

## 10. What Do You Value About the Land?



The land we live on has many uses. Some of those uses we may take for granted, such as the land our houses and buildings are on. Some uses we appreciate for fun and pleasure, like parks, scenic areas, or to play sports. Other uses are fundamental to our lives, as when the land is used for growing the food we eat and the food that domestic animals eat. Land provides resources like water, minerals, oil and gas, coal, and wind that power our world.

Land is also critical to other living beings. It's where they find food, shelter, water, and other members of their species; all that's needed for them to survive and thrive. Land that supports a broad range of plant and animal communities has high **biodiversity**, a sign of a healthy ecosystem.

The researchers on the WAFERx team study how different land use systems affect one another. If the way we use agricultural lands changes, then wildlife may be impacted. If we discover a new energy source, then human communities may be affected. Of course, every change and decision has a **trade-off**. Different people value different uses of the land.

Have you ever thought about what uses of the land are important to you? In this activity you will consider that

question. As you answer the questions and rate the different land uses in the four surveys to follow, you will gain a sense of the different activities that land is used for. In your answers, you will begin to discover what you feel are the most important uses for the land around you. Every person will have different ideas on valuing the land!

### Materials

- Copies of the four surveys, a pencil
- Optional: Land Use Explorer Card Deck (download at <http://waferx.montana.edu> > Outreach Resources)

### Prep for activities

Consider and discuss the types of land uses that are prevalent in the land around where you live.

### Time and place

**Time:** the surveys may take 20-25 minutes to complete

**Place:** Your own home or in a group setting.

### STEPS

1. Look through the four different surveys to get a sense of the different land uses being considered. If any are unknown to you, take a moment to do a little research to learn more about that land use.





2. Starting with the first survey, fill each out as accurately and truthfully as you can. This is for your own information; you can share your thoughts and opinions if you choose to.
3. When you've completed the surveys, fill out the Your Choices Chart with your first and last choices from each survey. Look for the patterns in your choices. Can you say what your own land use values are?
4. Consider the land around you, where you live, and how your land use choices match or fit with the uses of the land around you. What kinds of conflicts do you see between your choices of how land should be best used and how it is currently being used? How could those conflicts be resolved?

### Explore more

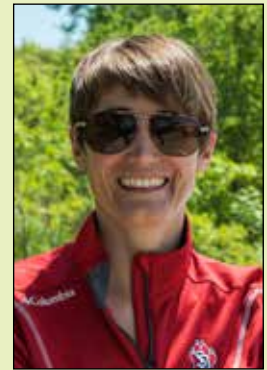
Not all land uses are compatible with each other; sometimes it is necessary to choose one or two land uses over some or many of the others. The question of which uses should be chosen often has a complex answer. Many factors need to be considered and each factor judged for which ones have the most weight.

Find a recent case of land use decision-making in your area. Determine the different factors that were involved and learn how the land use decision was made. How was the decision made? Who were the people involved, and what did each person or group want to do with the land? Could the land have been used for more than one of the proposed uses? Why or why not?

Meet the scientists:

## Meghann Jarchow










Dr. Meghann Jarchow is Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of Sustainability and Environment at the University of South Dakota.



She has expertise in prairie plants, bioenergy, and sustainability. Her research focuses on creating landscapes that have multiple functions and on sustainability education. She thinks of studying sustainability as a way to ask, “What kind of world do we want?” and “How can we effect change to create that world?”

On the WAFERx project Dr. Jarchow is mapping social values across the Upper Missouri River Basin (UMRB). She is working with graduate students in the Department of Sustainability and Environment to understand what people value about the landscapes of the UMRB and how those values are changing.

**Survey 1: Rate how much you value having the pictured activities on the landscape in your area**

		Strongly value	Somewhat value	Neutral	Do not value	Strongly do not value
Livestock						
Native plants and animals						
Wind power						
Energy extraction						
Development						
Crops for biofuels						
Crops for animal feed						
Crops for human food						
Hunting or fishing						

**Survey 2: How often is the land around you used for the following activities?**

	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Almost never</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>Farming/ranching</b>				
<b>Fossil fuel extraction</b>				
<b>Hunting</b>				
<b>Sightseeing/visual</b>				
<b>Hiking/other outdoor recreation</b>				
<b>Economic/resource production</b>				
<b>Community building</b>				
<b>Water recreation</b>				

**Survey 3: Consider what may be on the land around you in the years to come.  
How important is it to you for each of these to be part of the landscape in the future?**

	<b>I strongly desire this on the landscape</b>	<b>I somewhat desire this on the landscape</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>I do not desire this on the landscape</b>	<b>I strongly do not desire this on the landscape</b>
<b>Energy extraction</b>					
<b>Wildlife</b>					
<b>Outdoor recreation</b>					
<b>Wind energy</b>					
<b>Hunting</b>					
<b>Open space</b>					
<b>Agriculture</b>					
<b>Native landscape</b>					
<b>Development</b>					
<b>Biofuels</b>					

**Survey 4: Circle the FOUR land uses that are most important to you from the list below. You have 100 points to divide up among those four. How would you assign the points? What values are most important to you on the land around you?**

<b>Value Choices</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Reasons why you chose this value</b>
<b>Agricultural</b> <i>for example: farming, ranching</i>		
<b>Aesthetic (what is attractive about the land)</b> <i>for example: sights, sounds, smells</i>		
<b>Community building</b> <i>for example: Investment in community, community events</i>		
<b>Conservation and taking care of the land</b> <i>for example: conservation practices, responsibility to the land, reclamation</i>		
<b>Cultural</b> <i>for example: historic landmarks, ways of life, traditions</i>		
<b>Development</b> <i>for example: residential, commercial</i>		
<b>Economic</b> <i>for example: retail, employment</i>		
<b>Energy</b> <i>for example: coal mining, natural gas, oil, wind</i>		
<b>Recreational</b> <i>for example: outdoor recreation, hiking, hunting</i>		
<b>Spiritual/religious</b> <i>for example: sacred, religious, spiritual</i>		
<b>Tourism</b> <i>for example: historical or cultural sites, economic improvement</i>		

## Your Choices Chart: List Your Personal Choices – What patterns do you see?

When you've completed the surveys, fill out this chart with your first and last choices from each survey.  
Look for the patterns in your choices. Can you say what your own land use values are?

Survey	What are your top choices?	What are your last choices?
#1		
#2		
#3		
#4		
<i>What conclusions can you draw about your land use values?</i>		