

I selected these five challenges because of the impact they had on me and the amount of work I put in. I was especially passionate about and learned a great deal from each of these.

The Day 2 Greenest Challenge was memorable for the sheer amount of effort it required. I made a stop motion animation with a message to my Congressman, Trey Hollingsworth, about his policies on climate action. I spent more than five hours not only on content, but also figuring out how to create stop motion video, which was a new skill for me.

I was most passionate about the “Adventure Challenge” on Day 12. For this, I went out on a hike in a local nature preserve called Cedar Bluffs with my friend Tabby, and we reflected about the beauty of this stunning natural place. We spent several hours just watching nature unfold before us. Quietly observing fish feed made me appreciate the complexity of this local and largely native ecosystem. After I got home, I realized just how much of a boost this was to my mental health. I made a point of getting outside repeatedly as the challenge progressed, and it really helped me manage the stress as both the challenge and my academic term came to an end at the same time.

Preparing a large and inexpensive meal based on FLOSN ingredients for Day 5 Extra Credit had the biggest impact on me. It taught me that it's relatively straightforward to make a healthy vegetarian meal using ingredients that cost less than \$20 for an entire week of dinners.

The wellness challenge also really changed my ideas about self care. I thanked my mom for all that she does for me, especially during this time of stress and intense effort. It showed me how important it is to be grateful and to let people know you are grateful. After I sat my mom down and told her how much I appreciate her help and support, I felt happier than I had in a long time.

I was really proud of my #hydratelike a student campaign. Using skills I'd learned earlier in the challenge, I created a stop motion video informing students about the negative consequences of using disposable plastic water bottles, and how much better it is to use re-usable bottles like KleenKanteens. After that challenge I committed to never using a disposable plastic bottle ever again, and I've brought stainless steel bottles to school with me every day since.

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## THINK

So you've thought about where to go, how to get there and what to bring... all that's left is to **go on your adventure**. And today is Saturday! We suggest going somewhere you haven't been before. Stepping out of your comfort zone can be fun and rewarding!

## CHALLENGE

Start by setting intentions for your adventure. Read [12 Essential Lessons Nature Can Teach Us](#) for inspiration. Write down one intention you took away from this article and tuck it in your pocket.

Let the adventure begin! Take three pictures of your surroundings and caption them with observations. What are you seeing? What animals, plants, and other humans do you notice?

Reflect on your experience.

I was amazed at the sheer peacefulness of the experience. As we worked our way upstream, we paused to look at shiners and chub rising to a hatch of october caddis, while at the same time watching larger predators like smallmouth bass and freshwater drum chasing them into the shallows. I've always been fixated with the complexity of the interactions between aquatic insects, animals, and their terrestrial predators. Today, all of this was happening in an incredibly beautiful and serene location. While at first, I intended to have a fun nature hike with my friend, but it became so much more than that. We had an interesting conversation with a couple at the top of a 100 foot bluff above a creek, and I watched as they sat with their legs dangling over a 100 foot cliff. I was inspired by our differences, While they were smoking, and drinking beer, enjoying their surroundings in their own way, My friend and I were just enjoying the green of the leaves and the rustle of the wind. As we descended the bluff, we encountered a dog that lives at the nature preserves, and played with it until it decided to go find someone else to play with. We then walked upstream, and were captured by the sheer tranquility of a largely undisturbed stream, with functioning predator prey relationships, in the middle of a transition of seasons. As we shifted out of summer and into fall, the larger predator fish were more aggressive, chasing baitfish into the shallows to pack in the calories before a long and sluggish winter, rising to small aquatic insects laying their eggs on the surface of the water, and spooking when the shadow of a vulture passes over them. When we sat still and were absorbed into the environment, we were amazed by how much more we could observe. We saw a kingfisher fly over a pool, and land on an overhanging branch, observing its surroundings much like we were. After we began to head back, a small group of deer sprinted across the creek in a riffle a few hundred

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feet away, and we watched as they disappeared into the dense underbrush. I found this hike particularly inspiring, as it showed me the value of sinking into your surroundings, and sitting still and quiet, observing your surroundings. While I based my life around hiking and adventuring in the past, this experience only reinforced my belief that my life is connected to nature.

Share a reflection on social media that includes an inspirational takeaway, along with a picture of your adventure *and* a call for others to go on an adventure of their own. Tag @TurningGreenOrg and @KleanKanteen and use #PGC2019.



