

Aaron Smith - 1st Place Essay Winner

The Beautification of South Carolina

If you had the opportunity to contribute to the beautification and restoration of South Carolina, would you do it? South Carolina is the home of numerous historic landscapes, plantations, war-sites, and visitor attractions. Being the citizens of South Carolina, we must strive to keep our state in visitor-friendly condition, so our state can continue to be one of the leading tourist states in the country.

With the responsibility of restoring South Carolina to match its former glory, we must come together and help in any way possible. You can do anything to help: recycle, pick up litter, or even use recyclable trash as an art supply to avoid pitching it into another landfill. Any effort to make South Carolina a cleaner, and more beautiful state, will benefit not only you, but everyone living in (and visiting) the state.

As I stated before, South Carolina has many tourist attractions. Many of which (mostly old buildings/towns, battlefields and plantations) have been facing littering, uncontrollable corrosion (caused by rainfall), and a lack of people maintaining the beauty and cleanliness of such properties (that's where we come in). We can help by picking up trash when necessary, volunteering to help with repairs/landscaping, or even by spreading the word about helping out.

The beautification of South Carolina not only helps the exterior look, but it also helps the state's economic status. I say this, because if/when we improve the condition of our tourist/recreational areas, more people may visit. That's what will earn more money for the state, which could go towards new lanes on highways, more opportunities for further beautification (which could bring an even higher yield of tourists/profit), and building new facilities for purposes such as manufacturing, traveling, or for recreational purposes.

With the beautification of our state comes great responsibility; the responsibility to do what the others hesitate to do; the responsibility to "get our hands dirty" and get it done. If we all worked together, we could restore South Carolina's former glory as one of America's most beautiful states, and bring the tourist appeal back up to its original level. With great progress comes great results, and that's exactly what we're going to get.

Tais Pineda - 2nd Place Essay Winner

Edisto Pride

Look around you . . . doesn't it all look normal; go to a landfill an environmental horror. And the worst part is that we're all ignorantly being a part of it. We as a society, as the people who inhabit this earth, it's our home, our responsibility. In other words it's our home sweet home and we need to do something about it before it becomes a threat. Recycling will

help us reduce the amount of time landfills take to fill up. Tons of plastic goes into landfills each year, and it takes 450 years for even a small plastic bottle to decompose. Recycling will help reduce the amount of time and trash it takes to fill up a landfill. All those plastic bottles and such can be turned into merchandise, recycling can only have a positive outcome in all aspects.

It's been established that littering isn't right, but yet I see people throwing things out the window while on a highway and at parks. I think it's disrespectful because when they do that it's like saying, "I'm selfish, and don't care, because it doesn't affect me. Future generations will come and what are they going to think. And this implies to children, teenagers, people of all age; but especially the youth because we are the future and will be the examples for generation to come.

We all need to take action now while we can, because later on, time won't be an option, and we'll regret it. Things are going wrong, for many years the government focuses on power, wars for so called "peace", resources. They say in years to come it'll all be worth it, but for what . . . while most people are thinking of the future as flying cars and vacations in space. I'm looking at reality, no more parks . . . landfills, no more enjoying the outside . . . because we're wearing gas masks and calling it normal. All because we were focused on something that we're doing nothing to achieve, and hoping it will all magically appear, but on the path society is on we might as well forget it. I'm not a pessimist, I'm simply looking at the truth, we all fear it because deep down we know we're all slowly reaching a nightmare of a future, a detrimental world.

Tucker Jerman - 3rd Place Essay Winner

Beautification of South Carolina

South Carolina is home to many interesting and beautiful places. It is very important to keep this state clean. There are many ways that we can keep this planet clean so recycling and picking up trash is a big part of the solution. As a resident of South Carolina I personally think recycling is a big part in how we are going to save the state and keep it cleaner.

If people recycle more we can stop the filling of landfills, which will save places that animals live. For example, when nobody recycles landfills get filled faster, what happens is that when they get filled faster more are made in shorter amount of time. This brings it to a point of where landfills are everywhere. Another reason is that recycling is helpful is that it keeps this world cleaner and more efficient. So that instead of using a lot of minerals you can just recycle and companies can use those materials again. Recycling is a great way to keep our world clean and make it a more beautiful place to live.

