

Day 9 - Fact Sheet 24
Tales of the Todd- Read all about it!
Can you swim in there? The Story of Two
Waterholes

(Adapted from an activity developed by Felicity Forth, Waterwatch Co-ordinator)

An interactive story that tells the tales of two waterholes, the mucky Heavitree Gap Waterhole in Alice Springs and the relatively pristine Wigley's Waterhole. Students will participate in the story by adding pollutants to a fish tank or other container that represents the Gap Waterhole and observing how disgusting the water becomes. After each pollutant is added the question is asked, " Would you swim in there?" and the students respond by voting yes or no. Students will learn how all of our actions can affect the water of urban waterholes. Suitable for ages 7 - 11.

Props: 2 fish tanks (see through plastic tub) filled with water, 5 plastic containers labelled and full of pollutants (listed below), 6 nametags with safety pins, goggles, plastic cups, scourers, paper sheets, 2 pin boards, pins.

Pollutants: detergent, fertiliser, mud, rubbish, industrial waste (oil), algae.

Polluters/ actors:

- Larry the Lawnlover (fertiliser and algae)
- Cassy the Carwasher (detergent)
- Caroline the Cattle farmer (mud)
- Lizzie the Litterer (rubbish)
- Maggie, the Mechanic (oil),
- Sammy the Swimmer (goggles)

Can you swim in there? The Story of Two
Waterholes (script)

This is a story of two waterholes, and what makes them different from each other. The first waterhole is a lovely place to go, a lovely place to swim. (Wigley's Waterhole; discuss experiences at the waterhole or any other local waterhole that is well looked after).

The second water hole isn't quite as nice. When it is full of water you never see people swimming in it. Even on boiling hot days. (Gap Waterhole; discuss what impression kids have of this waterhole).

Today we are going to learn what has happened to the Gap Waterhole to make it so we don't want to swim in it. Maybe you'll even get some ideas of what you can do to stop it happening. I'm not going to do this story by myself. Now to do this I am going to hand out name cards and a plastic container to people in the audience. Inside the container is the bit of pollution that this person is responsible for putting into our environment. If you get a tub, be very careful to keep the tub closed until I tell you to open it. What I'd

like you to do is when I mention your characters name is stand up and when I give the word put the contents of your container into the tub.

Before I start this story about our waterholes, I want you to think about how the water gets into the waterholes. When it rains all the water in the catchment flows into the creeks and rivers and then into claypans. To see what a catchment is I want you all to cup your hands and pretend they are standing in the rain. What happens?

This is like a little catchment, the edge of your hands is the hills and mountains and the middle of your hands is the river. So a catchment includes all the creeks, and rivers and also all the land around the creeks and rivers. So even if you live 10 minutes away from the river, you still live in the catchment, because water flows from the land and into the river when it rains a lot.

So whatever you drop on the street, on the lawn or down the drain will eventually end up in the river. As soon as the rain comes, it goes into drain and into the river with the rainwater and ends up, guess where? In the waterhole.

Now the waterhole in the Gap could have been a bit like the one at Wigley's, somewhere to go to cool off and enjoy the surroundings. But the people of Alice Springs forgot one thing, they lived in a catchment and everything they did could affect the river. When it rained water flowed from the streets and the land taking all the rubbish and pollution into drains and then into the Todd River. Once the river dried up, guess where all the rubbish ended up? A lot of it ended up in the Gap Waterhole. And bit by bit the water hole got dirtier and dirtier. I'll show you what I mean.

There were lots of different people that were and still are wrecking the waterhole!!

First there was **Larry the Lawnlover**. Larry loved to **fertilise his grass**, to keep it green and lush the whole year through. Every few months the grass seems to need more. Where does all the fertiliser go Larry thinks? After he fertilises, he puts on the sprinklers, some of the fertiliser runs into the drain. When it rains it runs from his grass into the drain, through the drain into the river and then into the waterhole. Where's Larry? Put the fertiliser into the sink. Down it goes....

Now this fertiliser doesn't just make grass grow, it also makes weeds grow. At the Gap Waterhole it makes green slimy algae grow. So we need to add a bit of goeey, slimy algae as well. Larry doesn't realise but he's also adding **algae**. In goes the algae- plop!!

Next there was **Cassy the Carwasher**. Every Sunday Cassy **washed her car** on the street. She didn't wash it on the lawn so the lawn absorbed the detergent, but on the street so the detergent went straight into the stormwater drain. When it rained the water travelled through the drain, into the river and into the waterhole. Where's Cassy? Put the dishwashing detergent into the sink. Down it goes....

Next there was **Carol the Cattle Farmer**, she lets her **cows wander around the river** and poo in the riverbed. When it rains where does the poo go, down the river and into the waterhole! Where's Carol. Can you put the mud (its not really cow poo) into waterhole.

Lets have a look at our waterhole now. **Pretty yucky, its all bubbly and brown** and yuck. Hands up who would still want to swim in it now?

Next there was **Lizzie the Litterer** and **her mates**, every afternoon they would walk back from school and **drop their rubbish** in the street. But it didn't stay in the street. When it rained the water pushed it into the drain and into the river, and eventually into the Waterhole.

Where's Lizzie. In it goes...

Next there is **Maggie the Mechanic** . She runs a garage where they fix up cars. As they fix up the cars they collect heaps of oil. She doesn't want to pay for oil disposal so **she tips it into the drain** and it goes down the drain, down the river and into ...the waterhole.

Where's Maggie. In it goes.

Well here's the water hole now, thanks to some people who have been a bit careless, it's gone from being nice and clean to being all brown and yucky. But its not just Lizzie, Maggie, Cassie, Carol and Larry's fault, everyone in the town has added their own bit of pollution. Maybe even you, or Me??

Here comes **Sammy the Swimmer**. He loves swimming, would swim all day and night if he didn't have to go to school. Now Sammy, **where do you want to swim?** Will you risk it and swim in the Gap Waterhole, or would you rather jump in the car and drive all the way to Wigley's? Which one will it be?

Lets vote on it: Who want to swim at the Gap Waterhole??
Who would rather swim at the Wigley's Waterhole??

Wigley's waterhole wins. NB There is an organisation called Waterwatch which teaches school kids ways to test the water so we can see if its polluted or not, and if we can swim there or not. They also try to teach people things they can do to stop polluting waterholes.

Ideas for Reflection

- 1) Break up into groups, each group with one polluter. Each group needs to draw a picture showing how that person wrecks the waterhole and what that person can do to stop it, then stick it on the wall. Go round the groups.
- 2) Each person has a piece of paper they write or draw either a) how we wreck waterholes or b) how we can stop ruining waterholes and pin it up
- 4) 2 pieces of butcher paper 1) how people wreck waterholes, 2) the other how we can stop ruining waterholes
- 5) Write down 1 thing you have learnt and stick it on the learning board. Decorate it, draw a picture.

What are some ways we are destroying our waterhole?

- washing cars on the road
- fertilising grass too much
- letting cows poo in the riverbed
- putting stuff down the drain eg oil
- dropping litter

What are some things we can do to stop the gap water hole going yucky??

- don't drop litter
- don't put oil down the drain
- don't use fertiliser, native gardens don't need fertiser, grow one instead
- wash your car on the lawn, not the street



Drawing of
"Todd River"
By: Anthony
Age: 8

Larry the Lawnlover
(fertiliser)

Cassy, the carwasher
(Detergent)

Lizzie, the litterer
(Rubbish):

Maggie, the Mechanic
(Oil)

Caroline, the Cattle Farmer
(mud, representing poo)

Larry, the Lawnlover
(Algae)

Sammy, the Swimmer
(goggles)