

GREEN GLOSSARY

A

Air Pollution: Airborne contaminants or pollutants that adversely affect the environment or human health.

Alternative Energy: Renewable energy sources, such as wind, flowing water, solar energy and biomass, which create less environmental damage and pollution than fossil fuels, and offer an alternative to nonrenewable resources.

B

Biodegradable: A material or substance which will decompose quickly and without harmful effects to the environment, when left exposed to nature.

Biodiesel: A fuel derived from sources such as vegetable oils that is the equivalent of diesel refined from petroleum; diesel has a higher energy density than gasoline. A variety of oils serve as a source of biodiesel including rapeseed, soybean, and even waste vegetable oil. Other crops that show promise include mustard, flax, sunflower, canola, and even algae.

Biofuel: A fuel made from biological materials, usually plants. Ethanol and biodiesel are two different types of biofuels. Fossil fuels (which are formed underground) are distinct from biofuels.

Biomass: Organic matter available on a renewable basis. Biomass includes forest and mill residues, agricultural crops and wastes, wood and wood wastes, animal wastes, livestock operation residues, aquatic plants, fast-growing trees and plants, and municipal and industrial wastes.

C

Carbon Footprint: The total amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases emitted over the full lifecycle of a product or service, expressed as grams of CO₂ equivalents.

Carbon Neutral: Over its life cycle, a product or process that does not add more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. For instance, a plant consumes carbon dioxide while it grows, then when transformed into and used as fuel such as ethanol it releases carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere. Plant-derived fuels have the potential to be carbon neutral.

Carbon Offset: Carbon offsetting is the act of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions through emissions trading. For example, a factory or production facility may not be able to reduce its own carbon footprint any further through its own actions, so it may voluntarily purchase credits for another party to offset their actions. The goal of carbon offsets is to attain a carbon neutral overall effect.

Certified Wood: Under the guidance of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), wood-based materials used in building construction that are supplied from sources that

comply with sustainable forestry practices, protecting trees, wildlife habitat, streams and soil.

Co-op America: A non-profit consumer organization that promotes a socially and economically just society by harnessing the economic power of consumers, investors, and businesses.

Cottage Industry: An industry in which the creation and services of products is home based and not factory based. The products produced are often independent, and one of a kind and not mass produced.

D

Decomposition: Time it takes for garbage to decompose in the environment:

Glass Bottle -----	1 million years
Mono filament Fishing Lines-----	600 years
Plastic Beverage Bottle-----	450 years
Disposable Diaper-----	450 years
Aluminum Can-----	80-200 years
Foamed Plastic Buoy-----	80 years
Foamed Plastic Cups-----	50 years
Rubber-Boot Sole-----	50-80 years
Tin Cans-----	50 years
Leather-----	50 years
Nylon Fabric-----	30-40 years
Plastic Film Container-----	20-30 years
Plastic Bag-----	10-20 years
Cigarette Butt-----	1-5 years
Wool Sock-----	1-5 years
Plywood-----	1-3 years
Waxed Milk Carton-----	3 months
Apple Core-----	2 months
Newspaper-----	6 weeks
Orange or Banana Peel-----	2-5 weeks
Paper Towel-----	2-4 weeks

Information Source: U.S. National Park Service; Mote Marine Lab, Sarasota, FL.

E

Eco-chic: A product or good that is both eco-friendly and hip.

Eco-friendly: An alternative to goods usually bought in most stores. These products are made with ecology and the environment in mind.

Emissions: Emissions are particles and gases released into the air as byproducts. There are many types of emissions. Greenhouse gas emissions, for example, contribute to global warming and is not sustainable to the health of the earth.

Energy Efficient: Products and systems that use less energy to perform as well or better than standard products. While energy-efficient products sometimes have higher up-front costs, they tend to cost less over their lifetime when the cost of energy consumed is factored in. An example of this is fluorescent light bulbs vs. incandescent bulbs.

ENERGY STAR: International standard for energy-efficiency for electronic products. Products that comply with the Energy Star standards have been approved for their concern for the environment.

Ethanol: Also known as grain alcohol, a liquid produced by fermentation in which yeast metabolizes sugar, producing carbon dioxide and ethanol.

E

Fair Trade: A social movement that promotes standards for international labor and gives workers a sense of economic self sufficiency through fair wages and good employment opportunities to economically disadvantaged populations.

Fair Trade Certified: The Fair Trade Certified™ label guarantees consumers that strict economic, social and environmental criteria were met in the production and trade of an agricultural product. Fair Trade Certification is currently available in the U.S. for coffee, tea and herbs, cocoa and chocolate, fresh fruit, flowers, sugar, rice, and vanilla. TransFair USA (www.transfairusa.org) licenses companies to display the Fair Trade Certified label on products that meet strict international Fair Trade standards.

Flat-pack: Refers to furniture that is designed to pack flat, thereby reducing shipping costs and fuel used in transportation. Flat-pak designs are ready to assemble by the customer, right out of the box.

Fossil Fuel: Fuels formed eons ago from decayed plants and animals. Oil, coal and natural gas are such fuels.

Forestry Stewardship Council: The Forestry Stewardship Council is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests. FSC-labeled wood products indicate that the wood is harvested from sustainably-managed forests.

FTF: Fair Trade Federation. An association of fair trade wholesalers, retailers and producers that adhere to social criteria and environmental principles that foster a more equitable and sustainable system of production and trade.

G

Geothermal Energy: Heat generated by natural processes within the earth. Chief energy resources are hot dry rock, magma (molten rock), hydrothermal (water/steam from geysers and fissures) and geopressure (water saturated with methane under tremendous pressure at great depths).

