



## Entrepreneurs Foundation 2011 Environment Initiative *Resource Guide*

Environmental awareness has been on the rise in corporations over the past decade and now enjoys a certain celebrity appeal as companies distinguish themselves by their green or sustainable practices. The counter-effect, however, has been a wariness of green-washing. Consumers want to encourage and reward environmentally-conscious companies with their dollars but don't want to be misled by false claims or shallow greening initiatives. Whether or not environmental efforts are a signature part of a company's brand is a decision unique to each company, but all companies can play a role in protecting our shared environment.

To some degree, being cognizant of a company's effect on the environment is essential to being a good corporate citizen. But there are also opportunities for sustainability goals to drive innovation and positively impact the bottom line for a company in measurable ways. In this Resource Guide, we will provide an outline of some of the main environmental issues being addressed by companies, some key themes to keep in mind when developing corporate sustainability initiatives, and a list of resources to use as a guide once the efforts that make sense for an organization have been identified. This guide also includes stories from some Entrepreneurs Foundation member companies that are making an impact through a variety of efforts, but each in a way that fits their culture and organizational goals.

### **CO2 Emissions, Air Pollution, and Global Warming**

As evidence grows that global warming is real, and is due in large part to increased CO2 emissions, more companies are taking note of their carbon footprint. Reducing this footprint can be as simple as saving energy by changing out light bulbs, and companies have seen that investments to reduce their impact on the environment can create significant cost savings over time. Measurement and results can be recorded on even the smallest projects, and are catalysts for convincing leadership to make larger investments in efficiency solutions.

Many companies start their greening efforts in operations, where they can improve relatively quickly on reducing costs and achieving environmental benefits. Within operations, companies evaluate their buildings, waste management, energy efficiency, materials and packaging, and workforce policies, such as employees' travel, telecommuting, and alternative transportation programs. Carbon footprint calculators are offered by many service providers, and knowing where efficiency is being lost is the first step to innovate a solution.

As a triple bottom line company, Serious Materials ranks environment and social responsibility equally with potential profits. Last year, Serious Materials was selected to super-insulate more than 6,500 windows for the Empire State Building's energy efficiency retrofit project. Serious Materials will provide its SeriousGlass™ technology through a sustainable production process that will directly reduce energy costs by more than \$400,000 per year. Thinking beyond the sustainability of the product to a sustainable process, a 5,000 square foot processing space will be built onsite in the Empire State Building. The existing glass of the building's 6,514 double-hung windows will be removed from the window frames, separated, and cleaned in the processing space. By reusing existing glass and producing the new glass on-site, the process eliminates virtually all waste, saves energy, and reduces replacement costs.



## Preservation of our Open Space and Coastal Regions, Wildlife Protection, and Water Conservation

For many businesses, core operating procedures don't clearly affect preservation issues. However, these are often the issues that employees care the most about and can get involved in addressing in the community. The Bay Area offers a diverse natural environment, including beautiful hills and mountains, large forested areas, and abundant coastlines. With this diversity comes diverse wildlife and plant species that are critical to the quality of life and economy of the Bay Area.

Unfortunately, development and sprawl have threatened to eliminate scarce farmland and destroy the region's natural legacy and rugged beauty. The Bay ecosystem is tattered and restoration and protection is needed to increase valuable habitat for endangered waterfowl, shorebirds, and fish. The efforts of companies, through fundraising, advocacy, and volunteer activities, can help protect these critical ecosystems, retain our diverse natural environment, and preserve a healthy and vibrant Bay Area.

In lieu of a holiday party, NVIDIA hosted 1,000 employees, family members and community volunteers at San Jose's History Park to wield paint brushes, drills, shovels and the aforementioned hammers, with impressive results. In just one afternoon they: built 60 garden beds, enabling a nearby community to grow their own produce; assembled more than 800 one-foot-square planter boxes for educational use in classrooms, and fresh food for community members' homes; built a large greenhouse that will be used to help kids experiment with science in a hands-on environment; breathed new life into a treasured historical park by revitalizing several buildings and the surrounding landscape.

