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What makes you feel connected to the natural world?

- The fact that us as humans are also animals and belong in this “natural world.” When I am sitting here on a bench in the forest preserve near me, I realize that I myself am a part of the natural world, and I should feel like I am a part of this large ecosystem, instead of separating from it and feeling like I am superior and deserve to harm the natural environment
- I hear birds chirping and insects screeching occasionally, and I see a squirrel running up a nearby oak, and I feel like I am witnessing a system of different movements and niches within the forest, and by sitting here, I feel like I am apart of it too
- It is basically fall here and the leaves falling and the changing colors make me appreciate nature and brings back good memories
- I love the quaint, peaceful nature of the environment I am in, which juxtaposes with the bustling town I live in
 - Gives me room to think and in a way slows life down
 - A nice break from a bustle of schoolwork and traffic jams

How does this connection influence the work that you do?

- I want to preserve areas where one can see the beauty of nature and see all of the things it offers, such as viewing various animals like badgers and squirrels or birdwatching. It is a way for people to escape their lives in cities or in an office building, and immerse themselves in a contrasting environment. I know that resting my eyes and biking in the trail of the forest preserve near me is super helpful and is nice to see the vast trees, the falling leaves, and the small creatures scrambling around.
- I want to preserve these peaceful areas in order for people to have a place to exercise and relax and to be able to think clearly and self-reflect.
- These things make me want to act against building unneeded infrastructure over these areas, as parks and green spaces provide valuable resources to our community, like the various ecosystem services: cultural services such as the recreational, religious, or educational values, supporting services such as pollination, a properly functioning nitrogen cycle, and a healthy decomposer community that aids in soil formation, regulating services such as the sequestration of carbon dioxide by terrestrial plants to mitigate global warming and provisioning services like the food provided, timber, medicine, etc.
- It urges me to fight for what I love and believe in! Sitting here is like a reminder of that.

As you observe the space around you, what sensations arise?

- The first sensation that really hit me was smell. I smell the fresh aroma of grass, some flowers, and well, I Don't really know how to describe it, but it smells “forest-y.” Like a bunch of green stuff lol. This is really something that people in the city can't really smell if they are within the buildings, and for me, it feels super refreshing after sitting in my room all day, and it is almost cleansing.

- Then there are the visual sensations, so as described before, there are the sights of the variety of trees, bushes, twigs on the ground, the yellow gravel path below me, the occasional biker or walker passing, the birds in the trees and sky, the squirrels and small animals running around in the undergrowth, the light filtering through the branches and hitting the ground, the stream running through the trees in the back. These visual things make me feel connected to my surroundings and appreciative for what nature is.
- The sound of chirping, rustling leaves, and the faint sound of running water really shows me how peaceful it is that I can hear those things in the first place, whereas, let's say in my room, I cannot at all.

