

“Steps to Sustainability” Residents’ Ideas List

Town of View Royal Climate Change Task Force on Sustainability

Generic Resources/Other Checklists -

There are some generic on-line resources available:

The Eco-news monthly newsletter is a great local source of information about eco events, issues and educational sessions, many of them free or low cost.
www.earthfuture.com

Sites with tips and ideas on all subjects related to resource conservation, energy, and all types of environmental issues include: www.treehugger.com, www.onedayvancouver.ca, <http://c3.newdream.org/>, www.ghgactionguide.ca and http://www.bankrate.com/brm/news/energy-environment-2007/tips_environmental_school_a3.asp?caret=4e

Builders, new home buyers, and renovators should visit the Province of BC’s energy efficiency for buildings resource and information site www.saveenergynow.ca, and Vancouver’s Lighthouse Centre www.sustainablebuildingcentre.com

People who enjoy getting ideas from television shows will enjoy Sunday afternoon programming on HGTV’s “Green Space Sundays” during winter 2008. Conservation themes of all types are covered. For schedules and shows see http://www.hgtv.ca/ontv/theme_sundays.aspx, but don’t forget to adjust the show times from Eastern Standard to Pacific Standard Time.

TIPS & IDEAS

One of the easiest things to do is check the BC Hydro Team Power Smart website at <http://www.bchydro.com/powersmart/>. You can register to receive energy saving tips, join the community challenge, try the appliance calculator, take an energy quiz, and set yourself a power saving goal which you can track over time.

In my home...

Lights - Replace incandescent light bulbs, which turn most of their energy into heat not light, with compact fluorescent lights (CFL) for a 65% energy savings. Note that CFLs contain mercury, a toxic metal, and should be taken to a hazardous waste depot instead of being put in the regular garbage (CRD recycling hotline ph. 360-3030 or <http://www.crd.bc.ca/waste/recycle/directory/default.aspx>.)

Look for CFL’s that contain less than the industry standard of 5 milligrams and replace bulbs in high use areas first.

Filters – clean or replace forced air furnace filters monthly to help performance and indoor air quality.

Furnace Fitness – Whether gas or oil, all furnaces work better if kept clean and well maintained. Reduce energy use and air pollutants by having your furnace serviced each fall before the heating season starts.

Power Down – Even when turned off, many appliances (digital clocks, microwaves, computer components, battery chargers, etc.) use energy, perhaps 7% to 20% of your home's total use! Shutting them off is the easiest energy savings you can capture. First, do a reality check: How many phones do you really need in the house? Is that outdoor motion sensor light really necessary? Then, fully turn off your equipment when not in use, perhaps with an easy to reach power bar. Unplug devices you don't use every day. For more tips see <http://www.terasengas.com/Homes/SavingEnergy/default.htm>

Cool it – Turning your thermostat down by 1°C can lower your heating bills by 10%. Most folks are comfortable at 19-20°C in the daytime and 15-17°C at night. Using a programmable thermostat helps forgetful homeowners avoid overheating the house when no one is typically home, or when occupants are sleeping.

Energy Audit – See how your whole home performs with an energy audit. You can call others to do one for you (www.citygreen.ca also includes energy saving tips) or find out how to do your own (<http://www.wrwcanda.com/02wasteauditl.htm>). You may even be eligible for an EcoEnergy retrofit grant to make the changes that are recommended. (http://www.ecoaction.gc.ca/ecoenergy-ecoenergie/retrofithomes-renovationmaisons-eng.cfm?ecoenergy_main)

Gaps – Stopping drafts can reduce yearly energy use by 5-30%. It's cheap and requires no special equipment or skills. First, check for gaps and leaks around windows, baseboards, electrical outlets, attic hatches, foundations and mail slots. Then, add weather stripping or caulking as needed. Add insulation (aim for R-value of 6) to ducts and pipes in unheated spaces. http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/reoho/refash/refash_007.cfm, www.nrcan.gc.ca

Insulate – Hot water heating is usually the 2nd largest user of energy in the home. If you have an older electric tank, consider wrapping it in an insulation blanket. (For safety reasons, do not wrap gas fueled tanks.)

Fire Front – Got a typical masonry fireplace and chimney? When in operation, they lose as much as 80 – 90% of their heat by drawing cold air from the outside and allowing warm air up the chimney. Consider an insert that uses combustion air from outside instead. When you aren't using the fireplace, it can still draw heat up the chimney. To check for air leaks up the chimney, hold a smoking incense stick or lighted match just below the damper edges. To block escaping heat, consider adding glass doors or make an insulated fire screen which you can cover with interesting fabric or disguise with paint.

