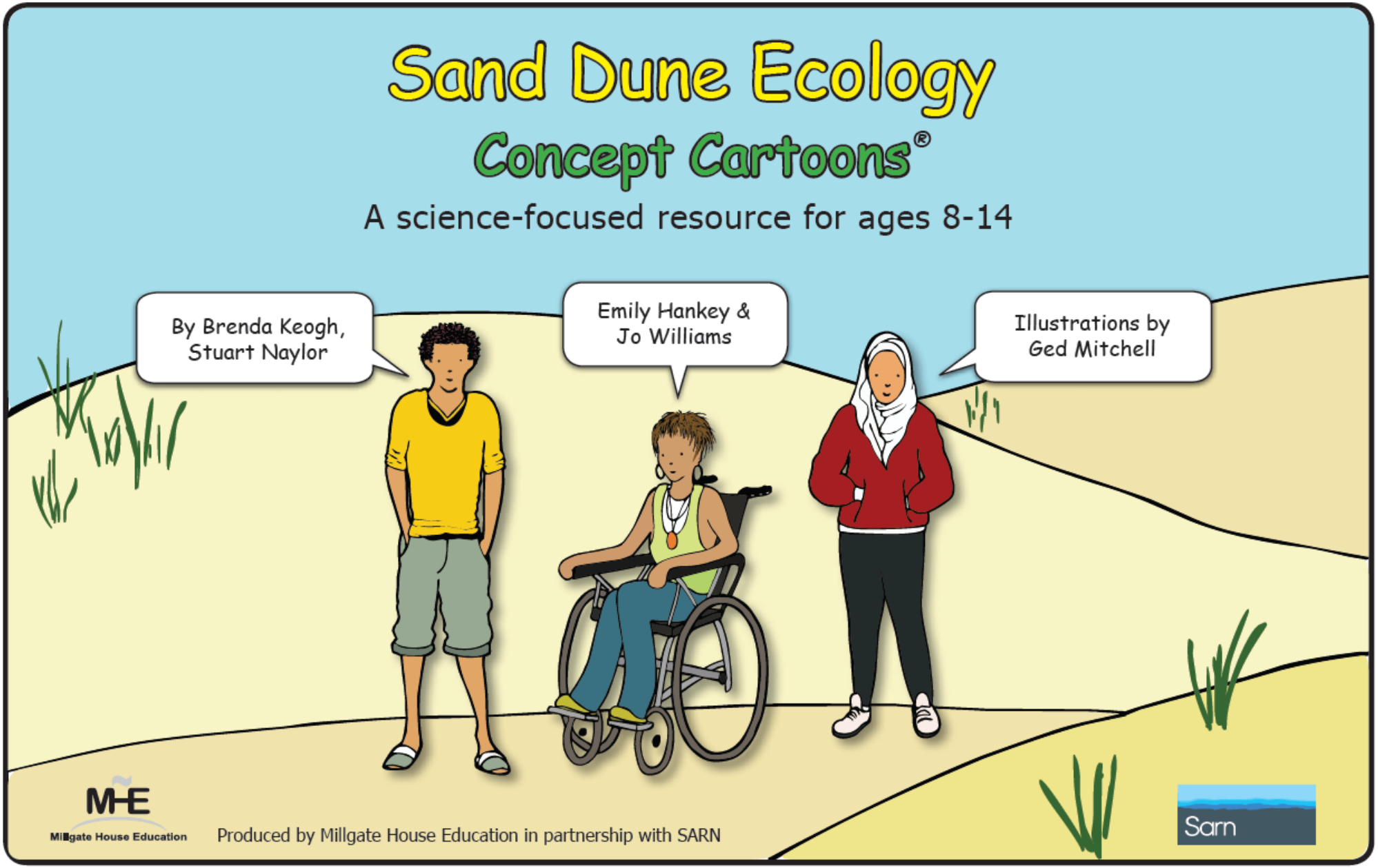
Sand Dune Ecology

Concept Cartoons®

A science-focused resource for ages 8-14



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9. Erosion


Dunes erode because they are damaged by people walking on them
Dunes erode because they are damaged by wind blowing the sand away
Dunes erode because they are damaged by insects burrowing in them
Dunes go through natural cycles where they get bigger and smaller
ECO NEWS
EROSION - WHY ARE OUR DUNES DISAPPEARING?
?
What do YOU think?

Notes

Sand in the first dune ridge is only loosely held together. The roots of plants, especially marram grass (Ammophila arenaria), give the sand some stability, but severe storms can blow away a lot of sand and cause damage to the dunes. However it is human interference that is usually the biggest problem for dune systems. Trampling soon creates a footpath and wears away the thin top layer of vegetation so that the underlying sand is exposed. When this happens the wind can blow away sand from dunes that would otherwise be stable to leave a 'blowout' – a large concave depression in the dune complex. Large areas of dunes can be damaged in this way. Although insects are very unlikely to damage the dunes, rabbit burrows can create areas where the wind can blow away sand and damage the dunes.