ommunity resources are people, places or

objects located off the primary site that may be used to
achieve educational objectives. Environmental
education lends itself quite naturally to community
oriented teaching. The use of resources within a
community can greatly enhance and expand the school
curriculum. Community resources can help teachers
teach more effectively by providing motivation to
students, helping students achieve learning objectives
and exposing students to positive role models and `real
life' situations.

Community resources can provide the

motivation some students need to see the connection
between the classroom and the "real world". Involving
students in the community gives them exposure to a
stimulating learning environment and to different
people and perspectives; and provides students a
greater sense of purpose.

Often community -based activities can help

students fulfill desired learning outcomes in a manner
that is more engaging than traditional textbook
assignments. For instance, a middle school science
curriculum may include these learning objectives:
"Develop an understanding of the recycling process",
"Distinguish between number one and number two
plastics", and "Read and construct a bar graph". In a
carefully planned field trip to a recycling plant,
students can gain relevant first-hand experience with
those concepts and processes.

The use of community resources can further

the goals of environmental education by preparing
students for the real world and helping students to
become "world class" citizens. The community is an
extension of the school. Since all environmental
problems occur in someone's community, it seems
logical for students to try to solve local issues. The
teacher can facilitate this process by choosing
manageable initial projects with a high chance of
success. In turn, students will begin to see themselves
as problem solvers and will likely continue their
involvement. As the students work on solutions, they
will connect with caring local citizens who are affected
by environmental problems. In so doing, they will

hopefully develop a sense of stewardship and place,
which will help build the bridge to global
responsibility.

**Implementing Community Resources**

Community resources in the form of people,

places, or things can be found in all sectors of the
community and can provide teachers with teaching
materials (borrowed or donated), project ideas, guest
speakers, field trips, or community service projects.
Some organizations hold workshops, which inform
teachers about various service, financial, equipment, or
curricular resources that they offer. Every community,
no matter how large or small, holds cultural, natural,
human, and technological resources that can be
utilized by the students and teachers who live there.

Three common ways for educators to use

community resources in environmental education
include: guest speakers, field trips, and community
projects. Guest speakers can be anyone from
environmental professionals to students' family
members to other community members. Possible field
trip destinations are zoos, manufacturing plants, farms,
or other community businesses where students can
interact with the people who work there. These
businesses may also serve as sources of internships or
mentoring experiences for students. Community
service projects can take many forms, from picking up
litter to long-term adoption of a natural area.

Learning through community resources can

involve short classroom sessions, one-day field trips, a
week-long unit, or a year-long project. Lessons can be
interdisciplinary, or focus in-depth on a particular
topic. Once educators begin using a variety of
community resources, it may be best to begin an
inventory of those resources. An inventory can take the
form of a notebook, a box of index cards or a computer
database. Each entry may have the name of the
resource, the appropriate subject areas, what the
resource can be used for, contact name, address, and a
list of restrictions or limitations pertaining to the
resource. This catalog of community resources allows
several educators to share their ideas and experiences
with others in their school.