

EARTH TALK™

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

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water consumption.

"On average, a vegan, a person who eats no meat or dairy, indirectly consumes nearly 600 gallons of water per day less than a person who eats the average American diet," reports Sandra Postel, director of the Global Water Policy Project and the lead water expert



How much water you consume depends directly or indirectly on what you're eating. (Photo courtesy of iStockPhoto)

on the National Geographic Society's Freshwater Initiative.

But those loathe to giving up meat entirely should consider switching to only grass-fed beef. According to Postel, it takes some 5,300 liters of fresh water for every dollar's worth of grain fed to a typical beef cow, while the water required to feed grass-fed cattle falls on the pasture from the sky, meaning it is free and does not deplete groundwater reserves at all. "Not all burgers are created equal," she says.

Postel adds that another way to cut down on one's water footprint would be to give up or cut back on coffee: One cup takes some 55 gallons of water to make, with most used to grow the coffee beans.

Choosing organic food can also help keep an individual's indirect water consumption in check. Organic farming techniques conserve water both by using less, increasing the water-holding capacity of soils and reducing erosion as well as by not polluting nearby water bodies with run-off from synthetic chemical inputs.

CONTACTS: Livestock's Long Shadow, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.htm>; Global Water Policy Project, <http://www.globalwaterpolicy.org/>; National Geographic's Freshwater Initiative, <http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/freshwater/about-freshwater-initiative>.

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POLICE BLOTTER

Portland Police respond to possible cougar sighting in Southwest Portland

March 26, 2013, at approximately 2:00 p.m., Portland Police officers assigned to Central Precinct responded to the area of Southwest Sam Jackson Park Road and 10th Avenue on the report of a cougar in the neighborhood.

Officers contacted the caller who reported seeing a large animal with a two-foot-long curled tail behind a residence in the 3300 block of Southwest 10th Avenue.

The caller and another person reported to police that they are hunters and are familiar with cougars. Officers checked the area but could not confirm the presence of a cougar.

The neighborhood where the possible cougar sighting occurred is directly above Oregon Health Science University, Doernbecher Children's Hospital, the Shriners Hospital for Children, and the Portland Veterans Administration Medical Center. This neighborhood is next to Marquam Nature Park and not

far from Washington Park.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has some tips to remember about cougars: http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with_cougars.asp.

ODFW advises the following if you encounter a cougar:

STOP - Never approach a cougar at any time for any reason.

STAY CALM - Face the cougar and do not turn your back towards it. Do not run. Running encourages it to chase.

APPEAR LARGE - Make yourself look large. Do not bend over or crouch down. Raise your hands. Hold your coat open. Hold small children.

FIGHT BACK - Fight back if attacked.

MAKE NOISE - Make noise while hiking to reduce the chance of surprising a cougar.

KEEP CHILDREN CLOSE - Always keep children close by and in sight.

AVOID WALKING ALONE - While there have been no other reported cougar sightings, the Portland Police Bureau would like community members to be aware of the possible sighting and encourages anyone seeing a cougar not to approach it but to immediately call 9-1-1.

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