



Kayla Cothrun's- Winning Environmental School Essay 2008-09

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Ms. Fleming

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Don't Mess With Mother Nature

Killing one animal, or cutting down one tree can throw off the world's natural balance entirely. This balance however, is essential to the lives of every plant, and animal, including humans, on this planet. Animals are innocent and helpless, and although helping them is simply the ethical and humane thing to do, protecting them, and the environment, our home, can benefit the human race as well as every plant and animal on earth.

The protection of animals has a huge impact on many things; one occasion is the food chain. One example of this is through grey wolves, and how much this predator impacted the food chain in North America. In the United States, the grey wolf used to roam naturally, this predator kept other animal populations, such as deer, in check (*A Planet in Peril*). Today these wolves have nearly disappeared after most were killed off due to their threat to livestock.

Because of this, the deer population is overabundant causing this herbivore to trample and over browse the area's natural preserves. In turn, many of the other creatures who depend on this source of plants for food have begun to disappear as well (Laue, par.11-13). The natural balance of the food chain is essential to all aspects of life, and the act of a rancher simply protecting his livestock can have this much of an impact on an entire ecosystem.

Protecting the environment, our home, is also extremely important when it comes to our water supply. Carelessness in the past has led to problems in the present. Many things are contributing to the contamination of our water supply, and water is essential to all aspects of life on earth. Things from industrial waste of toxins such as mercury and lead, to things like the improper disposal of human waste, are contaminating our drinking water, and this is leading to negative effects from cancer to even fatalities. Microorganisms, such as viruses, bacteria, and parasites, can lead to many complications. Some microorganisms carry on as cysts in the human body, which can be major sources of infection. These cysts are defiant to disinfectants, and if in the correct environment, can survive for months. According to Gordon Millichap, a medical doctor, "The prevalence of infection is as high as 50 percent in underdeveloped countries and 5 percent in the United States" (Millichap, par.3). Major waterborne outbreaks, are caused by things like overpopulation, poor sanitation, and insufficient hygiene. Another prevalent toxin that seems to be making its way into our drinking water is mercury, which is being leaked into rivers and lakes from industrial sources. Although mercury itself has a low toxicity, if consumed then released through the digestive tracts of animals, it can be changed into a highly toxic chemical which can lead to irreversible damage to the central nervous system (Millichap, par.8).

Just like carelessness from the past has affected us now, our carelessness now can affect the future. In order to keep our natural world as beautiful as it is, it is extremely important to

respect it, and to do all that we can to protect it, so it is a safe, healthy, and beautiful place for our future generations to live. In many parts of the world, poachers are destroying some of the world's most beautiful creatures. Many are illegally trapping or killing rare or endangered species to sell or to serve as food (*A Planet in Peril*). Careless acts like these are contributing to deteriorations of food chains, habitats, and ecosystems all over the world. In Places like Baghdad, where the affects of terror and chaos are impacting the Middle East's largest zoo, hundreds of rare and beautiful creatures are suffering the effects of the conflicts of man (Anthony). Destroying many of these wonders of our world, makes it so our future generations have less to appreciate when they get the chance to live on our beautiful planet. Not only is the beauty of our planet up to us, the health of our future generations lie in our hands as well. Deforestation, the emissions of factories, and the cars we drive every day, among many other things, are leading to numerous negative effects. According to David Gutierrez, a staff writer for Natural News, "The risk of developing allergies increased steadily the closer a child lived to a major road" (Gutierrez, par.6). Children, our future, are also facing the negative impacts of our everyday actions, actions as simple as driving a car. The affects of our emissions are also leading to major problems such as global warming, which is constantly causing negative effects on our entire planet, the future home of our children and generations after.

Protecting animals and the environment is important for many reasons, and many do not realize the huge impact their actions can have on our planet. The smallest actions of a human being can impact an entire ecosystem, including humans, and it is extremely important to keep our world a safe, healthy and beautiful place for the future. Many simple things to protect, conserve, and restore our environment can be done, things as simple as, recycling, carpooling, planting a tree, or even forgoing a receipt at the ATM. These straightforward actions can help

make our world a better place, and even though these things are so simple many are either unaware or simply disregard them.