

Sustainability Glossary

(from *Community Voices for Sustainability: A Workshop Guide*, p. 30, Izaak Walton League of America, Feb. 1998)

bioregion: an area defined by its unique ecological characteristics.

capacity building processes: opportunities to gain information and experience that improve citizens' ability to do something.

civic democracy: the practice of democracy at the municipal level where an active and engaged citizenry is the primary source of political power.

community sustainability: the goal of a system of development cultivated in places where people pursue environmental stewardship, economic security, civic democracy and social justice as complementary goals.

consensus: an agreement among people.

conservation: the controlled use and protection of natural resources.

ecological literacy: knowledge about the local and global environmental impacts of economic and social systems and understanding of the methods to address these impacts.

ecological renewal rate: the amount of time required to regenerate a renewable natural resource or restore and stabilize biological, chemical or physical conditions altered by use or pollution.

education about sustainability: the interdisciplinary use of civics, science, political science, geography and other traditional disciplines to advance environmental protection, economic security, civic democracy and social justice as complementary goals. Education about sustainability is a lifelong process that emphasizes systems thinking, partnerships, multicultural perspectives and citizen empowerment.

human carrying capacity: the maximum number of people, living at a specific level of natural resource consumption, that an area of land can support indefinitely.

environmental justice: the act of making decisions that have just and equitable environmental consequences.

green technology: methods of production and construction that waste nonnatural resources

social justice: the act of making decisions that have just and equitable social consequences.

sustainable development: development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

sustainability: a state defined by desired social and economic conditions, governed by population size and the limits of ecological systems, achieved by meeting equitably the needs of current and future generations without a net loss in environmental integrity.

stewardship: responsibility for the management of environmental, economic and social factors

systemic: pertaining to the elements that constitute a system, such as the system's underlying mindset, goals and rules.

systems theory: the idea that physical or non-material standing stocks obey scientific laws of conservation and accumulation as they are influenced by inflows and outflows regulated by negative feedback loops.

systems thinking: the application of systems theory