

Hailee Robinson

Waccamaw Elementary School

Teacher: Ms. Kelly Spaulding

5th Grade

Saving Our State Parks

I am so excited I could scream for days, I'm going to the state park for a field trip! At the park we went to the nature trails. All I could see for miles were broken branches, litter everywhere, and trampled plants from not staying on the trails. We then went to the beach and I almost died when I saw all the trash! As I scanned the horizon I noticed the tides were bringing in discarded plastic cans, bottles and bags, and sadly I also saw discarded fishing line and hooks lying on the beach. When I saw my friends jumping on the sand dunes, I yelled Stop! Stop! What can we do to save our parks and beaches? We could recycle all the waste, save the dunes, and we could educate the public to get them involved in caring for the future of our natural resources.

A few causes of pollution and erosion in our state parks would include visitors and fishermen not recycling their own trash, damage and erosion being done to sand dunes, and visitors just not being educated on how to preserve our beaches and parks. The article "*How Recycling Protects Our Animals and Humans*," states that plastic debris is a huge problem for wildlife. "Recycling offers a simple solution. The EPA estimates that more than 100,000 marine mammals die each year from ingestion or entanglement with floating plastic debris." What the author means by this is plastic debris is hurting and killing marine animals and because it is easy to recycle, this is an easy remedy to the problem. Simply picking up the plastic would keep it out of harm's way for animals and nature. Erosion to the sand dunes is also a concern for many people because they protect us from destructive winds and waves; they are also a natural barrier for big storms. Mother Nature contributes to most of the erosion but humans are worse. Visitors to our state park and beaches contribute to its ill health in many ways, and sometimes they don't realize the damage they're doing. "80% of pollution to the marine environment comes from the land. One of the biggest sources is called nonpoint source pollution, which occurs as a result of runoff." (*What is the Biggest Source of Pollution in Our Oceans?*) What this means is that runoff pollutes by washing land pollution like litter and oil from cars, trucks, buses, and even fertilizer from land into the rivers and oceans. Most of this litter pollution is coming directly from people.

Conservation would be the key word in saving our environment. The author of "*How Recycling Protects Animals and Humans*" claims that "By keeping these habitats healthy, humans can take advantage of the recreational and economic uses of these areas for purposes such as fishing and tourism." This is very important for the beaches and parks because kids and their parents come to visit each year. It would be very bad for visitors if they walk through trash on the beach or get a fishing hook through the foot instead of having fun in the sun. We can help this by practicing the 3 R's; Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. Conserving the dunes is also very important. The author of "*What to do About Sand Erosion*" explains that "Beach grass is a hardy plant, amazingly tolerant to high salinity conditions, direct sun, extreme heat, lack of fertile soil and a

fluctuating water supply; it can't survive being trampled by vehicle or man." This is very important for the dunes because planting beach grass helps stop erosion caused by wind and waves. Building fences to keep people off of the sand dunes, using crossovers and growing more grass, would be a great conservation method. "Fish, birds, marine mammals, reptiles, and other animals can become entangled in discarded or lost nets that continue to do; catching living animals, but now they catch them indiscriminately..." (*Pollution of the Ocean by Plastic and Trash*). Educating fishermen about recycling their nets would save the lives of many living creatures, this is important for beach Pollution and parks because if we educate people we could help pick up trash and plastic so that marine and land animals don't get stuck in fishing nets.

Everything we do to conserve and not leave a human "foot print" on our environment is important. The conservation effort that is most important would be educating people on the importance of recycling and not leaving their litter on the beach or anywhere that could be carried into streams, rivers or oceans. By putting out trash cans and recycling bins all around the trails and beaches people would be encouraged to recycle or throw away trash. This would help marine life. Our society is using so much plastic these days that I'm not surprised most of it is ending up as litter. The article "*Pollution of the Ocean by Plastic and Trash*," specifically states that "Since the 1940's, plastic use has increased dramatically, resulting in a huge quantity of early indestructible, lightweight material floating in the oceans and eventually deposited on beaches worldwide." Leaving recycling bins and trash cans for fishing waste near docks and marinas would also be a great way to keep nets, hooks, fishing line, used bait containers, etc., from entering our water ways.

Although saving our nature trails and parks may be time consuming and costly, recycling, educating the public, and getting volunteers for river and beach sweeps seems to be an economical solution.

In conclusion, humans have done many bad things to our environment and now it will be up to humans to save it from the future destruction.. Planting grass to save the dunes, placing recycle bins and garbage cans around the beaches and parks and educating people are just a few ways that we could go in the right direction. Beaches and State parks are a valuable nature resource and we need to take care of them so that visitors and other kids can enjoy our beaches and parks!

Bibliography

National Ocean Service, (NOAA), *“What is the Biggest Source of Pollution in the Ocean?”* [Http://homeguides.sfgate.com](http://homeguides.sfgate.com)

“Pollution of the Ocean by Plastic and Trash,” www.waterencyclopedia.com

Rogers, Chris Dineson, *“How Recycling Protects Our Animals and Humans”*.
[Http://homeguides.sfgate.com](http://homeguides.sfgate.com)

“What to do About Sand Erosion.” [Http://drec.deleware.gov](http://drec.deleware.gov)