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## **Environmental Sciences**

**(Subclass GE; portions of GF, QE, QH, QC, TD, and portions of Z)**

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### **I. Scope**

Environmental sciences are interdisciplinary studies of how nature works and how things in nature are interconnected. The Library of Congress classification subclass GE for environmental sciences was not created until 1992. Prior to that, there was no separate collection of environmental materials, although environment related materials existed in abundance throughout the general and special collections, and were classified with works in natural sciences as well as in social sciences. While it is not easy to set the boundaries of environmental sciences, this collection policy statement covers works in natural sciences that address biological, physical, and chemical impacts on the earth as well as the effect of man and technology on the environment. These works are found in subclass GE (general and interdisciplinary literature on the environment; i.e. communication in environmental sciences, environmental ethics, environmental education, environmental quality, global environmental change, the environmental movement, environmental management, and ecological engineering) and related publications in portions of other subclasses: subclass GF (human ecology); subclass QE (environmental geology); subclass QH (interrelationships of organisms and their environment); subclass QC (atmospheric pollutants); subclass TD (industrial and factory environmental control); and corresponding sections of class Z where bibliographies, abstracts & indexes, and catalogs on environmental sciences are found.

### **II. Research Strengths**

#### **A. General**

The Library's collection of environmental science materials is substantial. It dates back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as the written record of the "conservation movement," later the "environmental movement" took hold in America to protect America's natural heritage. Over the years, the Library's original collection of environmental literature that was rich in materials related to saving animal species from extinction by hunters, and the preservation of areas useful to humans from erosion and other forms of degradation has been augmented and expanded to reflect the increased human

consciousness of the importance of our surroundings. The environmental collection which the Library has amassed now covers vast and diverse disciplines, with materials from all parts of the world, in many languages. It includes records of governmental environment agencies from around the world, worldwide proceedings of conferences on environmental concerns, transactions and publications of learned societies and professional associations of the United States and of foreign countries. The Library's environmental sciences collection is currently at least at the research level in most areas; in areas of works on harbors and coast protection, water and wastewater treatment, air pollution, and environmental technology, it approaches the comprehensive level.

Complementing these collections are the environmental sciences materials in electronic formats. These include subscription databases, publicly available resources, web sites and physical electronic data in CD-Rom or DVD formats. The Library's electronic reference materials, abstracts, and indexes are especially strong. A few of the frequently consulted electronic databases are *Environmental Impact Statements*, which extracts the key issues from government-released environmental information; *GreenFILE* indexes nearly 300,000 scholarly and general titles that address all aspects of human impact to the environment; *Environmental Sciences and Pollution Management* provides comprehensive coverage of the environmental sciences and whose abstracts and citations are drawn from over 6000 scholarly journals, conference proceedings, reports, monographs and government publications; and *Wildlife and Ecology Studies Worldwide* that offers over 400,000 citations to wildlife literature worldwide from 1935 to present. Other databases such as *Terms of Environment*, *EarthTrends*, *Environmental Complete*, *World Data Center for Marine Environmental Sciences*, are often recommended to the researchers.

The Library's own American Memory/National Digital Library Program is a valuable electronic resource which is publicly available worldwide to researchers through the Internet. Under the topic "Environment and Conservation" are five collections of environment-related materials. Three of the collections: *Mapping the National Parks*, *The Evolution of the Conservation Movement, 1850-1920*, and *Tending the Commons: Folk life and Landscape in Southern West Virginia* are from the library's own holdings, while the other two collections: *Reclaiming the Everglades* and *American Environmental Photographs* are digitalized from collections of other institutions.

Another valuable electronic resource to our patrons is the Library's Science Reference Section web site which serves as a portal to the Library's science and technology resources, provides shortcuts to environmental science materials that are pertinent to their research, and links to Internet resources which generates additional materials for their study. *Tracer Bullets*, first issued by the Science and Technology Division in 1971, are available on the web site in full text. They are compiled and regularly updated by reference librarians in the Science Reference Section, provide bibliographic guides that address current scientific topics. Notable *Trace Bullets* on environmental sciences subjects are *Asbestos and Asbestosis*; *Global Warming & Climate Change*; *Indoor Air Pollution*; *Chemical Exposure: Toxicology, Safety, and Risk assessment*; *Remote Sensing*; *Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: State of the Environment*; and *Environmental Science Projects* which provides assistance to secondary students and their teachers in developing environment-related science fair projects.

