



NATIONAL DROUGHT
MITIGATION CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

Script and Instructions

Ready for Drought? A community resilience role-playing game

Game Region: Missouri River Basin

KEY

Black, bold text indicates facilitator script. You actually read this part aloud.



icon or blue italics indicates tips and instructions for facilitator and helpers



indicates a timing tip



indicates you should switch to a new PowerPoint on the projection screen

Please feel free to adjust this script to your needs as a facilitator and to the needs of your players. When playing with drought/hazard mitigation experts, please make sure to specify that this game serves as an icebreaker/team building activity and not as an exact portrayal of a drought. You can specify this when players are entering the room and getting their roles assigned or during the introduction in the Prepare phase.

Welcome and sign-in



Ask players to stop by the sign-in table as they enter the game room. For each player:

- 1. Invite player to select the sector he/she finds most appealing.*
- 2. Give player a nametag from that sector and a card with a description of his/her role in the game (player package from Instructions and Checklist).*
 - a. Start with #1 in each sector and work your way down.*
 - b. Reserve 1-2 name tags from each sector to use for the final few participants (turn sector cards face down when nametags from that sector are reserved or no*

longer available). This way, if there are no-shows, the players will be evenly distributed among the tables.

- c. Alternatively, to expedite the sign-in process you can simply assign players a nametag as they enter, rather than letting them choose a sector.*
- 3. Instruct players to find a seat at their sector's table.**
 - a. The color on the table's sector card should match the color on player's nametag.*
- 4. Instruct players to write their name on their nametag, to read their role description, and to consider their character's role in the community as they wait for the game to begin.**

Sample greeter script

Welcome to the Missouri River Basin resilience meeting! In order to get you ready for the drought event, I need you to pick out a role in a specific sector. Just pick whichever one appeals to you - there's no right or wrong choice here.

Hand player a nametag from the corresponding pile.

Let's see. You are *[person's name]* the *[character from the nametag]* your sector is *[sector from the nametag]* and you live in *[place from the nametag]*.

Here's a spot on your name tag where you can write your name. Please go ahead and find the table that has your sector name on it. *[Point to the sector name on their nametag]*

Then take a minute to get to know the other members of your sector, read a description of your character and think about your role in the community. You can find more information about your sector on the card in the middle of your table.

Prepare Phase



During this phase, players sit in their sector groups to decide which resources to invest in. You may tailor the intro to fit your group and your personality.



This phase takes about 20 minutes.



Play Missouri River Basin info PowerPoint.

[Encourage everyone to take a seat at their sector tables]

[Read this section slowly and verbatim: it is the official definition from the National Academy of Sciences] **We as a community are trying to figure out what it takes to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from, and more successfully adapt to adverse events. We call this resilience.**

As your nametags indicate, you are all important leaders in your community. Where are our Private citizens? Raise your hands.

Excellent. Now where are our Community groups? Businesses and Industries? Responders? Decision makers? Federal Government Groups? Great!

This exercise has four parts: (1) Prepare phase during which you will prioritize resources. (2) Response when you use these resources to solve drought-related challenges. (3) Recover phase during which we evaluate how well were you able to use your resources. And (4) a discussion-based adapt phase when you will be able to talk about the decisions you've made and how these apply in real-life situations. Please keep in mind that this is just a game and not a reality. The purpose of this exercise it for you to start thinking about drought impacts, important factors that influence decision making, and to start drought discussions with your colleagues.

Before we begin, please take a few minutes to introduce yourselves to the people at your table from the perspective of the character indicated on your nametag. Think about your specific role in the community and what your character brings to the table. When you're done introducing yourselves, take a look at the sector description on your table and read it aloud to your group. Okay, go!

[Allow a few minutes for introductions]

Okay, ready to start? That was the easy part. Here comes the hard part. You are gathered in your sectors today because you're interested in trying to figure out how we can help

our region to be more drought resilient. These meetings are part of an ongoing process to build coalitions within and across each of the sectors in our community.

[Hold resource cards in the air] Each sector will receive a set of resources to consider.



Distribute Prepare phase packet to each table. Packet should include sector-specific resource cards, prepare phase rules, and resource description sheets (one for each player).

You are also receiving rule sheets for this phase. I will read the rules out loud while you follow along, so that we are all on the same page in our resilience efforts.

Your table has a set of 24 resources to consider.

