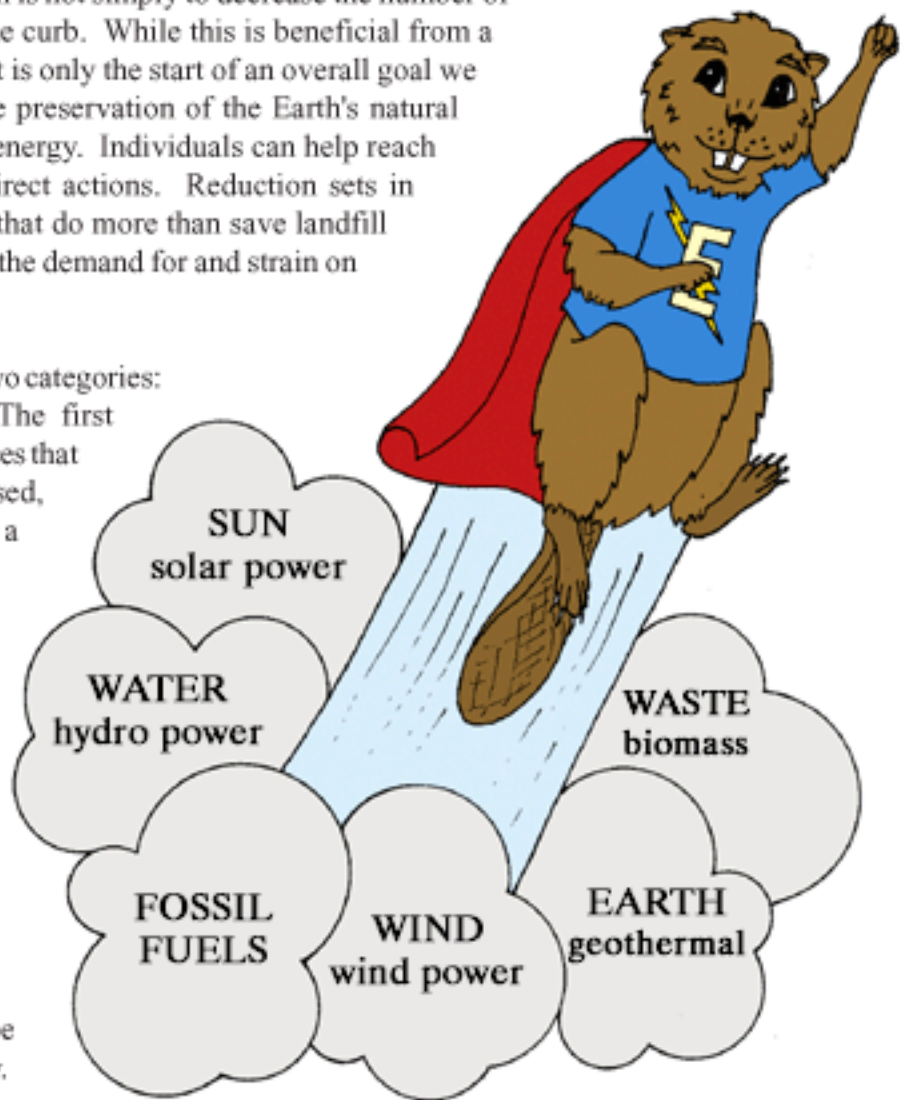


# Natural Resources and Energy

The underlying reason for reduction is not simply to decrease the number of garbage bags and cans placed at the curb. While this is beneficial from a waste management point of view, it is only the start of an overall goal we all need to reach. That goal is the preservation of the Earth's natural resources and the conservation of energy. Individuals can help reach this target through direct and indirect actions. Reduction sets in motion a series of chain reactions that do more than save landfill space. These events help decrease the demand for and strain on the planet's greatest treasures.

Natural resources are divided into two categories: renewable and non-renewable. The first classification refers to those resources that can be reused repeatedly or, once used, can be restored or regenerated in a reasonable period of time. Water, soil, forests, vegetation, fish and other animals are renewable resources.

Rocks, minerals, coal, oil, natural gas, metallic ores and phosphates are examples of the non-renewable variety. The natural formation of these resources is so slow, taking thousands to millions of years, that for all human purposes they may be regarded as being finite in quantity.



Energy occurs in many forms. In terms of conservation, we are referring to any use of energy resulting from human activities. This includes energy provided by natural resources, of both types. As Canadians, reducing our energy usage should be a major concern. We consume more energy, per capita, than any other country in the world.

How can one person indirectly preserve and conserve? Remember the garbage left at the curb? Instead of two or more bags, a household reduces the amount of waste that needs to be disposed to one small bag. If enough people did this, trash collection or visits to the landfill would decrease. This means less energy is used in powering the collection vehicles; trucks could be smaller and more fuel efficient or the vehicles could make fewer trips. This would lower the energy needed to refine the gasoline or diesel fuel the vehicles burn. Small trucks would need fewer resources in their production and less trips by bigger trucks should equal less resources used in repairs. As a consequence, even more energy would be saved by decreasing the need to locate and extract more of the resources used to provide the power and materials. Lastly, less energy would