

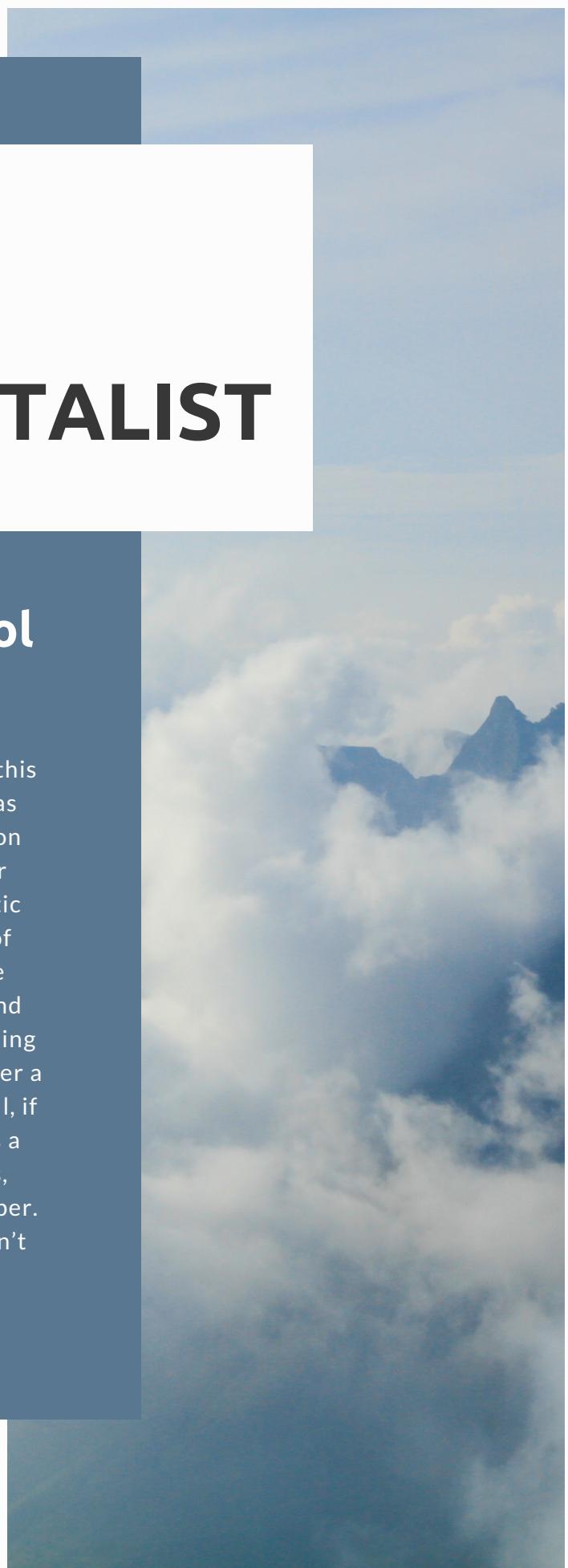
OCTOBER 2020 | ISSUE 1

THE YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALIST

Sustainability at School

Sustainable Waste Management Committee

Going to school is crazy and stressful during this time, but it's still important to reduce waste as much as we possibly can. If going to in - person school, having a reusable lunch box and water bottle will greatly reduce the amount of plastic packaging that gets thrown away at the end of the day. Plus, the one-time investment will be cheaper than constantly buying paper bags and water bottles in the future. Now that everything is going virtual, you might also want to transfer a lot of your notes and to-do lists virtual as well, if you think paper is not a necessity for you. It's a lot easier to organize notes on digital devices, rather than having to keep track of all the paper. If paper is a necessity, make sure that you don't throw it away, but recycle or compost it.



How can YOU reduce your carbon footprint?

Educational Outreach Committee

Have you heard about the climate change debate? Do you know what your carbon footprint is? Did you know that you are directly impacting the climate every day? How can you reduce your carbon footprint to save our environment? These questions may seem daunting, but in this article, we will break them down and help you truly understand the impact of your carbon footprint.

Your carbon footprint is measured in the amount of carbon dioxide, also known as greenhouse gas, your lifestyle adds to the atmosphere as a result of using fossil fuels. Your carbon footprint grows with the more fossil fuels you use. It decreases with the amount of carbon you consume out of the natural carbon cycle. It is important to try to reduce your carbon footprint as much as possible because your footprint is currently affecting animals, human health, biological plants, the environment, the weather, and the future economy. Have you heard about the melting ice caps, altered weather patterns, or the rising sea levels? These are all related to the increase of your carbon footprint!