But time is limited! As a group, you must select 12 resources you invest in and 12 resources to discard. Once you have selected the 12 resources you want to keep, distribute them among the players at your table so everyone has the same amount of resources they can bring to their community. If there is an odd number of players in the sector, distribute the resources as evenly as possible.

Use the information on your resource description sheets to learn about the resources. And keep information about the Missouri River Basin in mind while you are checking out the slideshow. I'll give you a 3-minute notice warning when you will need to start wrapping up.

Invest wisely - we are counting on you!



Circulate the room to observe and answer questions. Do not provide guidance on which resources to select, but clarify the rules if needed. There is no rule about distributing the resource cards - tables can do this however they like once they select the 12 cards they wish to keep.



Observe players to see how quickly they're progressing. Give a 3-minute warning when it looks like sectors are wrapping up. Allow enough time for discussion, but not enough time for players to get bored.

You have 3 minutes left to make your choices and distribute the new resources at your tables.

Drought (Response) Phase



During this phase, players solve challenges affecting their communities.



This phase takes about 20 minutes.



Start Drought PowerPoint and let it play on a loop.

Okay, it's time to make your final selections! I need one person from each sector to hold up the 12 resource cards you didn't invest in.



Collect discards and ensure that each group has distributed the remaining cards between the members of their group.

Congratulations on making these tough choices. Becoming a more resilient community is hard work, but it is critically important!

Now with the resources you decided to invest in, please go to your community and start preparing for the drought. Check your name tag if you are not sure where you live. Who lives in Belcoast? Raise your hand! Head over that way. *[Point to location of each city to help players to get there]*

Don't forget to bring your resources with you, as well as your resource description sheet if you need.



At this phase the challenge boards are revealed. Reveal only the challenge description and options A and B.

Every community has a different challenge connected with drought to overcome. Each challenge has two viable options to solve it. Decide as a group which of the two options you want to pursue to address your challenge. Choose whichever option is more appealing to you. Once you have your option selected call the organizer to reveal what resources you'll need to solve that challenge. You can change your selected option if it's more viable for you based on your selected resources.



At this time helpers reveal the resource portion of the challenge boards for options A and B, but not the FIRE! challenge.

Look down the column for your selected option and identify the resources you need to solve the challenge. Once you have a resource, stick it on the corresponding spot on your challenge board.

Your first goal is to solve your city's challenge. Each city earns 100 points for each category completed in its selected option.

Your second goal is to support other places in the Missouri River Basin in order to contribute to the resilience of the whole region.

Here are the details:

1. To fulfill a category, place resource card with the same resource name into its matching location on your challenge board.
2. Categories that have items separated by an "OR" can be fulfilled by either one of the resource cards indicated.
3. If two items are next to each other and are separated by an "&", then you need BOTH resource cards to fulfill that category.
4. To give or trade a resource, simply hand the resource card to the other player.
5. If you are finding it difficult to complete your option, you may switch to the other option on your board. There is no extra credit for completing both.
6. Please remember that based on your previous decisions, you might not be able to solve your challenge. Just do the best you can!

One more thing: before you start exchanging resources, select one of the players from your city to stay at your challenge board. This person should monitor your challenge board and watch for important messages and updates, because you never know what a drought might bring!

Now it's time to put your resources to use and your coalitions into action! Solve your city challenge and help the region to deal with this drought.

 *Observe players to see how they are progressing. Announce a surprise challenge (FIRE) to make game last longer. You can issue this challenge to the whole region or to one community at a time. Once you are ready to wrap up, ask everyone to return to their seats.*

 *Do not tell players what they should do - only clarify that they must complete one option on the challenge board and that they can share their resources with whomever they like (or not). Reinforce the game goals of supporting your community AND other communities as well.*

Fire



Recommendation: Send the surprise fire challenge to the communities that look like they are completing their challenge too quickly. This will cause them to need more resources to complete the entire challenge.

Fire! Oh no! The dry vegetation and strong winds make a wildfire spread rapidly. You will need additional resources to protect the lives and properties of your citizens. Unfold the end of your challenge board to see which resources you need to deal with the fire. You will lose some points if you are not able to suppress the fire.

Recover Phase



This phase starts when you see that there are no more exchanges of resources happening. The helpers should give the facilitator a heads-up when this is happening. During the Recover Phase, you enter scores into a PowerPoint presentations (or write them down on a board) for each neighborhood.



