

Water and Soil

By Elijah Mencken

I was on my way back from a field trip my class had just taken to our local park. Thoughts about what the park ranger had said about the park being in trouble were going through my mind. They were seeking recommendations to help save the park. I thought about the vast amount of trash in picnic areas, on nature trails, on the beach, and along the top of the water. The beach, sand dunes, and the soil are disappearing from early erosion. Nasty oil coats the water and fishing hooks are sprawled along the shore. I thought about how I could help. I came up with 3 conservation efforts or ways to help the park.

First I thought about the vast amount of trash in all parts of the park and how this is destroying and/or killing the ecosystem and killing unknowing animals that think of trash as food. Over 100,000 animals die every year from trash or pollution (Plastic Ain't so Fantastic). Trash is thought to be a main food source to some animals. Certain trash can be harmful to animals (How Does Garbage Affect the Environment). Over half the world is covered with trash and that takes away nutrients from the environment by killing plants and animals. Trash that does not decompose fills up the environment and creates a mess and a bad place for animals to live.

My first recommendation would be to hire staff or have volunteers collect trash, educate people about the harmful effects of litter, and watch for people littering. Fines should be put into place for anyone who leaves trash on the picnic tables or anywhere else in the park. Start weekly trash runs. The person that collects the most trash will receive \$100. My second recommendation would be buying many stainless steel 38 liter step on trash cans for \$99.99 (Bed Bath and Beyond). With such a cheap price the trash can will help the park save money and take away trash. I would place the cans on each hiking trail and along the beaches for the fishing hooks too. The animals would not be able to get into the trash cans because they can not step on the step to open the can. This would positively affect the ecosystem because the trash can cause pollution which can harm, destroy, and destruct the ecosystem and this would stop that from happening rapidly and lower the amount of trash on trails and in all places in the park.

I also thought about how the park dunes on the beach were destroyed and in complete ruin from early erosion. This can cause a destruction of sand dunes, which protects the soil and other parts of the park (Sand Dunes). Over the process of erosion the landscape changes and splits into smaller parts (Erosion), this can cause dunes to split up to smaller parts and hurt the environment.

To fix the erosion problem of dirt and dunes and all parts of the park I believe we should be building Groins, which are long walls that are built on the shore to prevent fast water flow that causes erosion. This will help the sand dunes stay strong and protect the dirt and park (How to Deal with Shoreline Erosion). After the Groins are built, it would be a good idea to

rebuild or build up the sand dunes again and the groins will now help protect it from further erosion. This would now stop that from happening again.

The last problem is the nasty oil and old fish hooks that wash up on the shore. These hooks can cause birds to break their beaks and kids can step on those hooks too (Protect Sea and Sea Birds). Oil can suffocate and kill animals and plants and kill the environment. Only one pint of oil can spread across a 1 acre span of water (Sailor for the Sea). To fix these problems I would recommend making one designated area for fishing, and provide small trash cans in that area for your old hooks and fishing lines. This would help to lower the rate of fishing hooks on the shore. Also you could help get rid of the oil by limiting the time a jet ski is allowed to be on the water such as a limit of 45 minutes of sailing time and 45 minutes for tour boats. This would help you limit or decrease the oil and this would also help other problems such as erosion because of the wake from the jet skis and tour boats.

In conclusion, all of my recommendations will help keep the park out of trouble, but I believe that one will have the greatest impact on the environment and help the animals. I believe that the trash effort would have the greatest impact because you cannot stop the ocean waves from coming in, or people from losing fishing hooks, or the people from sailing, or shipping, or having fun on boats, but you can at least stop people from littering or trash being left everywhere. So this would be the most effective, and would help the ecosystem the most. It would help the park stay clean and improve other people's experiences and make it better than the experience my classmates and I had at our local park.

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