

Allison Reid

Earth Steward Scholarship

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The Eco-Footprint

Imagine you are in a field of beautiful flowers and trees. You're sitting under a nice big shady tree in the soft cool grass, and you are admiring the beauty of the bright pink and yellow flowers around you. All of a sudden, you hear a rumbling in the distance. You think nothing of it until you hear it again, but a lot closer this time. The birds and squirrels in the trees run from the tree and head off in all kinds of directions. You look around frantically to see what is coming your way, with the rumbling almost becoming deafening. Suddenly, the shade under the tree becomes almost completely black, and you can tell that the sun has been blocked out. You look up to see what caused this, but only see a ridged surface hovering in the air. You can't see anywhere that isn't blocked out by this mysterious ridge, but what is worse that you realize it's not hovering, but stepping closer to the ground. You crouch and cover your head as you wait for the crushing force, hearing the top of your precious shade tree start to be crushed. With one final ear-splitting crack, and a thunderous crunch, you are sure you have been crushed. Then in a split second there is a bright light, and you peek out from your hiding position. The once beautiful flowers and shade tree are now devastated and entombed in huge, strange shaped mounds of dirt. Everything that was there just a second ago is gone. As you stand up, you climb on top of one of the mounds to see if you can see anything else besides crushed and trampled beauty that you had beheld moments before. As you

look out, you notice a pattern in the mounds that had crushed and covered your beautiful land. It is a gigantic footprint.

The meaning of Eco-Footprint to me is a depressing one. The Eco-Footprint is the way of measuring how much we take from the environment. To me it means how much damage are we causing our environment. I live out in West Texas and I love it, and it used to be a beautiful place. You could see the stars every night; there were bright green mesquites in all the pastures, and dainty yellow and purple flowers on the side of the road. Now there are always oilfield trucks driving as fast as they can down the road, stirring up dirt, covering the flowers and trees in trash and nasty dust. Throughout the years I've seen my home go from a nice ranch house form Little Home on the Prairie, to other people's garbage dump and wasteland.

It's sad to see that no one cares enough about nature's beauty, or even someone else's property, to stop making our world so awful. I've had friends and family visit out of state and they ask, "I thought Texans were proud of their land? It doesn't look that way because of all the trash." I told them that Texans are proud of our land and try to keep it that way, it's all the oilfield workers who only care about their paycheck that are the problem. I've seen workers plow through other people's property, leave all their beer bottles, Styrofoam cups, and potato chip bags wherever they please, and just over all not care about what happens to their trash or how it effects anyone else. I've seen how much trash ends up on the side of the road, and I plan to do something about it.

When I go outside on trips or anything like that, I usually have food, which means wrappers, leftovers, and a drink can. Instead of like many people I see, just

throwing it out on the ground, I put it back into my bag and wait until I find a trash can so I can dispose of it properly. When my mom and I go feed our cattle, she always tells me to make sure that our feed sacks and wire is stored properly, so when we drive down the highway it won't fly out and be more trash on the side of the road, like the oilfield workers. Even when I'm out walking around at the park or at the school grounds, whenever I see trash I pick it up and dispose of it in a trashcan.

Just like the giant boot print left on your precious shade tree and flowers, trash leaves a nasty scar on the environment. That's a scar I want to make disappear by cleaning up our environments, and putting trash where it belongs. I like seeing nice green grass and beautiful, colorful flowers around my town, and I have tried to get that idea to my friends as well. Whenever we see trash not in the trashcan, we pick it up and dispose of it properly. While a few of us might not be a big impact, each picked up piece of trash makes our Eco-Footprint diminish little by little.