



# Environmental Issues & Facts

**America's Gluttony** - With only 6% of the world's population, Americans generate 35% of the trash and consume 35% of the world's resources.

**Air** – Less than 1% of Chinese cities have clean air. Respiratory disease is the leading cause of death in China.

## Energy

- 80% of all the oil discovered in North America to date has already been extracted.
- Mines and smelters use up a tenth of all annual global energy expenditures.
- The U.S. could save 33 million gallons of gasoline each day if the average commuter – passenger load were increased by one person.
- Although the use of lead in U.S. gasoline has declined since 1985, other sources inject about 2 billion kilograms of lead into the atmosphere in this country each year. An estimated 1.7 million children in the U.S. have unacceptably high levels of lead in their blood

## Rainforests

- The amount of water that a single rainforest tree returns to the atmosphere in its lifetime of 100 years or more is truly prodigious – on the order of 2.5 million gallons.
- Rainforests are being destroyed at a staggering rate. According to the National Academy of Science, at least 50 million acres a year are lost, an area the size of England, Wales, and Scotland combined.

## Recycling

- Every year, Americans receive 2 million tons of junk mail of which less than 50% is opened.
- **Metal** – The energy saved from one recycled aluminum can, will operate a television for 3 hours.
- **Paper** – Waste paper makes up 40% of our solid waste. We could reduce by 6 million tons the waste going to landfills if we recycled all our newspapers. Americans recycle 245 million tons of paper every year.
- **Plastics** – Americans use 2.5 million plastic bottles every HOUR. Recycling just 10% of these bottles would keep 200 million pounds out of landfills every year. WE make enough plastic film every year to shrink-wrap the state of Texas.
- Every ton of paper made from recycled materials saves about 17 trees.
- Recycling a glass jar saves enough energy to light a 100-watt light bulb for four hours.

## Resources – Non Renewable

- More river miles (12,000) have been devastated by acid mine drainage pollution than are protected in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in the U.S.
- Between 1,000 and 40,000 tons of radioactive waste are produced for every ton of marketable uranium.

- Wastes, including arsenic, lead and radium-226, brought to the surface as a normal consequence of oil and gas drilling in the Gulf of Mexico have resulted in the creation of a 5000 square kilometer “dead” zone on the sea floor.
- **Transportation** – Every year, Americans abandon 3 million cars.
- **Water / Land** – Each toilet flush uses about 6 gallons of water and a 5 minute shower can use 35 gallons. A leaky toilet can waste 90,000 gallons of water every year.
- Over half (53%) of the wetlands in the lower 48 states were lost between the late 1700s and mid 1980s. About 100 million acres of wetlands remain today in the lower 48, representing less than 5% of the landmass in the continental United States.

## Where to Learn More...

### **Environmental Organization Directory**

<http://www.webdirectory.com/>

### **Environmental Media Services**

<http://www.ems.org/index.html>

### **National Resources Defense Council**

<http://www.nrdc.org/>

### **US Environmental Protection Agency**

<http://www.epa.gov/>

### **Environmental Organizations On-line**

<http://www.envorgs.com/>

### **Green Solitaire Organization**

<http://greensolitaire.bizland.com/>

### **Sierra Club**

<http://www.sierraclub.org/>

### **World Wildlife Federation**

<http://www.worldwildlife.org/>

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