The average amount of carbon the US consumes is about twenty tons per person per year. This is huge in comparison to other countries like India, which averages about 1 ton per person per year. The major use of your carbon footprint can be divided into about six categories: transportation, electricity, heating, food and clothes, leisure activities, and building/public services.

So how can you, as a young student, reduce your detrimental impact on our climate? Find an online carbon footprint calculator. Determine your footprint and decide how you can decrease the number. You might be surprised at how high it is! Be aware of everything you buy, use, and eat. Packaging is a huge waste and adds to your carbon footprint quickly. Make "If you don't have to, don't" your mantra during shopping trips. Conserve water, paper, and electricity with simple, daily choices. Take shorter showers, reuse scrap paper, and unplug from the outlets as often as possible! These are some of the most straightforward things you can do to immediately alter your carbon footprint. Knowledge is power. Research on your own and tell your friends about what you've learned! So, how will YOU reduce your carbon footprint?

DID YOU KNOW?

Plastic lasts forever. It doesn't bio-grade and go back to nature. It photo-degrades into smaller pieces of itself, continually polluting the environment throughout its life cycle.





THE RECYCLING CRISIS IN ALABAMA

Environmental Legislation Committee

What is the recycling crisis in Alabama? At the beginning of the year, the Environmental Legislation Branch of the AEYC had an interest in writing a resolution to send to the city of Birmingham Alabama's local government in hopes of getting them to establish recycling to the whole city, though we quickly learned through our research that due to the COVID 19 pandemic, and now storm damage from the recent Hurricane Sally, there is a recycling crisis all over Alabama as cities reduced the little recycling that they had due to the climate. Governments, local and statewide, are flustered with these situations, unknowing of what path to take. As researchers suggest new spikes of the pandemic to arise and fall multiple times (especially since Alabama is known for poor social prevention of COVID and is not known for taking care of the environment) during the academic school year per Alabama schools opening and COVID cases flourishing. Even on school campuses, recycling programs have had to come to a halt amidst this chaotic year.

Local governments have had their plates full this year with situations as 2020 has been a year to remember, causing the recycling crisis to once again get put on the back burner of the government. Though we are amidst a pandemic, on a global level the world is trying to get back on its feet again, starting with Greta Thunberg's "Fridays for Future" movement progressing once again. In the political world with a new 2020 election coming up, not only are the masses concerned about the presidential election and the pandemic, but also how these candidates will affect each state, including the state of Alabama. While governments small and large are currently battling several things such as these events, it is our hope to eventually write a recycling resolution for the city of Birmingham to begin our own climate movement. It is the Environmental Legislation of the AEYC to learn and report about how this state's environmental climate will move, whether it be forwards or backwards, and how the government will handle this recycling crisis.

A RANDOM FUN FACT

Toilet paper wipes out 27,000 trees a day. Worldwide, the equivalent of almost 270,000 trees is either flushed or dumped in landfills every day and roughly 10 percent of that total is attributable to toilet paper.

Water Usage

Sustainable Waste Management Committee

Turning off the faucet when not in use. When you are not directly using the water, such as when brushing your teeth, lathering, or even checking the mirror, make sure that you are turning the faucet off to conserve. Especially during this time of frequent sanitation, reducing unnecessary water usage is critical.

Reusing Rainwater. With a small rain barrel, you can harvest stormwater for a number of chores. Stormwater can be repurposed for watering plants, street cleaning, vehicle washing, toilet flushing, lawn care, and a plethora of everyday demands. Rainwater harvesting can be done both on an industrial or household scale serving a sustainable (and free) source of water.

THE MORE YOU KNOW

Peat bogs are wetlands containing large amounts of carbon, stored in decaying vegetation that has built up over centuries. New research has shown that protecting and restoring peat bogs will be crucial to achieving targets for greenhouse gas emissions and climate goals like those set by the 2015 Paris Agreement.



Home Gardening Tips

Sustainable Waste Management Committee

1. Start small. Beginning small will reduce expense and help new gardeners get a feel for growing food and live plants outdoors.
2. Use compost. Composting produces fertile soil and takes waste from the home and garden and recycles it into the soil.
3. Keep track of plant seasons and when to plant and harvest certain vegetables and fruit. Certain plants need to be planted and harvested at certain times of the year to.
4. Learn what plants grow well together. This can help speed up growth and help fertilization of soil.
5. Connect with other home gardeners in your area and built community with others that share your passion for sustainability.

