

30 Mile River Watershed Association Essay Submission

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We had been in the water, enjoying ourselves as any ten-year-olds would in a Maine lake on a midsummer day. Suddenly, as if out of nowhere, we hear a rumble of thunder and saw the dark clouds. However, the clouds were not as quick as the sweeping arms of my best friend's mother, and the throwing of towels urging us to get inside. We continued to watch from indoors as the lake went from being full of boats and swimmers, to barren of both. It turned from golden and shimmering to dark and tumultuous as the storm blew through. Within minutes, the storm was over, passing through quickly without leaving any damage in its path. We were back in the water again, this time with the cool air surrounding our exposed and wet skin, the air that follows a midsummer thunder shower. As the remaining bits of water falling from the sky tickled our shoulders and our noses we watched the sun peer through the clouds, creating rays that shined directly into the water, illuminating it as if Heaven itself was touching the lake.

Living in Maine, it's easy to take for granted all the beauty and the amazing moments that the state provides. This day in the lake was like many others, all unique, inspiring, and beautiful. Though they're easy to take for granted, residents in Maine must do their best to be stewards of their natural surroundings to protect the beauty. Maine's 6,000 lakes and rivers are what helps to make the state so unique, and so beautiful. It's part of the reason that over 33 *million* people visited Maine in 2015, helping provide income and prosperity for many Maine families. Protecting lakes not only helps tourism, but lakes provide homes not only for the humans living around them, but also for the thousands of animals, fish, and birds that rely on the cleanliness of the lakes for their survival. It's important for people to be aware of the problems that plague our watersheds and for each and every person in and around those watersheds to do their best to combat these issues, from monitoring for invasive aquatic plants like milfoil to planting trees or bushes to combat erosion, from cleaning trash out of lakes to making sure to not use the water as a trash can. People can do their parts, not matter how small, to protect our lakes, and to ensure that our children and their children after have the opportunity to experience the beauty and the awe-inspiring scene that Maine lakes provide.