This phase takes about 5 minutes.

Whew! The drought has finally ended and it's time to assess the damage.

Did your preparations pay off? Were you able to activate coalitions to successfully move resources to areas in need within the region?



End Drought PowerPoint and start Scoreboard PowerPoint.

Greensborough: You were facing a terrible situation in which your city had to deal with excessive heat and power outages. Did you decide to reduce the power demand or increase the power supply? Were you able to suppress the fire?

[Check board and enter score for Greensborough: 100 points for each completed category, (-) 100 for not competing fire challenge]

Newdale: You faced a West Nile Virus outbreak. Which solution did you choose? Did you lower the number of mosquitoes or did you reduce the interactions between people and insects? How did you deal with the fire situation?

[Check board and enter score for Newdale]

Bridgelyn: Your water system was weakened by the drought, leading to a pump failure. Did you decide to decrease water demand or bring more water into the community? Did you have enough resources to suppress fire?

[Check board and enter score for Bridgelyn]

Belcoast: You faced a lack of water in a touristic community and had to make a difficult decision to either keep water in the reservoir or in the stream. What did you do? Were you able to save the community from wildfire?

[Check board and enter score for Belcoast]

Skyview: Your water was affected by high levels of nitrates. How did you solve the situation? Did you bring more clean water or were you able to decrease the nitrate concentrations? Were you able to protect your community from fire?

[Check board and enter score for Skyview]

Silvergrass: You faced reduced forage for your cows, which threatened your ranching operation. Did you decide to sell part of your breeding herd to protect the pasture or did you try to save most of your herd? Were you able to deal with the fast-spreading wildfire?

[Check board and enter score for Silvergrass]

Well done everyone! It looks like we had *[number]* communities that got all the resources they needed through key investments and activating their coalitions.

Resilience is not just about one community or one challenge. It's about the region as a whole, isn't it? Let's see how the entire Basin did. *[show total score]*

Really great work!

Adapt Phase



During this phase, you will discuss what happened during the game and help players make connections between the game play and drought resilience in real life. The following questions and talking points highlight and the important outcomes of the game – building coalitions, cooperation, communication, drought resilience, etc. Feel free to add any other talking points that would support your use of the game.



This phase takes about 15-20 minutes.

Let's take a few moments to reflect on how we did and think about how the Missouri River Basin might be more resilient in the future.

Let's go back to the beginning of the game during the Prepare Phase when we were in our sector meetings.

- 1. How did you make choices about what resources to keep and what resources to discard?** *[Call someone from each sector: Private citizens, Community groups, Local decision makers, Federal government, Responders, Business and industry]*

[Optional follow-up questions]

- **What information about the Missouri River did you take into account, if any? Were you more prone to select abstract resources like “education on conservation practices” or physical objects like a “helicopter”?**
- 2. Now let's talk about what happened when the drought hit and you went to your communities. How did you decide which option to tackle in order to complete your challenge?** *[Call on someone from each community, starting with the top scorers]*

[Optional follow-up question]

- **Did you switch the option you originally selected based on the resources that had in your community?**
 - **How did the resources you discarded at the beginning of the game affect your choices or capabilities during the drought?**
- 3. How did the fire challenge during the drought affect your community?**

[Optional follow-up question]

- **Were other communities willing to share knowledge and information with you? Or, did people take a more competitive approach?**

4. How important or useful were the relationships you made at your sector meetings in the beginning of the game once the drought hit? What strategies did you use to get the right resources to the neighborhoods that needed them most? *[Call on players you saw sharing resources and those you saw hoarding or bartering]*
5. What elements of the game felt like something that could happen in real life? What elements didn't feel very realistic? What can we learn about becoming more resilient from a game like this?



Ask probing questions to expand the conversation and drive home the key learning outcomes related to coalition building, short- and long-term resource investment, mitigation and response resources, and parts of a whole network working together in a complex system.

To get through the game, you had to build coalitions within your sectors, within your community, and across the whole region. You put your coalitions into action first by working together to figure out which resources you needed to invest in to make the region more resilient. Then you used those coalitions and others when you shared resources and communicated information about community challenges and needs during the drought.

I hope this experience has made it clear that we need to lay the groundwork now and reach out to other people in all sectors of our community to create coalitions that will stand the test of any drought or other potential disaster.

Does anyone have any closing thoughts that they would like to share?

Well done, everyone!