You're Invading My Personal Space

Nature Conservation Committee

Alabama is one of the most biodiverse states in America, but a non-native, invasive species can disrupt any one of its ecosystems. An invasive species is a plant or animal species that is alien (or not native) to an ecosystem, and that can damage the balance of the ecosystem if introduced (NISIC). In recent years, the American South-East has experienced an influx of invasive reptiles, spiders, and birds. Florida has been hit especially hard by invasive snakes, mostly brought on by the illegal trade of exotic animals (Bell).

The largest- most prevalent and physically huge-intruder is the Burmese python, which was introduced from Southeast Asia. Native species in the Everglades, like rabbits and foxes, have become the prey of the pythons, and their local populations have been nearly eliminated (USGS). The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Committee is currently seeking public feedback on drafts for rules regulating the risks of these invasive reptiles. Because of Alabama's proximity to Florida, and the similar climates of the two states, some concern has arisen regarding how the illegal animal trade could impact our own state. Recent Alabama legislation has introduced tighter

regulations on the breeding, importation, trading, and possession of exotic and non-native species. Within 90 days of the legislation going into effect on October 15th, 2020, any person in the state of Alabama must surrender all exotic animals in their possession to the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries if no permit to own such animals has been obtained (Bolton). Commissioner Chris Blankenship of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has cited the fragility of ecosystem balance as the reason for the tighter restrictions, and calls the amendment a "proactive approach" to protecting Alabama ecosystems and the species native to those ecosystems.



National Geographic

Marine Debris in da Sea

Marine debris is litter that ends up in seas, oceans, and other large bodies of water. These patches of garbage float around in the water and tend to clump up in gyres or end up on coastlines.

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is a collection of marine debris that stretches across the Pacific Ocean from North America to Japan.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Asmelash, L. (2019, September 08). What you need to know about carbon footprints. Retrieved October 14, 2020, from <https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/08/us/carbon-footprint-facts-trnd/index.html>
- Bell, Renee. "They're Scaly, Cold-Blooded and Not from around Here, and FWC Wants Your Feedback on Them." Crestview News Bulletin, Northwest Florida Daily News, 26 Sept. 2020, www.crestviewbulletin.com/story/news/2020/09/22/fwc-seeking-feedback-draft-invasive-species-rules/5821173002/.
- Bolton, Mike. "Alabama Closes Door On Exotic Pets." Alabama Outdoor News, 24 Aug. 2020, aonmag.com/news/alabama-closes-door-exotic-pets/.
- Carbon Footprint Ltd using RADsite CMS (<https://www.radsite.co.uk/>). (n.d.). Carbon Calculator. Retrieved October 14, 2020, from <https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>
- Duncan, Scot. "Biodiversity in Alabama." Encyclopedia of Alabama, 12 June 2013, www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3462.
- Grotewold, S. (2016, April 06). How to Start a Sustainable Home Garden. Retrieved October 14, 2020, from <https://www.active.com/nutrition/articles/how-to-start-a-sustainable-home-garden-2348107?page=3>
- "How Have Invasive Pythons Impacted Florida Ecosystems?" USGS, www.usgs.gov/faqs/how-have-invasive-pythons-impacted-florida-ecosystems?qt-news_science_products=0
- Keyton, D. (2020, September 25). Greta Thunberg and youth climate protests make a return. Retrieved October 14, 2020, from <https://www.clickondetroit.com/news/world/2020/09/25/greta-thunberg-and-youth-climate-protests-make-a-return/>
- Maxwell-Gaines, C. (2020, July 27). Rainwater Harvesting 101: Your How-To Collect Rainwater Guide. Retrieved October 14, 2020, from <https://www.watercache.com/education/rainwater-harvesting-101>
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. (2020, September 21). Minnesota Stormwater Manual. Retrieved October 14, 2020, from <https://stormwater.pca.state.mn.us/>
- National Geographic Society. (2012, October 09). Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Retrieved October 14, 2020, from [https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/great-pacific-garbage-patch/](http://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/great-pacific-garbage-patch/).
- "National Invasive Species Information Center (NISIC)." National Invasive Species Information Center, U.S. Department of Agriculture , www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/.
- Osmanski, S. (2020, October 13). 20 Zero-Waste Cooking Tips for a Sustainable Kitchen. Retrieved October 14, 2020, from <https://www.greenmatters.com/p/zero-waste-cooking-tips>
- Progressive Materials. (2016, September 20). Retrieved October 14, 2020, from <https://pmsilicone.com/>