

GoNorth! Fennoscandia 2008

Module 3: Natural Resources: Sustainable Development - Chat #8

Tuesday, April 1, 2008

Welcome to the SECOND chat on the topic of World Resources!

Background: A resource can be defined as "something we use." Shelter, clothing, transportation, heat, and so on are all resources. The word also applies to the air we breathe, the water we drink, the land we farm, and the space we use for living and recreation. Not only do people use more resources today, but they also use them faster than ever before.

There are three basic types of resources: renewable, nonrenewable, and perpetual. In human terms, wind, solar energy, and the movement of tides last forever, so they can be considered perpetual. Renewable resources are replenished through natural or human actions. For example, trees may grow either naturally or in tree farms. Animals that give us food and other products are replaced naturally through reproduction. But renewable resources must be carefully managed. If a renewable resource is overused, it will not recover. Nonrenewable resources exist in finite amounts and once used are gone. Coal, oil, rocks, and minerals such as gold are examples of nonrenewable natural resources that took millions or even billions of years to form.

Trees are a special kind of renewable resource: They grow, so we have an infinite supply, but they grow slowly, so if our consumption of them outstrips their growth, we will run out. Moreover, there are different kinds of forests. Tree plantations typically grow only a few decades before they are re-cut; old-growth forests, however, are hundreds of years old and, once they are cut can take generations to regenerate, if they are left alone to do so.

Given the special character of trees, we need to think carefully about the way we use the products made from them if we want sustainable forests for the future. In Fennoscandia, where Team GoNorth! is traveling, some old-growth forests are protected, but others are being cut down to supply factories that make paper. Some argue that using ancient trees to make a product that is typically used just once is a misuse of a precious natural resource-but as long as people expect an abundant supply of cheap paper, the paper industry will continue to seek an abundant supply of wood pulp!

Building a sustainable future requires a shift in the ways we extract natural resources, a shift in the ways we use natural resources-and a shift in the way we think about products that are made from natural resources. In other words, every one of us has a role to play in making a sustainable future.

Some questions to possibly open the chat with or discuss prior to the LIVE chat!

- 1) What types of resources do you use in your daily life? Are these mostly renewable or nonrenewable?
- 2) Would you be willing to change your actions to use fewer resources? What suggestions can you make to reduce the amount of resources consumed in your life?
- 3) Are the world's governments being active enough in conserving resources? Are you?

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About our Speaker: The Green Guardian

Not long ago, and not far away, in a land of great beauty and abundant natural resources, was the kingdom of Trashalot.

It was a tiny kingdom, but prosperous, and as it grew, the people of Trashalot created more and more garbage and waste, until it covered the landscape and choked the air and water.

The kingdom, once proud and pleasant, became a dark and gloomy place. All seemed hopeless.

Then a group of knights joined together, vowing to clean up the kingdom. Thus was born the Order of the Green Guardians, dedicated to the cause of reducing waste through action and education.

Working with the people of Trashalot, they restored the kingdom to its former glory. Then the Green Guardian knights set out to spread their message of hope to new lands throughout the world.

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GoNorth! Education Basecamp: Good Afternoon Everyone! We are so glad that you could join us today. This is our second chat on the topic of World Resources. The Green Guardian is here and ready for your questions!

Ms Havey: Wilson Elem: WI: How did you become a knight in Trashalot? Did you have to have special training?

GoNorth! Expert: I had to have a passion about cleaning up the environment and to save the planet.

Mr Dimmer: 8th: Steffen MS: We are starting a recycling program here at our school. Do you think it is important for schools and companies to recycle too?

GoNorth! Expert: Yes, its very important for everyone to recycle. And recycling leads to other important things like knowing how to reduce waste and find ways to reuse things.

Mr Kroeger: 6th: MPS: Recycling at home into the containers we have isn't enough? What else can we do to make a difference?

GoNorth! Expert: Think about ways to reduce waste and reuse things. There's a lot of stuff around the house we find when we spring clean, so look for alternatives to the trash can.

Ms Havey: Wilson Elem: WI: How many knights are on your team?

GoNorth! Expert: I don't know the exact amount, but I can say we have a whole kingdom.

Mr Dimmer: 8th: Steffen MS: Why do you think some people in the government admit there is a problem and that we need to conserve our resources?

GoNorth! Expert: The government created me to tell everyone about the problems and how important it is to conserve our natural resources. If we keep depleting the non-renewable ones, all those resources disappear. It's time to think about alternatives to energy use.

Ms Havey: Wilson Elem: WI: Do you drive an electric car?

GoNorth! Expert: I don't have a driver's license so I think I'd have to get one of those before I starting driving! But if I ever do get one, I'll buy an electric car.

Mr Kroeger: 6th: MPS: Do you just work to educate people and students or do you work with companies too?

GoNorth! Expert: I can work with both people and companies. I like to think that the reason I'm here is to help people and businesses to understand their planet stewardship responsibilities.

Ms Havey: Wilson Elem: WI: are there other kingdoms you work with too? and are mean companies the dragons?

GoNorth! Expert: Every country in the world should have a kingdom like mine if they don't have one. I like to think that every company can learn to appreciate how important the earth is and how they can change their company to treat the earth better. If they can't or don't, then I need to work harder to help them change their ways.

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Mr Dimmer: 8th: Steffen MS: We are learning about CD packaging and how wasteful it is. We are trying to design new casing for it so that it is nicer on the environment. Are there other things that we could work on to come-up with better ways to package it?

GoNorth! Expert: One of my web pages has some information on packaging and what to do with it. Maybe it will help you with some ideas. If not, you can always contact me for more information: <http://www.greenguardian.com/residents/throw-buy/materials-name/cardboard-packaging>

Mr Kroeger: 6th: MPS: Can renewable resources become non-renewable?

