



**Visitors in the urban wetland
Mirasol of Algarrobo: A threat or an
opportunity for resilience?**

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In investigating the challenges of conserving the Mirasol wetland, I found that solving issues like litter and human waste is more complex than expected. Luckily there are many individuals and organizations who care about Mirasol and are tackling these issues with the few resources they have. My main takeaway from working with the local Algarrobo community and Fundación Kennedy, was that multifaceted issues require multifaceted solutions.

In reflecting on my experiences, I attempted to communicate through our short films that there is no simple solution to conserving the Mirasol wetland, but rather it will require a collective effort between the people who visit this wetland, the local community, conservation groups, and the local government.

With enough advocacy from the local community and conservationists, I believe that getting Mirasol officially declared as an urban wetland, would be a huge step in conserving Mirasol as there would be more legal protections and allocated funding to implement a restoration plan, hire people to monitor the wetland, and install bathrooms and a garbage system. The municipality will have to work more closely with the locals to create a concrete plan for garbage and management systems along with measures of accountability and tracking progress.

I also suggested through my presentation and films a focus on educating visitors and the general public on their impacts on wetlands and the ecosystem services wetlands provide us globally. By educating the public on the values of wetlands, we can collectively change societal norms and push forth the declaration of urban wetlands all across Chile.

A potential means to accomplish this is creating a visitor's center at the entrance of Mirasol, with ecological experts and educational signs about the value of wetlands. The experts could provide guided tours to educate visitors on the functions of Mirasol, the endemic species they can encounter, and the importance of treating the land with respect. Having experts walking along the wetland would also serve as a form of monitoring the litter issues. My suggestions were well received by Fundación Kennedy and guests at the final presentation of film #1 on the Oosterschelde.

Changing human culture and behavior is a very tough task, but cultural shifts first happen on an individual scale then a local scale, then gradually radiate outwards to effect societal changes. And while there are dedicated people from the local community and organizations like Fundación Kennedy working tirelessly towards creating a better future for Chile's wetlands, there will always be cause for hope.

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