

Focus On Publishers



Forest Destruction

Every day, human activities destroy more forests. Since humans began altering forests 8,000 years ago, we have permanently destroyed half of the world's original forest cover. Much of the worst destruction has occurred since the 1970s; in that period, natural forest cover declined by 10 percent. Today, only one fifth of the world's forests exist in large, intact areas. Healthy forests in the United States and other countries survive only in isolated pockets. Due to the balance of ecological systems, this forest loss contributes to global warming, the decline of biological diversity, the destruction of watersheds and other environmental stresses.

The greatest threat to forests is commercial logging driven by the rising wood consumption rate in industrialized countries. The United States, with only 5 percent of the world's population, uses 20 percent of the world's wood. Large U.S. consumers, such as publishers have the ability to stimulate the market for recycled paper to reduce pressure on forests.

Paper Consumption

Despite advances in technology, such as computers and e-mail, the global consumption of paper is sharply rising, increasing at a 3 percent rate per year since the 1980s. Most of the increase is occurring in wealthy countries with low or stable population growth. The world will consume 50 percent more paper in 2010 than in 1998. Approximately one in five logged trees is used for paper. And, 10 percent of the fiber in paper continues to come from old-growth forests—ecosystems that have not been substantially altered by humans. Biologically rich old-growth forests are the most threatened of all forest ecosystems.

The consumption of paper is growing twice as fast as any other wood product. The

Natural Capitalism: A Case Study

Publishing a single title on environmentally preferable paper conserves a significant amount of resources. *Natural Capitalism* by Paul Hawken, Amory Lovins and Hunter Lovins, is a book that advocates a sustainable economy. The book was printed on processed chlorine free paper made of 100 percent recycled fiber with 80 percent post-consumer waste. The printing of 35,500 books on this environmentally preferable paper saved 77,767 pounds of virgin wood fiber, 467 trees, 42,266 pounds of solid waste, 46,505 gallons of water, 60,658 kilowatt hours of electricity (enough electricity to power a U.S. home for almost 7 years), 76,834 pounds of greenhouse gases, 331 pounds of pollutants and 117 cubic yards of landfill space.

United States' paper consumption is wildly disproportionate to the rest of the world. The average American consumes almost 750 pounds of paper products annually—the world's highest consumption rate.

In addition to being an extremely resource-intensive industry, the pulp and paper industry is also one of the most polluting. It is the largest source of dioxin—an environmental toxin—found in water due to its use of chlorine bleach. And, paper stresses solid waste disposal systems, accounting for 40 percent of the municipal solid waste stream in the United States.

Who is to Blame?

In the United States, businesses have low participation in recycling programs even though they are the largest users of high-quality wastepaper. Given that the United States is such an excessive consumer of paper, reducing consumption in this country by even a small amount would substantially

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ease pressure on the world's forests. By eliminating wasteful packaging, reusing, recycling and expanding the use of environmentally friendly papers, Americans can greatly cut paper consumption without affecting quality of life.

Solutions

Offices can conserve forests by making smarter paper choices. Environmentally preferable papers are chlorine free and are made of recycled and agricultural fibers. They may also contain wood fiber certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)—endorsed by most environmental organizations—to come from well managed forests.

Various institutions are "greening" paper policies. For instance, the Clinton administration, issued Executive Orders 12873 and 13101 which mandated the purchase of 20 percent post-consumer waste and then 30 percent post-consumer waste recycled paper by all federal agencies. Previously, various stakeholders struggled to define environmentally preferable papers, and these minimums have become a de facto standard not only within the government, but for many private companies, universities and other institutions as well.

The Role of Publishers

Printing 1,000 copies of a 256-page book—on 55lb text paper in a 6"x9" format—consumes almost five trees. But, printers and publishers have begun to reduce paper waste and stimulate the market for recycled papers. The Independent Press Association is advocating recycled and chlorine free paper use to its members, researching environmentally preferable papers for magazines and creating a buying cooperative for recycled, chlorine free paper. Printers are using computer-assisted layouts and other design tools to maximize printing on a sheet and using lower-weight papers or reducing the size of publications. And, publishers are advocating for more affordable and widely available book-grade, environmentally preferable papers.

For example, the Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia is working to make environmentally sound papers available to its members at no additional cost.

Next Steps

Despite these efforts, adult trade book publishing consumes approximately 500,000 tons of paper annually, equaling about 8.5 million trees. And, although book publishers are ideally positioned to conserve forests by stimulating the market for recycled papers, they are not sufficiently requesting these papers. Paper merchants have remarked that interest in recycled paper is declining, and according to a representative of Willamette, a large pulp and paper company, the industry is receiving "limited requests from the publishing industry for recycled paper." Publishers should purchase environmentally preferable papers.

Key preferences include:

- recycled paper (preferably with a minimum of 30 percent post-consumer content)
- agricultural fibers (kenaf, hemp, etc.)
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification for virgin fibers
- totally chlorine free (TCF) or processed chlorine free (PCF), not elemental chlorine free (ECF) which still releases dioxin into the environment.

In addition, publishers should examine opportunities to reduce paper consumption and packaging, reuse paper products and increase recycling in their offices.

Production Manager: A Case Study

An individual can make a critical difference in furthering environmentally preferable papers for book publishing. Deborah Bruner is one such champion. While at Jossey-Bass Publishers, Inc., and now at Cornell University Press, Bruner continues to be an advocate of book-grade environmentally preferable papers. As Production Manager, Bruner has produced books on recycled paper, totally chlorine free (TCF) paper (including the first trade title on TCF paper), agricultural fiber paper and FSC paper (including the first book ever published on FSC paper). She is continuously encouraging mills to make environmentally preferable papers available, and in doing so has been successful in identifying high quality, affordable and environmentally preferable book-grade papers.