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Air Pollution

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Air Pollution

In the Great Smoky Mountains, air quality reduces magnificent scenery, harms flora, and erodes higher altitude rivers and soils. Pollution has severely harmed the scenery from attractive sites in the park. According to statistics, typical sight in the southern Appalachians falls by 40% in the winter and 80% in the summer (Keiser et al., 2018). Visibility deterioration affects how far one can see from a beautiful elevation and how effectively one can see. Colors become faded, and geographical characteristics become obscured. Pollution keeps appearing as a homogenous whitish haze, distinct from other types of pollution like the mist-like clouds for which the mountain derives its name.

Airborne contaminants emitted primarily from outside the park are damaging park ecosystems and visitor experience. The majority of pollution is caused by the combustion of fossil fuels such as coal, petrol, and gas. Ozone pollution, another related issue with polluted air, poses a threat to animal health and park flora. Earth's surface comprises colorless air formed by the reaction of hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides in the presence of light. It is different from the naturally present, helpful ozone layer that filters the sun's UV rays. The biggest sources of nitrogen oxides are power stations, cars, and industries. The majority of ozone pollution occurs beyond the area and is carried to the park by breezes. The park sees the most sulfur and nitrogen accumulation of any protected area under observation. These contaminants reach the ground in various forms, including acid rain, airborne particles, and cloudy water. This condition affects the availability of forest minerals, particularly calcium, to vegetation and results in the discharge of poisonous aluminum, which harms flora and stream life. According to Sullivan et al. (2018), the mountain waterways and woodland soils become increasingly acidic, putting the park's higher altitude ecosystems at risk. Other parks like Shenandoah and Grand Canyon also

experience similar visibility issues occasioned by pollution, but we can reverse the damage in our national parks. As per Sullivan et al. (2018), the fundamental issue is insufficient pollution control technology in power stations, manufacturing, and automobiles.

Reducing this pollution should be a national priority because it affects the parks and human lives. In 1970, Congress passed the Clean Air Act, which gives the National Park Service the mandate to comment on developments near parks that they think can harm their ecosystem. In addition, the government should come up with strict policies on vehicle and industrial emissions that cause the problem. The park services must also work with the local communities and teach them about the activities contributing to the problem. Policy interventions that guide on improved technology and emission caps must be in place. More importantly, we must find ways to reduce nitrogen dioxide and sulfur dioxide.

References

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