

# What you can do to make a difference



## Recycling facts and helpful hints

### Why Recycle?

Recycling saves energy, thus reducing acid rain, global warming and air pollution.

Recycling aluminum uses 95 percent less energy than producing aluminum products from raw materials.

Recycling paper uses 60 percent less energy than manufacturing paper from virgin timber.

Recycling a glass jar saves enough energy to light a 100-watt light bulb for four hours.

Recycling also conserves valuable natural resources. The *New York Times* uses 75,000 trees to produce its Sunday edition each week, yet only 30 percent of newspapers are recycled in the United States.

Recycling metals minimizes the need for mining new minerals and decreases damage to wilderness.

Recycling cuts down on land-fill. The average American throws away four pounds of garbage per day. By recycling, it is possible to cut our waste stream by 80 percent.

### What You Can Do

Purchase and consume according to the phrase "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle." Reduce the amount of garbage you generate by purchasing products with minimal packaging (about half of all waste is packaging).

Purchase foods in bulk. "Pre-cycle" by purchasing products in recyclable containers, such as aluminum, glass, paper and cardboard.

Avoid plastic and styrofoam products that are neither reusable nor recyclable, such as disposable diapers, lighters, razors and plastic utensils.

Use white paper; it is easier to recycle than colored paper.

Bring your own paper bags or, better yet, cloth bags to the grocery store.

Use a coffee mug rather than styrofoam cups.

Use products that are made to be used many times, such as cloth diapers, cloth napkins, towels and rags, sponges, dishes and silverware, rechargeable batteries, etc.

Use the blank sides of paper to take notes and do scratch work.

Mend clothes and repair broken appliances.

Take care of your belongings so they will last longer.

Look into purchasing used goods at second-hand stores and junk yards to eliminate unnecessary production.

Help establish and promote a curbside recycling program where you live.

## Tips on energy conservation

It is often difficult to grasp the importance of energy in our lives. On any given day we may drive to work, turn on a heater, store food in a refrigerator, take a warm shower, cook dinner, turn on lights and watch TV. All of these actions use energy.

Americans use more energy per person than any other people on Earth, yet we also have a deep appreciation of nature. Unfortunately, our energy practices often harm the environment. Acid rain, global warming, oil spills and nuclear waste are all directly related to the way we use energy.

By using energy more efficiently, we can reduce the negative impacts of energy production without sacrificing our standard of living. There are now compact fluorescent light bulbs that screw into standard sockets and use only a quarter of the energy required of conventional incandescent bulbs.



Here are some tips for saving energy in transportation:

Use public transportation, car-pool, bike or walk.

Purchase a car with good gas mileage.

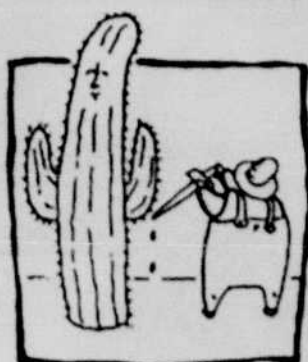
Keep your car tuned up and running well.

Cut down on unnecessary driving by living close to your place of work, calling ahead before shopping and consolidating errands.

Avoid drive-thru lines where your car engine must idle for long periods.

Arrange for a carpool with your coworkers or neighbors.

Enjoy local recreational activities rather than traveling long distances for entertainment.



## The necessity of water conservation

Conserving water saves energy and money. Much energy goes into transporting water to your residence, and then more is

used to heat water for bathroom and kitchen uses. By conserving water, it is possible to prevent some of the pollution caused by excessive energy use.

Ways to conserve water in the bathroom:

Take showers rather than baths. Showers use about a third as much water.

Install a low-flow shower head with an on/off valve.

Install a space-occupier in your toilet to minimize water use per flush.

Think "water conservation" and make it a habit. Take shorter showers, avoid leaving the water running while shaving and brushing teeth, and don't use the toilet as an ashtray or garbage can.

In the kitchen:

Only use the dishwasher and washing machine with full loads. Front-loading washing machines use up to 40 percent less water than top-loading models.

Avoid running water to wash vegetables and rinse dishes.

