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Cielo Scholarship Essay

Education on Land Restoration

When I was in fourth grade, our class took a field trip to visit Bamberger Ranch in Johnson City, Texas. While we were there, we learned about how Mr. Bamberger had restored this piece of land that had been overrun with cedar trees which inhibited the flow of water through the land. Mr. Bamberger bought this piece of land with the intention of restoring it to its natural state. “The goal of the individuals who love, operate, work on and live on the Preserve is to change lives through education and be examples so that the visitors who leave Bamberger Ranch Preserve will love, appreciate and protect Mother Nature in their own daily lives” (bambergerranch). I believe that we need to do all that we can to implement the education of earth stewardship into schools and communities. In doing so, our communities will benefit from a generation that is knowledgeable about earth stewardship and equipped to undertake projects like that of Mr. Bamberger.

Mr. Bamberger invested time, money, and effort into the rebuilding of a functioning habitat, paying special attention to the birds, deer, cattle, and water that were present on the land. He worked to rebalance the ecosystem on this piece of land that had been ravaged because of the excessive amount of cedar trees and lack of native grasses. Although this account of Mr. Bamberger is rather extreme, our society needs to know that anyone can work to rejuvenate a piece of land. I believe that if we implement more education of land management and restoration into schools and communities, we will benefit as a society.

This knowledge can be applied in everyday life. Any person can use their back yard, community garden, farm or ranch as a starting point for taking care of the land. If we encourage

habits of tending to the land and caring for it, people will catch on quickly and eventually it will become common on a large scale. Examples of how we may take care of land practically include researching the ecosystem that best fits the land being careful to support that ecosystem with selected plantings. Something else that is important for successfully rejuvenating or maintaining a piece of land is simply observing it. Mr. Bamberger was able to know the needs of his piece of land because he was observant of the birds, deer, sources of water, plants, and other animals present on his land. "As birds are good 'indicator species', you can glean an idea of what kind of condition your land is in" (bambergerranch). Observing the birds and other animals that are present on a piece of land can help in evaluating the condition of the land. Mr. Bamberger also had to pay attention to the habitats he was fostering on his land. At first, his ranch was predominately forest, but he transformed it to include forest, grassland, and edge habitat, which is where the two converge. Integrating and maintaining native plants are also important to rejuvenating a piece of land. With these alterations in habitat, Mr. Bamberger now accommodates healthy deer and wildlife that could feed off the land easily.

The work that Mr. Bamberger did beginning in the early 1970's should act as a call to action for our communities and society as a whole. Not only can any person work to rejuvenate and care for a piece of land, but they can also easily support organizations or individuals who work to rejuvenate land on a larger scale like Mr. Bamberger. If we implement the education and integration of land restoration and management into our schools and communities, our society will benefit from a generation that tends to the land in a fruitful, practical, and nurturing way.

I hope that someday I will own a piece of land that I can work to rejuvenate, restore, and maintain. Growing up, I learned to garden and tend to our backyard, and I look forward to continuing this in the future. Although I am not planning to study anything related to this in

college, I believe that every person, no matter what their background or profession, can participate in the restoration and management of land.