One of the last ways to keep South Carolina clean and beautiful is if we are to reuse things like plastic cups and disposable Tupperware. If we were just to keep those things a little bit longer we can keep a little bit of trash off of this

planet. Overall if we want South Carolina beautiful we need to do small things that will come together and be one large thing.

If we were all just to put a little more effort into recycling, or to just pick up things when we see them on the ground, we could make this state and world as beautiful as it can be.

Tony Williams – Honorable Mention

The Beast in the Beauty

I remembered when the ocean water was the purest blue; as if the water reflected the sky on a clear day. I remembered when the shore's sand was white as snow; where the waves crashed upon the shore with grace and elegance; when little critters would scurry to return to their safe haven. My head swarms with glee as I reminisce about the joys of life that used to make the deserted land home. Where giggles from damp children and proud parents invaded the dreadful silence. I recall all the smiles that embedded itself into my paradise. But what I recollect is no more. No more pure blue crashing into snowy white. No more laughter and happiness engraving itself into the forever of the beach. All has gone with a trace of none. Only layers of trash scatters the beach's presence. Layers of forgetfulness, ignorance, stupidity and most importantly regret.

The clutter was thick and rough with a foul smell. It all but attracted whoever dared to look past the repulsive sight. Only I continue to visit the forgotten nirvana. Only I continue to see the beauty that hides behind the hideous mask. To see what was and what could be. My heart aches for the stormy beach. Tears stung my eyes as I prayed for the stormy beach. Many times I tried to see what the others see but I could never. I could never think of the beach as a wasteland. I could never muster up the thought of the beach in a filthy way for I have memories with the beach. But it seems like I'm the only one, for the factories on the edge of the cliff leaks carbon dioxide into the water, misguiding the use of their advance. Or as the people who have knowledge of where the trash should belong yet discard the attempt to place it there. Rapid thumps of my rage course through my body as the mastery of animal safety swirls through my head. How I know the once loved starfishes and coral reefs has become beaten and brittle throughout time. Or how I comprehend the acidity rate is burning up the ocean, raising my endangered habitat thirty percent more than usual. Nothing could stop my sorrow from overtaking my body as I predict what would become of my sanctuary.

Although I fear for the stormy waters I still have no doubt that it will return to its once beauty. That all is not forgotten because as I stand here today watching the people wholeheartedly pick piece by piece of their forgetfulness and ignorance; piece by piece their stupidity and regret; piece by piece I marvel at how they in good faith are replenishing their paradise. How they are restoring their utopia. And I adore how they are taking back their bliss in the stormy beast.

Kym Townsend – Honorable Mention

Anti-Litter Recycling Beautification

Do you know how much trash is being thrown out and wasted on beaches? Each year the average American family throws out 2,460 pounds of paper, 540 pounds of metals, 480 pounds of glass and 480 pounds of food scraps. Littering is a big problem in the world because if trash is thrown on the beaches then it will end up in the oceans. People would not be able to swim in the ocean and more importantly animals would try to eat the trash and sadly they would die.

The important thing for all of us individuals to do is not to litter. Littering is an important form of environmental pollution and a sign that our society still has to learn a lot when it comes to global environmental conscience. The obvious form of littering is pollution. Pollution is connected to littering and is of course a visual pollution because litter represents one of the worst sites that can be seen in nature. Also littering can disrupt the balance of many ecosystems because it can cause a perfect breeding ground for many insects and rodents that carry different diseases and harm our environment.

Certain litter items can also harm innocent animals and getting them trapped and poisoned. Many litter items for example cigarette butts, which is known to be the most littered item on the planet. Cigarette butts have been found in the stomachs of many animals like fish, birds and whales who had mistakenly took them as food.

Littering can also cause forest fires also known as wildfires. It is possible that it can spark to hit a piece of litter like for example a paper bag and start a fire. Also cigarette buds can start a fire if not properly lit. Organic litter is particularly hazardous form of litter as it can even lead to major water pollution and lead to shortage of drinking water.

Littering is a bad source for the environment. Today everyone should know that littering is a severe problem on the Earth.