

# Wasteland

By: Emery Eash

My shoes crunch on what is left of the soil as I slowly walk down the dusty, dry path. The yellow, dead grass swishes in the hot wind. Fire season this year will be as bad as ever, and the thick smoke that always comes with it will be worse.

As I come upon a small hill, the hot sun beats down on me. As I make my way up the hill, the dead trees sway in the wind. With the shortage of water lately, they have dropped their leaves and died. Over the hill, the old riverbed lays empty with nothing but rocks.

A rush of sadness fills me as I make my way towards the old river bank. I have many memories here as a child, laughing and swimming in the river. I loved to watch the fish and colorful rocks as I floated with the clear, rushing water. I would splash and play with my friends, family, and dog. It seemed the sun never shone brighter on those days, the happiness never greater. The birds would sing background music to our joy, the mountains in the background. Oh, how I loved this place.

Now, the beautiful, flowing river has dried to nothing but rocks. The birds have left to go somewhere that is better, although no such place exists. Now, the world has been reduced to a dry, wasteland. Trash floats on the hot wind and blows into what is left of the trees.

I cannot stand to stay in this dump, so I trek to my bike. When I get up to my bike, I swing a leg over and start up the cracking asphalt path.

As I ride into town, I look at what used to be the tiny town of Columbia Falls. Big buildings have taken place of what used to be trees and green grass. The air smells thick with exhaust and I find myself breathing hard. Big, corporate businesses have replaced the boutiques and local businesses. Houses are smashed together, with no more room to build. The small town spirit and community has vanished.

When I get to my office building, I put my bike on the rack and walk in the door. Brenda the secretary waves at me while talking frantically on the phone, I smile and head to my office. I sit at my desk and review this week's projects.

Years ago I created Save the Earth, a non-profit organization that is trying to restore the planet as it used to be. Although the planet is not fully restored, we have come a long way. The business is growing and we are making a big stand against the many things destroying our home. We have partnered with schools and businesses around the world to plant trees, pick up trash, and more.

My business is restoring the Earth so that children will be able to enjoy the pleasure of nature, just as I once did.