Global Warming: An increase in the near surface temperature of the Earth. Global warming has occurred in the distant past as the result of natural influences, but the term

is most often used to refer to the warming predicted to occur as a result of increased emissions of greenhouse gases.

Green Building: A green building is designed to conserve resources and reduce negative impacts on the environment - whether it is energy, water, building materials or land. Compared to conventional construction, green buildings may use one or more renewable energy systems for heating and cooling, such as solar electric, solar hot water, geothermal, bio mass, or any combination of these.

Green Design: A term used in the building, furnishings, and product industries to indicate design sensitive to environmentally-friendly, ecological issues.

Green Hotels: "Green" Hotels are environmentally-friendly properties whose managers are eager to institute programs that save water, save energy and reduce solid waste-- while saving money. (As defined by "Green" Hotels Association)

Greenhouse Effect: The heating that occurs when gases such as carbon dioxide trap heat escaping from the Earth and radiate it back to the surface; so-called because the gases are transparent to sunlight but not to heat and thus act like the glass in a greenhouse.

Greenhouse Gas: Gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone, hydro fluorocarbons (HCFC's) and chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's) that are contributing to the greenhouse effect and to a rise in global temperatures.

Greenwashing: Greenwashing is a superficial nod to the environment that marketers and businesses that historically were not interested in sustainable concerns, are doing in order to improve their public relation standings with the consumer or public.

Going Green: A phrase referring to individual action that a person can consciously take to curb harmful effects on the environment through consumer habits, behavior, and lifestyle.

H

HEPA Filter: High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter which removes particles in the air by forcing it through screens containing microscopic pores.

Hybrid Vehicle: A car or other transportation vehicle that runs on both electric battery and fuel, making the gas mileage extremely efficient and also produces fewer.

I

Impervious Surface: Any land area covered by buildings or paved with a hard surface such that water cannot seep through the surface into the ground.

Invasive Species: An introduced species that takes over an area and chokes out the native species.

L

Leave No Trace: Leave No Trace is a set of principles for participation in outdoor recreation that seeks to minimize the impact on the natural environment. The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics is an educational, nonprofit organization dedicated to the responsible enjoyment and active stewardship of the outdoors by all people, worldwide.

LEED: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. A leading certification process by the U.S. Green Building Council that evaluates new buildings constructed to common green standards.

Low-VOC: A term referring to reduced amounts of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in paint and finishes. Low-VOC paints do not off-gas as much as conventional paints and contain fewer toxins that are harmful to the environment.

N

Natural: A product that is made from materials and ingredients found in nature, with little or no human intervention. For example, wood is a natural material while plastic is not.

Non-toxic: Something that is not toxic or poisonous.

O

Organic: Of or relating to a product that is solely made from plants or insects. Organic materials and products often carry certifications according to industry.

P

Photovoltaic: The process of converting light into electricity. Photo means "light", voltaic means "electric". Often referred to as "PV" and "solar-electric" for short.

Pollution Prevention: Reducing the amount of energy, materials, packaging, or water in the design, manufacturing, or purchasing of products or materials in an effort to increase efficient use of resources, reduce toxicity, and eliminate waste.

Post-consumer: Refers to recycled material that was used first by a consumer. A high post-consumer content helps divert materials from ending up in landfills.

Pre-consumer: Refers to recycled material that came from the manufacturing process. Pre-consumer recycling of scraps and discards diverts waste that may otherwise end up in landfills, and reduces use of raw materials.

R

Recyclable: A product or material that can be converted back into material that can be used again in manufacturing new goods. Typically, recyclable materials (aluminum, steel, paper, etc.) must remain in their pure form. If too many adhesives are used, or a product is made from a composite, those materials may not be separated at the end of its life-cycle for recycling.

Recycled: To use again or reprocess.

Renewable Energy: Energy harvested from sources that are not depleted when used, typically causing very low environmental impact. Examples include solar energy, hydroelectric power, and wind power.

Remanufacturing: A recycled concept by which an existing product can have its useful life extended through a secondary manufacturing or refurbishing process such as remanufactured systems furniture.

Renewable: A raw material that can be replenished within a reasonable amount of time. Example, bamboo and sustainably-harvested woods are renewable. Gold and precious stones are not renewable.

Repurpose: Taking a thing or a material and using it for a purpose not originally intended. Repurposed goods often have a lot of inherent character, flair, and style.

Re-use: To use again, whether for the same purpose or reappropriated for another.

S

Sustainable: Actions and products that meet current needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet theirs. Sustainability is a broad term and often refers to the desire to provide the best outcomes for the human and natural environments both now and into the indefinite future.

Sustainable Tourism: Tourism growth and development in a manner that does not deplete the natural and built environment and preserves the culture, history and heritage of the local community.

Sustainable Tourism Marketing: Marketing a destination to a level of tourism activity that can be maintained over the long term because it results in a net benefit for the social, economic, natural and cultural environments of the area in which it takes place.

V

VOC: Volatile organic compounds. VOC's are toxins commonly found in conventional paints, sealers, and finishes.

W

Waste Reduction: A process to reduce or eliminate that amount of waste generated at its source or to reduce the amount of toxicity from waste or the reuse of materials. The best way to reduce waste is not to create it in the first place.

Wastewater: Water that has been used and contaminated. Wastewater must be purified before being used again or before being returned to the environment.

Z

Zero-VOC: A term used to indicate paint containing no volatile organic compounds - a healthier alternative to conventional paints.