

Practice Timed Writing Prompt

Essential Question: Whose river is it anyway?

Objective: The student will write an argumentative letter in response to a specific prompt.

Standard(s):

LAFS.6.W.1.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Materials:

- Student page: **Whose River Is It? - The Magnolia River** dilemma sheets
- notebook paper
- pen or pencil

Set up: Display dilemma prompt

Time: 50 minute class period

Directions:

1. Pass out or project the dilemma sheet writing prompt.
2. Ask the students to choose one of the two positions listed on the sheet.
3. Have them write a persuasive essay to the county commission to support their position.

Writing Prompt: Whose river is it? After reading the positions and scenario, write an argumentative letter to the County Commission using details from what you read to convince them of your position.

Be sure to:

- include an effective structure to organize your ideas (introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion.)
- use appropriate grammar, usage, spelling and punctuation.

Assessment:

The completed letter.

WHOSE RIVER IS IT?

Positions

River County Dairy Farmer Association
Clear Lake Residents and Business Owners Association



Scenario

River County is known as the "Milk Capital" of Florida. Fifty dairy farms are located on or near the Magnolia River. These farms provide 25 percent of Florida's milk and 80 to 90 percent of the milk consumed in Southwest Florida. Each farm supports 1,000 cows, and each cow produces 85 pounds of manure a day - an amount equal to the fecal waste of 17 humans. Every time it rains, large amounts of waste wash into the Magnolia River. The Magnolia River feeds Clear Lake, a popular recreational site for swimming, canoeing and fishing. The lake has been closed to swimming and fishing several times because of high concentrations of coliform bacteria found in animal waste.

Government agencies have known of this contamination to the river for twenty years, but it wasn't until recently that the River County Environmental Protection Commission instituted specific policies regarding the handling of animal wastes. River County's dairy farmers have been ordered to prevent animal excrement from entering the river. The necessary improvements are so expensive and the accompanying required reductions in herd sizes are so drastic, that at least six farmers say they are going to move their farms to another county.

River County's economy depends upon its dairy farms. They generate \$250 million in revenues for the county annually. Additionally they employ over 1,500 people. Without its dairy farms, River County would have to ship in milk from north Florida or other states, and consumers all over southwest Florida would end up having to pay a higher price for milk.

Clear Lake, on the other hand, also generates a large proportion of the county's revenues as a tourist attraction. Business owners in the area say they can't afford any more closures of the lake. Local residents insist that the contamination and related health hazards are unacceptable. Environmentalists claim contamination to the Magnolia River and Clear Lake is destroying valuable habitats.

Source: Waterways- Southwest Florida Water Management District