Title: Community Meeting

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Theme: Many important parts of ecosystems, economies, and communities could be changed by an oil spill.

Objectives:

- Students will analyze and formulate opinions about the relative importance of protecting various components of local ecosystems.
- Students will discuss different values and priorities in the context of protecting local areas from oil pollution.

Duration: 45-75 minutes

Age Range: 6th-12th Grade

Materials:

- Notebooks
- Community Meeting Scenario Cards
- Whiteboard/Posterboard
- Markers
- Excerpts from interviews with children affected by oil spills
- Computer/projector/TV/SmartBoard to view videos

Background:

In this activity, students participate in a mock community meeting in response to an oil spill. They have to identify and prioritize areas for protection based on their knowledge of the local areas.

Preparation:

Visit http://www.childrenofthespills.org/index.php/people to choose excerpts of video interviews with children affected by oil spills. A DVD of video excerpts is also available upon request through the Children of the Spills website.

Introduction:

Briefly explain some of the facts of the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill and other oil spills. The *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill occurred in Prince William Sound, Alaska on March 24, 1989. About 11 million gallons of crude oil were spilled into the Sound after the Exxon

Valdez oil tanker ran aground on Bligh Reef. Storms carried the oil throughout Prince William Sound and almost 500 miles southwest to the Gulf of Alaska, Cook Inlet, and Kodiak Island.

Ask students, "Could something like this happen here?" Explain that it could indeed happen, and in many places, it has happened in the past. Ask students, "If YOU were in charge, what places would you want to protect?" Explain to students that they are going to do a mock City Council or Village Council meeting to respond to an oil spill.

Activities & Procedures:

At this point, accept a nomination for one student to run the meeting (this will be the Mayor). Ask for a volunteer or assign a student to assist the mayor (this will be the Clerk). Select a student with good handwriting to be the secretary and write ideas on the large paper pad. Everyone else will be council members.

Have volunteers read scenario cards 1, 2, and 3.

Proceed with a mock council meeting. Give students 1-5 minutes to develop their own list of priorities for protection and write them in their science notebooks. Then, the Mayor should call on all council members to speak in turn. The Secretary writes down ideas. The mayor then provides an opportunity for discussion of the ideas, if time permits. After 30 minutes, a list of top 3 priority sites should be ready for submission to response team.

At the end, ask if anyone suggested protecting anything that wasn't a beach, stream, marsh, etc. What about other things important in the community that could be affected by the spill and clean-up efforts? What about recreation? What about foods? What about children? Play video excerpts from interviews with children affected by oil spills that highlight some of the less obvious effects. Ask students if they want to add anything to the list. Have students reflect in their notebooks about why they chose these priorities for protection and how they would feel if one of their listed areas or resources was damaged.

Wrap-Up & Extensions:

Look at the list that the class has chosen as priorities for protection. Have students create a list of ways that these areas are already protected or threatened. Have students brainstorm actions they can take to protect these places without waiting for an oil spill happen or other pollution or disturbance to be introduced to the area. Implement one (or more) of these ideas.

Evaluation:

Assess student understanding based on their contributions during the meeting and

reflections in their notebooks. Observe participation, respectful tone, and adherence to protocol during the meeting.

Community Meeting Scenario Cards

SCENARIO CARD 1

An oil spill just occurred in _____. The tides, currents, and winds are carrying much of the oil _____. It is projected that large amounts of oil will reach your community within the next 24 hours.

SCENARIO CARD 2

Our hope is to be able to prevent oil from reaching the most important resources and areas. We have limited materials available, however, so we will need to prioritize which sites are most important.

SCENARIO CARD 3

We are asking you, as the City Council, to create a list of the top **THREE** local areas that you believe are most important to protect from the oil. Please consider their importance to people as well as wildlife and the overall environment. You may list other places of importance, but we need you to prioritize your top **THREE** sites. You have thirty minutes to create your list.

MAYOR ROLE:

Your responsibility is to make sure that the meeting proceeds in an orderly manner and that everyone has a chance to share their ideas and opinions. Call on all council members to speak in turn. Make sure they explain WHY something is important to protect. Once everyone has shared their priorities, provide an opportunity for additional comments and debate by calling on people that wish to speak further. You also must decide when it is time to decide the top three priorities. The Clerk will help you to budget time.

CLERK ROLE:

Your responsibility is to make sure that the list is created in the 30 minutes allotted. Make sure that your Mayor knows when 5, 10, and 20 minutes have passed.

SECRETARY ROLE:

Your responsibility is to record the suggestions so that everyone can see. You will also write the final list of 3 top priority sites to be submitted to the response team.

Community Meeting

Concepts of Life Science: Students develop an understanding of the concepts, models, theories, facts, evidence, systems, and processes of life science.

SC3
Students develop an understanding that all organisms are linked to each other and their physical environments through the transfer and transformation of matter and energy.

The student demonstrates an understanding that all organisms are linked to each other and their physical environments through the transfer and transformation of matter and energy by:

[11] SC3.2 analyzing the potential impacts of changes (e.g., climate change, habitat loss/gain, cataclysms, human activities) within an ecosystem

Science and Technology: Students develop an understanding of the relationships among science, technology, and society.

SE1
Students develop an understanding of how scientific knowledge and technology are used in making decisions about issues, innovations, and responses to problems and everyday events.

The student demonstrates an understanding of how to integrate scientific knowledge and technology to address problems by:

[6] SE1.1 recognizing that technology cannot always provide successful solutions for problems or fulfill every human need

[7] SE1.1 describing how public policy affects the student's life (e.g., public waste disposal)

[8] SE1.1 describing how public policy affects the student's life and participating diplomatically in evidence-based discussions relating to the student's community

SE2
Students develop an understanding that solving problems involves different ways of thinking, perspectives, and curiosity that lead to the exploration of multiple paths that are analyzed using scientific, technological, and social merits.

The student demonstrates an understanding that solving problems involves different ways of thinking by:

[6] SE2.1 identifying and designing a solution to a problem

[7, 8] SE2.1 identifying, designing, testing, and revising solutions to a local problem

[6, 7] SE2.2 comparing the student's work to the work of peers in order to identify multiple paths that can be used to investigate a question or problem

[8] SE2.2 comparing the student's work to the work of peers in order to identify multiple paths that can be used to investigate and evaluate potential solutions to a question or problem

SE3 Students develop an understanding of how scientific discoveries and technological innovations affect and are affected by our lives and cultures.

The student demonstrates an understanding of how scientific discoveries and technological innovations affect our lives and society by:

[10, 11] SE3.1 researching a current problem, identifying possible solutions, and evaluating the impact of each solution

Cultural, Social, Personal Perspectives, and Science: Students develop an understanding of the dynamic relationships among scientific, cultural, social, and personal perspectives.

SF1
Students develop an understanding of the interrelationships among individuals, cultures, societies, science, and technology.

SF2
Students develop an understanding that some individuals, cultures, and societies use other beliefs and methods in addition to scientific methods to describe and understand the world.

SF3
Students develop an understanding of the importance of recording and validating cultural knowledge.

The student demonstrates an understanding of the dynamic relationships among scientific, cultural, social, and personal perspectives by:

[10] SF1.1-SF3.1 analyzing the competition for resources by various user groups to describe these interrelationships

[11] SF1.1-SF3.1 investigating the influences of societal and/or cultural beliefs on science