

# River Quest Ray Skelton Writing Contest 2017 Essay Winner



## Sustainability in Lake Superior Abigail Gavin Superior Middle School

Lake Superior affects us all, whether we live in the middle of it or not. We all use that water in some way. We drink it, swim in it, and use it to wash our hands, which is why it's so important to keep it clean. A tenable environment is important, especially when you live near a freshwater lake. A sustainable environment is important yet difficult to contain in Lake Superior because lack of vegetation can contaminate the water, aquatic invasive species can take over, and non-point source pollution is hard to clean up.

The first reason why a sustainable environment is important yet difficult to contain is because lack of vegetation can contaminate the water. Vegetation grows in soil near the water, while the roots of the plants hold back the soil from dumping into the water. When there is little vegetation, some soil can fall into the water, and without any at all, the soil can completely pollute the water.

One way to prevent this is to simply leave vegetation along our lakes and rivers. In order to keep the water as clean as possible, planting as many trees and vegetation as possible along the shores of our water is beneficial.

The second reason why a sustainable environment is important yet difficult to contain is because aquatic invasive species can take over. One example of an aquatic invasive species is sea lamprey. Sea lamprey attach to fish and suck them dry, usually killing the fish in the process. Another example is goldfish. Although goldfish seem more like a friendly pet than an invasive species, the goldfish can contaminate the water, believe it or not. People release goldfish, and the tiny fish swim into territories that are the homes of trout. The goldfish take over, and long story short, cause the trout to die. One way to help rid our waters of aquatic invasive species is to, quite simply, clean your boat. Making sure there are no fish or species left on your boat helps the wellbeing of our lake.

The third and final reason why a sustainable environment is important yet difficult to contain is because non-point source pollution is hard to clean up. Non-point source pollution is pollution that has an unknown source. If you don't know exactly where pollution comes from, it is harder to clean up. Water flows downwards into Lake Superior, and all of the little ditches and streams flow into the watershed. This picks up dirt, feces, oil, fuel, residue, and pretty much anything you can think of. The water then flows into Lake Superior, taking everything with it. Lake Superior is a bigger part of your day-to-day life than you might think. Keeping our lake fresh and clean helps our day-to-day lives, in the long run. A sustainable environment is important yet difficult to contain in Lake Superior because lack of vegetation can contaminate the water, aquatic invasive species can take over, and non-point source pollution is hard to clean up. Our lake isn't going anywhere.