

2018 Mono Lake Committee Scholarship

essay by Rosalie Burch



As I sit down next to the shore of Mono Lake I suddenly become aware of the silence. All I can hear is the soft background rhythm of waves lapping on the shore. The sun is just beginning to set, and in the distance I can see the white veins of melting snow coming down the mountains. There is a small breeze that is not abrasive, but instead melts the air into the perfect temperature all around me. As I look around the giant tufas towers remind me of ancient castles that have been on this Earth long before I have.

I think back to how incredibly stressed I was before I walked down the path to Mono Lake. It seems that all I have been able to think about for the past week is how to take calculus antiderivatives and remembering the order of the presidents for my upcoming AP exams. Yet as I sit at the lakes edge I remember to take a deep breath and I feel as though a weight is lifted from my shoulders. I begin to realize that I should not see this experience as one more thing that I must check off my to do list, but instead see it as a blessing. It is so easy to get wrapped up in the struggles of life that we often forget to appreciate the things that are truly important.

Places like Mono Lake matter because they are a silent reminder of the beauty and wonder that the world gives us every day. All humans are guilty of forgetting that we are such a small component of this planet, and the reality is that no matter how much we worry about our own internal struggles inevitably everything will be fine. Finding my way back to nature gives me a sense of calm and serenity after weeks of stress and worry, and I truly hope that all people can find this happiness in their times of hardship.

The same way that places like Mono Lake bring balance to people souls, they also bring balance to the ecosystem of our planet. Since the beginning of human history more and more wilderness has been developed for human needs. Though there is nothing wrong with human advancement, it is still incredibly important to see that we must continue and maintain a balance between nature and development. Everything on our planet is connected and we all rely on each other in order to thrive. The day that natural places like Mono Lake cease to exist is a day of failure for all of mankind.

Though I only spent a short amount of time at the shore of Mono Lake it is clear to me that places like this matter because they bring joy to people's souls and they are the glue that holds our planet together. I am sure that if more people took a small moment to enjoy places like Mono Lake they would feel the same way.

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essay by Isabel Calderon

As I sit on the ground by the lake, I feel the warmth of the sun on my skin, I smell the salt that makes this lake so unique. At a distance I see a California Gull standing on a tufa tower, looking so graceful as it spreads its wings, making it clear that it's in its natural habitat. As I look over the salty lake, I can feel a sense of happiness and peace. Taking the time to sit here and take in the natural beauty and calmness of Mono Lake, makes me realize why places like Mono Lake matter and how much they truly mean.

One reason why places like Mono Lake matter is because they simply provide a place to escape the world of mankind and be able to connect with nature. I am able to sit here and take in Mono Lake all by myself, which is very relaxing and makes me realize how important Mono Lake is to me. There are many places in the world where there is no sign of living things such as any type of birds or plants. The only things people can see are the gleaming lights of cars passing by every second, a dark gloomy sky with no twinkling stars due to light pollution, tall buildings that tower over everything, leaving people looking at what the mankind has made and simply leaving no sense of calmness and peace or belonging. Places like Mono Lake, on the other hand, share what true beauty is and give us a sense of why nature is important to have in our lives. They prove that I am more than lucky to live in such a unique place, where I can see the stars and walk down to a lake anytime I want to. There's nothing else that can bring peace and comfort besides places like these.

Unlike myself, so many people around the world don't have places like Mono Lake to appreciate and make memories. A memory that I hold to this day is when I went on a trip with the fifth graders to teach them about the importance of nature and we took them to Mono Lake. It was a memory I will never forget because it made me realize how it is that places like Mono Lake teach kids at a young age to appreciate nature and be aware of the things that make our community so special, such as its ecosystems, the tufa and the salt. Mono Lake is a place where people want to go so they can see how unique and special it is because of what Mono Lake provides. It's surrounded with tufa towers, a beautiful blue sky, and all types of living things. It is the places like Mono Lake that help us escape the manmade world and go into another world of peace and comfort.