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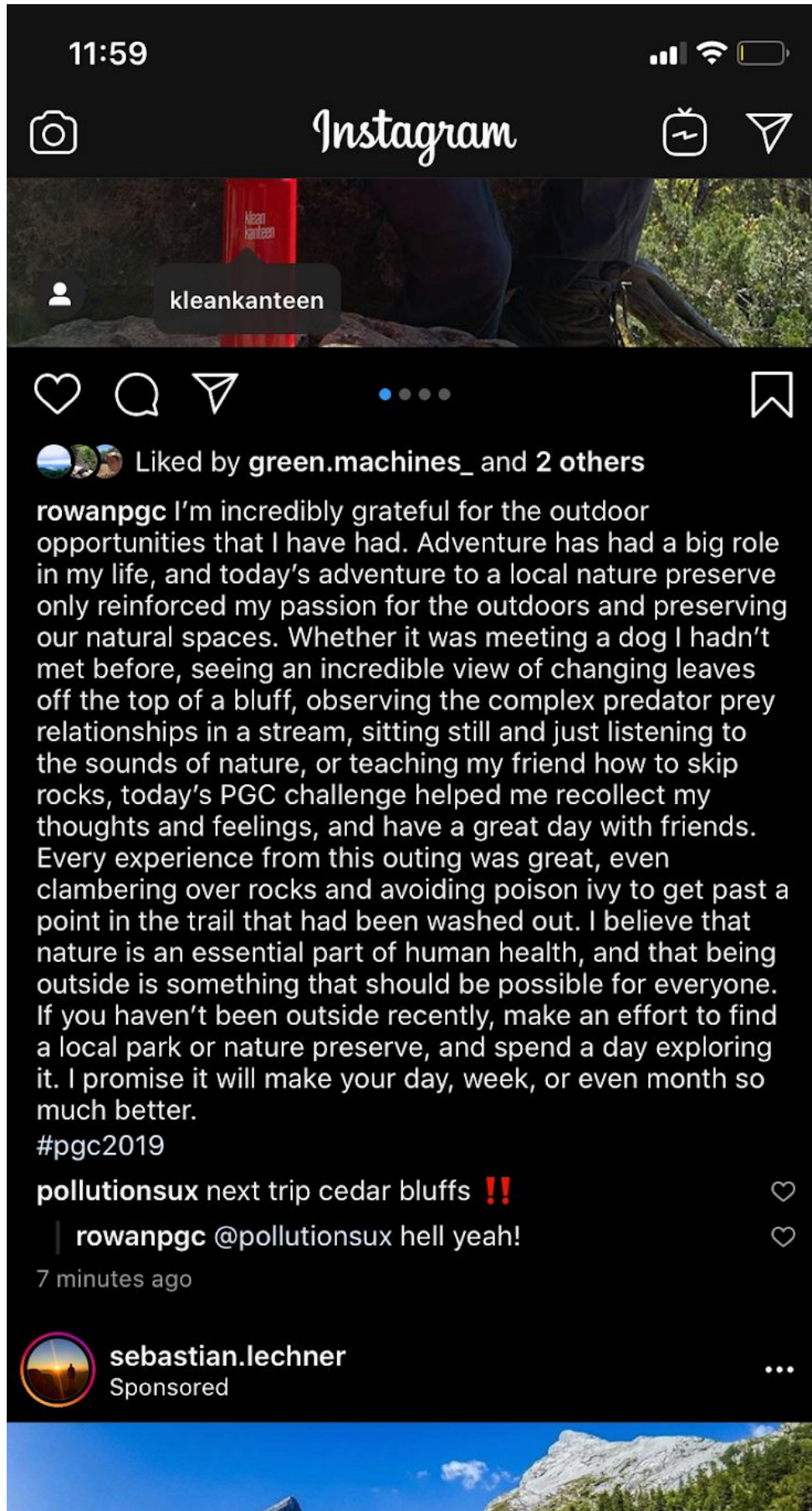


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## **MENU:**

Entree: Bean Chili

Side: Corn on the Cob

Drink: Hyssop and Lemon Basil Tea

## **Shopping List:**

Dried Beans (Bulk from Bloomingfoods Coop)  
Organic Canned Tomatoes (Bloomingfoods Coop)  
Chili Powder (Bloomingfoods Coop)  
Bulk Organic Brown Rice(Bloomingfoods Coop)

Corn (farmers market)  
Onion (farmers market)  
Garlic (farmers market)  
Red Peppers (farmers market)

Hyssop (front yard)  
Lemon Basil (front yard)



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## Cost Analysis

Corn (10 ears/dinner)(\$0.50/ear) - - - - -	\$5.00
Dried Beans (1.5 Lb/dinner)(\$2.99/Lb) - - - - -	\$4.50
Canned Tomatoes( 3 cans/dinner)(\$0.99/can)- - - - -	\$3.00
Onion ( 1 onions/dinner)(\$1/onion)- - - - -	\$1.00
Chili Powder ( 3 Oz/dinner)(\$0.75/Oz)- - - - -	\$2.25
Garlic ( 1 bulb/dinner)(\$1.00/bulb) - - - - -	\$1.00
Red Peppers (2 peppers) (\$1.00/each)- - - - -	\$2.00
Brown Rice (1/3 Lb) (\$2.69/Lb) - - - - -	\$0.89
Hyssop (free)- - - - -	\$0.00
Lemon Basil (free) - - - - -	\$0.00
TOTAL - - - - -	\$19.64

Number of guests: 4 + me = 5

$$19.64 / 5 = \$3.93$$

As you can see, we came in just under \$4.00 a person.

