

I live in a small town in the Texas panhandle. It is not quite as polluted as the bigger cities in Texas where I have been, but it does have its fair share. I do not like seeing trash everywhere and smelling the pollution in the air.

I strongly believe in preserving the earth's resources. My grandpa is a farmer and I was raised around horses, cattle and chickens. I remember my "Papa" used the cattle for our beef and sometimes for milk. I would gather the eggs from the chicken house and we would kill the young chickens for fryers. He raises his own crops such as alfalfa, wheat and love grass to bale for hay to feed the cattle. Without the earth's resources, none of this would have been possible.

I used to help my Nana when I was little. She always had a garden in the summer time. I would go outside with her and we would rotatill the ground to get ready for planting. I would take a hoe and make a straight row all the way through the garden to plant the seeds. We planted vegetables and fruit. We had okra, cucumbers, squash, green beans, lettuce, radishes, watermelons and cantelopes. I would have to go out every evening and water them so they would grow. I had to help pull the weeds so the plants could get the water and breathe. The very best part about helping her was when we got to be together in the kitchen cooking all the food we had grown ourselves. I think home grown food is so much better than store bought. I think that if everyone would recycle and use more natural resources, the earth would be a better place to live.

When I was in Elementary school, I was in the daisy scouts and we had a recycle day where we would go around town and clean up everyone's yards. We collected cans and bottles for our troop badges. I feel like that in one way or another, I have always been aware of the resources and what can happen if they were all destroyed.

In 2009, there were wildfires here which covered over 1.4 million acres of land all around my hometown in the Texas panhandle. I saw how it destroyed the land, crops, trees and the animals. The green was literally gone from our area for several months. I was so sad to drive around and see no grass, flowers or even leaves on the trees. I realized then that sometimes things such as natural resources are taken for granted. I wanted to do anything I could to help make it green again. Our class planted some flowers and grass in some spots that were burnt out.

I feel like when you go through something as devastating as the fires, you realize what is truly important and can be lost in a matter of minutes. This year we have already had more rainfall than we had all year long last year. It is so nice to see everything so green again. The flowers are blooming and everything is so beautiful.

One resource that we had when I was growing up was solar panels on our house. This made is warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. It saved on electricity and gas and saved our family some money.

I am going to college in the fall and I have been looking at vehicles for my drive to and from school. I like the smart cars and have been hearing a lot about them and how they help preserve the ozone layer by not using as much gasoline and putting carbon monoxide in the air. I am glad they have developed the cars now days that are more economical. They save money and also save the environment. I would like to see less pollution and littering, when what we need is more recycling and cleaning up around our communities.

I have been noticing where they have been putting up a lot more wind machines in the panhandle. I think this will make a big difference. The wind is a major source of a natural resource and I am glad to see them come into our area. Being able to say that I was raised in the

country and raised on natural resources gives me a sense of responsibility and accomplishment.

I have had a different kind of recycling experience lately. I have been going through all my clothes that I either don't wear or are too little and we have been taking them to the salvation army and other clothing stores where people who are less fortunate can have some nice things. It feels good to be able to give back to my community and surrounding areas.

I hope that in the future, I can make a difference and give everyone an idea of how I was raised with natural resources and we can't live without them. I would like to be more like Vermont.

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They are the second smallest state as far as population but the number one green state. Vermont produces less pollution than most states. They promote efficiency and alternative energy. What I would like to see in the future is more of what their communities have done, they have an annual Green Up Day which is on the first Saturday in May. The whole town gets together and gathers trash and cleans up the roadsides. They recycle what they can and get rid of the rest keeping Vermont the greenest most beautiful state. I feel that this would be a great way to hold on to all natural resources by cleaning up and keeping it beautiful. If I could be involved in something like that, I think it would be wonderful. I believe that this earth was created for us to enjoy and not destroy and I am willing to do my part to see that it stays beautiful.

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