

e-Edition Plus

A current events feature for teaching with electronic editions.

By Peter Landry

For Earth Day 2009, a Green Generation

Kermit the Frog once complained that "it's not easy being green."

But in 2009 more and more people want to give it a try.

From the president of the United States to leaders of other nations to kids in local schools, people are looking for new ways to protect the environment.

President Barack Obama is pushing for tighter controls on air pollution and alternative fuels that will produce cleaner energy.

The nations of the world will meet at the end of the year to work on an agreement to slow the global warming of the Earth's atmosphere.

And on Earth Day this week, millions of people will pledge to become members of The Green Generation. That is the theme adopted for this year's Earth Day by the Earth Day Network and other environmental groups.

The Green Generation Campaign will kick off on Earth Day, April 22, and build toward the 40th birthday celebration of Earth Day next spring.

The campaign has three goals:

- To develop renewable energy sources like solar and wind power so that the country can stop relying on pollution-causing fossil fuels like oil, coal and gas.
- To get people to commit to "sustainable" lifestyles in which they buy and use products produced in "green" ways less harmful to the environment.
- To get businesses, schools and government leaders to make more effort to create "green" jobs that will help people earn money while also protecting the environment.

"We still have a long way to go,"

says Lisa Jackson, the new leader of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "We won't get there without your help."

Kids make a difference

In every community, students celebrate Earth Day with special projects.

And a new nationwide study funded by the EPA shows those efforts can really make a difference.

At East Valley Middle School in Washington state, students monitored indoor air quality and then worked with school officials to improve air flow, odors, mold and pollution in the air.

At Exeter High School in New Hampshire, students studied the effects of car and bus motors running while waiting to pick up kids and got

the school to require that engines be shut off.

At Greater Eggleston Community High School in Massachusetts, students convinced the city to switch city buses to fuels that pollute less and to build a station to monitor air quality.

Wildlife

Protecting wildlife always gets attention on Earth Day. And this year there are two pieces of good news.

In West Africa, government and conservation leaders have reached a long-awaited agreement to protect the shrinking habitats of African elephants from development.

And in South Asia, wildlife experts say that a dolphin species believed to be endangered is actually doing better than expected.

Surveys of rivers and bays on the coast of Bangladesh reveal there is a large population of rare Irrawaddy dolphins living there that scientists did not know about.

Pascretas/Newscom Photo



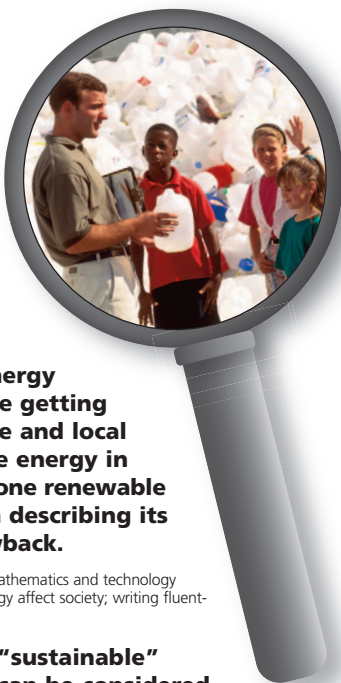
Recycling materials like plastic bottles is one way families can adopt a more "sustainable" lifestyle.

Talk About the News

- **On Earth Day, people in every community can make a difference. From picking up litter to planting trees, students and families can make the local environment a cleaner and healthier place. As a class, talk about things students could do as volunteers to improve the local environment. Then make a list of places in your community that would benefit from people your age volunteering to help the environment.**

Learning Standard: Engaging peers in constructive conversation about matters of public concern by clarifying issues, considering opposing views, applying democratic values, anticipating consequences and working toward making decisions.

Explore Your e-Edition



- **On Earth Day this year, renewable energy sources like solar and wind power are getting a lot of attention from national, state and local leaders. Find stories about renewable energy in the e-Edition or on the Internet. Pick one renewable energy source and write a paragraph describing its biggest benefit, and its biggest drawback.**

Learning Standards: Showing how common themes of science, mathematics and technology apply in real-world contexts; explaining how science and technology affect society; writing fluently for multiple purposes.

- **This year there is a lot of talk about "sustainable" living. The products we buy and use can be considered sustainable if they are made in ways that don't damage the environment, are made with recycled materials, or are sold without too much packaging. With a partner, search the ads in the e-Edition for products promoted as "green" or "sustainable." Write out two questions you would ask to test whether these products are really green or sustainable.**

Learning Standards: Acquiring information from multiple sources; interpreting the significance of the information; understanding the nature of scientific inquiry; applying critical standards for individual use.

- **Protecting wildlife is always a big concern on Earth Day. Find a story, ad, or photo in the e-Edition that involves a wild animal. Write out three challenges the animal faces in its habitat. Then write out one thing people could do to help it live more successfully in the wild.**

Learning Standards: Explaining ecosystem concepts and processes; describing positive and negative effects of humans on nature and wildlife; writing fluently for multiple purposes.

How Well Did You Read?

Understanding what you read is a skill that will help you all through life. Review the story about Earth Day 2009 by answering the questions below.

1. **According to the story, which of the following is a renewable source of energy?**
 - A. Oil.
 - B. Gas.
 - C. Wind.
 - D. Coal.
2. **The theme of this year's Earth Day is:**
 - A. The Green Generation.
 - B. The Earth Day Network.
 - C. The Green Collaboration.
 - D. It's Not Easy Being Green.
3. **According to the story, "sustainable" products are:**
 - A. Produced in "green" ways.
 - B. Never have to be replaced.
 - C. Are less harmful to the environment.
 - D. A and C.
4. **Students at Exeter High School helped the Earth by:**
 - A. Monitoring odors at school.
 - B. Getting their city to switch bus fuel.
 - C. Gaining support for an air quality station.
 - D. Getting car and bus motors turned off at school.
5. **Irrawaddy dolphins are in the news because:**
 - A. A healthy population of them has been found.
 - B. They are almost extinct.
 - C. They live near elephant habitats.
 - D. All of the above.