**Conservation Nation Card Game Teacher’s Key**

1. This represents **good** water conservation, because the user is only using what is absolutely necessary. If he were to leave the water on the whole time he was brushing his teeth, he would waste 3-5 gallons every time he brushes!
2. This represents **poor** water conservation. Showering instead of taking baths can save up to 45 gallons of water per bath. Sarah can help take better care of the earth by showering and taking baths only every once in a while.
3. Paula is exhibiting **good** water conservation. By allowing rainwater to water her garden, she isn’t wasting any water and her garden still grows!
4. This farmer has chosen a **good** water conservation practice. By leaving crop residues on the surface and not tilling his corn fields, more water stays in the ground and the ground stays cooler. When a crop is planted, it has more water to access without irrigation.
5. This farmer is exhibiting **poor** water conservation. If he were to irrigate only at the stages corn needs water the most, he would be exhibiting **okay** water conservation, and irrigating the absolute minimum necessary for the crop to live would be **good** conservation.
6. By checking the water lines, this farmer is ensuring that no water is being wasted while leaking onto the ground. This is **okay** conservation, and could be improved if the farmer checked the lines more often.
7. This citizen’s actions represent very **poor** water conservation. In a serious drought, watering a lawn to make it look good is a serious waste of water.
8. This farmer exhibits **good** conservation. She is protecting water quality in doing her best to prevent nutrients from leaching from soil into water.
9. This farmer exhibits **good** water conservation. By planting “buffer strips” of grasses along her fields, she is preventing nutrients from contaminating Iowa soils. Instead, the grasses along the field absorb the nutrients and they don’t run off.
10. This is **poor** water conservation. Even accidentally, situations like this allow nutrients from the fields to run into Iowa’s streams and rivers, which are damaging to wildlife and expensive to clean out of drinking water.
11. This farmer is using a **good** conservation practice. The use of GPS allows farmers to apply soil nutrients only where they are needed and at variable rates, so the minimum is applied and less leeches through the soils.
12. This is a **good** soil conservation practice. The windbreak of trees prevents wind from blowing soil across her yard, and the needles and residue from the trees themselves help protect the land around them.
13. This is a **poor** soil conservation practice. The water streaming across his paved patio will get to the soil around the edges and erode it, just like a river erodes its banks. It could be improved by using wood or stone pavers that allow water to escape through cracks instead of forming streams.
14. This is a **good** conservation practice. Using paving stones rather than concrete allows water to sink into the soil rather than eroding the edges or the patio.
15. This is a **poor** conservation practice. Tearing down the trees removes habitat for animals and allows the soil to be eroded by wind and water that the trees would have otherwise prevented.
16. This citizen’s actions represents **good** conservation. Collecting the water under waterspouts prevents erosion and leads to a better use of water.
17. A low-lying rain garden is an example of **okay** conservation. While it does provide a place for rainwater to run, it must be managed so that the soil around it doesn’t erode away in the process.
18. This is an example of **poor** soil conservation. This level of tillage is not good for soil structure and loosens the soil, making is more easily eroded by wind and water.
19. This is a **good** conservation practice. Cover crops have roots that hold soil in place to prevent erosion by wind and water.
20. This is called no-till farming, and it is a **good** conservation practice. Leaving residue on the soil surface rather than tilling it under protects the soil from erosion.
21. This is a **good** practice, buffer strips along fields prevent tilled soil from eroding.
22. This is a **good** practice, because grass waterways in hilly areas give water a place to run to and through without eroding the soil in the field.
23. This is an **okay** conservation practice. When coupled with buffer strips, it’s okay to till. It would be better if this farmer maintained conservation till or no-till practices.
24. This is a **poor** conservation practice. By mowing the ditches and waterways along fields, this farmer would be destroying natural grasses and the habitats for birds and rodents.
25. This is a **good** conservation practice, because it allows nature to take over – it provides habitats for animals and allows prairie grass to grow.
26. This is a **good** conservation practice. Growing milkweed attracts butterflies, who are helpful pollinators and an important part of Iowa’s ecosystem.
27. This is a **poor** conservation practice. Removal of trees is also removal of habitat for squirrels, owls, birds and other wildlife.
28. This was a **good** conservation practice. Allowing natural prairie to grow provides habitat for wildlife.
29. This is a **good** conservation practice. Disposing of garbage properly can have many animals’ lives.
30. This is a **good** conservation practice. Letting waterways grow up gives wild animals a place to live.
31. This is a **good** conservation practice, because using minimal chemicals protects plants like milkweed and animals in the ecosystem.
32. This is a **poor** conservation practice. Littering is illegal and is very damaging to wildlife.
33. Allowing fields that are poor for crop production to be wildlife habitats is a **good** conservation practice. There are government programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program, that support decisions like this.
34. This is a **poor** conservation practice. Continuing to farm ground like this takes habitat away from animals and is bad management.

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| **Good Practices (BEST)** | **Okay Practices (BETTER)** | **Poor Practices (NEEDS IMPROVEMENT)** |
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