

Study finds young Americans less interested in environmental issues

By Martha Irvine, Washington Post

They have a reputation for being environmentally minded do-gooders. But an academic analysis of surveys spanning more than 40 years has found that today's young Americans are less interested in the environment and in conserving resources – and often less civic-minded overall – than their elders were when they were young.

The findings go against the widespread belief that environmental issues have hit home with today's young adults, known as Millennials, who have grown up amid climate change discussion and the mantra “reduce, reuse, recycle.” The environment is often listed among top concerns of young voters.

“I was shocked,” said Jean Twenge, a psychology professor at San Diego State University who is one of the study's authors. “We have the perception that we're getting through to people. But at least compared to previous eras, we're not.”

This study, published online this month in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, looked at the life goals, concern for others and civic orientation of three young generations – baby boomers, Generation X and Millennials.

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