

Environmental Information Sources: WebSites and Books

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WebSites are listed in the following categories:

Commercial Entities

Educational Institutions

International

Nonprofit & Research Organizations

U.S. Federal and State Government Agencies

Books

Commercial Entities

Google Earth Engine

<http://earthengine.google.org/>

Google.org, the philanthropic arm of Google, has developed this planetary-scale platform for environmental data & analysis. The following description appears on the website:

“Google Earth Engine brings together the world's satellite imagery — trillions of scientific measurements dating back more than 25 years — and makes it available online with tools for scientists, independent researchers, and nations to mine this massive warehouse of data to detect changes, map trends and quantify differences on the earth's surface. Using the Earth Engine platform, we are helping scientists develop applications for detecting deforestation and mapping land use trends.” The folks at Google.org are also working with individual countries to develop their own applications. The site offers a map gallery and data catalog.

Educational Institutions

Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park

<http://ashfall.unl.edu>

This site presents images and video of animal skeletons in an area of Nebraska that was covered by volcanic ash from an eruption in southwest Idaho roughly twelve million years ago. Most animal species survived the main event, but after grazing on ash-covered grasses, their lungs filled with abrasive powder, causing them to die. The skeletons are largely preserved in the original positions in which they died. Visitors to the site can learn about the animals' last meals, preserved in their mouths and stomachs. An interactive skeleton map documents the fossilized remains on the site.**

Biodiversity and Ecosystems

<http://ateec.org/ateec-downloads/biodiversity-and-ecosystems>

The Advanced Technology Environmental and Energy Center (ATEEC) provides a learning activity for students that enables them to see how biodiversity affects environmental temperature and resulting changes to animal populations. Lesson materials are free although users must register with the site and log in to download the files. **

BioEd Online: Japanese Earthquake and Tsunamis, Before and After

<http://www.bioedonline.org/hot-topics/tsunami-BeforeAfter.cfm>

This website, from BioEd Online at the Baylor College of Medicine, focuses on the aftermath of the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunamis in Japan. Resources for biology teachers include slides, notes, and podcasts with discussion about ways that recovery planners use satellite images to guide their allocation of resources. The site also provide links to related news reports, tsunami images from NASA, and fact sheets from the NOAA Tsunami Information Center.*

Biofilms and Biodiversity

http://www.mdsg.umd.edu/programs/education/interactive_lessons/biofilm/index.htm

Developed at the University of Maryland with support from the MD Sea Grant and NOAA, this interactive website offers background about biofilms and lessons to introduce students to biodiversity in Chesapeake Bay. Activities include learning to use plexiglass discs or CDs to culture communities in local bodies of water. These biofilm experiments show how water quality, depth, and biodiversity are interrelated. Data and images from the original experiments in the Chesapeake Bay are available for students anywhere.**

Ecological Role of Fire

<http://www.ncsr.org/materials/EcologicalRoleofFire.html>

The Northwest Center for Sustainable Resources in Salem, OR developed and maintains this website. The description says: "This lecture-based module is designed to introduce the ecological role of wildfire to students in a broad range of disciplines. It is intended for use in courses such as *Environmental Science*, *General Biology* and *Introduction to Natural Resources* and presents the current understanding of the role of wildfire. Although forest ecosystems are emphasized, most of the major points generalize to other ecosystems such as chaparral and prairies. The module is presented as a series of *PowerPoint* slides paired with a textual outline of the major points." Free registration is required for access to the learning materials.**

Topic in Depth: Fire Ecology

<http://amser.org/amser/topicindepthfireecology>

People at the Applied Math and Science Education Repository present collections of online learning materials on various topics, and this site features fire ecology. The introduction on the site explains that “Forest fires have become a regular summertime occurrence in North America, sparking debate about the proper role of fire on the land.” Links for about ten carefully selected online sources from educational institutions and research centers “examine fires and fire ecology in different ecosystems, regions, and eras.”**

Global Climate Change

http://www.ucar.edu/learn/1_4_1.htm

This website is one of seven sets of classroom activities on topics related to atmosphere, climate, and climate change. This focus of this section is on the nature and rate of global climate change. Topics include the carbon cycle and its impact on the biosphere and life on earth. Additional concepts presented on this website are how living organisms affect local atmospheres, how changes in vegetation can affect wind speed, and ways that human activities increase greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. Developed and maintained by UCAR, the University Corporation for Atmosphere Research.**

