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Global Problems, Local Solutions

As inhabitants and advanced species on Earth, we have a large impact on the environment and factors that affect the environment as well. As we have evolved, learned more with technology and tools, grown larger, and occupied more space to accommodate living needs, we have changed Earth significantly from how it was millions of years ago when it formed. While change is good sometimes, it can also be bad and affect us, and everything living on this planet more than we think. As we have grown and become a larger population, we have needed to take up more space to live, which in turn, takes space from other animals living spaces, specifically primates. We have caused an enormous amount of deforestation, the main living space of most primates. We are taking over their habitat and their environment for our own good, causing many species of primates to go extinct. In addition to deforestation, we are also hunting and killing primates for food and keeping them as pets as well, causing them to rapidly decline in population as well. We are not only causing loss of just primates however, but we are in fact causing a huge decline in biodiversity as well. Our ways of living have caused many species to extinct, such as some rhinos, birds, reptiles, amphibians, etc. We are slowly pushing out other species and populating Earth with just humans. To wrap this all up, we should also note that we are not only

hurting the things living on Earth, but we are hurting the Earth itself. Over the past few centuries, we have discovered coal burning and energy practices harmful to Earth's environment. This has slowly caused the climate to gradually get warmer and warmer as we fill the air with toxic, harmful gas and particles. This is what has become the controversial subject of climate change, and even though many people do not believe it is happening, we are able to see evidence of it as we live day after day.

To fix these issues, we have come up with a few practices that we are pushing to do more and more each day so we can hopefully reverse some of the harsh effects we have had on Earth. One practice, conservation, is the active effort to preserve, restore, and protect the natural environment, ecosystems, vegetation, and wildlife on Earth. Another practice is sustainability, which is the effort to not be harmful to our environment, and not to heavily deplete natural resources. The last practice we will go over is environmentally responsible behaviors, or ERB, which are things such as riding your bike to work, driving an electric car, not smoking cigarettes, and using less heat in the house (not to mention saving money too, right?).

We can see a lot of places making active conservation and sustainability efforts today, especially very close to us! A big name being the University of Utah, and they have some pretty great efforts. One of the efforts is a climate action plan, which they started in 2010 to map a path to a carbon neutral campus. They also have installed a small series of solar panels on the roofs of buildings to help power them as well, however they are not completely solar yet. Another big effort is their public transportation services, offering bike lanes, campus shuttles, and discounted

passes to all UTA facilities (TRAX, bus, etc.) in an effort to get to the campus completely car free (mind you a parking pass is \$200+ anyway). (Sustainability Resource Center, University of Utah, utah.edu)

Zooming out a small bit, we can look at the sustainability and conservation efforts of Utah's state capitol, Salt Lake City. SLC has a massive energy push, trying to go solar wherever they can. Their biggest solar project is the solar farm just west of SLC itself, containing four acres of around 3,000 solar panels, producing over 1.2 million kWh of electricity per year. Another big thing that SLC has been doing is their active efforts with recycling, specifically glass recycling. They charge a small \$7 fee to get a special 35 gallon can just for glass! This is a big push, especially since glass is such an easily reused material, it will help stop processing more than we need to! (SLC Green, slcgreen.com)

Finally, zooming out some more, we will look at the entire state of Utah and the sustainability and conservation efforts made by the state. First off, it should be noted that they have set up a website, <http://www.sustainutah.org/>, providing news, updates, and a list of organizations set up to assist in the sustainability efforts in the state of Utah. One big organization in Utah is the Breathe Utah organization, with a mission to improve the air we breathe. They recognize seasonal pollution in Utah, due to gas emission from motor vehicles, with active efforts to get people off the road and using other methods of transportation to reduce motor vehicle emission and help clear the inversion (Breathe Utah, breatheutah.org). Another large organization in Utah is the Hawkwatch International organization, their effort focused on protecting migrating and

local raptors (or just birds) in Utah. HI has made multiple studies on the migration network of raptors coming in and out of Utah, in addition to studies on multiple Owl species' living in Utah as well. (Hawkwatch International, hawkwatch.org)

All of these efforts and practices are necessary to help save biodiversity and keep the Earth healthy and safe for many more years to come. People need to come together and realize we are losing winters, depleting our poles, and destroying so much land that never belonged to us in the first place. We need to continue these practices to save humanity, Earth, and the general population of animals on Earth as well. We all deserve a spot here, and we shouldn't rid anything of their life on Earth, no matter where they lie on the food chain.

These issues are addressed by primatologists and in schools because they all need to preserve their efforts and practices as well, they want to educate others on the impact we have and why we need to make a change, and we need to make it fast, or we could possibly cause a mass extinction, which would make the 4th mass extinction Earth has seen.

I believe that even I myself can make a change as well, such as taking a shuttle to work instead of driving through the canyon myself in my car, taking trax to school to help not drive as well, and I can start also trying to start using less heat at my house with my parents, in an effort not to burn gas through the house and emit gross fumes into the air.

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