

# Role Play Activity: Endangered Species Protection vs. Private Property Rights

GRADE LEVEL: 9 – 12

SETTING: Classroom

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OVERVIEW: Threatened and endangered plant species are not afforded the same protection as listed animals, and are often destroyed by landowners.

OBJECTIVE: Students will research the Tennessee Coneflower (*Echinacea tennesseensis*) and the estimated number of local populations. Students should focus on the probable outcome for this plant should its numbers continue to decline. Students will participate in role play by assuming the role of a citizen at a town hall meeting.

LEARNING STANDARDS: Biology CLE 3210.2.3; Ecology CLE 3255.44; 3255.6.2; Environmental Science CLE 3260.4.4; 3260.7.2

Problem: An endangered species, the Tennessee Coneflower, has been found on private property. The landowner wishes to develop the land. A town hall meeting has been called to address the proposal for development of the land.

Procedure:

1. Using internet or other sources, students investigate the Tennessee Coneflower regarding locations and approximated number of remaining viable populations. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Agency at [www.fws.gov/](http://www.fws.gov/) will provide information regarding current status of plant.
2. In groups of 3 or 4 students will assume roles for town meeting. The meeting will address the proposal for development of private property on which the plant exists.
3. Students will prepare a statement explaining their point of view.
4. Students must present and (respectfully) defend their statement during the meeting.

Suggested Student Roles:

- Land owner who wishes to sell property to developer
- Developer
- Town Planner
- Town Mayor
- Land owner of adjacent property
- Environmental Group representative
- Business owner who wishes to move into proposed development
- Local teacher who takes field trips into the area
- Student of teacher
- Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency officer
- Tennessee Native Plant Society representative
- University Botany Professor
- Graduate student conducting research on other rare plants

EXTENSION: Have students access the U.S. Fish & wildlife Agency site to review the Recovery Plan for the Tennessee Coneflower, which was listed June 6, 1979. This information could be used in the student presentations.