

Earth Day Essay
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"Chip chip chip swee swee swee"
"Rat tat tat"
"Chickadee dee dee"

I love sitting on the deck in the morning and blowing bubbles and listening to the birds! I also love camping with my little cousins on my birthday! Playing StarWars with giant glow sticks once it gets dark! Swimming in Peacham pond at my grandparent's lake house! Canoeing at Peacham! Biking up Thresher road! Swimming in the brook behind my house! Catching frogs in the cattail ridden pond in front of my grandparent's house! Eating giant wild strawberries, and blackberries in our side yard! All of these are things I love to do in Vermont, the Green Mountain State!

However, I do have concerns. All of these activities that I do that involve swimming, canoeing or catching and releasing aquatic animals are things that I may not be able to do in the future if water pollution continues. All of this is so amazing to do, but may not be if asphalt roads, water run off, chemicals, littering continue. The litter, such as plastic bottles, wrappers and, in recent years, disposable masks, ends up in nearby water sources, killing wildlife and polluting rivers, streams, and lakes that people and more animals like to live, swim, and play in! Asphalt roads don't soak in rainwater so oil, nutrients, and pesticides will go with the flow and also pollute nearby rivers. Now you may be thinking: Well I can see how the other stuff could be bad but *nutrients*? How does that work?! That is the confusing part. Overall, in the right place, fertilizer and nutrients are good. But if you put them somewhere they don't belong, like in your local river, they can be very bad. For example, they could fuel poisonous algae blooms which could then take over the river and make swimming in it impossible. The algae would then travel with the river to the lake, lake to a bigger river, bigger river to a bigger lake, etc. My point is, one gum wrapper, one hot day, one rainstorm, one field full of pesticides and nutrients, and one asphalt road can do a lot of damage.

I hope that someday, farmers in VT will use no-till farming, farming without pesticides or tilling, which destroys or buries nutrients which gets in rivers via groundwater. Instead using natural things to maintain nutrients like crop rotation plans, which could be a huge help! Also instead of throwing trash, kids and adults alike will pick it up. Using it for art

projects and science projects and holiday decorations may be a great way to reuse, reduce and recycle. I also hope people will either worry less about paved roads or find a way for asphalt to absorb water. Clean water is more important than large-scale development! I beg you, please please, PLEASE, do your part to make sure the Green Mountain State lives up to its name.