

2024 KACD Conservation Essay Contest

1st Place

“Save The Forest”

By Mason Brillhart

*Submitted by Morton County
Conservation District*

Save the Forest

Do you know what to do to save the forest? It's not just about planting trees, it's about building a deeper connection with nature and making conscious choices every day. One great way to start is by supporting local conservation groups that focus on protecting natural habitats. You can also get involved in community clean up events or tree planting days, which are both fun and impactful. Educating yourself and others about the importance of forests helps raise awareness about the issues they face, like deforestation and climate change. In addition, making small changes in our daily lives, like reducing paper use and choosing sustainably sourced products, can really add up. Every little action counts and when we work together, we can create a brighter future for our forests.

Connecting with the forest is not just a one time effort, it's a lifelong journey that enriches our appreciation for nature. Engaging with the forest fosters a sense of stewardship, where we see ourselves as caretakers of these vital ecosystems. Taking time to explore local trails, participate in nature walks, or even simply sit quietly in a wooded area can deepen our understanding of the intricate relationships within these habitats. The more we immerse ourselves in the beauty and tranquility of forests, the more compelled we become to protect them. This connection can also spark creativity and inspire a commitment to conservation that spreads beyond ourselves. When we share our experiences and knowledge about the wonders of forests, we cultivate a community spirit focused on sustainability. By nurturing this bond, we ensure that future generations will inherit not just trees, but a thriving environment filled with life and possibility.

One of the best ways to save the forest is by getting involved in our community and learning more about nature. When we join local conservation projects like tree planting events,

we help make a real difference and show others how important it is to take care of the environment. It's really cool to see how one small action can inspire friends and family to do the same. Also, when we learn about how forests help fight climate change and provide homes for animals, it makes us want to protect them even more. If everyone understands why forests are so important, like giving us clean air and a place to enjoy nature, they're more likely to help out. By working together, we can all help keep our forests healthy and beautiful for years to come.

2024 KACD Conservation Essay Contest

2nd Place

“Water Conservation”

By Lea Schmidt

*Submitted by Pratt County Conservation
District*

Water Conservation

This summer I heard on the news about droughts in Kansas and water restrictions across the state I became more interested in water conservation because my dad got a letter in the mail about voluntary water restrictions for Pratt County. Water is important because not only humans use water, other living things use water too. Water conservation is the focus on taking actions to reduce usage and not being wasteful so that there can be water in the future.

Almost 96% of Earth's water is saltwater which is not suitable for humans or the majority of animal life. Without enough water humans, animals, and plants would not survive. This affects our food source too, without enough water we don't have enough plants for humans to eat or enough grass for the animals to eat. By conserving water we can make sure there's enough water for everyone. We can reduce our water usage to help make sure there is enough water for the plants, crops, and animals. Water conservation also helps in protecting the wetland habitats full of animals. This can also keep the environment healthy.

Water is used by many to take their showers, water their grass, and have something to drink. Sometimes people waste water by Taking long showers, leaving the hose on, and dumping a full glass of water down the drain. When we waste water that means there is not enough water to be used later.

Learning about water conservation means that there is something that can be done to help with water usage. Here are some ways kids can help conserve water, turning off the faucet when you are done brushing your teeth, taking a shorter shower, and reusing a towel so there isn't as much laundry. Everyone can help conserve water by each person making an effort to use less water.

Taking action today to conserve water means there is water for humans, plants, and animals down the road. We can ask our friends and family to conserve water by making small changes in their lives. These small changes can make a big difference for our future.

2024 KACD Conservation Essay Contest

3rd Place

“May The Forest Be With You Always”

By Finian Keenan

*Submitted by Pottawatomie County
Conservation District*

May the Forest Be With You ALWAYS

galaxy far far away, a tree deforestation crisis takes place. The magnificent grazing fields of Kansas destroyed by the frantic revolution of the Economy. The future is up to us to choose whether we have a horrific battlefield of waste and landfill, or we can give the environment what it needs to grow. The time is upon us to change our future while we have time.

Studies show the average amount of trees cut down by the year of 2018 would sum to be around 15 Billion. 41 Million trees were cut down every day. That would mean that out of the 8 Billion people on earth, if everyone received one of the trees that were chopped down, everyone would get roughly 1.9 trees. If that doesn't sound crazy, it's everyone in the entire world! 8 Billion People! As if it wasn't obvious, forests are very important as it is an essential ecosystem for many animals. In order to stop the crisis from continuing on its dark path, you can act by supporting causes against this terrible reality. Though, there is hope, by 2023, it was found that there could be up to 3.04 Trillion trees.