## Waste Reduction

Every year, Bay Area residents and businesses produce millions of tons of garbage. Nearly half is sent to landfills, including Altamont in Alameda County, Keller Canyon in Contra Costa, and Kirby Canyon in Santa Clara. Landfills like these pose serious environmental hazards. Not only is the outcome of waste in landfills dangerous for the environment, but also the production of materials that are then rendered useless consumes resources in manufacturing, delivery, storage, and removal. More information on the impact of items throughout their lifecycle is illustrated in *The Story of Stuff*.

In many organizations there are already internal grassroots initiatives and a degree of awareness around recycling, eliminating disposable cups, and reducing printed materials. Environmental stewardship can be encouraged at all levels of an organization so that employees feel ownership to reduce waste where they see it. By creating more efficient processes, and always remembering the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle mantra, significant progress can be made in preventing waste.

The "Free is Good Fair", hosted by Yahoo!, is a great example of turning trash into treasure. By simply asking Yahoos to bring unwanted items from home for an on campus swap meet, more than 2,000 unused items were donated and exchanged; these items found a new home instead of heading to a landfill. Among the items donated were Chief Yahoo David Filo's signature Adidas sneakers, a vintage map of Silicon Valley businesses from 2000, last-generation Tivos, Rockem Sockem Robots, vacuum cleaners, a complete set of Star Trek: Next Generation VHS tapes, bunny slippers, fleeces galore, Yahoo! schwag, and gently used sporting equipment. The Fair was a fun way for employees to share their interests and encouraged employees to think beyond recycling to reusing.



## Developing Sustainability Initiatives

The path towards sustainability will be different for every company, but there are important themes to consider that can be generally applied. Most important is to develop environmental strategies that align with business objectives and factor in long term trends. Each company is likely to have the greatest impact by leveraging their core competency, whether that is transportation, human capital, brand influence, or something else entirely. Also important to consider is how sustainability and efficiency can be integrated with the innovation process. Focusing on sustainability can be a driver for innovation, but innovation is also essential to creating more sustainable solutions. Once policies are in place at the strategic level, driving the direction of sustainability initiatives, setting metrics and measuring results are as important for long term success.

SilverSpring just formed a Green Team and they plan to launch their first activity in conjunction with Earth Day. They are planning to align the efforts of this new Team with the recently-formed CI Team, to create a combined activity to engage employees, benefit the community and go green as their inaugural event.

Outside of the company, it is important to keep in mind key partnerships and the global context when developing sustainability initiatives. Supply chain providers, customers, business partners, as well as government and community organizations should all be considered as partners if they can help a company achieve environmental objectives. The global context is important because sustainable solutions to issues of climate, water, labor standards, and human rights, require broad thinking and cannot be done by one company or even the entire private sector alone. Companies are wise to keep an eye on global trends as their sustainability strategies are developed and implemented.

## Green Teams

Grassroots efforts are a major driver of environmental efforts and awareness in companies. Companies face challenges, however, in involving executive leadership and coordinating efforts from the top down and the bottom up. It is ideal to cultivate ownership of environmental efforts at all levels of the organization, including the CEO as a key sustainability spokesperson for the company. A best practice for harnessing grassroots enthusiasm and aligning disparate efforts is to assemble a green team. Teams range in size and formality across organizations.

Compiled below are a variety of ways that companies can help protect the environment, grouped by the issue areas of this Resource Guide. This can serve as a starting menu for a newly formed green team, and creative ideas, unique to a company, grow organically once the seed is planted.

### *CO2 Emissions, Air Pollution, and Global Warming*

- *Save Energy:*
  - Set programmable thermostats to turn heating on 30 minutes before people arrive and off 30-60 minutes before they leave. Set them no higher than 68°F during work hours in the winter.
  - Install motion detectors for lights and thermostats, especially in conference rooms, so that they turn off when the rooms are not in use.



