



Albuquerque's Environmental Story

Educating For a Sustainable Community

(Appendix) Obtained May 2006 from <http://www.cabq.gov/aes/glossary.html>

Glossary

ABIOTIC – Nonliving factors in the environment; air, water, sunlight, and minerals.

ADAPTATIONS – (Biological) Any structural or physiological characteristic that allows an organism to exist under the conditions imposed by its habitat.

ADOBE – A brick or building material made of alluvial clay and straw.

ALLUVIAL FAN – The fan-shaped area built up by alluvial deposits, usually at the foot of a steep slope as it opens onto a valley floor or plain.

ALLUVIUM – The clay, silt, sand, gravel, or similar material deposited by running water.

ARROYO – A water-carved gully or channel, usually dry.

BARRIO – A political subdivision of a city; suburb.

BIODEGRADABLE – A material that will decompose quickly as a result of the actions of microorganisms, sunlight, chemical attack, etc.

BIOMASS – The total quantity of living organisms of one or more species per unit of space at a given time or of all the species in a community.

BIOTIC – Of or relating to living factors in the environment; plants and animals.

BOSQUE – A small wooded area abundant with riparian trees and shrubs and usually lining a river bank or floodplain.

BUFFERING STRATEGY – A plan to protect or buffer oneself from unforeseen factors by providing alternatives.

CARNIVORE – A meat-eating animal.

CARRYING CAPACITY – The amount of living matter an area will support indefinitely.

CLEAR CUTTING – A forest management practice of allowing loggers to clear large areas of forest of all mature trees.

CLIMAX COMMUNITY – An assemblage of plants which produces conditions favoring its perpetuation, and which will not undergo transition unless disturbed by external forces.

COMMUNE – (Biological) An interrelated and interdependent assemblage of plants and animals.

CONSUMER – (Biological) An organism that obtains vital nutrients and energy by eating other organisms; in the food chain, all organisms other than green plants.

CREOLES – People of pure Spanish descent who were born in the Americas.

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CULTURAL – Relating to man and his special ways of reacting to the environment.

DECAY – The breakdown of organic matter into simpler compounds due to the digestive action of microorganisms such as bacteria or other decomposers.

DECOMPOSERS – The group of organisms in the community that causes decomposition of organic matter, releasing raw materials into the environment.

DEMOGRAPHY – The statistical study of human populations especially with reference to size and density, distribution, and vital statistics.

DIVERSION DITCH – A man-made channel that acts to intercept and transport water from one location to another.

DYNAMIC EQUILIBRIUM – A state of balance with respect to environmental factors and populations of organisms.

ECOLOGY – The study of the relationship of living things to one another and to their environment.

ECOSYSTEM – The interacting system of a biological community and its nonliving environment.

ENCOMENDEROS – A Spanish caste of land and mine owners.

ENCOMIENDA SYSTEM – A system under which the Spanish government gave the rights to Indian labor to colonists.

ENERGY – The capacity to do work; the capacity of acting.

ENVIRONMENT – The sum of all external conditions and influences affecting the development and survival of an organism.

EROSION – The wearing away of the earth's surfaces by the forces of the atmosphere and gravity.

ESCARPMENT – A steep slope separating two comparatively level or more gently sloping surfaces.

FLOODPLAIN – That part of any stream valley which is inundated during floods, or has been.

FOOD CHAIN – A sequence of organisms in which each uses the next, usually lower, member of the sequence as a food source.

FOOD PYRAMID – The quantitative relationship of organisms in a food chain. Thousands of organisms are needed at the bottom of the food chain for the eventual support of one animal at the top, due to energy lost in each conversion.

FOOD WEB – A complex pattern of interacting food chains.

FOSSIL – The solidified imprint or remains of ancient plant or animal life.

GAUCHUPINES – Top level of Spanish caste system; people who had been born in Spain.

GENIZAROS – A class of people in the Spanish period which served as military personnel.

GEOMORPHOLOGY – The science of the study of land forms; the description and interpretation of the earth's relief features.

GEOHERMAL – Relating to the heat in the earth's interior and the use of steam formed when water comes in contact with this heat.

