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3rd Place, 2018 Horry Soil and Water Conservation District Essay Contest

Park Preserved from the Negativity of Pollution, Erosion, and Damage

State and local parks are a great way to enjoy time off with family and friends but can we really enjoy them? Tourism seems to be one of the biggest challenges facing parks. Tourists can harm the environment in many ways, and unfortunately, are unaware of the damage they generate (Finnessey, 2012).

When visiting parks, tourists have a variety of options that allow them to enjoy nature like trails, picnic areas, boating, camping, and ocean views. However, the natural beauty of any park can be negatively affected by human interaction. Parks and its community leaders are distressed by the trash and pollution that has taken over the ecosystem and the parks that have been littered. Oil spills have been spotted in the ocean as well as eroded sand dunes and among the shoreline are old fishing nets and hooks. Trees and shrubs are damaged by hikers not staying on the trail and soil has been eroded. People must take action and act upon this to preserve our park. Not only will people and the park be affected but so will the animals and their habitats. Conservation Efforts should be made to prevent all these negative impacts. A beach community in Hampton have their own ways of solving the pollution problem. They stated, "Join a Carry It-Don't Bury It campaign for proper disposal of cigarette butts. Install pet waste stations to make it convenient for dog owners" (Hampton Beach Village District).

During my trip at the park I decided to give the park's community leader some recommendations on how to solve the park's problem on pollution. Three efforts that could be made is to plant new trees to prevent soil erosion and produce fresh oxygen(1). Pick up the trash littered in the ocean and along the parks picnic tables, trails, and other areas located in the park(2). Reduce or limit the amount of boats and jet skis allowed in the ocean(3). These efforts can significantly affect our environment in a positive way and I have evidence to support this.

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Our human activities is 1 of the main reasons that causes soil erosion to occur so keeping hikers on the nature trails and not off of it is 1 of the solutions that can be made to stop this. The park should install a few signs informing hikers to stay along the path so soil won't erode and plants won't get damaged. Installing signs can also keep hikers from harming the tiny animals living in the trees and shrubs like little insects or birds. Planting new trees around the park is another great way to prevent soil erosion. Not only that but planting new trees can also produce oxygen providing us with non-polluted air. If new trees and shrubs are being planted then its roots can secure the soil to the ground and also limit the amount of wind coming in." There are things that can be done to limit the amount of erosion caused by human activity. This includes planting trees... " (www.ducksters.com). Sand dunes are also being eroded mostly because of strong winds and tides getting higher and higher each day. To prevent this type of erosion beach grass can be planted. "Plant Beach Grass: Planting 'Cape' American beachgrass (*Ammophila breviligulata*) is the most effective way to stabilize existing dunes and build new dunes along our coastline. Erect Sand Fencing: Beachgrass must be protected from foot traffic otherwise stems are broken and the plant dies. Sand fencing erected at the base of the dune and along walkways helps to keep people from walking on the beach grass" (Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control: Shoreline and Waterway Management).

Trash removal in parks is an expensive endeavor however quick removal is essential in prefer to maintain a healthy ecosystem. You can find litter all over parks and we must be aware of this and properly dispose of it. Initiating teams to pick up trash around the park is a way to maintain the healthy ecosystem without having to have expenses. If people naturally cared for our environment pollution wouldn't be a problem but the effort, progress, and money is still worth it. Stationing a sign at the entrance of the park advising people to pick up their trash if

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dropped and putting it in the right place is another solution for trash removal. “Land pollution can be one of the most visible types of pollution. This type of land pollution not only can hurt animals and their habitats, but also is ugly and destroys the beauty of nature. Different kinds of land pollution have been known to have adverse effects on the health of animals and humans”

(www.ducksters.com).

Limiting boats and jet skis access to the ocean can reduce the amount of oil spills in the ocean. Oil spills can harm the oceans habitats and the aquatic animals living in there. Parks tourism and view of the ocean will look ugly and its chemicals can harm people as well. “A lot of water pollution comes from human activity. Some of the most famous incidents of water pollution have been oil spills. One of the most precious and important commodities for life on planet Earth is clean water. For over 1 billion people on the planet, clean water is nearly impossible to get” (www.ducksters.com). If parks let in a few boats, jet skis, or any other water vehicle that contains oil a day then this could possibly restrain oil spills.

Caring for our environment naturally can prevent future problems in categories such as pollution, erosion, oil spills, and other problems that can damage the earth’s ecosystem. Overall I think the conservation effort that would give a more positive impact is trash removal because trash can result in polluted air and its chemicals can ruin the fertile soil which can cause more erosion. If effort was most shown in the removal of litter other negative damages wouldn’t occur. We know we can never stop it from harming the ecosystem but if taken care of it now then the it would lessen our difficulties in the future and would result in a brighter and healthier ecosystem.

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