## Green Teams (continued)

- Replace energy-wasting incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), which use two-thirds less energy and last 6-10 times longer.
- If you have T12 fluorescent lighting, replace it with more efficient T8s or T5s.
- If your office is in Santa Clara, participate in Santa Clara GreenPower, which is a program from Silicon Valley Power and offers you the option of one hundred percent renewable energy at some of the lowest rates in the nation ([www.siliconvalleypower.com](http://www.siliconvalleypower.com)).
- *Institute Alternative Transportation Programs:*
  - Provide incentives for employees to carpool, such as reserved parking spots closer to the building entrance
  - Provide vouchers for public transportation
  - Encourage employees to telecommute so that they don't use their cars as frequently, especially on Spare the Air days.
  - Provide bike racks and showers for employees who want to bike to work
  - Pay for the cost of offsetting carbon emissions for employees who must use their car for work through such organizations as <http://www.myclimate.org>, [www.b-e-f.org](http://www.b-e-f.org), [www.carbonfund.org](http://www.carbonfund.org), [www.terrapass.com](http://www.terrapass.com), [www.liveneutral.com](http://www.liveneutral.com). These programs are not expensive and your contribution goes to fund planting trees, wind energy, and other ways of reducing CO2 emissions.

## *Preservation of our Open Space and Coastal Regions, Wildlife Protection, and Water Conservation*

- Provide opportunities for employees to volunteer on restoration and clean-up projects at parks, coastal regions, and the Bay. These can be company sponsored group volunteer experiences which also promote team building. (**Volunteer Opportunities**)
- Conduct fundraisers to raise money for organizations that preserve open space and conduct restoration and education programs. (**Organizations**)

## *Waste Reduction*

- Recycling: These days, most companies have recycling but ensure that all the bases are covered for paper, bottles, cans, and even electronics. <http://www.rethinkwaste.org/business.php>.
- Donate excess electronics, office supplies, and office furniture to a community-benefit organization (contact your EF representative to find out where you can donate).
- Switch to 100% recycled paper in printers and copy machines.
- Use 100% recycled paper for letterhead, brochures, and other company collateral.
- Use the backs of already-used paper in fax machines, and as scratch pads.
- Adopt a policy of avoiding printing and copying whenever possible. Instead, encourage employees to publish documents electronically, post one copy at a central bulletin board, or distribute them as attachments via e-mail.



- If items must be printed, encourage employees to print only as many copies as they really need. With meeting handouts, ask staff members to share.
- Recycle used toner and ink-jet cartridges (most office suppliers will accept your used cartridges)
- Switch to biodegradable cleaners.
- Encourage employees to use reusable cups, plates and utensils at the office rather than using paper, plastic, or Styrofoam.
- Purchase environmentally friendly supplies and biodegradable food service products (e.g. <http://www.greenearthofficesupply.com>).

### Resources

There are countless sources of information on the current state of the environment and the ways that individuals and companies can help protect it for future generations. Below is a resource list, definitely not exhaustive, to provide a starting point for further inquiry. Also included is a selection of local volunteer opportunities, as well as advocacy organizations.

- [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#): Committed to achieving clean air to protect the public's health and the environment in the San Francisco Bay region. The Air District aims to attain and maintain air quality standards, increase public awareness of positive air quality choices, develop and implement protocol and policies for environmental justice.
- [Bay Area Green Business Program](#): The Bay Area Green Business Program verifies that businesses meet higher standards of environmental performance. A partnership of government agencies and utilities, the Program helps local businesses comply with all environmental regulations and take actions to conserve resources, prevent pollution, and minimize waste. For motivated businesses and agencies, this offers an easy-to-use framework for improving environmental performance.
- [CalRecycle](#): Manages programs created through two landmark initiatives--the Integrated Waste Management Act and the Beverage Container Recycling and Litter Reduction Act. CalRecycle's staff and leadership are dedicated to the role they play in the stewardship of California's vast resources, and to helping California remain at the forefront of environmental awareness and progress.
- [Carbonfund.org](#): An organization that makes it easy and affordable for individuals, businesses and organizations to reduce their climate impact. They promote low-cost carbon reductions and supporting renewable energy, energy efficiency and reforestation projects that reduce and offset carbon dioxide emissions.
- [The CarbonNeutral Company](#): Works with companies to develop reduction, avoidance and offset programs to meet agreed commercial objectives.
- [Earth911.org](#): Provides community-specific resources and guidance for how to reduce air pollution and other ways to preserve the environment. Call 1-800-CLEANUP or enter your zip code on their website to get community specific information most relevant to you.