GREENHOUSE EFFECT – The heating effect of the atmosphere upon the earth as light waves from the sun pass through the air and are absorbed by the earth. The earth then reradiates this energy as heat waves that are absorbed by the air. The air thus acts as a greenhouse, allowing the passage of light but not heat.

GROUND WATER RUNOFF – Ground water, spring, or seepage water, that is discharged into a stream channel.

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HABITAT – The sum total of environmental conditions that make up the surroundings for an organism or a community.

HERBIVORE – An organism that feeds on plants exclusively.

IGNEOUS – Rock formed by solidification of molten or once molten material.

INFILL – In housing construction, the process of developing open areas within an established area before developing outside the established area.

INFRASTRUCTURE – Physical installations necessary to support a community (roads, power lines, etc.)

INTERRELATIONSHIP – The interaction between plants and animals in their environment.

KIVA – A Pueblo Indian ceremonial structure that is usually round and partly underground.

LEIBIG'S LAW – The number of individuals in an environment is limited by the amount of the scarcest element necessary to maintain life in that environment.

LIFE ZONES – Biogeographical zones that, because of geographic position, temperature, precipitation, elevation, exposure, and history of climates, have restricted or promoted plant and animal similarities.

LIMITING FACTORS – The physical needs that determine the survival of a species: temperature, water, air supply, light, food.

MAGMA – Molten rock material within the earth.

MARSH – A low-lying track of soft, wet land that provides an important ecosystem for a variety of plant and animal life.

MESTIZOS – People of mixed Indian, European, and often Negro descent.

METAMORPHIC – A pronounced change in the constitution of rock effected by pressure, heat, and water that results in a more compact and highly crystalline condition.

NICHE – The function or position of an organism within the community structure.

NONRENEWABLE RESOURCES – Natural resources that are limited in supply and may eventually be depleted; petroleum, coal, copper, zinc, gold, uranium, etc.

OXBOW – The area resulting from the meandering of a river or stream.

PENEPLAIN – A very late phase of a mature land surface, with very low relief and very gentle slope.

PERCOLATION – Downward flow or infiltration of water through the pores or spaces of rock or soil.

PIONEER PLANT – The first naturally occurring species of plant to inhabit a newly-established environment caused by burns, floods, or misuse; the first step in ecological succession.

PLATTED – A graphic and verbal description of a lot or lots with survey reference ties to permanent survey monuments.

POPULATION – Any group of organisms of the same species that occupies a given space at a particular moment in time.

PREDATOR – An organism that obtains nourishment by killing and consuming other animals.

PRIMARY CONSUMER – An animal that subsists on the producers (plants) for nourishment, usually herbivores.

PRODUCER – An organism that produces its own food from elements in its environment; green plants.

RECYCLING – Reprocessing for reuse; the process by which waste materials are transformed into raw materials which are then used in new products.

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RENEWABLE RESOURCES – Natural resources that, through management, treatment, development, or other means, may be restored or replenished; wind, solar, geothermal, hydroelectric, plants and animals.

RESOURCE RECOVERY – The process of obtaining raw materials or energy, particularly from solid waste.

RIFT – A cracking or splitting of the earth's crust.

RIPARIAN – Relating to or living on the bank of a natural watercourse (stream, river, lake).

SCAVENGER – An organism that obtains nutrients from dead animals.

SECONDARY CONSUMER – Animals that feed on the primary consumers.

SEDIMENTARY – Rock that is formed by continuous deposits of sediment, layer upon layer.

SUCCESSION – The gradual, predictable replacement of one community by another. The community itself creates the conditions that lead to its replacement by another community. Succession ends with the climax community.

SYSTEM – An organized interrelationship and interaction of biotic and non-biotic matter with energy.

TEMPERATURE INVERSION – A state in which cooler, denser air underlies warmer, lighter air and is thus prevented by gravity from vertical mixing and dispersion. Such a condition acts to trap air pollutants near the grounds.

TERRACE – A level narrow plain usually with a steep front resulting from a stream cutting into its broad valley floor.

TOPOGRAPHY – The configuration of a surface area including its relief, or relative elevations, and position of its natural and manmade features.

TURBIDITY – Having the sediment stirred up; murky, dense.

UPLIFT – The upheaval or lifting up of the earth's crust.

WATERSHED – Drainage basin, an area of land drained by a given stream.

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