

Soil Conservation Speech Essay Contest - Fiala Herceg

As a little girl my dad and I would take the boat and go fishing on the Missouri at least once a week, and for younger me this was basically torture. Instead of getting to play with my barbies, I was forced to be in the middle of the dark deep water, with slippery and slimy things all over the boat. But, as I got older I realized that those slippery and slimy things my dad seemed obsessed with was actually part of a wonderful pastime. Nothing beats an epic battle with a 23 inch walleye that just refuses to give up. But, my experience is not unique from others. In South Dakota, water remains to be one of the most important aspects to our way of life, to our culture and the marked distinction between the East and West River and to livelihoods being built upon it. Because of this it is clear, Rivers and streams benefit South Dakota.

But before we can discuss the many ways that rivers and streams benefit South Dakota, there are mechanisms in place that ensure that these benefits can remain protected. These mechanisms come in many forms, from Conservation efforts from the Game Fish and Parks that ensure that overfishing, length limits, and licensing regulations are all followed by sportsmen across our beautiful state. This ensures the sustainability of not only our rivers and streams but also the many diverse species inside of it. This isn't the only protection though, practices outside of the water can have just as much of an impact, from legislation passed by the South Dakota legislator to create safer farming practices such as providing incentive to plant nutrient run off strips that attempt to create a buffer between farming lands and the water to stop fertilizer from creating dead zones in our rivers and streams. Preventing dead zones is essential to river growth because when excess nutrients enter the water all of the oxygen is taken by the plants, and rather than the many other live creatures living there, leaving them to suffer and then I don't get that epic walleye battle on the river.

These protections allow our benefits from rivers and streams to be preserved, which is extremely important when these benefits create so many positive impacts, next we can discuss the diverse benefits.

In South Dakota we utilize our streams and rivers in many various ways. From the Oahe Dam created on the Missouri River near Pierre, South Dakota. The Associated Press explains, Oahe Dam generated 4.2 billion kilowatt hours last year, up from the long-term average of 2.7 billion kilowatt hours. This type of power is extremely useful hydropower plants can generate power to the grid immediately. Not only does the Oahe Dam provide a relatively cheap source of power, but it also allows for flood control, irrigation, and community drinking water. With the ever changing south Dakota weather, and the proneness to floods, the Oahe Dam and the reservoirs created around it allow us to maintain our farming lands, and general livelihoods.

In South Dakota our largest industry base is agriculture adding 32 billion to our economy yearly, however due to changing weather conditions year to year this practice for farmers can be almost as volatile as betting on the lottery. However, thanks to our rivers and streams irrigation systems can be created to ensure that crops receive water even in times of drought. The Campbell Scientific explains the importance of these systems, western South Dakota has vast

stretches of tablelands with agricultural potential. Carefully monitored irrigation is necessary for this region to thrive due to its differing needs. When South Dakotan farmers are suffering, irrigation systems fed by our rivers and streams step in to save the day. When Rivers and Streams allow us to create a protection buffer for our largest industry base in our state, the benefits are clear.

First we were able to discuss the many diverse protections that have been implemented, and second we looked at the many key ways that Rivers and Streams benefit us as South Dakotans.

While at first getting younger me to go enjoy a day out on the water was an uphill battle, I will now go fishing with my dad whether it's rain or shine, July or January, as long as we bring a heater for the iceshack of course, and my dad takes the slimy fish off of my pole for me. The rivers and streams of our great state create many lasting benefits and the protections of these benefits will allow many generations down the line to experience the joys of going fishing with their dad.