



Skyview's 7th Annual Earth Day Sustainability Survey!!



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*Over 60 things Your Family can do to
lessen your impact on our Earth!*

Earth Day is here. (Actually every day is Earth Day, if you think about it!)

So this is a fantastic time to do something for our Earth! Why? Well we, the inhabitants of this planet, are facing a big challenge in the next 30 years. The challenge is to create sustainable practices for over 9 billion people on Earth. It's a big job, so we might as well get started!

btw: Sustainability relates to the survival of vital human support systems, like the planet's [climatic system](#), nutrient cycles, as well as healthy [agriculture](#), [forestry](#), and [fisheries](#)

To make life on Earth sustainable we'll need to adopt practices that will allow us to "meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". It's a big world out there and are all linked together.

The key to sustainability is for each of us to learn how to balance the wants of human beings with the need to keep Earth's environment healthy.

You are all going to be the leaders of the new era soon, so let's see how we can practice living 24/7 in ways that have less impact on our environment. Adopting sustainable practices will help determine the fate of ALL inhabitants on this planet. As an added bonus, many of the items on this survey can save money or improve your family's health in the long & short run!

Mission:

- a. To do things to actually make a difference for our community
- b. To discover & choose new ways you can do to lower your family's impact on the environment.
- c. To celebrate things your family already does to live sustainably.
- d. To share any new ideas or sites you have to make our next survey stronger!

Step One: **Schedule a time(s) for a family meeting.** You must have at least one parent/guardian present at all times. You'll need at least one to two hours for this meeting. It can be in more than one sitting, but remember, this is a very important job. It will help if you prepare by reviewing the site ahead of time.

Step Two: Have the Family meeting: Have this handout & note taking materials ready.

Begin by explaining your mission, then:

1. Do a Carbon Calculator Survey. Do **ONE** of these surveys with your family to gain knowledge about your impact on the environment and report out the results.

A. Measure your family's over all "carbon footprint vs other folks" using the Nature Conservancy's's: [Carbon Footprint Calculator](#)

B. Calculate your family's "carbon footprint" vs other Americans with the famous EPA [Carbon calculator](#). (Note you may need to go to "compatibility view" if you have Internet Explorer 8.)

C. Print out, or screenshot your results and add to the report.

2. Review the list of ACTION items with your family (SEE BELOW).

For each item, or sub item, give it a A - C rating:

A. We already do this action.

B. We will to do these actions. (note: websites are for more info if needed later)

C. We will think about doing this for the future.

D. Also list things that aren't on the list as D's - These are items, sites, or apps your family recommends as an addition to the project for next year.

3. Record "A", and "B's, and "C's plus any new ideas or sites ("D") to add to the list.

4. Write up your Final Report. Use the [format shown below](#).

Report Format

Title: *Our Family's Earth Day Sustainability Survey*

1. Summary: Tell how the meeting went. Explain using complete sentences and data.

a. Final results of the Carbon Calculator (attach or screenshot).

b. What went well during the meeting.

c. What was difficult in the meeting.

d. What was fun.

2. List Successes: (top A's) - Five things we already do.

List what you feel are the Top Five items you already do.	
a. Item Number	b. Briefly describe what your family does

3. Goals: (B's) - Three things we are committing to do! (3 items your family will do.)

Goal: no less than 3 items please.		
a. Item Number	b. Briefly describe what your family is going to do to	When

4. Parking Lot: (C's) – Three items we are considering doing in the future.

Goal: no less than 3 items please.	
a. Item Number	b. Briefly describe the items your family is considering

5. New items “(D’s)” we came up with or suggested modifications:

New or revised ideas or websites, fixes, new eco games etc. that should be added to the next survey list. (Goal: at least one idea!)
a.
b.
c.

Action Items to review & discuss at your Family Meeting

RECYCLE IDEAS

1a. Recycle cans & bottles. (It takes 10x the energy to produce a new aluminum can as to recycle one!) [Check out these facts!](#)

1b. Recycle: clothes sports equipment etc to a charitable organization - There are many less fortunate people in our area that could use your hand me downs, for example [Sight Connection \(formerly Community Services for the Blind\)](#).