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## Recipes

### Chili:

Market Corn (2 ears/dinner)(\$0.50/ear) - - - - -	\$1.00
Dried Beans (1.5 Lb/dinner)(\$2.99/Lb) - - - - -	\$4.50
Canned Tomatoes( 3 cans/dinner)(\$0.99/can)- - - - -	\$3.00
Onion ( 1 onions/dinner)(\$1/onion)- - - - -	\$1.00
Chili Powder ( 3 Oz/dinner)(\$0.75/Oz)- - - - -	\$2.25
Garlic ( 1 bulb/dinner)(\$1.00/bulb) - - - - -	\$1.00
Red Peppers (2 peppers) (\$1.00/each)- - - - -	\$2.00
Brown Rice (1/3 Lb) (\$2.69/Lb) - - - - -	\$0.89
Chili Cost - - - - -	\$15.64

### Corn:

Corn (8 ears/dinner)(\$0.50/ear) - - - - -	\$4.00
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### Hyssop and Lemon Basil Tea

Hyssop (free)- - - - -	\$0.00
Lemon Basil (free) - - - - -	\$0.00



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To make the chili, I began by sauteing organic onions in the bottom of my InstantPot. Next, we added chili powder, and then the garlic. After sauteing them together for about 30 seconds, I added the beans, which I had placed in a pot to rehydrate that morning. I stirred this for a few minutes before putting the organic canned tomatoes. We stirred, added water to meld the flavors, before putting on the lid and bringing it up to pressure. We let it cook, and used a natural pressure release after about an hour. We let the water boil off until our guests arrived, and in the meantime prepared our corn and tea. Just before we served the chili, we added our chopped peppers and corn kernels that we had sliced off of two of the cobs we boiled. We then mixed it and served!

I boiled the corn, and used the shucks for dry material in our compost. We then served it alongside the chili.

For the tea, we collected two native weeds that grow in our front yard. Hyssop is a native plant that grows everywhere and has pretty purple flowers, but something most people don't know is that it is edible. We boiled the hyssop with lemon basil, which also grows all over our front yard. This turned into a surprisingly good tea, that i will certainly make again.

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In the end, the family friends I invited over for dinner loved the meal, and were surprised at the low footprint of the meal! While we only had 1 corn left, we only ate half of the chili. This was saved, and my family will eat it throughout the course of the week. While normally the water we boiled would have gone down the drain, we haven't had rain in our town for over a month, so we decided to let it cool down overnight and to water our plants with it in the morning.

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Link to video: [https://youtu.be/ZclqSIE\\_Tvs](https://youtu.be/ZclqSIE_Tvs)

wanted to confront my local congressman, Trey Hollingsworth about his failure to act on environmental issues, so I created a stop motion giving some facts about his voting and how he could improve his stances on the environment. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties, some of the text was cut at the bottom of the screen.



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Start by watching “**An Experiment in Gratitude: The Science of Happiness**” [video](#). After reflecting on this video, think of a person for whom you are grateful. Write a letter to this person detailing why you are grateful. Include at least 5 ways they have positively contributed to your life. Be personal, intentional and genuine. After you have written your letter, read it to that person face-to-face, by phone, FaceTime, WhatsApp, Skype or send by snail mail. Take note of their reaction and how it made you feel. Share your letter and their reaction (submissions will be kept private for this challenge). Write a short reflection on this experience.

I chose my mom, for all of her support throughout my life, highschool, and even this challenge. She has picked up the slack in my house during the periods of extreme stress and no time that come with school, and more recently, this challenge.

My message:

Thanks Mom. Thanks for everything you do, the large and the small. Thank you for being supportive of me in my activities, and doing what you think is best for me now and in the future. This spring and fall, when you agreed to ride in the car with me to rowing practice two or three times a week, taking time out of your busy schedule to help me do what im passionate about, and work towards getting my license, I often was so exhausted that I didn't thank you. I want to say thank you now. In middle school, when you went thankless for keeping me on track and making sure that I stayed on top of my work, I was mad at you for stopping me from wasting my time with videogames. Now I want to thank you for that, as the experience I gained in middle school shaped me into the student I am today. Whenever I break down from stress, (about school or impending doom) you're there to talk me through my feelings and point me in the right direction. This summer, you did what was best for me by letting me go. You sent me to spain on an immersion program, letting me run wild (supervised by grad students and an honor code), and giving me experience in another culture, making me more mature and independent. Even this month, you've picked up the slack in the house created by my suddenly busy schedule. You're the best mom I can imagine, and I just want to say one last time, thank you.

