Well, What Do You Think?

We've learned how cranes adapt, or fit in, to their community by using their long legs, long necks, and long beaks. People must adapt to the environment, too. But instead of using a beak or a long neck, people can use their brains to think of ways to fit in, and use the land wisely. These questions should start you thinking. We hope you will learn how to fit into your environment just as well as a crane fits into a wetland.

1. What does being a environmentalist mean? Do you think that you are a environmentalist? Why?

2. A man named Aldo Leopold said that we should care for the soil, water, wild animals, and plants just as much as we care for other people. Do you think that this is true? Why or why not?

3. At ICF we learned that we have to protect the environment if we want to have good soil, clean water, clean air, and abundant wildlife. What are two things **you** can do to protect the environment?

4. Your Aunt Gertrude thinks that wetlands are awful places that should be destroyed. Can you convince her that wetlands are important? Be sure to give at least two good reasons.

5. ICF is trying hard to save cranes from becoming extinct. Why should they even bother to save the cranes if they are in trouble? Try to think of two reasons.

6. We always have to make choices about how to use the land. Which of these choices would help us adapt to the environment better? Circle the one you prefer and explain why:

We're building a new road. Should we put it:
- a) through the wetland
- b) around the wetland
- c) not build the new road

Whew, look at all this trash. Should we:
- a) recycle everything we can
- b) throw it someplace where we can't see it
- c) try to use less stuff in the first place

We just bought a forest, and we need some wood. Should we:
- a) cut some trees and re-plant more
- b) cut all the trees and sell the land
- c) try to reduce the amount of wood we need

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DON'T JUST SIT THERE ....

Do Something!

Decide on a class project to help wildlife. Here are some suggestions to choose from.

Posters

Everyone in your class could produce a poster. Your poster could persuade more students to learn about saving endangered species, convince people to save wetlands, or be about one of the cranes you saw at ICF. Put them up in the hallway or library so your classmates can see them.

Wetland Study

Find a wetland near your school (even if it's just a wet place along the road) and begin to study it as a class. One team of three people could measure how deep the water is in different places. Another group could make a big map of the wetland. One team could look for animal tracks and draw any they find. Three people could find different kinds of plants and draw them, and another team could collect water in jars and draw pictures of anything they find living inside. Add the locations of the animals tracks, water measurements, plants, and water samples to the map.

Make these measurements once each week for three months. How is the wetland changing?

Adopt an Endangered Animal

Become a foster parent to an animal that needs your help! With a small donation, your class may receive certificates, pictures and interesting information. Raise money by collecting aluminum cans or old newspapers. Have a rummage sale, organize a carnival, or sponsor a bake sale, and donate the money to help save endangered species. Some classes have even held crane dances! Your class can adopt a crane at ICF for $25. For a list of other animals you can adopt, write your local zoo or the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (AAZPA), Oglebay Park, Wheeling, WV 26003.

Restore the Land

Learn about lost prairies by creating a patch right on school property. Work together as you collect the seeds and plant them. Keep good notes as you watch the wildflowers and grasses grow. What a great gift to future students! Birds and other animals which depend on prairies will appreciate your work, too! The Department of Natural Resources or local prairie groups can give you tips.

Water Stickers

Cranes depend on water and people do, too! The water you use each day affects the health of wetlands, cranes, and other wildlife. Water in an area usually flows toward a river, like the Mississippi or the St. Lawrence. All the areas which contribute water to the river are called its watershed. Find out what watershed you live in. Then make stickers which read "The Other End of the _____ River" and post them above the faucets in your school and home. This will help classmates and family remember how their choices affect other areas.

Write Letters!

Let local, state, and national officials know that you care about the environment. Find out who your representatives are and write them, along with your mayor, governor, even the President! A school or public library can help you find their addresses.

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