

# Local artist packs 100 environmental issues into one mural

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By [Ryan Kuna | For lehighvalleylive.com](#)

Tom Maxfield Artist

Artist Tom Maxfield reviews a downsized proof of his mural opening this October at the Nurture Nature Center in Easton. (Ryan Kuna | For lehighvalleylive.com)

Former [Bethlehem Catholic High School](#) art teacher Thomas Maxfield is putting the finishing touches on an environmental mural at the Nurture Nature Center in Easton. The mural touches on 100 different ecological situations in a 5x15-foot comprehensive piece.

And the goal is to spark discussion.

"I hope that people view the mural and see the world around them," Maxfield says. "I hope that they see that each individual is a part of the ecological world. Nobody is separate from that environment. I hope they learn about how global environmental issues affect us on a local scale."

Maxfield is a graphic artist, designer and illustrator with 35 years experience. When asked about his reason for undertaking this piece, Maxfield says he wanted to better identify and learn about the local impact that seemingly large scale environmental issues have on our society.

To accomplish this goal, Maxfield combined his detailed artistic vision and talent with a great deal of environmental science research. Maxfield has served for several years on the Lower Saucon Township Environmental Advisory Council. He met with local environmental scientists to expand on his own personal research, before he even started to draw.

His findings became sketches, and later ink drawings. Those ink drawings were then scanned into a computer where they were digitally colored and synthesized into one piece.

The mural will open to the public in October. The piece will be produced on a curved canvas so viewers will be encircled by both the work and the current environmental conditions affecting our local communities.

In the illustration, Maxfield worked painstakingly to identify each issue in a manner that is neither good or bad. He presents the situations as existing conditions, leaving the spectators to reflect and discuss the existing condition's impact on the health and welfare of the

community's future. The mural depicts environmental issues as diverse as habitat destruction, water usage, and urban greening. It also encompasses some historic, local conditions through images tinted like old photos.

[The Nurture Nature Center](#) recently received a grant from the Department of Environmental Education to develop educational materials for the Easton Area School District based off of the situations and conditions presented in Maxfield's mural. That educational campaign is scheduled to launch on Earth Day 2016.

The campaign will feature lessons that explain how the ecological world is connected.

Additional works by Thomas Maxfield will be on display in an exhibit called "Perspectives on the Environment" at the Nurture Nature Center. It opens to the public 6:30 - 9 p.m. on Aug. 14 at 518 Northampton St. in Easton.

This exhibit focuses on exploring, communicating, and expressing environmental ideas through artistic perspective. Maxfield's work in this exhibit focuses on the troubles in the [Pacific Gyre](#) where plastic and trash are being washed into the Pacific Ocean, polluting the water and killing marine life.

For more information on the mural, call 610-253-4432.

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