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THE YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALIST



NEW YEAR, NEW GOALS

SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

As we start 2021, it is important to be mindful—to reflect on how we perceive and engage with the world. In the new year, teens can be mindful of their consumption patterns. Reducing consumption not only reduces waste, but it can also show gratitude for the things we already own. Take a look at these goals you can have in 2021.

Fashion: To not contribute to the fast fashion industry, try buying less, thrifting, or upcycling (a good one if you are looking for a hobby).

Food Waste: For teens who want to eat greener, they can challenge themselves to incorporate more plants into their diet. Or, buying from local farmers' markets can lessen food waste, as trucks will not waste fumes or spoil produce during long-distance transportation.

Transportation: When it comes to transportation, make an effort to carpool or bike to your location at least a couple times a week.

Otherwise, keep your car in good maintenance; this can lessen the fuel consumed.

Energy: Power can be saved by turning off the lights often. Additionally, energy-efficient bulbs (LEDs or CFLs) and a power strip you can switch on and off are good substitutes for household purchases.

You could make these areas guiding principles or measurable outcomes, depending on your best motivators. Nevertheless, the priority is to consume less. Teens should start implementing small changes now. In the end, sustainability is a lifestyle. Only then will we be able to shift away from the unsustainable process of extraction, exploitation, production, consumption, and waste.



HOW SMALL CHANGES CAN BENEFIT THE ENVIRONMENT

NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

The year of 2020 brought us numerous twists and turns, unparalleled by any year in modern history. Due to the magnitude of this past year's chaos, many people are reimagining and reevaluating their lives, vowing to prioritize self-care and quality time with loved ones. However, one thing that remained consistent this year is the need for environmental consciousness. Therefore, this year the Nature Conservation Committee is making it our goal to promote individual based environmental responsibility.

The idea of making lifestyle changes is intimidating at first, but in reality, even the smallest of changes can help to protect

the environment if we all work together. One positive change you can make is choosing to shop from local businesses. When you choose to shop locally, you are helping to reduce your own carbon footprint through reduced fuel consumption. This is because the amount of gas used to drive yourself to a local store is far less than that used to have your purchase shipped to your home.

Shopping locally for food is just as beneficial as shopping locally for other consumer goods. Buying from local farms directly benefits local wildlife through reducing your carbon footprint as well as minimizing the need for large-scale agriculture operations. These large-scale operations can reduce biodiversity by increasing

land degradation and excessively using pesticides.

It is important to remember that supporting local businesses is more accessible for some than it is for others depending on location. Although you might not be able to make every proposed eco-friendly lifestyle change, there are still plenty of ways to take part in personal environmental responsibility. It is for this reason that this year the Nature Conservation Committee is making it a goal to not only support local businesses in upcoming projects, but to also educate and advocate for additional ways to take personal initiative in caring for the environment and conserving nature.

FUN FACT FOR YOU

When states are ranked by size and population, Alabama is approximately in the middle, but we ranked seventh out of 55 states and territories in 2018 for hazardous air releases per square mile, according to EPA's Toxics Release Inventory.



THE YEAR TO LIVE IN INFAMY

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH COMMITTEE

As we come out of a year filled with a global pandemic, quarantine, multiple mental breakdowns, social change, and major political turmoil, it is nice to look back and reflect on the good things that came out of one of the worst years of everyone's lives. This year, species were brought back from the edge of extinction; interest in renewable energy surged; many Indigenous people were recognized for their efforts; and new protected areas were created. As we enter into a new year, let us take time to look back at some positive environmental stories from 2020.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic brought about by zoonotic disease, China established new restrictions on wildlife trade and consumption. Public opinion has shifted towards favoring stricter animal protections. The role of Indigenous people in rescuing our environment has become increasingly recognized, especially amongst the women. Nemonte Nenquimo, a leader of Ecuador's Indigenous Waorani nation, successfully petitioned and saved 500,000 acres of Indigenous territories, as well as parts of the Amazon rainforest, from oil extraction. Nemonte was recognized by Time magazine as one of 2020's 100 most influential people. She was also awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize alongside Leydy Pech, a Mayan beekeeper who spearheaded a coalition that prevented the planting of genetically modified soybean crops in seven states in southern Mexico.

