

Penny

Vermont Day School

**Earth Day** 

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Vermont, one of the 50 states of the U.S.A, is called the Green Mountain State, and for a good reason. Vermont, founded in 1609 by French explorer Samuel de Champlain, was the first European to set foot in Vermont in winter(according to nps.gov). It was called the Green Mountain State because of the pine trees and evergreens that were still alive and green in winter. In early March 1791, Vermont officially became a member of the United States.

Flash forward about 230 years, and Vermont is almost completely changed. There are not as many trees as there were in 1609-1791. Most of the trees have been cut down for lumber, and in documents and research, people have found that old buildings in New York and Philadelphia are actually made of this lumber. But how would they get there? By boat? By horse-and-wagon? People carrying them all the way to New York? Nope. None of those. Instead, they decided to float them across lake Champlain.

And this situation in 1609-1791 did not go well. Now, there is more pollution than ever, and Vermont's environment has been decreasing due to people building houses, and farms. Plastic is everywhere, even though people during earth day pick up plastic, people keep littering. And some people don't appreciate the plastic in the lake during a relaxing kayak ride. It's the same for forests, fields, and ski mountains.

According to one of my parents, who is part of the political group Voices Of the Environment, on our property, there used to be lots of plastic bags, bottles, and cans. The trash eventually got picked up, but that doesn't mean that some Vermonters will not stop littering. One problem is that some animals confuse it for food due to the smell, colors, or shape of the object. Plastic is bad for the environment, and especially for the animals.

When animals mistake pollution for food, they can sometimes eat it. And because digestive systems are not meant to process plastic and harmful material, it makes the animals very sick. It's just like in the ocean. Sometimes a dolphin will end up with a Coca-Cola bottle in its mouth, or a turtle will get blinded by a plastic bag.

There is a solution to this problem. One, pick up plastic. All the plastic! Another option is composting, but there is a chance that there is a small amount of plastic in the compost, and the chubby squirrels who eat your compost might not like that.

Well, people pick up the plastic, but there is going to be more. It's like picking up every single grain of rice that is spilled on the grass. It's basically impossible.

And again, due to construction, there is pollution, cutting down trees, and the housing issue. (Oh boy). This issue is a huge problem affecting climate change and the environment. Many people want to move to Vermont, because of its natural beauty and forests; that are being cut down to put more buildings in. Here is an example; when I was in 4th grade, the town of South Burlington (where I live) took away our soccer and baseball field, along with the forest where everyone likes to go cross-country skiing. My point? No one loves to see the fun outdoor activity spaces being stripped away.

But there is a solution. Earth day! People on earth day plant trees, and pick up plastic and other environmental stuff that is helpful for the environment.

Some things I love about Vermont are the wild animals and the forests. I live in the middle of the woods, and any time I want I can go outside and run around in the woods hoping over logs like a deer in the woods. I can bring my dogs along with me and have them be by my side. I could explore, head down to the creek and chase fish in the stream that heads to the lake. When it rains, I can look down at the fields below and watch the deer feeding on the grass. It's the little things in life that make Vermont what it is. Like the snow, in early spring when you can tap trees for maple syrup, and in summer, when the wildflowers bloom, and you can see all the stars in the sky.

But, if towns and counties like Chittenden county keep putting up houses and apartments, we might not have that freedom to do all of the things that make up Vermont. People have been fighting politically to keep the population down and settled. And keeping the wild way it is. That's why people wear "keep Vermont weird" merch.

How could you help to keep  
Vermont, Vermont?