- [511.org](#): A free phone and Web service that consolidates Bay Area transportation information into a one-stop resource. 511 provides up-to-the-minute information on traffic conditions, incidents and driving times, schedule, route and fare information for the Bay Area's public transportation services, instant carpool and vanpool referrals, bicycling information and more. It's available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- [Flex Your Power](#): A resource for energy efficiency and conservation information in California. Find incentives/rebates, technical assistance, retailers, product guides, case studies and more.
- [Green Earth Office Supply](#): Provides a wide variety of environmentally friendly office, school, and food service supplies.
- [GreenCitizen](#): Helps individuals and organizations recycle electronics responsibly. Has one-stop Silicon Valley and San Francisco Drop-Off Centers that are open daily to take all electronic recyclables from batteries and printer cartridges, to TVs and computer systems. You can schedule a pick-up of your electronic recyclables from your home or office, or use GreenCitizen Classifieds to extend the life of your electronics.
- [iReuse](#): Get Rid of Stuff the Green Way AND Get Used Furniture, Equipment, Supplies, and other items. iReuse facilitates reuse of unwanted items before recycling, which is about 93% more efficient. Purchasing used items also reduces demand on natural resource extraction. iReuse matches unwanted stuff with buyers and nonprofits via Wish Lists. Sign up for a wish list to get stuff today, or get your unwanted items picked up at your convenience.
- [RecycleWorks.org](#): Helps residents and businesses of San Mateo County take advantage of local environmental resources such as recycling, reducing the effects of green house gases, etc. While focusing on San Mateo County, RecycleWorks.org also focuses on unique programs in the greater Bay Area.
- [ReduceWaste.org](#): Mission is to conserve, protect and preserve the environmental resources of the Santa Clara County community through advocacy, education and outreach programs. Provides resources and guidance on how to reuse, reduce, recycle and intelligently dispose of waste materials.
- [RethinkWaste.org](#) (South Bayside Waste Management Authority): A joint powers authority of twelve member agencies in San Mateo County and is a leader in innovative recycling and waste-reduction programs. They provide cost-effective waste reduction, recycling, and solid waste programs to member agencies through franchised services and other recyclers to meet and sustain a minimum 50% diversion mandated by California State Law, AB 939.
- [StopWaste.org](#): The Alameda County Waste Management Authority and the Alameda County Source Reduction and Recycling Board, operating as one public agency, to provide guidance to both businesses and residents on how to reduce waste. They have a recycling hotline, 1-877-STOPWASTE, as well as a recycling wizard to find recycling and reuse options for materials.
- [Sustainable Silicon Valley](#): A nonprofit collaboration of businesses, governments, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations that are identifying and addressing environmental and resource pressures in Silicon Valley.
- [TerraPass](#): Offers easy, affordable and effective solutions to help your business reduce its carbon footprint.



