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Block H

When my group and I visited the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park, the day was sunny and dry, exemplifying the region's trend of slightly rising climate. At first glance, one could see that the setting was relatively dry, home to groups of leafy trees, and bred patches of thick, low-lying shrubs. The area seemed well-maintained as there was a small protected grove of freshly-planted plants and little standing deadwood. In this natural park, we also found scattered cacti, some even bearing small fruits. This wildlife setting is located on the precipice of a portion of Sunset Cliffs and looks right over the Pacific Ocean from the California coastline. While protected and maintained, much of these cliffs are fragile and unstable.

By examining the pictures my group collected, it is possible to infer a few things about the environment Sunset Cliffs Natural Park offers. Firstly, the abundance of shrubbery, cacti, and nondeciduous trees suggest that these organisms are best fit to survive in this dry, temperate climate. This supposition can be supported by the nearness of the setting to the Pacific Ocean, which offers an abundance of saltwater and may demand that organisms establish adaptations to accommodate unique water and salt conditions. Additionally, the lack of any scorch marks or dark, barren patches suggest that there have been no recent fires in this area. Thirdly, the presence of some established pathways, a small grove of fresh plants, and deadwood with chopping marks in it suggested a notable human presence in the area. This presence seems even more likely because the park is located very close to both urban and residential settings in the area, in addition to the foot traffic drawn by the ocean. Using our learned skills, and acquired information, the group was able to analyze our gathered photos to form these conclusions and compile them to form a hypothesis regarding the existing conditions of the area and the factors that likely came to play a role in realizing them.

Global Forest Watch did not have much information on our forest other than the fact that there is less than 30% tree coverage. However, GFW did show that since 2001, there has been an increase in tree population. The map also indicates that the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park is one of the few forests with an increase in tree population, shown by the blue dot. Other sources offered more information on the forest such as current projects that are going on. One source discusses the restoration effort that began in the fall of 2013 and shows that the effort has added nearly 1,000 plants to the forest. The forest is also in the midst of undergoing a master plan that will develop an extensive drainage system to reduce any avoidable erosion and the areas of the forest that have already been lost.

After looking at several sources one can see the importance placed on the preservation and restoration of the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park. It is a great treasure to the community and is home to a multitude of plant species. Fortunately, Sunset Cliffs is well-maintained and has been lucky to have had few forest fires. Erosion will be a problem in the future given the nature of cliffs with lots of traffic. The cliffs are a pristine national park and should be maintained for future generations.

Works Cited

@meteoblue. "Climate Sunset Cliffs." *Meteoblue*. Web. 11 Nov. 2016.

"Friends of Famosa Slough." *Friends of Famosa Slough*. Web. 11 Nov. 2016.

"Park & Recreation." *Sunset Cliffs Natural Park*. Web. 11 Nov. 2016.

Links:

<http://www.famosaslough.org/scgraphics/SCNPbrochure.pdf>

https://www.meteoblue.com/en/weather/forecast/modelclimate/sunset-cliffs_united-states_5400180

<http://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/parks/regional/shoreline/sunset.shtml>