their own lives. What guidelines would you recommend when it comes to using the environment?

What's Happening Here?

Team members: _____

Situation: A luxury hotel resort is being proposed for an open, natural space along the beach front at Flamingo. This is located inside Everglades National Park. What are your ideas about what happens when a space like this is changed?

Questions:

1. What are some of the direct consequences of the development?

To animals? _____

To plants? _____

To humans? _____

To the environment? _____

2. What alternative courses of action might be considered? _____

3. Humans are curious about the Everglades. They enjoy visiting the park. What alternatives to this project could be considered?

4. For each alternative, describe some consequences of the action you are considering.