2nd Fridge - Refrigerators are one of the highest energy users in your home. If all second operating fridges were recycled in British Columbia, enough energy would be saved to power all the homes in the City of Chilliwack for a year. If you have an unneeded older fridge, call 1 866 516-4357 or see <http://www.bchydro.com/powersmart/fridge/fridge8437.html> for details.

Incentives – BC Hydro offers incentives which change from time to time. Check <http://www.bchydro.com/powersmart/> for program information and energy saving tips.

Solar Solutions – Would adding some solar features to your home be worth it for savings on hot water or space heating and for photovoltaic source energy? That's something that will require research on your part as active solar systems are still pretty expensive compared to the low financial cost of electricity and gas in BC. For a start, visit the BC Sustainable Energy Association website www.BCSEA.org, CMHC http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/maho/enefcosa/enefcosa_003.cfm, and US sites such as www.EERE.Energy.gov and www.DSIREUSA.org.

In my yard...

Quiet Time - Try a push mower instead of the old electric plug-in or noisy gas-powered type. It's quieter, might save you a trip to the gym to work on your arm muscles, and will save on energy use.

Hang it all – Dryers use from 1200 – 900 kWh/year in the average Canadian household, depending upon the model year. So you could save money, energy and greenhouse gas generation by hanging your laundry outside. In fact, using a fold-out drying rack inside or wash lines in a basement can take advantage of the heat you are paying for in the house anyway. There's even a "right-to-dry" movement that supports people who want to hang laundry outside but are concerned about restrictive municipal bylaws, strata rules and private covenants. Some US States have passed "Right-to-dry" laws and Canadian groups are taking up the cause. <http://www.laundrylist.org/index2.htm>

With my kids...

Training – Take some time to train your children to be energy conscious, explaining where our energy comes from and the impacts it has on the planet that we can't easily see. Kids also believe us more when we set a good example ourselves so don't forget to model the behaviour you've been talking about!

Classroom – Ask your children's teachers if there is an energy component to the teaching curriculum for their grade and offer to support them in the classroom by helping with displays, speakers, activities etc. Check your school district's website for resources and links like www.re-energy.ca,

<http://www.bchydro.com/education/index.html>,

http://www.bchydro.com/education/4-7/4-7_3177.html,

<http://www.earthrangers.ca/education/resources.php> and

<http://www.bcclimateexchange.ca/index.php?p=educational-resources>.

Online Fun – Visit <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/calendarclub/index.cfm?attr=0> for some energy saving on-line activities aimed at the younger set.

With my friends/family/neighbors...

Power Talk – Organize a free presentation on how to save energy in the home. BC Hydro will send one of its Power Smart Champions to talk to groups of almost any size who are keen to learn more. Email: eric.beevor-potts@bchydro.com

Candle Night – Join the international Candle Night movement by turning off the lights from 8-10 p.m. at the summer and the winter solstices. It will mean a lot more if you can invite a few families to join you. Would your whole street join in if you invited them to?

<http://www.candle-night.org/english/>

Blackout Parties – Host a party with no power on! What did your grandparents do as kids for fun on a Saturday night before TV’s, iPods, DVD’s, CD’s, Karaoke machines, and micro-waved popcorn? Find out by asking them, or do some research, then invite friends and family to join you for a night where you have to entertain yourselves. Make a big event of turning off all the household gadgets, followed by all the lights, then settle in for something that could turn out to be a great family tradition. You might want to combine this with Candle Night but you don’t have to wait for the solstice to try it. Google “parlour” or “old-fashioned” and “games” to find thousands of things to do together.

When I shop...

Power Smart – When shopping for new electrical appliances, check energy ratings and buy the best performance you can afford. Look for the EnerGuide label and EnergyStar rated products.

(http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/publications/infosource/Energy_Star/ES_pamphlet.cfm)

Fired Up – If you’re shopping for a new gas fireplace or woodstove, look for the EnerChoice label.

<http://www.enerchoice.org/>

Carbon-Conscious Consumer – Just about to pull out your bank or charge card for a purchase? Quick, check the questions on your “wallet buddy” first! Do you need this item? How far did it travel? Will it last? Is it an energy hog? Is it the best choice to line up with your social and environmental values? Print off a copy at <http://www.newdream.org/walletbuddy.pdf>.

