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### Stop the Waste, Save the World

The United States is currently fighting a war for its own survival. There are many issues that threaten our way of life. Phoenix, Arizona, is in an everyday fight to bring in enough water to its desert-set city. Likewise, Ruston, Louisiana, has been fighting declining water levels in the Sparta Aquifer. In Louisiana, as with most states, there is a heavy reliance on fossil fuels that contribute to pollution and other environmental problems. How do we battle these disasters? There are small-scale actions that can help avert global catastrophes, to name a few: recycling, water conservation, and fuel conservation; sustainability is the practice that promotes using our resources in a way that is ecologically sound and accounts for generations to come.

To avert disaster The United States must embrace sustainability! Sustainability comes in a variety of shapes and forms, fuel conservation, recycling, and water conservation contribute to a healthy planet and are eco-friendly habits. These green practices are low-cost and easily advocated methods of sustainability. Although they are relatively simple and cost affordable, many institutions feel that their money is better spent elsewhere. Many are not opposed to the green agenda, but feel they have other, higher priorities. Louisiana Tech University could be considered one of those schools that are not opposed to the green agenda, but have done little towards becoming green. However, they have made some minor efforts to help with water conservation and some other areas.

StopTheWaste

The Sparta Aquifer has been the main water supply for northern Louisiana and Southern Arkansas since the 1920s, “resulting in water-level declines of more than 360 feet near El Dorado, Arkansas” (Friewald and Johnson 1). Since the decline, the Sparta Aquifer has been under study and has been monitored by the use of eight USGS wells (Friewald and Johnson 2). Water conservation has been a pressing issue locally; Louisiana Tech University has been involved in the attempts to fight the declining water levels of the aquifer. The Louisiana Rural Development Center teamed up with Louisiana Tech University’s Agricultural Sciences faculty to devise a program to initiate learning in students and raise awareness about water conservation on campus and in the general public (Center for Rural Development). There have also been attempts by some companies to help conserve water. Union Parish built a pumping station (completed in 2004), pumping surface water from the Ouachita River to supply an alternative water source for three companies that had previously been completely reliant on the Sparta Aquifer (Friewald and Johnson 2). The result of these actions and the promotion of water conservation have succeeded in stopping the declining water levels of the Sparta Aquifer. All eight monitored wells have had an increase in water levels. For one well, Monsanto, water levels increased by 49 feet between October 2004 and April 2007 (Friewald and Johnson). Along with water, there are other ways to conserve the Earth’s resources; recycling is the practice of making our waste products into reusable products, thus conserving raw materials.

Recycling is one of the easiest forms of eco-friendly practices. Many institutions have some sort of recycling, whether it is plastic, glass, paper, aluminum, or some other metal. Recycling keeps landfills from filling as quickly and keeps the environment cleaner by reducing pollution. Perrin speaks on the complacency of institutions when it comes to acting on what they’re teaching, “Nearly every institution that has so much as one lonely environmental-studies

course also does a little halfhearted recycling. Paper and glass, usually” (761). Louisiana Tech has a few environmental classes and a few agricultural classes, so what does our university, Louisiana Tech, recycle? Currently, Louisiana Tech only recycles paper (Ifeanyi 1). According to Noel Perrin, in his essay “The Greenest Colleges: An Idiosyncratic Guide” institutions should be trying to recycle 100% of recyclable materials (768). There have been attempts to extend Tech’s efforts into a program called Trailblazer, which recycles aluminum cans and printer cartridges, but have yet to come to fruition (Ifeanyi 1). The issue, according to *Tech Talk* online, is that there simply is no market for recycling; there is not an end receiver able to do something with the recyclable materials (Ifeanyi 1). However, the preceding statement is simply not true; there are places such as Super One in town, Arcadia Recycling in Arcadia, and Recycling Services in Monroe that make recycling a part of their business agenda. The real reason Louisiana Tech campus does not play a bigger role in recycling is possibly due to the lack of convenience, money, and support from higher level administration. According to Noel Perrin it is near impossible for any institution to turn green without the active support from at least two senior administrators (764). Recycling materials is one thing, but there is another more pressing issue, fuel conservation.

Fuel conservation and reduced emissions are of great importance for many reasons including but not limited to, the fact that oil is a nonrenewable resource, fuel emissions are harmful to the environment, and oil is expensive. Nonrenewable resources are defined as those resources that nature creates, but cannot create them fast enough to comply with human consumption. Once the world’s supply of oil is gone, it will be gone for a long, long time. Emissions from fuel exhaust and gasoline vapors are bad for the atmosphere and have created a hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica (Ozone Hole Watch). The University of California has

lowered emissions with its many bikers and bike paths (Perrin 765). Emory has lowered its emissions with 60 percent of “its fleet” running on alternative fuels (Perrin 764). Many universities are fighting emissions by finding alternative power sources such as solar panels, hydro power, biomass, or a wind tunnel (Perrin 765-767). Louisiana Tech currently does or has none of the aforementioned. A few people bike, but every day on campus there are people driving around circling the parking lots look for a parking spot.