Introduction to Climate

http://www.ucar.edu/learn/1_2_1.htm

Developed and maintained by UCAR, the University Corporation for Atmosphere Research, this site provides an overview and learning activities about earth's climate. Climate “is generally defined as the average weather over a long period of time. A place or region's climate is determined by both natural and anthropogenic (human-made) factors. The natural elements include the atmosphere, geosphere, hydrosphere, and biosphere, while the human factors can include land and resource uses. Changes in any of these factors can cause local, regional, or even global changes in the climate.” Other topics on the site address atmosphere, the greenhouse effect, and global climate change.**

Search for the Missing Sea Otters: An Ecological Detective Story

http://sciencecases.lib.buffalo.edu/cs/collection/detail.asp?case_id=167&id=167

This lesson plan comes from the National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science, housed at the State University of New York at Buffalo and supported by the National Science Foundation. The abstract for this case study says: “Using a progressive disclosure format, this case study teaches students how to apply ecological principles to a real-life ecological problem, namely, the decline in sea otter populations in Alaska. Students interpret data from graphs and tables and practice developing testable hypotheses as they work in groups to solve the mystery of the ‘missing’ sea otters. Designed to serve as a framework for teaching an ecology module to first-year biology majors, the case introduces students to basic concepts of population and community ecology.”*

University of New Hampshire Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans and Space
<http://www.eos.sr.unh.edu/>

Established in 1985, the “interdisciplinary Earth, ocean, and space science research at the Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space (EOS) places it in the forefront of academic centers offering opportunities for students to work alongside distinguished faculty in high-level research projects.” EOS researchers work to understand the integrated behavior of the Earth and its surrounding universe. The website highlights current research projects, provides information about admissions, lists faculty, and announces student opportunities.*

International

FAOSTAT, from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<http://faostat.fao.org/>

FAOSTAT provides statistics on food and agriculture with data from 210 countries and territories as well as international statistics. Contains more than one million time-series records, some as old as 1961 but most from 1995 and more recent years. Access became free in 2010, although users must register to view all features of the site. Topics for which data are available include: food supply, food security, food products, agricultural trade, forestry, and fisheries. Content is available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, and Spanish. Users will benefit from a user manual, glossary of terms, and FAQ.

Nonprofit and Research Organizations

Arbor Day Foundation
<http://www.arborday.org/>

“Founded in 1972, the centennial of the first Arbor Day observance in the 19th century, the Foundation has grown to become the largest nonprofit membership organization dedicated to planting trees, with over one million members, supporters, and valued partners.” The website offers a vast amount of information about trees and options to buy and give trees. A section called “What Tree is That?” is an online identification field guide. Visitors to the site can learn about how to plan tree planting, taking into account sizes and shapes for landscaping projects.*

Endangered Species International
<http://www.endangeredspeciesinternational.org/>

This organization employs an interdisciplinary team of scientists, endangered species experts, and conservation awareness professionals to take action about species that have a strong chance of becoming extinct but which do not attract attention from the media. Projects focus

on ecosystems as a whole and are underway in a range of habitats. The website provides fact sheets and overviews of extinct, threatened, and rediscovered species.*

Global Climate Change

<http://globalgeography.aag.org/GlobalClimateChange1e/index.html>

The Association of American Geographers' Center for Global Geography Education maintains this web site. The following description comes from the site itself: "CGGE Global Climate Change module explores how climates have changed in the past and how climates are currently being influenced by human activities. The conceptual framework introduces some of the theories and ideas used by geographers to analyze world climates, emphasizing concepts such as atmospheric pollution, greenhouse effect, and energy budgets. Each case study explores a geographic question about climate change in the context of a particular region or country. The module's collaborative projects offer opportunities for students to discuss the case studies and engage in geographic learning with students in different countries."*

Mangrove Action Project

<http://mangroveactionproject.org/>

This website explains that "the Mangrove Action Project is dedicated to reversing the degradation and loss of mangrove forest ecosystems worldwide. Its main goal is to promote the rights of traditional and indigenous coastal peoples, including fishers and farmers, to sustainably manage their coastal environs." The Project has offices in the U.S., Thailand, Indonesia, and Latin America. The website provides information about the biology and ecology of mangrove species, the distribution of mangrove forests, and the importance of mangrove ecosystems to wildlife and people through ecosystem services and goods. Visitors to the website can learn background about threats to mangrove forests, such as shrimp farming, petroleum/oil drilling, and tourism development and also about the ways mangrove destruction contributes to climate change by reduced carbon sequestration. Sections of the website are tailored to shrimp consumers, tourists, wholesale buyers, students and educators, community activists, researchers, and policy makers.*

