

Effects on a grassland ecosystems

Business



According to Boval and Dixon, grasslands are important as they make up 26 percent of total land area and 80 percent of agriculturally productive land. Unfortunately, invasive species are a threat to grasslands around the world. There are also other threats to grasslands: when droughts occur in grasslands, we lose crops that the farmers grow and animal life. By looking at the grasslands ecosystems, invasive species and weather have a big effect on the ecosystem but it is clear that climate has the biggest effect. Medusahead is an example of an invasive species that takes over an ecosystem.

According to Stephanie Dearing, Medusahead came to the grasslands in the 1880s and has eaten about 2.5 million acres since then. It spreads over 12 percent a year over 17 states. Medusahead is a threat to our grasslands because once it takes over the grassland is worthless. She also says that once Medusahead takes over our grasslands we won't be able to get rid of it.

We need to keep Medusahead out of our grasslands; it hurts the animals that roam the grasslands. Medusahead has sharp edges that can scratch the eyes and mouths of the animals in the grasslands. This invasive species has silicone which can ruin the teeth of the animals. The animals can't live in the grassland once Medusahead takes over. The roots of Medusahead take up most of the very little moisture that the grasslands have.

Without the moisture the plants will start to die. Medusahead creates fuel for forest fires and prevents plants from spreading. We need to find a way to get rid of Medusahead before it takes over everything in the grasslands including other invasive species. This isn't something we can mow or cut to get rid of.

“ It [found by scientist from Oregon State University] that Medusahead has a faster growth rate, a longer period of growth and produced more total biomass even than cheatgrass - another invading species that is a major problem in its own right, but not as devastating as medusahead” (Stauth).

Rising temperatures also affect the grassland ecosystem. According to Admin, humans are currently responsible for most of the rising temperatures in our atmosphere. The temperatures keep rising because of all of the greenhouse gases we release into the air. Some major greenhouse gases are water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and haloalkanes. Grasses lose their quality and health, when grasses dry up and die.

The grasses that stay will absorb more water from the plants that died. Greenhouse gases are the gases that are in our Earths atmosphere. The greenhouse gases affect our temperature. With the greenhouse gases the temperatures will rise. These greenhouse gases can rise surface temperatures.

“ A study reported by the Agricultural Research Service and Colorado State University scientists in 2007 revealed that a significant consequence of global warming is that the health and quality of grasslands can become diminished” (Heuberger). Drought also affects our grasslands but doesn't have as big an impact on them. When there's a drought in grasslands it affects the whole ecosystem. A drought happens when a place doesn't get rain for a long period of time; therefore, farm crops and animals die and that means we have lost a food source. According to the article “ Drought,”

because of the lack of food in the area prices for foods start to rise. The plants stop growing and dry up.

Streams and rivers start to dry up, and that is the only way for the animals to get water. All of the fish and other animals that live in the stream will die without the water. Clean water for humans and animals depend on how well our grasslands are functioning. “ Scientists think that when a warm ocean current which they call El Nino occurs in the Pacific Ocean, it has an effect on weather around the world. Scientists think that when it flows, once every three to eight years, the air pressure over the sea is reduced and winds that normally bring rain to land blow less often and a drought occur” (Thomas).

People need to prepare for droughts before they hit. We need to protect our grasslands and what they do for us. Without the grassland’s rich nutrient soil we won’t be able to farm as many crops. Grasslands provide a lot of the grains that we need. If we don’t protect our grasslands, the animals and plants will die and the soil will dry up. Works Cited Admin.

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