

## **What Does a “Sustainable Vermont” Mean to Me?: A Place of Beauty**

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What does a sustainable Vermont mean to me? It means a place of gorgeous landscapes, beautiful wildlife and happy people, a place of four seasons with beautiful nature to observe in each one, and a place where I am glad to call my home. I believe a sustainable Vermont is a place where the citizens make an effort to care for the land around them in order to ensure that Vermont stays beautiful for all to experience.

Ever since I was born, I have lived in Vermont, which is a statement that I am very proud and grateful to make. In my 15 years of living here, I have witnessed some of the most beautiful things in nature and there is so much we take for granted living here. During the spring, Vermont produces a copious amount of maple syrup, in the fall the trees glow with the burning reds, oranges and yellows of foliage, and in the winter, the Green Mountain State welcomes feet and feet of beautiful snow which sends ski-savvy tourists racing to the state. The population of Vermont is small at only 626,042 people in the entire state as of 2015, but even though there aren't very many of us, we still make an impact on the environment and have to be sure that we are controlling that impact to avoid depleting the nature that we know and love.

Vermont citizens living sustainable lives is important because if we go through life, making bad choices, then we are preventing others from experiencing the amazing wildlife that Vermont has to offer. It is extremely important to respect the environment that you live in because without that respect, the nature that you love won't be there anymore. Vermont is happy to welcome new people to the state, but with population increase comes responsibility. We need to be sure that we are doing all that we can to preserve the wildlife around us. By taking nature for granted and using too many resources, Vermonters and people everywhere won't get to experience the beautiful natural elements of the state.

The natural species on this planet are here for a reason. How would you feel if somebody new moved into your home and ruined it, taking the resources from your habitat and using them for themselves? Probably not very good right? When humans overuse resources and destroy habitats with no regard for the wildlife that lives in them, they are contributing to the decline of so many diverse and interesting species. It is so scary that an animal or plant could be in your backyard one day and gone the next, purely because someone didn't stop to think before ruining their environment. In less than 50 years, half of the world's animal species have been destroyed which is a shocking fact. The part that is even worse is that during that time the human population has greatly increased, suggesting that humans are the cause for the loss of so many amazing species.

Just in case the destruction of so many species isn't a good enough reason to care for the environment, think about what Vermont would be without its wildlife. Its an awful thing to imagine bland, colorless falls, no lush forests to explore, and springs without sap flowing

through the pipelines. I know that I wouldn't want to live in a state without those things, so why should we contribute to it? Let's all make an effort to think before you do, to reuse and to be courteous of the environment around us, because Vermont is a land of nature and it is our responsibility to take care of it. Think about how much you cherish the nature Vermont has to offer. If we only cherished nature as much as we cherished maple syrup on our pancakes, Vermont and the world would be a much better place to live for humans, plants and animals alike. If we treat the natural world around us with respect, we will be able to enjoy its beauty and all that it offers in return. That's what a sustainable Vermont means to me.

SOURCES:

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vermont>
- <http://www.vspop.org/htm/commentaries.htm#vermont-digger-commentary-11-05-14>