### Advocacy and Open Space Preservation Organizations

- [East Bay Regional Parks District](#): Acquires, develops, manages, and maintains a high quality, diverse system of interconnected parklands which balances public usage and education programs with protection and preservation of our natural and cultural resources.
- [The Green Gate](#): A project of NRDC, the Natural Resources Defense Council. NRDC uses law, science, and the support of 1.2 million members and online activists nationwide to protect the planet's wildlife and wild places and to ensure a safe and healthy environment.
- [Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District](#): Purpose is to purchase, permanently protect, and restore lands forming a regional open space greenbelt, preserve unspoiled wilderness, wildlife habitat, watershed, viewshed, and fragile ecosystems, and provide opportunities for low-intensity recreation and environmental education.
- [The Nature Conservancy](#): Works to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.
- [Peninsula Open Space Trust](#): Provides permanent protection to the beauty, character and diversity of the San Francisco Peninsula landscape for people here now and for future generations. They encourage the use of these lands for natural resource protection, wildlife habitat, low-intensity public recreation and agriculture.
- [Save the Bay](#): The oldest and largest membership organization working exclusively to protect, restore and celebrate San Francisco Bay.
- [Sierra Club Silicon Valley](#) and [Sierra Club Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin and San Francisco Counties](#): A membership organization that works to preserve wildlands, save endangered and threatened wildlife, and protect our fragile environment. They advocate for policies and political candidates that protect our natural environment.

### Volunteer Opportunities

- [Acterra](#) (Santa Clara and San Mateo counties): Coordinates volunteers to clean up the local ecosystems of the Midpeninsula and large-scale habitat restoration efforts in the foothills and watersheds of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. Also recognizes local business leaders for their innovative environmental programs, Acterra's Business Environmental Awards has recognized the outstanding environmental achievements of many Bay Area companies, government agencies, and nonprofits.
- [CityTrees](#) (Redwood City): Volunteers work with the Redwood City Public Works Department to plant and maintain trees along Redwood City's streets, at schools, and on other publicly owned property.
- [The Creek Connections Action Group](#) (Santa Clara County): A consortium of public agencies and non-profit organizations that share a goal of protecting Santa Clara County's waterways. Volunteering at a cleanup event helps to keep these natural parts of our county beautiful for everyone to enjoy.
- [East Bay Regional Parks District](#) (East Bay): Acquires, develops, manages, and maintains a high quality, diverse system of interconnected parklands which balances public usage and education programs with protection and preservation of our natural and cultural resources. There are many year-round volunteer and docent opportunities.



- [Friends of the Urban Forest](#): Promotes a larger, healthier urban forest as part of the urban ecosystem, through community planting, maintenance, education and advocacy. Friends of the Urban Forest is a non-profit committed to the belief that trees are a critical element of a livable urban environment.
- [Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy](#) (San Francisco, Marin, San Mateo): Helps to preserve and enhance the beautiful landscapes of the Golden Gate National Parks. Volunteers help restore the sensitive natural habitat, maintain our trail systems, protect important historic and cultural resources, and educate and engage our local community.
- [Hidden Villa](#) (Los Altos Hills): Offers an education program that teaches key concepts of ecology and environmental stewardship through farm and wilderness experiences for tens of thousands of children, witnessing the natural environment of Hidden Villa as a teaching platform.
- [Marine Science Institute](#) (Redwood City): Offers hands-on science and environmental education programs to students of all ages throughout the Bay Area and Northern California.
- [Save the Bay](#) (Berkeley, Oakland, Palo Alto, San Francisco, San Rafael, Vallejo): The oldest and largest membership organization working exclusively to protect, restore and celebrate San Francisco Bay. Save the Bay engages volunteers in restoring 75 acres of Bay wetlands by hand and provides Bay recreation and education opportunities for more than 5,000 students and adults. <http://www.savesfbay.org>
- [Village Harvest](#) (Santa Clara Valley): A nonprofit suburban harvesting cooperative that organizes and coordinates backyard fruit harvesting and provides education on fruit tree care, harvesting, and food preservation. Their mission is to preserve our heritage and skills, and promote sustainable use of urban resources, while at the same time providing food for the hungry.
- [Volunteers for Outdoor California](#) (Northern California): Engages the community to build and maintain trails and restore natural habitat. Works in partnership with public agencies and other non-profit organizations and conducts large-scale weekend stewardship projects all over Northern California.