

The Nine Commandments: Living like this is the only Earth we have...

Less Recycling and reusing is fine, but most of the waste (98%) is generated before we get our hands on a product in the mining or harvesting process, in manufacturing or preparation, and then in packaging, shipping and merchandising. It's no wonder that *US'ers are each responsible for about 400 pounds of material consumption per day*—and we aren't even aware of it!

Local I Arrange your life to be close to school, work, errands—or work from home. Walk, bike or take public transit when possible. Personal car use for work purposes is the #1 US enviro impact. *And every mile we drive puts a pound of CO2 into the atmosphere (for a 20 mpg vehicle).*

Local II Try to buy products from local producers. The average food item travels 1500 miles to our table—not by magic carpet, but by fossil-fueled transport. Every year, 60,000 container ships dock at US ports bringing us merchandise from afar. *One of those ships traveling one mile creates as much pollution as a car driving around the world.*

Lower I Eat lower on the food chain. Protein and calories from grain consumed directly as opposed to coming to us as meat are much more energy efficient and less polluting. For instance, the same protein from grain vs. beef creates 3.4 times less global warming gasses, 22 times less water pollution, and requires 20 times less land. (A pound of grain-fed beef can require 8-15 pounds of grain and 8000 pounds of water to produce—or 200 square feet of rainforest, if produced in the tropics.) There are currently about 105 million beef cows and 10 million dairy cows in the US. *If we in the US would reduce beef consumption by half, it would free up water equal to the flow of 14 Colorado Rivers*

Lower II Eat lower on the chemical chain—buy organic products as much as possible. *Chemical runoff in the Mississippi River from farms has created a dead-zone in the Gulf of Mexico as large as Rhode Island.* Agricultural chemicals also pollute water tables around the country.

Lift Work for justice in the world, as global poverty is a primary cause of environmental destruction. Lifting our neighbors out of poverty will help them survive without over-harvesting the fields, forests and wildlife near them. *“Don't expect to be able to purchase and preserve rainforest when the people living all around it are desperately poor.” – Borbor, manager of Ecuador's Cuyabeno National Park*

Lighten Live more lightly around the house. Heating water (showers and clothes washing), raising and lowering the thermostat, utilizing solar gain and tree wind breaks, the kind of light bulbs you use (*compact florescent bulbs can save 300 pounds of CO2 per bulb—and \$\$ as well!*) are all important factors in your household eco-impact.

Legislate Let your government reps know you favor bike lanes, higher gas prices (to include the costs of air pollution and global warming), and protection of our last remaining wild places.

Love Sounds mushy, but do we love this fine earth? The Creator did. Do we love our neighbors? Then we gotta care that over 300,000 die each year from global warming impacts. Love our children? Then we have to think about what kind of planet we're leaving them...

Sources: State of the World 2004, World Watch Institute; Consumer's Guide to Effective Environmental Choices, Union of Concerned Scientists; Planet Ark; Environmental Science (G. Tyler Miller)