

Climate Story  
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Hello!

My name is Anna Haynes, here is my climate story.

I'm a very lucky person, and not just because I belong to that beautiful family, but because I was born in Minnesota, a state with amazing access to Lake Superior, the largest freshwater lake in North America, and our own personal collection of just absolutely amazing untouched woods and water. Have any of you been to the boundary waters? Everything looks like a stock image. I love living in a town where I can step out my front door and see constellations and watch the sunrise from my bathroom as I brush my teeth. It's simply not fair that I get to live here, and that when I have kids, they may not get to live in the same Minnesota I have. Climate change means they may never get to go swimming in Cedar Lake, because the fragile ecosystem has been turned into a stagnant puddle.

There's this little lake along the Wobegon Trail, I've learned that it's called Lake Schwinghammer but when I was little my family called it Bike Lake. This was because Bike Lake is about three miles from my house, so when we'd go on family bike rides our goal was to make it to Bike Lake. One of my clearest childhood memories is going for bike rides with my family, trying to keep a steady pace so you could talk to whoever you were biking next to. Being a little kid I always wound up going a little too fast and getting tired, and then going a little too slow. When I got a little older my mom and I would bike out to Bike Lake and sit on the dock reading our books. We'd watch for fish jumping out of the water and try to follow the paths of the swallows to see if they returned to the same nest every time, and sometimes get caught by a storm and have to bike back in the rain. I know that a lot of people like Schwinghammer Lake, but Bike Lake is my own private sanctuary. In my memories it belongs to me, my family, and the fish and birds.

I'm scared, not only that careless CO2 emissions will take away the lakes, both the big and small ones, from Minnesota, but that in a way, it'll destroy much more.

What if, once we're forced to start focusing on these problems, and when we have to fix the damage we have created for our survival, we'll start forgetting to maintain things that we so often take for granted now, like the Lake Wobegon Trail, and our priorities will change because we have to save the things that keep us alive on the planet, so we stop taking care of the things that make us love living on the planet.

I don't want to lose what we've been given. I have complete faith in humans' ability to solve this problem, but first we have to collectively acknowledge that there is a problem.