

Environment and Society Vocabulary

Acidification – to become more acid. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Bedrock – solid rock beneath the Earth’s soil and sand. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Biofuel – energy source derived directly from organic matter, such as plants. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Climate – all weather conditions for a given location over a period of time. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Deforestation – destruction or removal of forests and their undergrowth. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Delta – the flat, low-lying plain that sometimes forms at the mouth of a river from deposits of sediments. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Dust Bowl – (1930-1940) term for the Great Plains of the U.S. and Canada when severe dust storms forced thousands of people off their farms. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Earthquake – the sudden shaking of Earth’s crust caused by the release of energy along fault lines or from volcanic activity. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Erosion – act in which earth is worn away, often by water, wind, or ice. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Flood plain – a generally flat valley area bordering a stream or river that is subject to inundation; the most common land area for human settlement. (National Geography Standards, 2012)

Flow resource – supply of materials that is neither renewable or nonrenewable, but must be used when and where they occur, such as flowing water, wind or sunlight.

Fossil fuel – coal, oil, or natural gas. Fossil fuels formed from the remains of ancient plants and animals. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Geothermal energy – heat energy generated within the Earth. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Habitat – environment where an organism lives throughout the year or for shorter periods of time. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Hurricane – tropical storm with wind speeds of at least 119 kilometers (74 miles) per hour. Hurricanes are the same thing as typhoons, but usually located in the Atlantic Ocean region. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Hydroelectric power – usable energy generated by moving water converted to electricity. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Landform – specific natural feature on the Earth’s surface. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Lithosphere – outer, solid portion of the Earth. Also called the geosphere. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Nonrenewable resource – natural resource that exists in a limited supply. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Recycle – to clean or process in order to make suitable for reuse. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Renewable resource – resource that can replenish itself at a similar rate to its use by people. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Resource – an aspect of the physical environment that people value and use to meet a need for fuel, food, industrial product, or something else of value. (National Geography Standards, 2012)

Riparian – having to do with a river or stream. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Rural – having to do with country life or areas with few residents. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Salinization – the process by which high salt content in soils is formed in arid areas where evaporation rates are high. (National Geography Standards, 2012)

Siltation – process where sediment and silt build up on the bottom of a reservoir, reducing the amount of water it can hold. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Soil – unconsolidated material found at the surface of Earth that is divided into layers (or horizons) characterized by the accumulation or loss of organic and inorganic compounds. Soil types and depths vary greatly over Earth's surface and are influenced by climate, organisms, rock type, local relief, time, and human activity. (National Geography Standards, 2012)

Solar power – rate of producing, transferring, or using solar energy. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Sustainable – able to be continued at the same rate for a long period of time. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Tectonic plate – large, moveable segment of the Earth's crust. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Tornado – a small but intense funnel-shaped low-pressure cell with very low barometric pressure, strong and violent updrafts, and high-velocity converging winds. (National Geography Standards, 2012)

Urban heat island – a phenomenon of urban settlements where relatively warmer atmospheric temperatures prevail in the most heavily built-up areas and decrease outward toward the fringe. (National Geography Standards, 2012)

Water supply – amount of available fresh water for drinking, hygiene, and industrial and agricultural use. (NatGeo Education, 2014)

Wind power – rate of producing, transferring, or using wind energy, usually measured in watts.