Currently, people around the world are working hard to be heard about this dark reality because they know that they're the only ones who can really make a change. In a Grand Total, we need your help to stop this horror from pursuing forward.

2024 KACD Conservation Essay Contest

Honorable Mention

“A Treasured Belonging”

By Monique Agol

*Submitted by Morton County
Conservation District*

A Treasured Belonging

When we think of a treasured belonging, it's easy to see it as a regular item. However, it's so much more than that! A treasured belonging is like a little time capsule filled with memories, emotions, and stories waiting to be explored. Picture an old teddy bear or a piece of jewelry passed down in your family. Each dent or a bit of wear isn't just damage, but it's a testament to the adventures and love that surrounded that item. These objects connect us to special people and moments in our lives making them valuable. An example of this is our forest.

Forest is much more than a collection of trees. It is a complex ecosystem that includes not only trees but also a diverse array of plants, animals, fungi, insects, soil organisms, and non-living elements like water, air, and rocks. Forest is vital to life on earth because it sustains our life in many ways, from the air we breathe and the water we drink, the food we eat, and the wood and paper products that we use every day. The treasures in our forests are the wild plants and animals, we consider plants and animals our treasures because they are God's given nature, this is why we should take care of our forests.

Taking care of woodlands essential for maintaining biodiversity and combating climate change, through tree planting is a vital component of forest preservation. Engaging in local reforestation projects, not only counters the detrimental effects of deforestation but also fosters new growth in our ecosystems. Active participation in these initiatives can make a significance difference in maintaining the health and sustainability of our woodland. Beyond planting, it's essential to focus on the ongoing care of trees. Regular monitoring for pests and diseases is critical. Early detection of issues can lead to timely interventions. Utilizing organic pest control protects the environment while managing infestations, and proper pruning techniques support healthier growth in struggling trees.

In conclusion, actively caring for our woodlands through tree planting and ongoing maintenance is essential for preserving the health and vitality of our forests. By participating in reforestation projects and implementing effective tree care practices, we can combat deforestation, promote biodiversity, and ensure that our ecosystems thrive for years to come. Each action we take, whether planting new trees or nurturing those already established, contributes significantly to a sustainable future. Together, we can protect our natural spaces and foster a greener planet for generations to come.

2024 KACD Conservation Essay Contest

Honorable Mention
“Water Conservation”
By Hayden Beckman

*Submitted by Sheridan County
Conservation District*

Water Conservation

Why is saving water important? Saving water around the home is simple. Three percent of the nation's energy is used to pump and treat water, so conserving water conserves energy that reduces greenhouse gas pollution.

Water is a vital component of successful agriculture. Very clean, usable water enables crops and livestock to thrive. Aside from agricultural benefits, water is also necessary to preserve the environments of many sensitive or protected lands, such as wetlands. Water is a vital component of farming and natural ecosystems. Excess water in soil can cause such problems as ponding, flooding, and drainage issues. If left untreated, these issues can make it impossible to grow vegetation or crops and make buildings or structures more prone to flooding.

Summer's rising temperatures often coincide with rising outdoor water use, primarily due to increased lawn and landscape watering. While using water efficiently is important throughout the year, sometimes the timing of water use can make a big difference for community water supplies—and your water bill. In most areas, the amount of water homeowners use to keep their lawns green or gardens lush spikes in the summer—two to four times as much water than they use the rest of the year! Those with timed outdoor watering systems often forget to monitor the weather or set their irrigation controllers back in the fall, leading to more overwatering during the cooler months. Of the estimated 29 billion gallons of water used daily by households in the US, nearly 9 billion gallons, or 30 percent, is devoted to outdoor water use. In the

hot summer or dry climates, a household's outdoor water use can be as high as 70 percent.

In conclusion, saving water is important. You can take shorter showers and use less water when brushing your teeth. Shut off sprinklers in the field or your lawn when its night time or raining. Use the dishwasher to wash dishes instead of having the water on the whole time.

Citations

<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/watering-tips>

<https://www.farmers.gov/conservation/concerns-tool/water>

<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/when-its-hot>

2024 KACD Conservation Essay Contest

Honorable Mention

“The Forest Needs Saving”

By Meredith Ronnau

*Submitted by Pottawatomie County
Conservation District*

The Forest Needs Saving!!!!