## Agriculture and the environment

Few people consider agriculture to be an environmental problem. However, mismanaged agricultural lands lead to topsoil loss, water depletion and pollution. With the world's population growing by about 95 million people, the pressure on agricultural lands to increase food and fiber production builds. Clearing land for agriculture, especially in tropical regions, leads to large-scale deforestation and loss of species diversity.

What you can do:

Buy local, organically-grown fruits and vegetables. Ask your supermarket's produce manager to stock organic products.

Help organize and support a local farmer's market.

Plant a vegetable garden and compost your organic waste to fertilize it.

Eat lower on the food chain more often. If you choose to eat meat, buy grass-fed, organic beef and organic chickens instead of feedlot beef and industrial chickens.

If you have a pet, think about replacing part or all of the canned meat in its diet with vegetable protein.



## How population growth fits into the picture

The size of the human population affects virtually every environmental concern facing our planet. As our population grows,

demands for resources increase, leading to pollution and waste. More energy is used, escalating the problems of global warming, acid rain, oil spills and nuclear waste.

More land is required for agriculture, which contributes to deforestation and soil erosion. More homes, factories and roads must be built, occupying habitat lost by other species that share the planet, often leading to their extinctions.

Simply put, the more people inhabiting our finite planet, the greater the stress on its resources.

## Earth Facts

The industrialized nations, comprising one-fifth of the world's population, use four-fifths of its resources to achieve their current standard of living. — Consumers Association of Penang, Malaysia

In 1988, U.S. industry legally expelled 22 billion pounds of toxic waste into the air, soil and water. — The Environmental Protection Agency



The average American car driven 10,000 miles will release approximately its own weight, between one and two tons in carbon, as carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. — World Resources Institute

There are enough chlorofluorocarbons embedded in a single styrofoam beercooler to destroy all the ozone over an area the size of 20 football fields. — National Toxics Campaign

The styrofoam cups Americans use each year could form a chain that would encircle the Earth 436 times. — National Toxics Campaign

In 1988, McDonalds Restaurants used 1.5 cubic feet of styrofoam. — Harpers Index

Amount of meat imported annually by the United States from Central America: 200,000,000 pounds

Amount of meat eaten by the average person in Central America: Less than the average American housecat. — *Diet From a New America*

Every quarter pound hamburger from a steer raised in Central America represents the loss of 55 square feet of valuable tropical rain forest. — Chris Uhl, Forest Biologist

The outflow from the Hyperion Sewage Treatment Plant near the LA Airport forms the 10th largest river in California.

— Heal the Bay

Disposable diapers represent 2 percent of all municipal solid waste in America. — The Environmental Protection Agency

There are currently two holes in the ozone that develop annually over the two poles; the one over the Antarctic is approximately the size of the United States. — The Sierra Club

## Environmental information on the Internet

Some of the environmental newsgroups on the Internet  
 alt.hemp  
 alt.org.earth-first  
 alt.org.audubon  
 alt.org.sierra-club  
 alt.sustainable.agriculture



## Working for the rainforest

Forests act as a natural sink for carbon dioxide, which is the major greenhouse gas responsible for global warming. As rainforests are destroyed, higher levels of carbon dioxide remain in the atmosphere, leading to higher global temperatures.

Burning rainforests further exacerbates the problem by releasing huge amounts of additional carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Scientists predict that as global temperatures rise, we will face an increase in crop failure, oceans will rise and flood coastal areas, and many species of plants and animals will become extinct.

It is often impossible to re-establish a rainforest once it has been cleared.

To slow this process, try to follow at least some of the following suggestions.

Avoid eating fast-food hamburgers and other processed beef products. Current labeling procedures make it difficult to track the origin of imported beef.

Don't buy products made from tropical hardwoods. Instead, purchase furniture and other products made from temperate hardwoods. Oak, beech and walnut are a few species that are popular in furniture-making.

Patronize businesses, such as Ben and Jerry's ice cream and Body Shop cosmetics, that have policies designed to promote sustainable rainforest use.

Much of the information on this page was provided by *Earth Day Resources*.