

Conservation Nation Cards

How much do you know about taking care of the Earth? Students will work in groups of four. Cut out cards. Then, try to decide if the person on the card is taking **good** care, **okay** care, or **poor** care of the Earth. Once you've decided, sort the cards into **good**, **okay**, and **poor** categories. If the card's practice wasn't good, work with your group to decide how it could be improved.

Water Conservation

Tony always makes sure to turn the water off while brushing his teeth, and only turns it on when necessary.

1.

Water Conservation

Sarah takes bathes instead of showers. She likes bubble baths and soaking in a very full tub.

2.

Water Conservation

Paula always checks the weather before watering the garden. If it looks like rain, she doesn't turn the sprinkler on.

3.

Water Conservation

Challenge!

Farmer John reads in the Farmer's Almanac that it is going to be a dry year in Iowa. He doesn't till his corn fields, and leaves organic matter on top of them.

4.

Water Conservation

Farmer Eric reads that its going to be a dry year in Iowa in the Farmer's Almanac, so he makes sure to irrigate every single day. He wants his corn to grow tall despite the weather.

5.

Water Conservation

Farmer Roger raises hogs in a barn, like most Iowa hog farmers. Once a week, he checks to make sure none of his water lines in the barn are leaking.

6.

Water Conservation

Jacob lives in California, where there hasn't been much rain. Even though it's a drought, he still waters his yard twice a week, because he likes it to be green and pretty.

7.

Water Conservation

Challenge!

Farmer Vicky knows her plants need nutrients to grow, just like humans do. She only gives her plants the smallest amount they need to grow, so no nutrients escape into the streams around her fields.

8.

Water Conservation

Challenge!

Farmer Carrie plants grass strips on the edges of her fields, which absorb nutrients and water that may runoff the fields.

9.

Water Conservation

Challenge!

Farmer Tabitha forgets to check the weather and it rains 2 inches after she applies nutrient fertilizer.

10.

Water Conservation

Challenge!

Farmer Sam uses GPS to detect places in the field that may need nutrients like nitrogen, and applies them there only.

11.

Soil Conservation

Emily plants a lot of trees around her house in a wind-break to prevent wind from blowing so strongly across the ground.

12.

Soil Conservation

Derek notices a lot of water running across his paved driveway and washing the soil away on either side. He doesn't do anything about it.

13.

Soil Conservation

Charles wants a patio. Instead of paving it, he uses stones so that rainwater can get into the soil instead of washing over it.

14.

Soil Conservation

Samantha recently bought a lot of land to build a house on. She is tearing down all of the forest that used to be on it, and now rain and wind are reaching the soil.

15.

Soil Conservation

Kara placed a rain barrel under her roof to collect rainwater, instead of letting it wash over the ground.

16.

Soil Conservation

Eric planted a "rain garden" which lies low in his yard. The plants soak up all the excess rainwater.

17.

Soil Conservation

Soil Conservation

Soil Conservation

Farmer Miranda tills her field in the fall, spring, and after planting to get rid of weeds. The soil is now very loose.

Farmer Jean plants a crop in her fields in the fall, after she harvests corn, and lets it grow through the spring. It has strong, deep roots.

Farmer Amanda doesn't ever till her fields. Instead, she plants a new crop in the spring over the old crop's leftovers.

18.

19.

20.

Soil Conservation

Soil Conservation

Soil Conservation

Challenge!

Farmer Steve plants grasses and legumes with long roots along his fields, so rain doesn't wash the soil away.

Farmer Melissa has very hilly fields, because she lives in far Southeastern Iowa. She leaves the natural grass waterways in place.

Farmer Pam lives in Northeastern Iowa, and has very hilly fields. She plows them anyway.

21.

22.

23.

Wildlife Conservation

Wildlife Conservation

Wildlife Conservation

Challenge!

Farmer Jake doesn't like the natural Iowa grass along his fields to grow very tall, so he mows it regularly.

Farmer Adam allows the grass along his fields to grow tall in the summer, and doesn't ever mow it. He notices native species of plants and the Iowa state bird, the Goldfinch, perched in the grass.

Ellie loves butterflies, so she plants milkweed, a plant that butterflies love, in her garden. Milkweed grows well in Iowa.

24.

25.

26.

Wildlife Conservation

Erica doesn't like having to rake up the leaves from the many trees in her backyard, so she cuts them all down.

27.

Wildlife Conservation

Josh has a big yard. He converted some of it to prairie, where native plants and animals thrive. Sometimes, he'll catch a glimpse of a Goldfinch!

28.

Wildlife Conservation

Noah is very careful not to litter. He knows that plastic bottles, bags, and wrappers can be very harmful to Iowa's animals.

29.

Wildlife Conservation

Farmer Chris maintains grass waterways in his fields, where many types of animals live. This gives Iowa's state bird, the American Goldfinch, a home!

30.

Wildlife Conservation

Farmer Ashley is careful to use small amounts of chemicals on her fields, and only when she needs to, so that they don't harm Iowa's native plants and animals.

31.

Wildlife Conservation

Theresa knows she shouldn't, but sometimes she litters on empty country roads. There are a lot of those in Iowa!

32.

Wildlife Conservation

Challenge!

Farmer Megan has a few fields that often flood and aren't very good for growing crops. She decided not to farm them anymore, and let nature take over.

33.

Wildlife Conservation

Challenge!

Farmer Charles farms along the banks of the Des Moines river. Every year his land floods, but he keeps trying to farm it.

34.

Wildlife Conservation

Conservation Nation Questions

1. Many of the behaviors in the game were simple changes to human behaviors that can impact the Earth in a big way. What are a few simple things that you can do every day to make sure our Earth stays healthy?

2. You may have noticed that some practices for water, soil, and wildlife conservation were similar. Can you name some of these overlapping practices? Why do you think they work to help conserve soil, water and wildlife in Iowa?

3. What other ways can you think of to keep the water, soil, plants and animals on Earth healthy?

4. What are some plants and animals in Iowa that could be effected by not taking care of our Earth?

5. What do you think it means to be environmentally friendly?