

Tragedy of the Commons



- Concept proposed in 1968 by Garrett Hardin
- He looked at a shared grazing area used by the townspeople in New England
- He demonstrated that a small increase in the use of the resource (adding an extra cow),
- Provides a benefit to the individual....but the cost (decreased grass) is shared by all

- **“Tragedy of Commons”**

- When individuals use a common resource for their own personal gain and degradation of the common resource results
- Resources that are shared and limited, are often exploited
- Mindset: “If I don’t use the resource, then someone else will. I might as well get the benefit”
- Challenge: Overcome our tendency to over consume!

Is it fair to say that most people who anguish over environmental problems want to solve them without relinquishing any of the privileges they enjoy?

Are we locked into a system of “fouling our own nest?”
example: amount it costs to discharge waste into the commons is less than the cost of purifying the waste before releasing them

If we manage the “commons” are we infringing on personal liberties? What does freedom mean?

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8gAMFTA
t2M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8gAMFTA
t2M)

<http://www.worldometers.info/>