



## The yearlong celebration of science continues...

### Sustainability and the Environment: The YoS2009 May Theme



Image from Science@Cal web site (<http://scienceatcal.berkeley.edu/node/15>)

Today, many communities struggle to provide adequate well-being and thus make decisions that weaken the future of the next generation. Often, communities over-consume their natural resources, establish farmland by eliminating natural habitat, isolate neighbors through home designs, and promote economic growth through short-term industries. However, sustainability means finding innovative ways of living today to improve our well-being that does not impair the future. If we are to respond proactively to the challenges communities face, how do we live and make decisions that support sustainability.

To navigate these challenges, we must consider the three spheres of sustainability:

#### Environment, Economy, and Society.

➤ **Environment** is our natural systems, our ecosystems, and our ecological heritage. It includes plants, animals, insects, oceans, rivers, lands, and considers decisions that result in pollution, deforestation, extinction, climate change and so on.



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➤ **Economy** is our economic and capital created systems. It includes the vitality of individuations, the wealth of society, and the prosperity of actions for individuals and businesses. It considers decisions that impact employment, pricing, trade, markets, industries, fair trade, affordable housing and food and so on.

➤ **Society** is our social institutions and relations between them. It includes how communities can be strengthened and more liveable. It considers decisions that impact government, friends, social groups, sport activities, tourism, volunteerism, political issues, equity, justice, racism, war, marginalized social groups and so on.

Making decisions that support sustainability means we must consider all three spheres equally and holistically. We must consider each in our science, our design and engineering, our policies, and our education.

Sustainability represents a way of thinking, living, and acting to ensure that our choices do not impact future generations' ability to enjoy a high quality of life. This means being good stewards of the earth, good citizens in local and world communities, and sharing resources with human and natural populations.

Celebrating sustainability means celebrating the ways individuals and communities have successfully considered sustainability to make better decisions. Let's celebrate the scientists, the city planners, the students, and citizens who have found innovative ways to promote and live sustainably.