

Clayton
May 26

ASSIGNMENT III: PERSUASIVE WRITING IN CONTEXT
Suggested time: 40 to 50 minutes

Read the situation described below and use it to complete the assignment that follows.

The Situation

The Prosper Town Council is considering a proposal from the local Recreation Board to build a network of wooden walkways and an observation deck in the Mirian Lake wetland. The local chapter of the Wetlands Conservation Group is opposed to the proposal.

The town council is inviting residents to make their views known in writing, and you have decided to reply. You are Dylan Lee, a Grade 12 student at Prosper High School. You have considered information and opinions from a variety of sources (see pages 22 and 23). After considering the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal, you have reached a decision. You will now write a persuasive letter that clearly explains

- your decision on the proposal to build the Wetlands Walkway
- the reasons why you believe your decision to be the best decision

The Assignment

Write a letter to the members of the Prosper Town Council that will persuade them to either ACCEPT or REJECT the proposal to build the Wetlands Walkway.

In writing your letter, BE SURE TO

- consider your purpose and audience
- study and use the information on the following pages
- use an appropriate tone

Remember that you must clearly and directly choose to either **accept** or **reject** the proposal.

What Are Wetlands?

Wetlands are the physical link between land and a body of water. Sometimes called “nurseries of life,” wetlands provide habitat for thousands of species of plants and animals, and support their critical development stages. Although wetlands are best known as a home to water lilies, frogs, and birds, they also provide important habitat for snakes, fish, and mammals. Birds use wetlands as nesting sites and for resting and feeding during their seasonal migration. As a result, the loss of wetlands has a serious impact on these species.



Statement from the Prosper Recreation Board

The Wetlands Walkway would be designated as a multi-use recreation area. The proposed walkway and observation deck have been carefully designed to minimize the disruption of habitat, and they will include interpretive displays designed to raise awareness about the importance of this fragile ecosystem. The Recreation Board is well aware of the importance of maintaining these habitats, and we feel that limiting the walkway and observation area to pedestrian traffic will greatly reduce the impact on the wetlands area. It will also allow us to restrict some of the current activities in the area.

Statement from the Wetlands Conservation Group

The Wetlands Walkway represents exactly the kind of development that is endangering fragile and crucial ecosystems. A development in such a complex ecosystem is bound to disrupt animal feeding patterns, water flow, and migratory patterns. The best way to preserve the wetland is for people to stay away from it. Wetlands are very diverse, but they all share one fundamental feature: the complex interaction of their basic components—soil, water, animals, and plants. Any artificial construction will disrupt this balance.

Opinions on the Wetlands Walkway

Conservation groups would have us believe that there is no way that human beings can exist in harmony with their environment. However, the walkway is designed to do just that. There will be no heavy construction involved, and the resulting multi-use area will significantly raise awareness of the importance of wetlands in general because people will be able to experience them firsthand.

Mario Scolari, *engineer*

Any development is too much. The mere presence of people in this area will disrupt the migration patterns of geese and ducks, and the pilings and timbers placed to support the walkway and observation deck will alter the water flow. We can't predict the consequences, so we're better off leaving the area alone.

Susan Evans, *small business owner*



The walkway is designed to provide controlled access to an endangered area. Any negative impact it may have could not be worse than the damage that is being done now. The current reality is that people use the area, and we can't control the access. We have motorboats, ATVs, dirt bikes, and snowmobiles ripping through there all the time doing severe damage, and the walkway will certainly prevent this.

Myca Nyen, *principal, Prosper High School*



Someone once said, "If you don't know what to do, don't do anything." I think that statement applies here. Addressing the current problem of halting uncontrolled access to the area by building a controlled access in the form of the walkway may create an even bigger problem. We just don't know. I think we need to do nothing until we're sure we're not replacing one problem with another.

Rahna Fernandez, *lawyer*

