

What's all the fuss about carbon and its footprint?

But we've always had carbon dioxide in our atmosphere

- Carbon has been present as a gas (CO₂) in our atmosphere throughout the earth's history. Plants and trees remove and store carbon as part of their growth process and the exchange of carbon dioxide between trees, soil, and oceans makes up the earth's carbon cycle.

The greenhouse effect and climate change

- With the advent of the industrial age and its dramatic increase in the release of carbons due to expanded burning of fossil fuels, the previous balance within the carbon cycle has changed drastically.
- This excess of carbon that can no longer be absorbed by living plants now stays in our atmosphere and traps some of the thermal radiation that would normally escape into space, causing the earth's atmosphere to become warmer. This 'greenhouse effect' causes its own problems. The warming by just a single degree in our annual temperatures is causing the icecaps and glaciers to melt at alarming rates and raising our sea levels. The trapped gasses in our atmosphere contribute to air pollution, drifting smog, and acid rain.

Your carbon footprint

- A carbon footprint is the measure of carbon dioxide being emitted through the burning of fossil fuels (coal, gasoline, oil, wood) by a country, an industry, a home or office. This measure is given in pounds of CO₂ and the amount produced by so many of our daily actions and activities can be quite alarming. An effort to reduce your own carbon footprint by improving your energy efficiencies can be accomplished through some very straightforward and simple means that are very much like the efforts being made worldwide by other individuals, communities, businesses and countries. The benefits of these small and large improvements in your methods and practices will benefit our town and our earth while having a very nice impact on your wallet as well.