Several species were brought back from the brink of extinction including the New Zealand black stilt bird and the New Guinea singing dog. Furthermore, the last 14 Lao water frogs were rescued from a vanishing stream in northern Chile and have produced over 200 tadpoles and the Burmese roofed turtles, once considered extinct, have grown to a population of nearly 1,000 turtles this year. Other species have been reappearing like Bolivia's devil-eyed frog and satyr butterfly seen for the first time in decades and a chameleon from northwestern Madagascar seen for the first time in a century.

The demand for renewable energies such as solar, wind, and electric vehicles has surged exponentially. Countries all across the world are pledging to meet 100% of their energy needs through renewable energy. This green energy, primarily through wind and solar, is poised to overtake coal as the top global power producer of energy in the next five years. The upcoming administration of presidential-elect, Joe Biden is predicted to have a major impact on climate action and the role of renewable energy in global power markets. New conservation projects were created and financed in the areas: the protection of Myanmar, a forest of 386,000 acres and home to various critically endangered species; the protection of Nepal's Himalayas covering 262,000 acres of land; and Nigeria establishing a conservation area where the most threatened subspecies of chimpanzees in the world will survive.

Though 2020 was a year that will long live in infamy as "the year that changed all," we can celebrate the fact that we were not solely impacted negatively. Great things came out of 2020, just as we hope great things will come out of 2021. To learn more about current environmental events, please follow News.Mongobay.com

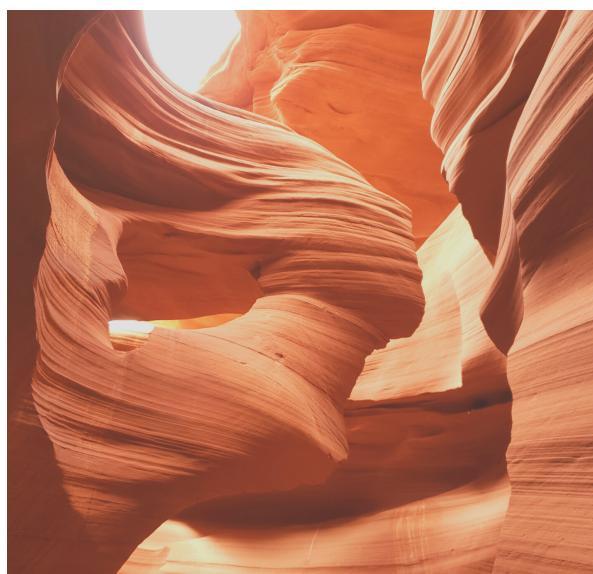
2020 WAS A YEAR THAT WILL LONG LIVE IN INFAMY AS "THE YEAR THAT CHANGED ALL"

CHRISTMAS TREE COMPOST

ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Many face the common problem in the months of late December and early January of what to do with their Christmas trees, the living ones, of course, used in people's homes during the end-of-the-year holidays. Several schools in select cities have participated in Christmas tree composts for years, normally hosted by recycling clubs from the select schools.

2020 has been a year of unimaginable challenges that the world has had to face over and over again, affecting our state of Alabama's recycling in a large way. Despite these challenges, the city of Montgomery teamed up with Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and



offered a Christmas tree compost at the end of 2020 for free. Residents were able to drop off Christmas trees at regular trash points throughout the city, giving residents all access opportunities to turn the dying trees in without going out of their way of daily life.

**RESIDENTS WERE ABLE TO DROP
OFF CHRISTMAS TREES AT
REGULAR TRASH POINTS
THROUGHOUT THE CITY**

While Christmas tree composts have an array of recycling methods with their collected trees, such as turning the trees into mulch, the ALWFF is using the trees to expand their fishing habitats and promote tourism with the desired outcomes. Using public fishing lakes, the ALWFF has used the trees to attract the fish to congregated areas. The lakes with the recycled trees have been found to attract more fish than other regular habitat types. Using this method of recycling, this not only cuts down on our waste of Christmas trees but benefits our state in more ways. While the end of 2020 was filled with election chaos and yet more news of our government's internal divide, with the new term of presidency we have hope that the recycling crisis caused by COVID earlier in 2020 will begin to better, and from the lead that Montgomery has taken in bettering our state the hope continues to grow.

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