National Public Lands Day

<http://www.publiclandsday.org/>

This event is organized by the National Environmental Education Foundation and "keeps the promise of the Civilian Conservation Corps, the "tree army" that worked from 1933-1942 to preserve and protect America's natural heritage." National Public Lands Day (NPLD) began in 1994 with three federal agencies and 700 volunteers. In 2011 170,000 volunteers worked at over 2,060 sites in every state, the District of Columbia, and in many U.S. territories. NPLD volunteers removed trash; collected invasive species; built and maintained trails; planted trees, shrubs, and native plants; and contributed \$17 million for improvement of public lands. Eight federal agencies, along with nonprofits and state, regional and local governments participate in

the annual day of caring for shared lands. The website explains how individuals can get involved and how to recommend a site. NPLD will be held Sept. 29, 2012.*

Ocean Update

<http://www.seaweb.org/resources.php>

"SeaWeb provides a variety of unique resources that track the latest developments in ocean conservation and marine science." The website presents a monthly newsletter that summarizes news and events related to marine and coastal environments and wildlife. The Ocean Report is a series of ninety-second radio stories about topics related to the ocean.**

U.S. Federal and State Government Agencies

Beyond the Golden Gate: Oceanography, Geology, Biology, and Environmental Issues in the Gulf of the Farallones

<http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/c1198/>

This 80-page circular describes the results of a major United States Geological Survey (USGS) geologic and oceanographic study of the Gulf of the Farallones, adjacent to the San Francisco Bay region. The investigation was intended to establish a scientific database for an area of 3,400 square kilometers (1,000 square nautical miles) on the continental shelf for the purpose of evaluating and monitoring human impact on the marine environment. Topics include techniques and technology used in the investigation; oceanography and geology of the Gulf of the Farallones; biology and ecological niches; and issues of environmental management. There is also a list of supplemental reading materials and a glossary. The report is available in two versions: a shorter version for a general audience, and a more technical long version that is also available as a CD-ROM.**

EPA: Cleaning Up Our Land, Water and Air

<http://www.epa.gov/cleanup/>

This website reports on the Environmental Protection Agency's efforts, in cooperation with state and territorial partners, to remove contaminants from the nation's land, water, and air for four many years. Contaminants such as industrial solvents, petroleum products, metals, pesticides, bacteria, and radiological materials can threaten human health and the environment. Visitors to the website can learn about clean-up projects in their region and read basic information about EPA projects such as Superfund, brownfields, underground storage tank system releases, and oil spills. Other information includes links to national clean-up laws, statutes, regulations, and standards; policies and guidance; how clean-up rules are enforced, and clean-up grants and funding.*

Extreme Planet Makeover

<http://184.72.55.19/system/interactable/1/index.html>

NASA and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology developed this site to let readers create their own Earth-like, habitable world, choosing and balancing factors such as distance from a star, planet size, and planet age. An image gallery enables users to compare their creation with other people's and with existing planets. The site requires a Flash plug-in.*

National Science Foundation: Predicting Seasonal Weather
http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/autumnwinter/

This special report from the National Science Foundation has interactive features built into its explanation of ways that weather conditions affect the U.S. economy. Sections of the report include: "A New and Better Way," which describes collaborative research undertaken by the National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded with Atmospheric and Environmental Research, Inc. (AER Inc., www.aer.com) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); "Fall Predicts Winter;" "New Seasonal Forecast Model;" "Model Accuracy Demonstrated;" and "Classroom Resources." Every section includes graphs and maps related to the research described.*

PMEL CO2: Carbon Dioxide Program
<http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/co2/>

In order to advance a shared scientific understanding of the ocean's carbon cycle and how it continues to change over time, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) continues to investigate the evolving state of ocean carbon chemistry with high quality measurements on ships and autonomous platforms. This website provides information on their public outreach efforts, along with news about how these changes may affect everything from marine animal populations to tourism operations. A "Map & Data Viewer" allow visitors to the site to look at the collected carbon data via a 3D projection. A "Data Portal" makes it possible to examine the data that have been collected to date as well as historical data sets. Updates are provided about continuing research projects and recent observations. *

Acknowledgements

Items followed by a single * are adapted from *The Scout Report*, Copyright 1994 – 2011 (<http://scout.wisc.edu>).

Two ** indicate the site was featured on the Applied Math and Science Education Repository Bulletin (<http://amser.org>).

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