

# Area 1

Zach East  
Soil Conservation Essay

You come in from a hard day of work, ready for a delectable meal. You are prepared to embrace a plate with a thick, juicy steak and a heavenly serving of corn and baby carrots. However, you come home to a meager can of chicken noodle soup. In astonishment, you ask your spouse why you are having a can of soup for dinner. The soil, they inform you, has not been properly maintained, and it was impossible to find corn or carrots in your local grocery store. Disappointed, you proceed to devour your can of simple, tasteless chicken noodle soup.

As ridiculous as this scenario might sound, it could eventually become a reality. Soil is a vital natural resource. In order to provide healthy, plentiful food options for our planet's inhabitants, healthy soil must be maintained. As stated in the Soil Daily Times, only  $\frac{1}{32}$ , or around 3.1%, of our planet is considered to be land that is readily available for agricultural usage (The Soil Daily Times, Page 5). While this may seem like a lot of farm land – considering how large our planet is – in actuality, it is quite the opposite. Consider this: The population on Earth is currently near 7.125 billion people. These seven-plus billion people must be fed this tiny section of our planet. Why? Simply put, the other 96.8% of our planet houses soil that is unfit for cultivation and usage. And, if we fail to properly enrich that tiny percentage of usable soil, the amount of usable soil will only decrease in time.

What would happen if we fail to promote the health of our soil? Scenarios similar to the one aforementioned would become all too real. Healthy soil is needed for healthy food, and healthy food is needed for healthy people and animals. Without healthy soil, we will be lacking the healthy food needed to survive and thrive. And, even beyond the health of our food, healthy soil is also needed for the safety and stability of buildings and other structures. Without healthy soil, it would be nearly impossible to construct structures on a solid, secure foundation; without a solid foundation, a building is in no way safe or secure. Furthermore, unhealthy soil would have an undesirable impact on livestock. Many of these animals rely on crops for survival; without healthy soil, there are no healthy crops for these animals to devour. And, without healthy herbivores, carnivores – such as humans – would have a hard time finding food as well.

With all of this in mind, it is clear that protecting the soil is vital for our society. So, what can YOU do to promote healthy soil? The easiest option is to become an active advocate for soil conservation. Even if you know very little about healthy soil practices, encourage local farmers to practice safe soil management techniques. Persuade your neighbors in growing small gardens in their own back yards. According to the Soil Daily Times, soil should always be covered by growing plants or their residue (The Soil Daily Times, Page 5). Something as simple as a small tomato garden would help to maintain and promote healthy soil.

Soil conservation is vital to the survival of our nation and world. If we fail to maintain healthy soil, scenarios like the one mentioned in the first paragraph could occur more and more often. And, in even more extreme cases, the soup mentioned might not even be available. As humans, it is our responsibility to preserve the soil that we have been blessed with. Even if you have little knowledge about soil management, advocating for smart soil conservation methods is another fabulous way to be involved. Encourage those with the scientific knowledge of soil conservation to practice those proper methods, and in turn you will be helping to promote soil conservation. Do you want to be the family mentioned previously? Regardless of who you are, you can help make this world a better place!