E-CYCLE WISCONSIN

When we choose to recycle electronics, we can make a world of difference.

Visit dnr.wi.gov and search “e-cycle” to learn more about recycling your old electronics.
Mining

Many of the raw materials used in electronics come from open-pit mines. This is like oil, gold, copper, and iron are extracted from the earth's crust by mining companies. Mining can result in environmental degradation, including soil erosion, water pollution, and habitat destruction.

Poster Key

Processing/Melting

Most materials in our electronics do not come out of the ground in the form that manufacturers need. They must be melted and then cast into the desired shape. In some cases, melting materials may result in the release of toxic gases or other pollutants into the environment.

Manufacturing

Once the components of electronics are made, they must be assembled into devices. Manufacturing is a complex process that involves many steps and equipment. It is also a major source of pollution and waste.

Transportation

The chips, tubes, and other components are transported to manufacturers where they are installed in the final product. This transportation process involves the use of trucks, trains, and other modes of transportation.

Use

Electronic devices are part of our daily lives. They provide us with communication, entertainment, and convenience. However, they also generate waste.

Disposal

When electronic devices are no longer useful, they must be recycled or disposed of properly. If not recycled, they can release toxic materials into the environment.

Recycling

Electronic recycling facilities in high-tech businesses that require skilled labor and heavy machinery. The plants are usually located in industrial areas.

Further Research

1. Because of the international nature of mining, it is difficult to determine where the raw materials in our electronics come from. This is because many raw materials are sourced from different countries around the world. However, it is known that the mining of these raw materials is often driven by economic incentives.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did the artist include power transmission lines at the top of the poster and a wetland at the bottom of the poster? How are these elements part of the story of electronics?

2. What is the meaning of the table barrell, the treasure chest, and the periodic table pieces?

3. What are some conclusions that can be drawn from this poster?

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