A Creek Worth Keeping

How conserving water and soil protects a watershed

6-9.WH.2.10 "Describe why the conservation of resources is necessary to maintain a healthy environment."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two cause-and-effect links that show why saving water matters, and circle one cause-and-effect link that shows why keeping soil in place matters.

The Creek at Alder Bend

1 In the town of Alder Bend, a creek runs past homes before joining a larger river. During dry summer weeks, rain adds little water to the creek. People also draw water from the same watershed for gardens and lawns. If too much is taken at once, the creek becomes shallower. Shallow water can warm quickly and hold less dissolved oxygen, making it harder for some fish to survive. A creek may look like just one part of town, but its water supports living things downstream, too.

2 Residents can reduce their demand for water without giving up every garden. A sprinkler left running on a hot sidewalk sends water into the street or air instead of plant roots. Watering early in the morning and choosing plants that need less water reduce withdrawals during dry weeks. When more water stays in the creek, fish have more room and cooler places to shelter. Keeping enough water in the stream also helps trees and insects along its banks. Conservation means using water carefully, not refusing to use it at all.

3 Water is not the only resource to protect. Along Alder Bend's creek, roots of bank plants hold soil in place when rain rushes downhill. If people remove those plants, loose soil can wash into the water. Muddy water can block sunlight from reaching underwater plants and cover places where some fish lay eggs. Planting along the banks helps keep soil on land and the creek clearer. By conserving both water and soil, the town protects habitats and helps keep its river healthier for communities farther downstream.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why can taking too much water from the creek during dry weeks harm fish?

2. How can watering early and choosing plants that need less water help the creek's living things?

3. Why does keeping plants along the creek's banks help maintain a healthy creek?

4. Why might communities downstream care whether Alder Bend conserves both water and soil?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

At a school, a student club washes muddy sports equipment beside a storm drain, and a bare patch of soil slopes toward that drain. In four sentences, propose one action to save water and one to keep soil in place, and explain how each would help the nearby stream.

ANSWER KEY

A Creek Worth Keeping

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WH.2.10

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two cause-and-effect links that show why saving water matters, and circle one cause-and-effect link that shows why keeping soil in place matters. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why can taking too much water from the creek during dry weeks harm fish?	**The creek becomes shallower. Shallow water can warm quickly and hold less dissolved oxygen, making survival harder for some fish.**
2	How can watering early and choosing plants that need less water help the creek's living things?	**These choices reduce water withdrawals, leaving more creek water and shelter for fish, trees, and insects.**
3	Why does keeping plants along the creek's banks help maintain a healthy creek?	**Their roots hold soil in place. Less soil washes into the creek, so the water stays clearer for underwater plants and fish eggs.**
4	Why might communities downstream care whether Alder Bend conserves both water and soil?	**The creek joins a larger river. Conserving water and soil helps protect downstream habitats and keeps soil from muddying the water.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The club could fill a bucket instead of leaving the hose running while it scrubs equipment. This would reduce the amount of freshwater taken from the stream's watershed. The club could cover the bare patch with mulch and plant ground cover. Roots and mulch would help keep soil from washing through the drain into the stream.

Accept other practical actions if the student explains how saving water or preventing soil runoff helps maintain a healthy stream. Part 3 responses should address both resources in four sentences.