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Save Our Plants & Animals by Recycling Textiles

Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles (SMART) Association encourages Earth-friendly textile use this Earth Day



Heather Lester, SMART's director of meetings and member services and her husband, Scott, repurposed an old shirt to create a fun outfit for their dog, Marshall, to celebrate their favorite sports team

ABINGDON, Md. (April 18, 2019)—This Earth Day (April 22), the **Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles (SMART) Association** urges consumers to help preserve the Earth's wildlife by reusing and

recycling textiles (any fabric made of interlacing fibers such as clothing, towels, bedsheets and much more), thereby significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Earth Day 2019's theme is "Protect Our Species," a global movement encouraging education, raising awareness of the accelerating rate of extinction of millions of species and encouraging lifestyle changes. Textile recycling must be an active part of this critical campaign.

"Today's unprecedented global destruction of wildlife populations is of great concern," said Earth Day Network president Kathleen Rogers [in a news release](#) issued earlier this month. "Climate change, deforestation, habitat loss, trafficking and poaching, unsustainable agriculture, pollution and pesticides all take their toll."

Reusing textiles saves the environment from tons of harsh chemicals, waste products and waste water used in the manufacturing of new textiles. Additionally, when textiles are thrown away instead of recycled, they end up in landfills, resulting in increasing greenhouse gas emissions that have the potential to wipe out plant and wildlife species across the planet.

What is the impact of the greenhouse effect on animals? Greenhouse effects occur when heat from the sun is trapped in the earth's atmosphere, according to [Sciencing.com](#). Trapped heat increases global temperatures, which directly affects food sources and habitats for animals. For instance, increasing temperatures can cause an increase in global water temperature which results in the death of vital sources of algae for small fish. Small fish are a direct source of food for larger fish; thus, warming waters cause a ripple effect in the food chain, eventually leading to fewer fish and a reduced food supply for animals, including humans.

However, SMART believes there is hope for a healthier planet through textile reuse and recycling, a viable method of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, current clothing and textile recycling has a greater impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions than the recycling of yard waste, glass and plastic.

"Reuse and recycling of clothing and textiles is the equivalent of removing 1.3 million cars from America's highways and is equal to the impact of aluminum recycling," explains SMART's Executive Director, Jackie King. "It is also more impactful than plastic and glass recycling, but many consumers don't realize their household textiles can be recycled...and most textiles therefore end up in landfills."

SMART aims to educate consumers that they can play a part in improving the environment. According to the association, 81 pounds of textiles per person are thrown away annually, leaving them destined to decay in landfills. However, old clothes, shoes, towels, sheets, curtains, stuffed animals and more can be recycled as long as they are clean, dry and odor-free.

Consumers with items they would like to ensure are recycled are encouraged to seek out collection bins in their towns or neighborhoods. SMART recommends looking for a collection bin that follows the [SMART Code of Conduct](#).



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“You may also donate your items to your favorite thrift store or charity like Savers, Goodwill, Salvation Army or St. Vincent de Paul,” says King. “Even if your items can’t be resold or re-worn, these groups will ensure they are properly recycled and don’t end up in landfills.”

To learn more about SMART and textile recycling, visit www.smartasn.org. Please direct media inquiries for SMART to Patrick Seidl at 410-420-2001 or by email at Patrick.Seidl@fallstongroup.com.

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About SMART

Established in 1932, the Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association (SMART) is an international nonprofit trade association that strengthens the economic opportunities of its diverse membership by promoting the interdependence of the for-profit textile recycling industry segments and providing a common forum for networking, education and trade. SMART members use and convert recycled and secondary materials from used clothing, commercial laundries and non-woven, off spec material, new mills ends and paper from around the world. SMART member companies create thousands of jobs worldwide, proving each day you can make money by being social responsible.