## B. Areas of Distinction

The Library's primary-source historical materials in environmental sciences are exceptional and their availability in a variety of formats is incomparable. The collections shown in the American Memory web site includes books, journals, maps, photographs, prints, manuscripts, motion pictures,

and other types of materials drawn from general collections as well as special collections of the Library of Congress.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Library vigorously pursued the personal and professional papers of eminent environmentalists and persons in related fields to augment already strong holdings. As the result, the Library holds papers of pioneer conservationists Gifford Pinchot (1865-1946), the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service; William Temple Hornaday (1854-1937), a pioneer in wildlife conservation; Barry Commoner (1917- ), renowned cellular biologist who helped initiate the modern environmental movement; Joseph Wood Krutch (1893-1970), a writer and naturalist; Henry Fairfield Osborn (1887-1969), a zoologist who founded the Conservation Foundation which works for the conservation of endangered wildlife and natural areas; Edward Osborne Wilson (1929- ), a biologist known for his work on ecology and sociobiology; and Mira Lloyd Dock (1853-1945), a woman environmentalist and botanist.

The Law Library contains the most complete body of records documenting the work of the U.S. Congress pertaining to environmental policy by maintaining a complete set of bills, resolutions and laws as well as hearings and committee prints. It has comprehensive law journal holdings which environmental policy analysts regularly turn to for in-depth analysis of laws and judicial rulings. The Library's foreign environmental law holdings are just as impressive. While an individual library might have stronger collection for one particular country or specific issues, no library has a stronger worldwide collection of environmental law.

The Geography and Map Division maintains materials of extreme importance to environmental studies. It has an outstanding collection of geological maps, as well as cartographic records that offer evidence of the physical characteristics of a given place at a given time; sometimes it is the only source of this information. Because of the Division's worldwide, temporal coverage, essentially from the 14<sup>th</sup> century to date, the Division's collections provide the fullest range of materials concerning environmental changes of the earth over time. This collection is probably unsurpassed by any institution in the world.

The Library's unparalleled environmental journal collections (many date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century) include industry-related journals whose distribution is usually limited to their own members. Scholars often visit the Science Reading Room for issues of environmental science journals and association publications that are not available from other libraries. They also are attracted by the Science, Technology and Business Division's open-stack reference collection of over 10,000 titles, as well as one of the world's largest collection of technical reports, standards, and specifications that have proved to be very useful to researchers on environmental issues.

### **III. Acquisition Sources**

#### **A. Publications in Traditional Print Format**

The Library acquires its materials in environmental sciences in print format from a variety of sources. The largest pool of such publications is received through the U.S. Copyright Office. They are monographs and serials issued by U.S. publishers, or by foreign publishers with distribution offices in the United States. The other large source of print publications are received through the Library's Cataloging In Publication (CIP) and Preassigned Control Number (PCN) programs. These are monographs published by U.S. publishers. The Library acquires its foreign publications mainly by purchase through the Library's Acquisition and Bibliographic Access Directorate. The Library also

acquires a small number of environmental sciences publications through gifts, and by exchange with other institutions.

## **B. Electronic Publications**

The mandatory deposit law (U.S.C. section 407) does not require the copyright holder of electronic publications to provide the Library with free access to such publications, hence the electronically published works without open access are acquired by subscription with fee. The electronic publications in earth sciences are added to the Library's collection as they are recommended by the Recommending Officers of the Science Reference Section. However, those that require purchase are limited because they must fit within the Library of Congress acquisition budget for electronic resources.

## **IV. Collecting Policy**

The Library acquires materials on the environment and all the technologies, life, physical and earth sciences related to the environment primarily at the research level regardless of formats in order to serve the needs of the Congress, Federal agencies, and America public and to carry out the Library's archival responsibility to collect and preserve historical materials for tomorrow's researchers. Dictionaries, directories, and journals that are particularly important to the Congressional Research Service are collected at the comprehensive level, as are some specific subject areas in environmental sciences, such as environmental engineering, air pollution, and wastewater treatment.

