

Sundae Frobase

Lakewood Elementary School

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5th grade

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### My Soil and Water Conservation Plan

As I rode on the bus back to school, the gruesome image of what I had seen on my field trip to the state park was still engraved in my mind. Trash was all over the trails, beaches, and picnic areas. Dunes were eroded, and trees and shrubs were being trampled on by careless hikers wandering off the trails. Jet skis and boats were leaking oil and fuel into the water. Once beautiful oceans, were now littered with fishing lines and cigarette butts- a truly horrid sight to see. One question still tortured my mind: if these careless human actions remain unchanged, what will our parks become for future visitors? I knew something had to be done. What we need is a conservation plan. My three recommendations for the plan are to organize volunteer beach sweeps, educate people about all forms of pollution and how it is harmful to the ecosystems, and place fencing around our dunes and trails. Hopefully, these recommendations can wipe out these problems once and for all!

Imagine someone leaving a plastic bag on the beach. Little do they know it will take around 10 to 20 years to decompose (Litter Fact Sheet). Chances are that, in the process, it could be accidentally swallowed up by an animal (turtle, bird, etc.) causing it to choke to death. Litter can also contain toxic chemicals. For example, if a cigarette filter ends up on the ground, the chemicals leak into animal ecosystems (Litter and Trash Impact Water Quality). Litter, obviously, causes lots of problems for animals. One solution to solve this problem is for parks to organize local trash pickups. It is not only an effective way to get rid of the disgusting garbage that litters the beach and trails, but it is also a great way to build community and be part of a team. There are a lot of different organizations that regularly hosts beach sweeps (Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, churches, etc.). However, like many solutions, this recommendation might have some

drawbacks. Although the beach sweeps would help prevent litter from entering our beaches, it may only provide a temporary solution. Since this solution does not prevent pollution, frequent cleanups are needed for this recommendation to really make an impact (Litter and Debris in our Waterways).

Another recommendation is for the parks to raise concerns about the harmful consequences of pollution such as littering and accidental oil leakage from jet skis or boats. Some ways we can do this is to have park rangers give public speeches and put up signs that educate people about the issues. The more people know about trash and oil, the less they would be tempted to leave it behind. Hopefully this will make people think twice about leaving their rubbish wherever they'd like and purchasing environment friendly boats and jet skis. Advising people about how to be responsible with what they leave behind, would really make an impact on the environment.

My final recommendation is to fence off our sand dunes to prevent erosion. Dunes are constantly being trampled by human activity. Even the hardy beach grass, which is able to survive anything from direct sunlight to high salinity conditions, sadly cannot survive being stomped on by the trudging feet of mankind (Dune Protection and Improvement). We need our sand dunes to protect our coastlines from powerful storm waves (Sand Dune Stabilization: Wikipedia). Erecting dune fencing will reduce erosion from the ocean waves and human foot traffic would be reduced. It also will protect the beach grass which holds the dunes in place (Dune Protection and Improvement). Furthermore, we can also erect fences around our trails to protect the terrain from being damaged by hikers.

In conclusion, if everyone follows these three recommendations, our parks will be restored to its' magnificent beauty once again. I feel that the recommendation that brings the most impact in our parks is educating the public about the harmful effects of pollution. This one brings the most impact because it prevents litter and accidental oil leakage from occurring. If people can

learn to be more self aware of their actions, they are less likely to make the same mistakes in the future. I hope these recommendations for a conservation plan can keep these parks alive for future generations.

## Work Cited

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