



We have studied the results of the Lawn Lake Flood as a dramatic lesson in geology, ecology, and revegetation. However, the event itself was not a natural occurrence. The flood was

humancreated. If the Lawn Lake Dam had not been built, the flood would not have happened. As a result of the Lawn Lake Flood, the Park Service has lowered water levels on several mountain lakes and removed dams that appeared to be at risk of failure.

Ask your students to think of examples of human-caused disasters that have affected large areas of land, people, and ecosystems.

Their suggestions may include

the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, Bhopal chemical leak, deforestation of rainforests, Valdez oil spill, etc.

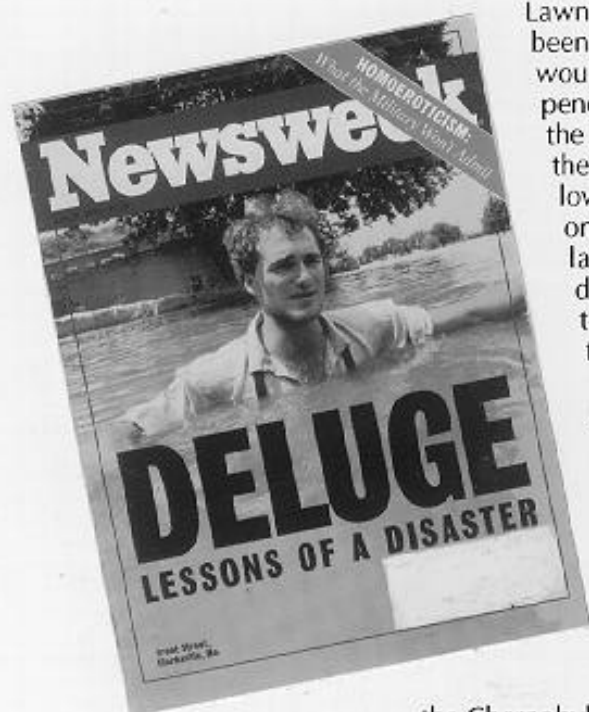
Divide the class into small groups and assign each one to choose a current area of environmental interest that leads to a positive change. They might choose things such as the reduction of greenhouse gases, reforestation, sustainable agriculture, planned human population growth, alternatives to toxic wastes, renewable energy sources, or

local recycling. Tell them that they are to research all sides of the issues, not just one perspective. They will present their information in the form of a debate or panel discussion with panel members representing these different points of view. Class members may ask questions of the panel members. Each member must remain in character defending a particular bias. If possible, videotape the presentations for further discussions.

After the groups have had a chance to present the different sides of the issues, each group will work on a resolution to the problem. It will be important for you to point out that **these are not solutions to simple problems**. If the solutions were easy, we would not be facing so many problems!

Instruct them to return to their small groups, this time with the goal of reaching consensus on a solution. As they remain in character, each one defending his/her position, students should realize how complex the issues really are. Stress to them that at some point compromises will have to be made.

When the groups present their solutions to the class, ask the other students to evaluate them. Does the solution seem realistic? Does it protect the environment? Does it protect the interests of all the concerned parties? Who or what will the solution benefit most? Who or what will be hurt the most? Are there any important factors that have not been considered?



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