

DILEMMA CARDS



DILEMMA 1: You've changed the oil in your car. You know the hazards of oil seeping into ground water, yet you are in a hurry to attend a meeting. How will you discard the used oil?

1. Put it in the back of the garage.
2. Place it in a garbage can for disposal in the city/county landfill.
3. Pour it on the ground somewhere out of sight while no one is looking.
4. Burn it.
5. Take it to an approved oil-disposal facility in your area.
6. Other?

DILEMMA 2: You are the mayor of a city which has an area known to flood. A developer wants to build houses on the floodplain. These houses will have a great view of the river, will be conveniently located near the business district, and will entice prosperous people to move to your struggling community. You must make the final decision on the developer's request. Which option will you choose?

1. Inform the developer no building will be allowed.
2. Let the developer build in the flood area.
3. Insist the developer elevate the houses on piles of gravel in hopes of avoiding flood damage.
4. Instruct the developer to find an alternative building location out of the floodplain.
5. Other?

DILEMMA 3: You own a cabin on a lakeshore and there are 400 other cabins facing the lake. Several residents around the lake have been complaining because they think the lake's water quality is poor. (There has been an increase in algae growth and unpleasant odors.) A public service announcement informed the community that these problems likely are caused by septic tanks leaking sewage into the ground water that feeds into the lake. The announcement advised that septic systems should be checked every three years. It has been almost ten years since yours has been checked, and you know other cabin owners have not checked theirs recently either. Checking your septic tank and fixing the problem could be costly. A fine could be imposed if your septic tank is found to be defective, although it is not likely the tank will be checked. What are you going to do?

1. Sell the cabin.
2. Do nothing; your tank probably isn't leaking—and if it is, the fine can't be that bad, and you can appeal it.
3. Have your septic tank checked; and if it's leaking, pay to have the sewage pumped and hauled to a safe place.
4. Have your septic tank checked, and if it's leaking, sell the cabin.
5. Have your septic tank checked; fix it if it's leaking, and form a homeowner's association to encourage everyone else to check their tanks, too.
6. Rally the public works system to develop a community water and sewage system and pay to have your cabin hooked up.
7. Other?

DILEMMA 4: You and a friend are hiking, and you see someone dumping a 55-gallon (209-l) drum of a dark liquid into a shallow stream. What should you do?

1. Go over and ask what is going on.
2. Run home and call the police.
3. Wait until the person leaves, then investigate by smelling and feeling the liquid.
4. Take down the license plate number of the nearby truck and report the situation to the fire department.
5. Other?



DILEMMA 5: You are the governor of your state. Many streams are drying up because water is being diverted for municipal, industrial, and irrigation uses. This has resulted in fish kills. Furthermore, people who like to canoe, raft, and kayak have sent letters of complaint. Industry and agriculture are major sources of income in your state, but you also like its reputation of being a “quiet place” where people can explore scenic rivers. What action will you take?

1. Ask water users to stop using water.
2. Locate and publicize other rivers around the state where people can fish and canoe.
3. Establish a committee to study the problem.
4. Propose constructing a dam and reservoir to store water for release when needed.
5. Buy out the water users so they will have to move to new locations.
6. Establish a water conservation program with incentives.
7. Other?

DILEMMA 6: Your friends have spread a plastic tarp on a hill and are spraying it with a hose. This creates a great water slide. However, sliding repeatedly kills the vegetation on the hillside, and large amounts of water are consumed during the game. Your community has experienced water shortages, but there have been no notices about conserving water for almost a year. You have been invited to take a dive down the hill. What should you do?

1. Report the game to the local authorities and have them cut off the water supply.
2. Change into your bathing suit and join the fun.
3. Try to encourage your friends to do something else, like play basketball or go skateboarding.
4. Join the activity, but only for a short while, encouraging your friends to stop with you.
5. Refuse to join in, and go home to watch television.
6. Lecture your friends on the reasons not to waste water.
7. Other?



DILEMMA 7: You are the head of a household. You are trying to save money; because your water bills have been large, you have decided to practice water conservation methods to reduce water consumption by family members. Although you have installed low-flow faucets on your showerheads and sinks, your family still insists on taking long, hot showers (sometimes over 20 minutes). What are you going to do?

1. Hold a family meeting to discuss why conservation is important, and ask that shower times be reduced.
2. Order family members to cut down their shower times to five minutes, or else you will turn the hot water heater down or off.
3. Figure the cost of water per gallon and how many gallons flow out of the showerhead each minute. Tell the family you will time their showers, and they will be charged (or their allowances reduced) for each minute over five minutes they shower.
4. Tell family members that you will compare monthly water bills, and if a bill is lower than the previous one, the money saved will go toward a family trip or entertainment event.
5. Nothing. Your family has a right to bathe for as long as they want.
6. Other?



DILEMMA 8: You are a city council member for a community located adjacent to a large, privately owned wetland. The wetland is home to rare wildlife and migratory birds; some wetland managers indicate that the wetland helps control surface runoff. The owner has decided to sell her land and move to a new location. The land is in an area surrounded by lucrative businesses, where land prices are high and parking is an issue. What should you encourage the council to do?

1. Provide tax incentives to a local development consortium, to help them purchase the land around the wetland and seek permits to develop it for business.
2. Launch an initiative to have the city purchase the land. This will require new taxes and protect the wetland forever.
3. Apply for a permit to fill the wetland with soil from a local hill, developing the wetland into a parking garage and community park.
4. Leave the fate of the wetland to the desires of the community's special interest groups.
5. Wait and see who buys the wetland, and then decide what to do.
6. Other?

DILEMMA 9: You have moved across country. You love to fish, and you are known for your skill at catching a particular species. This species is not found in the lakes and streams around your new home. A friend from your old neighborhood has offered to bring a tank of these fish to introduce into one of your local streams. You have heard that introduced organisms (such as starlings, zebra mussels, and purple loosestrife) are competing with native species for resources. However, you have not found the local fishing practices appealing. How should you respond to your friend's offer?

1. Tell your friend to bring the fish; you can't wait to get a population growing.
2. Tell your friend you are already learning how to catch a new species of fish, so not to bother.
3. Check with a local fish and wildlife agent to learn if the introduced fish will compete with native fish.
4. Tell your friend to bring the fish; fry up a few and release the rest—they'll probably die anyway.
5. Other?

DILEMMA 10: You are a taxpayer in a coastal state that owns large tracts of land which historically were wetlands. Through complex engineering, the land has been drained to provide flood protection and to open the area for development and agriculture. These accomplishments have saved lives and improved the standard of living for many residents, while increasing revenues from crop exports. However, populations of some organisms living in the wetlands (such as scarlet ibis, wood storks, and panthers) and along coastal areas (such as coral reefs, lobsters, and shrimp) have been greatly reduced. Shrimpers and other fishing industries have suffered from low harvests, and the number of tourists has declined. There is a proposal to restore the historic water flow pattern in some of these areas. This action will increase your taxes. What should you do?

1. Vote down the tax; you pay enough in taxes already.
2. Vote for the tax; a restored, healthy ecosystem is good for everyone.
3. Vote down the tax because communities will be flooded.
4. Vote for the tax because your best friend says you should.
5. Other?

