

'Green Consumers' Growing in Popularity

Contributed by Sue Mahar
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Since the late nineteenth century, when well known organizations such as the Sierra Club and Audubon Society were formed, the theory of world conservation entered the minds of our growing nation. (See Sensible Sue's Suggested Links for a timeline of Environmental milestones) Since then, we have been on and off the fence about where we stand on the topic of world conservation.

Our extraordinary history, which includes two World Wars (and a few others), the great depression, the industrial era, the nuclear era, the race to space and a multitude of other milestones, distracted us from thoughts of world conservation. Everyone wanted progress in the form of modern conveniences, big cars, fast food, gadgets and gizmos. It was a sign of progress to have more than the generation before. The effects and impact our choices made on future generations though, would eventually surface.

In the 1960's and 1970's, intellectual groups protested harmful environmental wrongdoings and preached radical changes in industry and lifestyle. Those groups were considered specialized and given an occasional voice in the world arena. Mostly, the future was paved for big industry without much regard for the environment.

By the 1980's, we started seeing changes in the climate. Reports of the depleting ozone layer heightened awareness. Aerosols and other pollutants became a disgrace. We were shamed into ecological conformity, uncertain if it was too little too late. Sensible measures of recycling including bottles, cans, plastics, newspaper, junk mail and cardboard were enforced by municipalities, immediately saving millions of dollars. People gained a conscience with their diet and lifestyle. But, alas, for many, it was only a fad.

By the 1990's, those continuing to take an environmental stand were disheartened by tragic oil spills, the widespread loss of family farms, political finger pointing, red tape and many, many challenges. Not enough was being done. Overwhelmed by the challenges, the environmental movement needed help. Good-hearted, intelligent people responded, raising awareness and fueled a movement for all of humanity. By the end of the twentieth century, it was clear that being 'green' was long last finding its way into mainstream. Today, in 2007, there is a growing population of 'green consumers' that will soon outnumber those still on the fence. Many products are displaying their certified 'Earth-Friendly' and 'Organic' labels making it easier on the conscious consumer. Once found only in specialty stores, organically grown and earth friendly products are popping up everywhere. Soon to find its way into many proud 'green consumer's' lives are the practices of composting, reduction of wastes and clean energy. Though most everyone will claim their support for the environment, not everyone is bold enough to change and sustain their support with everyday action. There are public (though eccentric) role models like Jane Goodall and best known 'green list celebrities' like Ed Begley jr. and Woody Harrelson, to name just a few. They are using their notoriety to create awareness to lifestyle changes we all can make. They are passionate living examples of green living. If 1 out of 10 people followed their examples, being 'green' would be even more mainstream. There are intellectual groups, like Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) organized in 1969, and countless others. These groups have been rising above it all, leading us down the path of ecological redemption. Scientists and other concerned intellectuals have dedicated their professions to healing and preserving the Earth. Intellectual groups don't hype stuff up. Their claims are based on scientific fact. They have a decisive opinion on the environment and stand by their knowledge without hesitation. That's the kind of conviction we could all use. It really puts the value of material goods into perspective.

The 'green consumers' are growing in popularity. More and more are taking a definitive stand with world conservation, no longer on the fence. Perhaps, in the years to come, we will have more than the generation before, by having less.