



Los Altos Historical Commission and Los Altos History Museum
39th Annual Margaret Thompson Historical Essay Contest
For 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Graders

2023 Theme – A Path to Conservation Inspired by Wallace Stegner

Essay Prompt

Background:

Wallace Stegner was at the forefront of the modern conservation movement. He was a visionary who understood how important wilderness is to human beings. Mr. Stegner brought awareness locally, nationally, and globally to the importance of the environment and conservation. In 1962, he co-founded Green Foothills, a local environmental organization, which led to the development of MidPeninsula Regional Open Space and their work in preserving wilderness areas and natural open spaces for all to enjoy.

“We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be...a part of the geography of hope.” - Wallace Stegner

Come to the Museum grounds anytime to view this outdoor exhibit by March 5. The exhibit begins in front of the J. Gilbert Smith House. Learn about the impact Wallace Stegner had on the conservation movement as you stroll the Museum grounds and access photos, videos, and audio recordings via QR codes on your electronic device. For more information on this exhibit, please visit this website:

losaltoshistory.org/StegnerExhibit

Writing Prompt:

Have a conversation in your classroom or with family members about what you and your family are doing to save our natural resources and protect our environment and wildlife. Think of yourself as an environmentalist or conservationist. What are some things you are doing? Are there places in the natural world that you and your family like to go and feel the “hope in nature?” Conclude your discussion by thinking about how you can save and protect the environment in the future.

Choose **ONE** of these topics:

- *Tell us what you are doing to protect our environment.*
- *Tell us about where you like to go and feel the “hope in nature.” What do you enjoy doing there?*
- *Tell us about what you will do to save the environment in the future.*

Draw a sketch, paint a picture, or take a photo to focus and illustrate your ideas either before you write or after you have completed your essay.

Tell us about your “path to conservation.” Use interesting vocabulary and communicate your ideas in a creative manner. Include your photo or artwork with your essay when you submit it.

Win Prizes

1st Place - \$50 2nd Place - \$30 3rd Place - \$20
3 Winners Per Grade Level!