1c. Recycle paper, printer cartridges, cardboard etc. Use 2 sided printing and copying. **Staples and other companies give coupons for each cartridge returned.** [Staples](#)

1d. Recycle all electronics, (computers, televisions, computer monitors, & portable or laptop computers). In Washington State Manufacturers must make electronic product recycling services available at no cost To find collection sites in your area call 1-800-RECYCLE or go to [E-Cycle Washington](#)

Companies, like HP, offer free recycling of printers and electronic equipment. [HP recycle info here](#)

1e. Recycle burnt out fluorescent bulbs at McLendon’s Hardware or other stores! BTW as of 2011 all retailers of flourescent bulbs must offer recycling. We mention McLendon's because they were the first in our area and SKYVIEW students convinced them to join the flourescent bulb recycle [Take-It -Back-Network](#)

1g. Recycle or properly dispose of hazardous household waste.

For King CO: [Wastemobile schedule](#)

For Snohomish County: [SNOCO drop off](#)

Other Ways to Reduce Waste also see: [Waste Reduction Tips](#)

1h. Recycle old appliances at: [Sno-PUD](#)

REFUSE IDEAS

2. Ask yourself, “What want?” and “What do I really Need?” Before you buy. Then buy only when necessary. Some things need to be replaced, or are outgrown, others really don't.

3. Buy Minimally packaged goods. Excessive packaging costs more & adds to the waste stream.

4. Use postconsumer recycled products. This has the advantage of increasing the demand for these products and lowering their price. Example: Recycled printer paper. Paper can be up to 100% post consumer recycled) **Then print using both sides of the paper.**

5. Avoid buying products packaged in Non recyclable plastic & Styrofoam. Both last a tremendously long time.

Here's an idea: When buying meats/fish/fowl go to the butcher in your grocery store and get paper wrapped food instead of buying meat & fish packed in Styrofoam from the cooler aisle

6. Alternatives to avoid unnecessary waste. Example:

- a. **Don't buy bottled water.** Use a water bottle (BPA Free) and save money and plastic.
- b. **Bring a reusable mug** to your favorite coffee shop. (Avoid plastic mugs, stainless steel is ok!)
- c. **Avoid fast food stores** - All over package goods & don't offer recycling
- d. **Bring a food storage container** to the restaurant for leftovers! Skip the Styrofoam containers
- e. Store food in sturdy **reusable containers**, preferably glass, vs plastic or aluminum wrap.
- f. **Think twice** before buying any “disposable” products. Sure they are disposable, but you pay for items twice. (Buying and waste disposal fees) All end up in the landfill and last a very long time
- g. **Parties** - Use compostable utensils and dishes etc: See [Lets go Green Biz!](#) Then compost these items at home or put them in the yard waste for Cedar Grove to compost.
- h. **Lunch** – Bring your own in a **reusable lunch container**, then reuse it.
- i. **Reuse scrap paper** by turning it into notepaper or notepads

Health Note: Avoid heating food in plastic storage containers. Put the food in a glass bowl or plate instead!

7. Use cloth shopping bags – keep some in your car at all times. If cloth isn't possible, request paper and use the paper bag to line your garbage instead of plastic bags, reuse or recycle any extras. Search for “Cloth Shopping bags” for info on where to get these.

8. Take your family off direct mailing lists. Go to: [NO MORE JUNK MAIL](#)

9. Recycle your old cell phone! Check out these sites.

- a. [Cell phones for soldiers](#)
- b. [CREDO](#) - Collective good mobile phone recycling
- c. [Wireless recycling](#)

10. Start a backyard compost pile. Recycle your kitchen scraps and yard waste! This vastly reduces transportation and landfill costs. Learn how at [Stewardship Gardening!](#)

Do things differently - Revise your thinking?

11a. Are you up the Challenge? Choose one of these [Eco Challenges for the whole family](#)

11b. Have a happy, sustainable holiday for your family check this site out and... [Make a Greener Holiday!](#)

Rethink - Take charge of your Environmental Health:

12. Choose your seafood sustainably. At the present rate, the world's seafood stocks will be entirely depleted by 2048, says a report in the journal *Science*.

By buying & eating only certain types of seafood, you can discourage harmful fishing practices, avoid depleting stocks of threatened species and avoid harmful levels of mercury.

Use one of these two great sites to check out which fish are sustainable and safe and keep checking, the list changes over time.

[Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch](#) or [NOAA Fish Watch](#)

13. Eat more meatless meals! The American Dietetic Association endorses well planned [Vegetarian Diets](#). Choosing to eat a healthy all vegetarian meal at least once a week can have great benefits. Eating from lower down on the food chain may offer benefits like preventing and treating certain chronic diseases, saves \$\$ and energy. It costs an incredible amount more energy, antibiotics, hormones etc. to raise a cow, pig, or chicken than to raise beans, corn, wheat, barley, and rice. (Not to mention stress on the environment.) To get some good information:

Learn more about nutrition when starting a new diet. Check out the doctor created [Mayo Clinic vegetarian diet site:](#)

Here's a sample vegetarian diet to pick out ideas from: [PETA two week menu](#)

14. Reduce your food intake and get a Healthy heart. Eat only what your body really needs and exercise 5x a week. Eating more costs more energy and is bad for your health.

Need help and more info? Go to the [American Heart Association](#) site and read up on choosing *a Healthy Lifestyle* for information about nutrition, fitness diabetes, and heart health.

15. Choose Organic. Get the facts first.

a. Read up and choose to buy Organic Food and other produce which do not use manufactured fertilizers & pesticides.

[Soil Association](#) . *Why Organic?*

[Organic Consumer's Association](#). also see [OCA's organic fact sheet](#).

[EWG Shopper's guide to pesticide ranks for fruits & vegetables](#) before you buy. Has an iPod app

16. Take back your Meds! Protect children, water and our environment by taking back unused and unwanted medications.

[Bothell & Mill Creek Police Departments](#) will take back controlled substances.

[Bartell's](#) and [Group Health Cooperative](#) will accept **all but** controlled substances

[DEA's National Take back drugs website](#) Find other sites to drop off controlled substances.

Their national initiative day is usually in April.

17. Use environmentally safe household cleaners and other products. Check out how to choose safer cleaning products at these great sites:

[WA Toxics Coalition](#) - a list of [safer cleaning products](#) & learn why to avoid [anti- microbials](#).

City of Seattle's Green cleaners site - [make your own green cleaners!](#)

18. Car washing -Wash your car on the lawn, not on the pavement. Better still, take the car to a [car wash](#) (business). Car washes treat their wastewater, yours goes into the nearby stream! Bad for the fish, bad for all of us!!!

19. Learn more about Indoor Air Quality. Many homes and offices can avoid indoor air quality issues by making some simple steps. [Learn more about IAQ.](#)

Use low VOC paint – Many types of paint smells when fresh because it emits VOCs (volatile organic compounds), the same kind of chemicals found in gasoline and nail polish, which are bad for your lungs. Now there are new paints that don't have

a. Low VOC paint background and product review. [Earth Easy](#)

b. Seattle's own Rodda paint was the first to make a zero VOC paint. In fact, I have asthma and have been using [Rodda horizon](#), which works well. Now there are many others.

20. Planting - Plant a native! Native plants save water, uptake CO₂, emit O₂, provide shelter and food for native animals.

a. Washington Native Plant Society [landscaping with native plants](#)

b. Arbor Day Foundation on [planting trees](#)

21. General Planting

a. Start a [Victory Garden](#) and grow your own food.... other [tips](#)

b. Use [organic fertilizers](#), not chemicals in your garden.

c. Use a mulching blade and leave the cut grass on the lawn and recycle nutrients into your lawn.

d. Dig up weeds vs weed and feed whenever possible.

e. Avoid toxic herbicides and [pesticides](#). Use the ideas at [Living with Bugs](#):

22. Lawn mowing: Buy/use a electric lawnmower or a cool [Reel mower](#) to reduce the air pollution of gas

Gas mowers are notorious air polluters. [According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#), a traditional gas powered lawn mower produces as much air pollution as 43 new cars each being driven 12,000 miles!

Using a cordless electric battery powered mower conserves energy and reduces air and noise pollution, lower CO₂ emissions, & reduce oil spills. That's a big win for you and the environment. Some popular models: [Neuton](#), [Black & Decker](#), [Worx](#), [Solaris](#), and [Earthwise...](#) *the 24V models can mow a pretty big lawn!*

Energy and Water Conservation –General Home

23. Cooking

a. [Use a microwave](#) or toaster oven rather than using a conventional oven and save 80% of the energy!

b. [Use the Crock-Pot](#). Slow cooking uses a lot less energy than simmering on the stove

c. Put covers on pots when cooking & match the burner size to the pot. Foods cook food faster and avoid wasting energy.

