

Educate! Climate Change

Sustainable development is a balance between using resources needed for human activity while still maintaining the Earth's natural ability to continue to provide the resources in the future. Global warming is the warming of the Earth's atmosphere due to greenhouse gasses. Everyday life contributes to the amount of greenhouse gasses being released into the air such as driving cars and using electricity. It is important that as humans we work to protect the environment by trying to make as little of an impact so the Earth can heal itself. By using sustainable and renewable resources for energy, we can decrease the amount of emissions released into the atmosphere.

Important Definitions

Greenhouse Effect

- The rise in temperature that the Earth experiences because certain gases in the atmosphere trap energy from the sun.

Wind Power

- The use of wind to turn the blades of the turbines, which spins a shaft that is connected to a generator, creating mechanical power or electricity
- Free of Pollutants
- Wind farms are completed in weeks
- Wind is free of charge! Not mined, drilled, or transported

Solar Energy

- The use of solar energy to create electricity or heat using photovoltaic cells to capture and convert the sun's energy into electricity and heat.
- Does not pollute
- Can be used for heating and cooling water and houses

The Debate

The debate is whether Global Warming is a flawed and incomplete science, or if the greenhouse gasses as a result of human activity are responsible. Is this just a normal cyclical change and how big of a problem could this become if it is not cyclical? Many scientists say that there are hard facts proving that more greenhouse gasses are present in the atmosphere than ever before and that the Earth is heating as a result. All scientists agree that the future is unknown and the majority agree that Global Warming is a problem. Whether Global Warming exists or not; it is important that we continue to take the steps needed to decrease our impact and use our resources in a sustainable way to protect not only the planet, but the health of its inhabitants.

Global climate change/environmental impact statistics

- 1.7 billion people worldwide have entered the “consumer class,” adopting the diets, transportation systems, and life styles that were once limited to rich nations.
- Coal-burning power plants are the largest U.S. source of carbon dioxide pollution. They produce 2.5 billion tons every year. Automobiles, the second largest source, create nearly 1.5 billion tons of CO₂ annually.
- The 10 hottest years on record have all occurred since 1990.
- Americans make up just 4 percent of the world's population. We produce 25 percent of the carbon dioxide pollution from fossil-fuel burning
- 12% of the world's people are in North America and Western Europe and account for 60% of private energy consumption.
- Requiring SUVs, minivans and pick-up trucks to be as efficient as cars would cut 120 million tons of carbon dioxide pollution a year by 2010.
- According to NASA, the polar ice cap is now melting at the alarming rate of nine percent per decade. Arctic ice thickness has decreased 40 percent since the 1960s
- Approximately 20 to 30 percent of plant and animal species assessed so far are likely to be at increased risk of extinction if global average temperature increases by more than 2.7 to 4.5 degrees Fahrenheit

- *Natural Resources Defense Council