Water conservation, recycling, and fuel conservation are all easy-to-do actions that should be put into practice by all people. If we want to continue our futures, these three things are all easy and low-cost actions that will contribute to our survival, a healthy planet, and the livelihood of our children and grandchildren to come. Perrin challenges all universities to step up their green agenda and speaks of possible rewarding results, “If every American college in a suitable climate were to behave like Davis (University of California), we could close a medium-sized oil refinery. Maybe we could even get rid of one coal-fired plant, and thus seriously improve air quality” (Perrin 766). We can all find ways to conserve and therefore do our own part, whether it is on personal level or an institutional level. It is never too late to start, unless of course we have no more clean air to breathe, water to drink, or the atmosphere is gone, any of which would be the end of mankind. Choose life, life for your own descendants for generations to come, and go green.

## Works Cited

- Center for Rural Development. "The Sparta Aquifer Project." *Louisiana Tech University - Rural Development - The Sparta Aquifer Project*. LaTech.edu, n.d. Web. 24 Jan. 2013.
- Freiwald, D.A., and Johnson S.F. 2007. "Monitoring of Sparta aquifer recovery in Southern Arkansas and Northern Louisiana" 2003–07." *U.S. Geological Survey Fact Sheet*. 2007–3102, p. 1-4.
- Ifeanyi, KC. "News - The Tech Talk Online." *News - The Tech Talk Online*. Latech.edu, n.d. Web. 21 Jan. 2013.
- NASA. "NASA Ozone Watch." *Ozone Hole Watch: Antarctic Ozone Maps for 2013-01*. NASA Ozone Watch, 15 Mar. 2012. Web. 24 Jan. 2013.
- Perrin, Noel. "Ch.14: The Greenest Campuses: An Idiosyncratic Guide." 2001. *The McGraw-Hill Reader: Issues across the Disciplines*. 11th ed. Muller, Gilbert H. New York: McGraw-Hill. 761-768. Print.

## Annotated Bibliography

Freiwald, D.A., and Johnson S.F. 2007. "Monitoring of Sparta aquifer recovery in Southern Arkansas and Northern Louisiana" 2003–07." U.S. Geological Survey Fact Sheet. 2007–3102, p. 1-4.

This source is the source I used to get my information on the Sparta Aquifer. I based a lot of the information from my third paragraph from this source. It has a lot of information on the Sparta Aquifer with real time charts. I found it through the online Tech library.

Ifeanyi, KC. "News - The Tech Talk Online." *News - The Tech Talk Online*. Latech.edu, n.d. Web. 21 Jan. 2013.

I used this source to find out what kind of recycling, if any that Tech currently participates. I also used my knowledge from the in class group assignment. I also found this source interesting because it interviewed a student and gave his perspective on recycling. The student claimed he knew little about recycling and did not understand the purpose.

LaTech. "The Sparta Aquifer Project." *Louisiana Tech University - Rural Development - The Sparta Aquifer Project*. LaTech.edu, n.d. Web. 24 Jan. 2013.

I used this source to find Tech's involvement with water conservation in the area. Tech helped with educating students on campus, then the students informed and reminded other people on campus as well as the public about water conservation.

Perrin, Noel. "Ch.14: The Greenest Campuses: An Idiosyncratic Guide." 2001. *The McGraw-Hill Reader: Issues across the Disciplines*. 11th ed. Muller, Gilbert H. New York: McGraw-Hill. 761-768. Print.

I used this source as a guide for determining what becoming green means. There are many things

that campuses across the US have done working towards sustainability. It has given me a guide to gauge Louisiana Tech's greenness and the knowledge to instill an environmental-friendly perspective in my own life. This is my textbook source and was the backbone paragraph for my recycling paragraph.

NASA. "NASA Ozone Watch." *Ozone Hole Watch: Antarctic Ozone Maps for 2013-01*. NASA Ozone Watch, 15 Mar. 2012. Web. 24 Jan. 2013.

I used this source to find information on the ozone hole. I also used it to find the location of the hole as well as how emissions harm the atmosphere.

## Outline

Topic: Going green and Louisiana Tech

Thesis: There are small-scale actions that can help avert global disaster such as recycling, food composting, and water conservation.

I. Recycling waste materials keeps the Earth clean and more efficiently uses our resources.

II. Water is not unlimited and we should conserve what we have.

III. Oil is harmful to the environment and in a very limited supply.

Quote from Freiwald and Johnson:

“..resulting in water-level declines of more than 360 feet near El Dorado, Arkansas”

Quote from Noel Perrin:

“Nearly every institution that has so much as one lonely environmental-studies course also does a little halfhearted recycling. Paper and glass, usually”

“If every American college in a suitable climate were to behave like Davis we could close a medium-sized oil refinery. Maybe we could even get rid of one coal-fired plant, and thus seriously improve air quality”