

Wisconsin Society for Conservation Biology- Student Chapter

Consumerism & Conservation

Monday 4/5/21



wscbstudentchapteruwmadison



wscbstudentchapter



<https://wscbstudentchapter.wixsite.com/conservation>

If you want to be
on our email list,
please put your
email in the chat!

What is consumerism?

- ❖ Consumerism: The social and economic phenomenon that encourages the consumption of goods and services in an ever-increasing amount
 - Negative impacts on the environment and mental health of a consumer-centric society
 - Wall-E: <https://youtu.be/GQ68Q3G84c8>

Environmental Concerns

- pollution of industries
- planned obsolescence = more waste
- ecological effects
 - habitat pollution, diet, disease, land degradation



Ethical Concerns

<https://newint.org/blog/2016/12/08/the-dark-side-of-christmas-the-impact-on-sweat-shops>

- Christmas Waste: shopping, packaging, wrapping
- Black Friday: making purchases just because they are on sale
- Toys and other goods: produced in Chinese sweatshops; systemic. Misconception that consumers make their treatments worse.
- “As consumers, the best approach to the injustice of sweatshops is to support the unionisation of workers, highlight the resistance from workers themselves, and provide opportunities for their voices to be heard, supporting campaigns for better wages and conditions, despite their often slow and incremental progress.”

Becoming a Conscious Consumer

- ❖ The first step is introspection; realizing your impact until this point is not your fault, but recognizing your position of privilege is important
 - This problem is created by society that places value in material items and prioritizes profit. However, your individual actions DO make a difference! Small progress is still progress.
 - Calculate your ecological footprint to tailor your reduction strategy:

<https://www.footprintcalculator.org/>



Not all to blame...

- Important to remember consumers are only part of a larger system
- 100 companies alone emit 70% of global GHGs
- “Ecological footprint” initially a campaign by BP gas to divert blame from themselves
- Individual choices make a difference, but especially in advocating for structural change
- Vote at local, state, and federal levels!



“Greenwashing”

- Conveying a false impression/providing information about a company’s “green” & environmentally sound practices
- An unsubstantiated claim to deceive consumers that a company’s products are environmentally friendly

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2898878/>

The Health Impact of Greenwash

Go to: 

One major result of greenwashing, say Case and others, is public confusion. But can greenwashing also pose a threat to the environment and even to public health? Critics say greenwashing is indeed harmful, and they cite examples.

In 2008, the Malaysia Palm Oil Council produced a TV commercial touting itself in very general terms as eco-friendly; a voice-over stated “Malaysia Palm Oil. Its trees give life and help our planet breathe, and give home to hundreds of species of flora and fauna. Malaysia Palm Oil. A gift from nature, a gift for life.” But according to Friends of the Earth and other critics of the ad, palm oil plantations are linked to rainforest species extinction, habitat loss, pollution from burning to clear the land, destruction of flood buffer zones along rivers, and other adverse effects. The U.K. Advertising Standards Authority agreed, declaring the ad in violation of its advertising standards; contrary to the message of the ad, the authority ruled, “there was not a consensus that there was a net benefit to the environment from Malaysia’s palm oil plantations.”¹³

In 2008, the authority rebuked Dutch energy giant Shell for misleading the public about the environmental effects of its oil sands development project in Canada in the course of advertising its efforts to “secure a profitable and sustainable future.”¹⁴ While acknowledging the term “sustainable” is “used and understood in a variety of ways by governmental and non-governmental organisations, researchers, public and corporate bodies and members of the public,” the authority also noted that Shell provided no evidence backing up the “sustainability” of the oil sands project,¹⁴ which has been criticized widely for its environmental impact.¹⁵

Case contends that makers of indoor cleaning products are among the worst greenwash offenders. “People are attempting to buy cleaning chemicals that have reduced environmental and health impacts, but [manufacturers] are using greenwashing to either confuse or mislead them,” he says. “People aren’t really well-equipped to navigate the eco-babble, and so they end up buying products that don’t have the environmental or human-health performances that they expect.”

3 Steps to Avoid Greenwashing

1. Bypass packaging and look at the label
2. Beware of branding & stop trusting slogans
 - FDA doesn't regulate "all-natural"
3. Look for proof of environmentally sound practices/reputable labeling

<https://foodrevolution.org/blog/how-to-avoid-greenwashing/>

Conscious Consumer Alternatives/Recommendations

- What are some of your favorite eco-friendly companies/organizations?
- [Dropps](#)
- [Reusable K-Cups](#)
 - Pair with [Shade grown coffee](#)
- [Nimble for Good](#)
- Amazon Smile



4Ocean Fundraiser

- Purchase Today through Friday 4/16
- 20\$
- Venmo [@LuisAbreu12](#)
 - State the **color** you would like, and your **email**.
- Delivery
 - Via Mail or drop off (campus only)
 - Luis will email you to confirm your purchase and ask which delivery method you would prefer



The 4Ocean Bracelet
is GreenCircle Certified!



Save the Date

Marine Biology Jeopardy!

Monday 4/12 @7:30pm

RSVP on our website

Zoom ID: 935 8873 2116

2021-2022 Executive Board Elections

Open to all students of any major!

Applications will be available Monday 4/5 through Friday 4/16. You may apply for one position.

The voting period will be from Wednesday 4/21 through Thursday 4/29.

Decisions will be made and you will get an email with your results on Friday 4/30. In this email, you will also be required to confirm that you still want the position.

Though each position has different responsibilities, exec board members work together to create and plan meetings and events, so you are not "stuck" to the duties in your description. If you have specific questions about a particular position, please don't hesitate to reach out to the current exec member that holds that position.



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