
The Endangered Species Act

Segment Length: 4:36 minutes; 5:38 minutes

Videos:

“The Endangered Species Act: 40 Years at the Forefront of Wildlife Conservation”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DojGPBV4U0w>

“SITC 2015 Protecting Endangered Species”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOQF4VtSCQs>

Guide:

The questions below will help students achieve a better understanding of the arguments made on either side of a contentious topic. Because these questions often touch upon statements made briefly in the videos, we recommend reading the questions before watching each video.

Students are encouraged to take notes during the videos, and it may be helpful for students to break into groups, each taking responsibility for only a few questions, before coming together for discussion.

Analysis Questions:

1. John Stossel claims that onerous conservation rules have caused an unintended consequence. What is that consequence? Why would protecting endangered species cause this to happen?
2. Bill Snape says there are economic, ecological, aesthetic, and spiritual reasons to preserve endangered species. List and explain some possible examples of these reasons.
3. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service calls the Endangered Species Act a commitment to stop another American species from becoming extinct. How does this relate to Bill Snape’s comment that there is a limit to how far conservationists will go to preserve endangered species?
4. The purpose of wildlife conservation, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is to protect the nation’s species for future Americans and create a sense of pride in America’s natural and national history. How could their efforts create such a sense of pride? How might John Stossel respond to this statement?
5. Ed Poitevent notes that his land will have to be changed to accommodate Mississippi gopher frogs. Why is this significant?
6. John Stossel says lawyers love the hundreds of pages landowners must navigate to cooperate with officials. Why might that be?

7. Landowners like Ed Poitevent might be tempted to shoot endangered species on their land, according to John Stossel. How might the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service push back on the argument that their conservation efforts result in the deaths of endangered species?