

What Makes Up an Environmental Issue?

Environmental issues occur because people have differing views about the environment. If everyone had the same viewpoint, there would be no controversy and there would be no issues. One way to analyze an environmental issue is to look for the following components.

Components

Issue: An issue is a problem or solution for which people have differing values or opinions. The issue usually involves two or more parties who don't agree.

Facts: A fact is a piece of information that is true and can be verified. As one analyzes an environmental issue, it is helpful to tease out the facts of the situation.

Players: The players are the individuals and groups involved in an issue.

Positions: The players' positions are where they stand on the issue.

Values: A value is something that an individual or group finds desirable or important. Many environmental issues become controversial because different players value different things, such as the following examples:

Aesthetics—beauty or appearance

Community—shared relationships

Culture—the history or practices of a societal unit

Ecology—the natural ecosystems

Economics—the exchange of goods or services for money

Education—learning and instruction

Laws—rules and regulations

Personal Rights—individual freedoms

Recreation—leisure time activities

Opinions: An opinion is an idea or judgment about the issue—whether true or false—that is held by one of the players.

Solutions: These are the various strategies proposed to resolve the issue. A successful solution involves the players in the decision-making process, takes into consideration what the different players value, and reaches a compromise outcome where players are not seen as “winners” or “losers.”

Source

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