

Water and Land Ecosystems

After learning about wetland organisms, students make links between an aquatic ecosystem and one that they are much more familiar with - dry land. By comparing threats and mechanisms of ecosystem protection, students realize that water and land ecosystems have much in common.

Instructions for the Teacher

Make an overhead of the graphic (next page). Ask students:

- **Why do you think the artist drew the little "thought bubbles" above the aquatic vegetation, the mayfly nymph, and the dragonfly larvae?**
The artist was trying to make the point that each of the nymph, larvae, etc. have their equivalents in a terrestrial environment.
- **Which of these organisms shown is a first-order consumer? A second-order consumer? A producer?**
The organisms shown are, from left to right: Producer; first order consumer; and second-order consumer. This is true regardless of whether we look at the actual aquatic organisms, or their terrestrial equivalents in the "thought bubbles".
- **What things could threaten the pond in which these small organisms are living?**
Brainstorm this list with students, and put them on the board.
- **Which of the items listed above could threaten a terrestrial ecosystem (such as a nearby natural area). What differences are there between land and water ecosystems?**
Have students 'compare and contrast' differences and similarities between the two types of ecosystems.
- **If you wanted to protect the pond ecosystem, what would you have to do?**
Have students refer to the list of threats they created in order to come up with things that they could do. Actions should range from personal ('use less polluting things') to group action ('Write a letter to the local council').
- **If you wanted to protect a TERRESTRIAL ecosystem, what would you have to do?**
Students should again compare and contrast their lists. Tell students that it is important to look for ways to protect both land and water ecosystems.



