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I remember watching the news during Hurricane Harvey, seeing the water level rising above the street signs. Next, over 1 million acres burned to the ground in California, including land within the American River Canyon. Then, severe weather struck Colorado, Minnesota, Arkansas, and Missouri. Next, drought hit the Great Plains. All of this took place in the United States within 2017. I could no longer deny the severity and urgency of the climate crisis.

Although I *felt* small and powerless, I knew the only way to fight this was through action. I began by funding an environmental club at my school, where I was able to not only meet people with interests similar to mine, but also to take action on an issue I am passionate about. I have led the club in climate strikes, awareness weeks, and discussions regarding our individual roles in battling the climate crisis. Together, we have enjoyed the various trails the American River Canyon has to offer on weekend hikes.

Last spring, I became determined to reach a larger audience. Along with other youth leaders from my community, I began crafting an event that would be held at the Auburn State Theater called *Think Globally, Act Locally: The State of the Climate*. The event aimed to shift the mindset surrounding climate change from guilt and denial to empowered knowledge and optimism.

It was held many months ago but I am still in touch with many of the attendees. They have spoken to me about the lifestyle changes they have made to live more sustainably, as well as the relief they feel in knowing they are not alone in the fight.

Additionally, along with my School's MIT-funded InvenTeam, I am working to develop a device that increases the efficiency of burn piles, reducing the amount of carbon dioxide and particulate matter produced while simultaneously creating biochar. This device will reduce the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere.

My passion for environmental stewardship began in the American River Canyon. I have grown up hiking, biking and running along the American River. No matter how old I grow, I am still awestruck every time I catch a glimpse of the canyon. Having such an incredible place so close to home cultivates community. We all can enjoy the American River Canyon, be it through picnicking, hiking, relaxing by the river even cheering on runners during the Western States 100. I believe that its versatility and serenity is what make it such an incredible place that we must all pledge to protect.