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Mrs. Mireles 5th Grade

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Soil and Water Essay

Our class trip to the State Park was great but I could not let go of the fact that certain places were either eroded or polluted. I thought about what the State Park Ranger had said about how these areas became eroded and polluted. I wanted to do something. Therefore, I came up with three recommendations that I believe could help the park. First, add more trashcans around the park's beaches, bike trails, and hiking trails and host monthly cleanups. The second is build up the dunes and plant beach grass in the dunes. The third is to put a limit on where and when people are allowed to fish, ride jet skis, go boating etc.

Litter is not only ugly to look at but it can be harmful to animals. Some animals tragically think trash is a source food; ingest it, then later die from the complications of not being able to digest the trash. They could end up tangled in soda rings misshaping their bodies, limiting their food capacity or worse decapitation. There are actual reports of animals getting their heads stuck in tin

cans, cups, and jars trying to eat crumbs left in them! **(How Littering Kills Animals)** As humans, we are the cause of these problems so we need to be the solution. This leads me to my first recommendation, which is two parts. Place more trashcans around the park, beaches, bike trails, and hiking trails as well as starting a monthly clean-up program. Some people are lazy and if there is nowhere to dispose of trash then they just drop it on the ground thinking it could not be that harmful. If there are more trashcans around, people are more likely going to throw away their trash properly. This should be combined with monthly clean-ups. When I was in the car with my mom, I noticed a paper fly off the back of a dump truck. The driver of the truck did not want to litter but unfortunately, without knowing it he did. Even with the trashcans placed in and around the park, there will be litter accidentally left in the park. I believe a monthly clean-up program will help with this type of litter. Students are always looking for service projects so advertising a monthly clean-up program will bring in volunteers to help clean the park. A prize could even be given to the person who collects the most trash. This would positively effect the park's ecosystem because fewer animals will fall victim to litter. It would also motivate people to help keep our parks clean.

Sand dunes are our first line of defense against waves that crash against the shore. Therefore, my second suggestion is to build up sand dunes as well as plant cape grass on existing sand dunes. The grass roots will help to stabilize the sand dunes. This would positively affect the park's ecosystem because if there is a storm we have a good plan to help the sand dunes from eroding (**Shoreline Stabilization Techniques**). We saw proof of this when we went on our fieldtrip to the State Park. Hurricane Matthew eroded the primary sand dune but the maritime shrubs were saved because the secondary and tertiary dunes protected them. Some may think that building groynes are a good way to prevent beach erosion but weather that is solution or not is according to which side of the groyne you live on. My suggestion is a good idea because it is a more natural way of preventing beach erosion rather than the groynes, which may also become eroded, causing even more problems to our shores. (**Shoreline and Waterway Management**).

Causes of oil spills are spills by petroleum users of released oil. This happens when various water sports or water vehicles such as motorboats and jet skis leak fuel. (The Chemistry of Oil Spills) Oil threatens thousands of marine animals yearly. Even when marine mammals escape the immediate effects, an oil spill can cause damage by contaminating their food supply. The seriousness of the

harm oil causes leads me to my last recommendation. There should be more restrictions for the use jet skis, and motorboats. If there is a time limit, as to when and where these vehicles could be in the water that would mean fewer chances for them to leak oil. There should also be inspections done on watercrafts before they enter the water to make sure that the tanks are not over filled and that boats have a drip tray under the engine and gearbox to prevent oil from entering into the bilge. This will positively affect water ecosystems as well as keep our waters clean.

In conclusion, my three conservation efforts are placing more trashcans around the park and a clean-up program, planting beach grass on the dunes, and putting limits on aquatic vehicles. I believe that all of the recommendations that I have made are good, but the recommendation that will have the greatest impact would be the trashcans and the clean-up program. 1.9 billion tons of litter is dumped into the ocean **(9 Interesting Facts about Littering)** and 100,000 marine animals alone die from litter in the ocean. **(Plastic Statistics)** When it comes to the land 91,000-land animals alone die from litter. This is why I think that keeping our State Parks clear of litter would have the greatest impact. They may all be costly solutions but after all, we made the mess so now it is time to clean it up.

Bibliography

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