24. Buy Local products - Go to [local Farmer's Markets](#) to buy locally grown foods. Doing so keeps jobs and money in the community and reduces environmental impacts due to less transportation.

25. Lights: Turn off lights, appliances & computers when not using them. We have light detectors, they are called human beings! Save money and energy by turning off lights.

26. Electricity Usage:

a. Find out how much energy your television, computer, lights and other electrical appliances actually use! Get an Electricity Usage Monitor and check out the electrical loads - one of the popular ones is called a [Kill a Watt electricity usage monitor](#). (there are others!).

Hint:

i. If you make changes, like changing out incandescent light bulbs vs compact fluorescents or LED light bulbs, you can check before and after loads.

ii. Save your utility bills so you can compare usage over time as you make changes to conserve energy.

b. Electrical leaks. Kill those Energy Vampires! Most of our electronics are [Vampires & suck energy!](#) You can be diligent and unplug TV, DVD player, Computer, MP3 or Cell phone chargers when not in use. Or get a [smart power strip](#).

27. Change Light bulbs: Change incandescent bulbs to [Compact Fluorescent bulbs \(CFL\) and or LED's](#) . LEDs and CFL's use about 2/3 less energy and last 10x longer. So make the change and save energy and money!

But when the bulb burns out **RECYCLE the CFL bulbs** (don't toss in trash – they contain mercury! Bring them to **McLendon's**, Home Depot (NEW 09), King County waste mobile, and the Snohomish County Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off Station in Everett.). Also see the [Take-It -Back-Network](#)

28. Refrigerator/freezers: Vacuum off the refrigerator & freezer condensation coils quarterly as well as under the appliance. Keep door seals clean and *keep the door open only when necessary*.

29. Dishwashing: Run the dishwasher with a full load. Also use the time delay run the wash after 8pm to keep the electric load off of the local power grid!

30. Clothes washing.

- a. Use cold water wash whenever possible for clothes washing
- b. Only run full loads of wash.

- c. Hang clothes to dry or only run full loads in the clothes dryer.
- d. Clean the lint filter after every load.

31. Transportation: Car Pool, Take the Bus, Ride your bike! Also save gas and money by eating out less..

32. Energy Star Appliances! Save money and possibly get a rebate: Buy energy efficient appliances like washers, dryers, refrigerators etc. Households that replace existing appliances with “Energy Star” appliances (under the new Energy Star review program!) can save up to 30% on annual energy bills. For an average home that’s about \$450. Also both of our local utilities offer rebates!

[Puget Sound Energy rebates](#)

[Snohomish PUD rebates](#)

33. Lower the Hot Water Heater maximum temperature: If your old water heater is still good, turn it down to 125 to 120F. Also buy a “blanket” for the heater if the unit is in an unheated space.

34. Get a better water heater! There are better choices now available to you that will save you money in the long run.

a. Get an on Demand Water Heater: Installing an on demand water heater will save you lots of money. (We have had one for five years and the heater works great!.) [Information](#)

b. Get a Heat Pump Water Heater: Installing a heat pump water heater are 2 to 3 times more efficient than conventional heaters. [Information](#)

35. Do a quick [home water audit](#) on water use. Next go to 36 below:

36. Check out, then adopt 3 of these [Home Water conservation TIPS](#) and adopt a couple new ideas! (A couple starter ideas. Don’t let the water run when you don’t need it for showering, shaving, washing, or brushing your teeth. (A couple starter ideas: Use bath or dishwater to water the flowers! Water early morning.)

37. Low flow, shorter showers - Have your parents install low flow showerheads, then take 3-5 minute showers. [How to do change a shower head](#)

38. Flushing - Flush toilets less often. Every flush saves between 1.6 to 3 gallons of water “When it’s yellow let it....” [Take EPA's fun water quiz](#)

39. Install low flow toilets and reduce water consumption, sewage treatment, and wastewater! The newer, more efficient ones can be bought for as little as \$125. There's some good advice at [H2OUSE](#).