The forest is where a lot of trees thrive and a lot of trees are cut down to make pieces of paper, pencils, and a lot of other things. Trees provide oxygen and shade from the heat coming from the sun. Trees are a natural resource for humans and animals. Animals need trees for food, hiding from predators, and keeping their babies safe from the danger of falling trees. Trees provide so many things for us humans. Oxygen, improving air quality, conserving water, preserving soil, climate amelioration, and supporting wildlife.

About 15 billion trees are cut down every year, and more than 41 million trees are cut every day. Earth will be treeless by 2319 because 10 billion trees per year are being chopped or sawed.

If trees were extinct, the land would dry up and create very large wildfires. A lot of the trees are already gone because of hurricanes, tornadoes, and major storms, so we don't lose any more trees.

Now, you might not know this, but a lot of your household items are made of trees; toilet paper, sponges, car wax, hair dye and many other things. Chocolate, chewing gum, and latex gloves are all made out of trees including your water bottle! Now in conclusion, trees are one of the most important things in the world and May the Forest Be with You ALWAYS!!!

2024 KACD Conservation Essay Contest

Honorable Mention

“Organic Matter Contribution to the
Forest”

By Gentry Thompson

*Submitted by Pratt County Conservation
District*

Organic Matter Contribution to the Forest.

What is organic matter? Organic matter is 5 % living organisms, 10 % crop residue, 33-50 % decomposing organic matter, and 33-50 % stable organic matter. Soil is made up of mineral particles, organic matter, water, and air. Organic matter is made partially of decomposed plants and animal matter, it keeps the soil healthy. Fallen, decomposing leaves from the trees are a great source of organic matter. Inside of clay soils there are small tightly packed particles, which leaves minimal space for air or water movement. (Fun Fact: there is a living community of microorganisms, water, nutrients, minerals, and air in the soil. Organic matter enhances biological diversity in the soil. Microorganisms have greater activity when the weather is warm, which means greater amounts of nutrients. Organic matter helps water get through the soil, and helps the soil retain water. It's helpful to have trees because they lose leaves, needles, and branches that decompose, and provide nutrients to help tree growth. If the soil is stable there is less chance for the soil to erode. Recommendations are that up to $\frac{1}{3}$ of the trees taken from the forest should be left to provide organic matter for future forests. Evidence suggests that being in a forest can decrease human stress. Forests can help improve people's immune systems. They provide essential oxygen. They can help purify water. In summary, forests need to be preserved for the good of people, animals, and future generations. Having natural organic matter from the forest will keep the forests alive. That is why we need to keep forests going for as many generations as possible.

2024 KACD Conservation Essay Contest

Honorable Mention

“Forest’s Importance”

By Max Morris

*Submitted by Crawford County
Conservation District*

Forest's Importance

Forests are in danger of being forever destroyed, and we have to do something about it! Many people take our forests for granted, but with many of our forests being cut down it will take many good things away! Such as the trees being able to help with climate change. And that they also help to clean our water and air as well! We need to step up and save them from forever being lost!

Trees are very important to helping our earth's climate to improve. They help with climate change in many different ways. They absorb the carbon that's in the air. Then they produce pure oxygen that makes it easier for us to breathe. They also give shade that can help to cool the earth from the hot temperatures, and help cool animals and us down as well! Which in the winter can bring snow that also cools our planet.

Trees can also help ourselves and other animals by cleaning our water that we drink. They can move the water cycle along that also filters the water in the lakes and rivers. But trees can filter water themselves with their natural resources as well! They use their many roots that absorb the water keeping out dirt and other grime. They keep sediments and other pollutants out of the water so it stays fresh for us all!

Trees can also clean the air we all breathe! Their leaves absorb gasses in the air so wildlife and humans don't breathe in toxic chemicals. It can also alter the temperature of the air which helps with global warming. And an article from fs.USDA.gov said that in 2010 trees removed 17.4 million tons of pollution in the air! If we started to plant more trees and refrained from cutting them down, that number could go sky high!

Trees are very important to humans and animals alike, we all need them. They provide shelter and food to animals and us! If we cut them all down, our world could fall apart and we

may never be able to repair it. So if we start to save them and plant more trees, our world will become an amazing place for generations to come! If we can start now, our Earth will be one step closer to being a beautiful planet of color, and life.