GoNorth! Expert: That's a tough question. A renewable resource will always be renewable, like trees, but if we can't plant enough trees to create all the things people want, then there will be less and less renewable resources available for everyone.

Ginger 5th grade C.E.S.E: What do you think is the most important world resource?

GoNorth! Expert: I think there are two: water and trees.

Mr Kroeger: 6th: MPS: Did you go to college and learn about the environment or did you learn things on the side?

GoNorth! Expert: I learned everything I know on the job. My education wasn't related to the environment, but I have a real passion for the environment and this is the best job in the world.

GoNorth! Education Basecamp: We are going to adjust the screen a bit so that it displays properly for everybody.

Kari Team Lighting: Is there any other way to make paper but not using trees?

GoNorth! Expert: Yes, you can make paper by recycling paper. For instance, a newspaper in my kingdom is made from 30% recycled content. So the more we recycling paper, the more recycled content we can use to make new paper products instead of using trees. Here's a great program to learn how to recycle more paper: <http://www.greenguardian.com/residents/rethink-recycling>

Team Freya of CRES: I once heard that the world never produces any more water that it has now. Is that true?

GoNorth! Expert: The earth's water cycle is a continually renewable process. It's really complicated and that's not exactly my area of expertise, but I just found this great web site that talks about it: <http://www.kidzone.ws/water/>

tylercres: About how many lbs. of garbage does the USA go through a day

GoNorth! Expert: There's some great links to a lot of this information on the Green Guardian kid's web site <http://www.greenguardian.com/kids/green-links>. I think you'll find a lot of information at this link: <http://www.epa.gov/region5/students/waste.htm>

Rhinelander, WI-NCSS-Matthew: how long have you been a green guardian?

GoNorth! Expert: I've been around for about 6 or 7 years. In Trashalot years, that makes me about your age!

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Rhineland, WI-NCSS-Matthew: as a green guardian, how important are Non renewable resources?

GoNorth! Expert: Non- renewable resources do have their purpose in our world, but I think it's time that industry and businesses try to find a balance between using non-renewable resources and renewable ones.

Guest: how many trees are cut down each year for paper?

GoNorth! Expert: I don't know how many trees are cut down in a year, but I know that we have a problem with deforestation of old growth forests. I tried to find some information on the internet, but there's so much out there, I think that might be a good class project.

Rhineland, WI-NCSS-Brittany: Do you at home recycle like papers, plastics, glass etc.

GoNorth! Expert: I recycle everything that can be recycled at home, like junk mail, newspapers, magazines, glass, cans, plastic bottles. We can always recycle more!

Rhineland, WI-NCSS-Brittany: Do you enjoy being a green guardian?

GoNorth! Expert: Yes, because it's fun. I get to meet kids at malls and hang around with them, I go into schools, and sometimes I even get to meet politicians!

Rhineland, WI-NCSS-MattC: What does being a Green Guardian mean?

GoNorth! Expert: I think it means helping people understand that they CAN make a difference, individually, to make this a cleaner planet to live on, and to pass that on to each generation.

GoNorth! Education Basecamp: These are fabulous questions! We have about 10 minutes left....enough time for a few more questions.

Rhineland, WI-NCSS-Matthew: are there any recycling plants in "Trashalot"?

GoNorth! Expert: Yes, we have to have recycling plants to make sure we close the loop on recycling. If we collect them, we have to make sure we can make them into other products, like glass bottles into more glass bottles, or newsprint into cereal boxes.

Mikaela team ginger: Can you use water from a fountain or toilet twice?

GoNorth! Expert: There's something called grey water that can be used for car washes, or irrigation in fields, or watering crops, but that kind of water isn't what you would want to send back to a water fountain or toilet.

Mikaela team ginger: As A Green Guardian member do you have about rules how to treat your World Resources?

GoNorth! Expert: That's what I challenge you to do. Create rules that protect the world resources. You can grow as a Green Guardian Knight each year, by thinking of ways to protect our resources and tell others about it.

Rhineland, WI- NCSS- Brianne & Britty: Were is Trashalot??

GoNorth! Expert: Trashalot can be found anywhere people don't care about the environment.

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Kari Team Ligthning 2: Is water a renewable resource? If so, what reproduces it?

GoNorth! Expert: Yes, water is a renewable resources and it comes from the moisture in the air. It falls on the Earth and there are many large eco-systems, like the South American rain forests, where is goes through a water cycle, and it goes on and on.

Mr Kroeger: 6th: MPS: Are companies ever hesitant or reluctant to do what you teach them because of cost or how they might need to change what they are doing now?

GoNorth! Expert: This is a very complicated question, but I think we can help businesses change how they do things by making choices or demanding products that are more environmentally sound.

Guest: in what year was Trashalot founded in?

GoNorth! Expert: Trashalot was founded a long, long time ago, wherever people didn't care about the environment.

GoNorth! Education Basecamp: While The Green Guardian is answering the last question, we want to thank you for joining us today. We had so much fun and we hope that you not only enjoyed yourself, but learned a lot too.

GoNorth! Education Basecamp: Gold Stars to all of you! These were wonderful questions today. You all obviously did a lot of homework preparing for the chat. Good Job!

Mr Dimmer: 8th: Steffen MS: What do you think the most important thing that we as students can do to make a difference?

GoNorth! Expert: Each of you can make a difference through your choices and decisions you make when buying things. Be a smart consumer, and talk to others about your passions and concerns about the environment.

GoNorth! Education Basecamp: A BIG THANK YOU to The Green Guardian!!!

THANKYOU FROM TEAM FUJI

Thank you=P

Thank You!

From all of us at Team GoNorth!, Thank You for joining us today! Join us again next week on Tuesday, April 1st at 1PM CST for our second chat on the topic of World Resources.