Link to video:

<https://youtu.be/crzLg-vqxoQ>



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I felt that, directly after this display of gratitude, my happiness increased dramatically. This boost faded slowly over the next hour and a half, but it pushed me through the hardest part of the day. This challenge showed me the potential of gratitude as a boost to mental health, and I might do something similar again if im feeling down.

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## Think

**One million** single use plastic bottles are sold around the world every **minute**. Let that sink in. 1,000,000! Despite some of our best efforts, still **only 9%** of plastic is actually recycled. Plastic pollution is an environmental and public health crisis causing harm to our natural resources, animals and people. Luckily, there are *many* alternatives to single-use plastics and organizations like **Lonely Whale** are working to raise awareness about and address the global plastic problem!

## Challenge

Now it's time to make a personal commitment to stop using single-use plastic water bottles, and challenge others to make the same commitment! Create a social media campaign to spread the #HydrateLike message. Encourage others to #HydrateLike... a student!

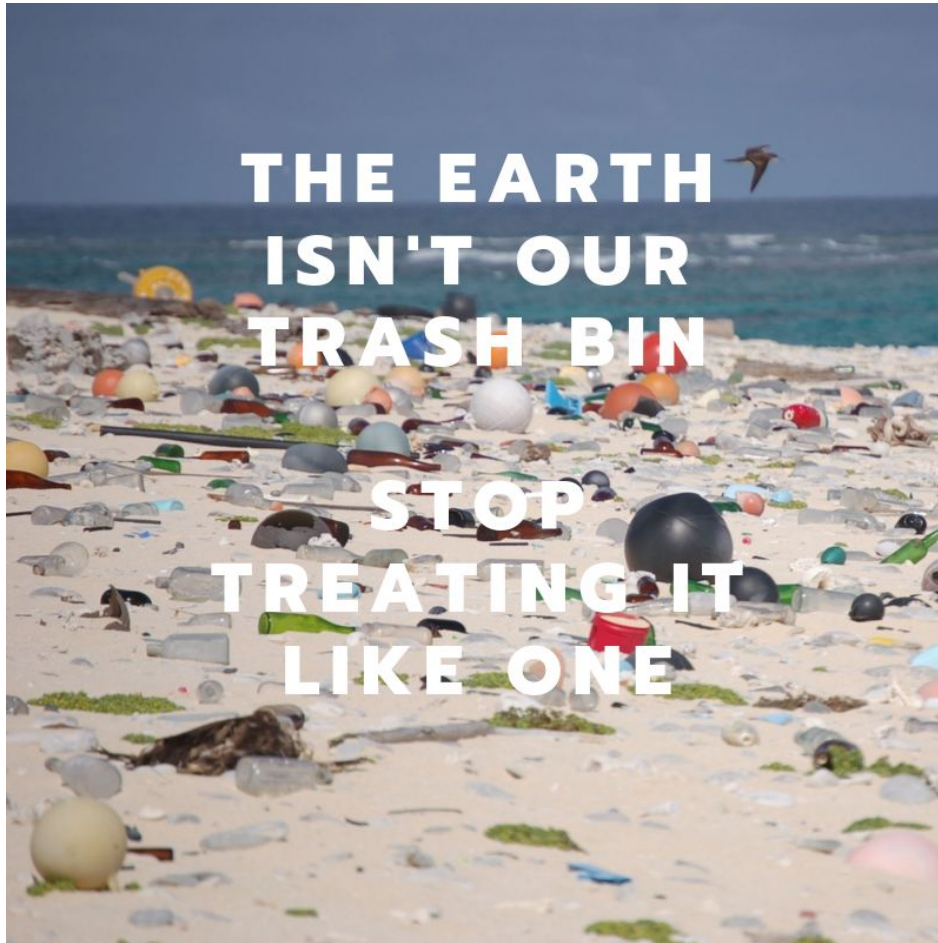
- Make it creative and engaging! Think about videos, infographics, posters, etc.
- Include alternatives to single-use plastic water bottles as listed on the [Hydrate Like website](#).
- Challenge friends, family members, classmates, local businesses, even celebrities to ditch single-use plastic water bottles by tagging them in your post. Start a conversation in the comments!
- Tag @TurningGreenOrg and @LonelyWhale, and use #PGC2019 and #HydrateLike.

Youtube Video:

<https://youtu.be/WETHHilwq98>



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**ashley.pgc2019** Wow this video is really cool!



2 minutes ago



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**ashley.pg2019** Wow this video is really cool! 



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