40. Install screened rain barrels with downspout diverters – This can be a fun project that will save water and money as well as let you water for free in the summer! [Complete rain barrel info](#)

Conserving Energy in your Home

41. Heating - Adjust your thermostat, down 2 degrees in the winter and 2 degrees up in the summer if you have air conditioning. Set the thermostat back at night. For each degree you lower your thermostat you will save about 5% of your home heating bill. Energy use of the average U.S. home creates almost twice the greenhouse gas emissions as the average car

42. Clean or replace furnace filters every 2 months

43. Before vacation - turn down the heat and turn off your water heater

44. Close the fireplace damper (and doors if installed) when not using the fireplace.

45. Buy Green Power or Join Planet Power or Green Up at your Utility Company – these inexpensive programs increase the demand for new energy (wind/solar/tidal etc.) devices and decrease your overall amount of CO2 emissions!

a. [PSE Green Power program](#)

b. [SnoPUD Planet Power program](#)

c. [Seattle Green Up program](#)

46. Heat Leaks: [Find and seal leaks in your home](#) , heating ducts, doors etc. and save more money every day!

47. Insulation: Ensure you have proper attic and heating ducts insulation in your home. Many 20 years and older homes could save \$\$ in heating costs by adding more insulation. Both [PSE](#) and [Snohomish PUD](#) offer cash rebates when you use a qualified contractor.

48. Furnace: Have your furnace cleaned and inspected every 2 – 3 years. Here's some simple furnace "[How To's](#)" if you are handy. (Be safe!)

49. Windows: Use curtains and shade to slow heat loss. If possible, install new insulated Energy Star “Lo E” windows. New windows can save a lot of money in home heating (often 30-40% of heating bill), especially if you plan to stay in your present home. [Window information](#)

50. Change to a Hi Efficiency furnace or Heat pump: Replace old, inefficient furnaces with a new furnace or heat pump. [PSE](#) offers rebates for furnaces ([also](#)). Snohomish PUD often has various program offers.

See EPA information on [Furnaces](#) as well as [Heat Pumps](#)

Saving energy for your Automobile

51. Take the bus to school or work. Riding the bus saves energy and reduces pollution.

52. [Rideshare](#) save energy and cut down pollution whenever possible.

53. Bike to work. May is national Bike to work month! You can create a team and enter [Cascade Bike Club's commute Challenge!](#)

54. Slow down, drive smoothly and avoid idling! Drive the speed limit, accelerate slowly (fast starts use lots of gas!). Gas mileage is about 15% higher at 55mph compared to 65mph. Avoid idling for more than 10 sec. [Idling can create excessive wear on your vehicle increase air pollution.](#)

55. Tire Air Pressure - Check your car's tires pressure frequently. You can improve your [gas mileage by up to 3.3%](#), which at today's prices, really adds up!

56. Lower the car's weight - Remove unnecessary items that add weight to your car and save gas

57. Check an change your car's air filter as needed and change the oil and filter per owner's manual to help save gas

57. Check your tire alignment - Look at tires once every couple weeks for signs of uneven wear. If uneven, get your car realigned to save gas and tire costs

58. Looking for a new car? Get the [facts on fuel efficient cars](#) include mileage, fuel cost, Carbon Footprint etc.

Carbon Offsets:

59. Direct some funds to offsetting your family's carbon emissions! Here's some really good information on offsets, plus links to ratings of offset providers.
[Stockholm Environment Institute](#)

ECO Resources: Some fun and game sites and a couple other serious resources.

[Eco Challenges for the whole family](#)

[California Energy Commission Bright School Program](#)

[California Energy Commission Consumer Energy Center](#)- Energy Efficiency at Home, Office and School

[Dr. E's Energy Lab](#) - Kid's saving energy games etc.

[Drinking Water and Ground Water Games](#)

[Energy Hog challenges](#)

[Energy Kids](#)

[Energy Quest!](#)

[Energy Star Kids](#)

[Garbage Caper](#)

[Green Schools](#)

[Habitat Adventure - The Panda Challenge](#)

[Hot Vacs - Guide to Energy Efficiency](#) - Some cool energy efficiency tips **and lots of fun links at the end of the article.**

[Kids saving energy](#)

[Plumber for a Day!](#) - San Diego's fun sewage investigation

[EPA's Recycle City!](#)

[Renewable Energy: Project Plans to build working models](#)

[U.S. Dept. of Energy - Energy Efficiency:](#) very comprehensive energy site. Great for learning

[Test your Water Sense](#)

[The Case of the Warming Planet](#)

[The Energy Story](#) Everything you wanted to learn about energy.

[Virtual Sewage Treatment tour](#)

[Water Life](#)

[Waste Busters!](#)

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