The Library endeavors to acquire current reference works comprehensively. The Library acquires substantial bibliographies and other general works of collections at least at the research level. The Library acquires U.S.-published textbooks on environmental sciences written at the college level; foreign textbooks in these fields and at this level are acquired selectively. Textbooks below college level are rarely acquired. Juvenile works, vocational guidance materials, and materials on the study and teaching of the environmental sciences are generally collected at the instructional support level while materials on museums and exhibitions are collected at the basic information level.

The Library acquires comprehensively the publications from all environmental ministries around the world. Materials that contain local statistical information, government policy, and physical data of the region are especially important. When necessary, this may include theses from foreign countries at Ph.D. level and items that are ephemeral in nature.

The Library does not acquire foreign materials that are limited to information commonly found in other published materials, which do not add to the body of knowledge in the existing collection. It collects materials that reflect the levels and distinct areas of scientific and technical specialization in their countries of origin, as well as those materials of historical, cultural and social value that can provide a good picture of environmental conditions in those countries. It should be noted that less developed countries often devote a significant portion of their environmental research efforts to environmental improvement in agricultural industries. Consequently, when a country's scientific and technical enterprises are dominated by agriculture, its environmental-related literature may have a relatively low representation in the Library's collection.

The Recommending Officers for environmental sciences materials are responsible for selecting electronic resources as well as materials in traditional format for acquisition. Recommendations are made in coordination with the Special Collections Coordinators (Electronic). An electronic resource is

selected based on the availability of funding, the usefulness and uniqueness of the information in serving the current or future informational needs of the Congress and researchers, the reputation of the provider, frequency of updating, and ease of access. In addition, the resource's service requirements, cataloging, storage and preservation should also be considered. For specific guidelines in recommending electronic resources, consult the Collection Policy Statement on Electronic Resources.

## V. Collection Weakness

The emergence of electronic journals has presented the Library with a challenge, especially the born digital serials that are growing at an accelerating rate. For an environment scientist, looking for reports on advances in his field, the most important publications are the current serials. However, as of the time of this writing, the Copyright Code's mandatory deposit of "Best Editions" is still limited to the best print editions. This means the Library receives the serials as long as they are available in print format, once they are replaced with online version, the Library loses its right to the rest of the run. Since the deposits provide the largest segment of the library's acquisitions, the Library's service to its clients is still concentrated in print materials.

The Library does have access to many e-journals through its subscriptions to aggregated databases. However, these databases tend to have an embargo period imposed by the vendors which delay the availability of the journal text. Therefore, access to e-journals from subscription databases may not be available as quickly as their print counterparts in the Library. Furthermore, the Library cannot guarantee the continued availability of e-journals it does not hold directly, because there is no guarantee that a vendor of electronic materials will stay in business or that a successor company will preserve the database. An electronic resource may also cease to exist because vendors have the right to prune their collections. Therefore, a rethinking of the meaning of "Copyright Best Edition" in a digital age that gives the Library the right to claim its own copy of e-materials is important and will become much more important as we move further into the digital age.

## VI. Collection Levels

Class	Subject	Collecting Levels
GE10	Dictionaries and encyclopedias	5
GE20	Directories	5
GE25-GE35	Communication in environmental sciences	4
GE42	Environmental ethics	4
GE50-GE56	History of Environmental sciences	5
GE70-GE90	Environmental education, study and teaching	4
GE95-GE100	Museums and exhibitions	2
GE105	General works	5
GE123	Handbooks, manuals, etc.	4
GE140-GE146	Environmental quality and degradation	4
GE149-GE160	Global environmental change	4
GE170-GE199	Environmental policy	4
QC882-QC994.9	Atmospheric pollutants, atmospheric greenhouse effect, global warming	4

QE38	Environmental geology	5
QH72-QH77	Nature conservation, landscape protection	5
TD169-TD1066	Industrial environmental protection and control	4

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