At work ...

Power Lunches – Set up a lunch time discussion with co-workers to brainstorm some ideas for reducing energy use at your workplace. See if your employer will support this with some cold drinks or results-based incentives such as sharing the financial savings of adopting one of the ideas you generate. You could also host a screening of some of the PowerPoint presentations available online at <http://www.bchydro.com/business/>. To get some inspiration and more ideas see

<http://www.bcclimateexchange.ca/index.php?p=industry-resources>, <http://www.cool-companies.org/homepage.cfm> and <http://www.ghgactionguide.ca/>.

Energy Star – Any new equipment purchases should be the most energy efficient your business/employer can afford.

http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/What_You_Can_Do_at_work.asp and

Car Pool – Car pool either with co-workers (post notices or use your intranet) or nearby commuters by using the RideShare Network or similar programs. <http://online.ride-share.com/en/my/>, <http://www.carpoolworld.com/>, <http://www.gogreen.com/choices>

Pedal – Consider cycling to work. Start with a reasonable goal, such as once a week, and look for commuting tips at the GVCC site www.gvcc.bc.ca Capital Bike and Walk Society <http://www.capitalbikeandwalk.org:80/>

Walk – Can you walk to work once a week? What about once a

month? Maybe you can't walk the whole way but you can drive part way, then park and walk? Consider the "extra" time it takes to be time saved having to go to the gym or as part of your new commitment to exercise. Would you feel safer or enjoy it more if someone walked with you? Advertise for a walking partner at work or via a pedestrian newsletter such as <http://www.capitalbikeandwalk.org:80/>. See if your employer will participate in the Go Green programs at <http://www.gogreen.com/choices> to reduce single vehicle trips to work and during work time.

Bus – Taking the bus might work for you some or even all of the time. Check out the schedules, rates, bus shelters for rainy days, etc. on the Town of View Royal website and scroll down to "transit". http://www.town.viewroyal.bc.ca/other_services.php

2. WATER

TIPS & IDEAS

In my home...

Low Flow - Replace older shower heads with Power Smart fixtures for up to 15% savings on hot water use in the home.

More Air – Adding aerators onto other faucets can save you up to 40% on your hot water consumption.

Flush It – Consider buying an efficient Low Flow toilet to replace your old water guzzler or to install in your new bathroom. The toilet is one of the largest water uses in the household with older models using as much as 21 L per flush, compared to the new 6 L or less models. If you are ready to replace all three of the fixture types above, you may qualify for a CRD rebate. For tips and information see

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/water/conservation/rebates/bathroom.htm>.

Shorter showers – set yourself a personal challenge to reduce the time you let the water run while in the shower. You could even challenge others in the house to beat your reduction percentage over a week or two then try to keep to that new record.

Pre-cooled -Keep a jug of drinking water in the fridge rather than running the tap until it's cold. Simple, simple and could save you a few gallons a day.

Pump it up - While some keen folks will plug the tub while they shower and then bucket the greywater down to use on their garden shrubs or trees (but not the salad veggies please!), most of us aren't that committed. You can invest in a small kayak pump or a specialized hand pump (Droughtbuster at www.ethicalsuperstore.com), hook it up to a hose draped out the window, and send the water to where you need it.

Less Suds – Our dirty laundry water goes into the ocean, taking with it lots of soap residues (surfactants). This can have a negative impact on fish and other aquatic life. High levels of surfactants can attach to fill gills, destroying their ability to breathe and may be hormone disrupting. Because we have relatively soft water, reducing the amount of detergent you use to well below the manufacturer's recommendations will still give you clean clothes. Experiment with your own wash, and see the information and video at The Georgia Strait site,

<http://www.georgiastrait.org/?q=node/619> or read the CRD's Q&A's at

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/wastewater/sourcecontrol/residentialfaq.htm#aundry>

In my yard...

Xeriscaping – Water thrifty gardening is called xeriscaping. By grouping plants with similar moisture needs, watering wisely, using mulches and native and drought-tolerant plants, we can seriously reduce our peak summer water demand.

The CRD has some excellent publications to guide you at <http://www.crd.bc.ca/water/conservation/droughtgardening.htm>. Visit the demonstration gardens at the Swan Lake Nature House (www.swanlake.bc.ca) and the Glendale Gardens (<http://www.hcp.bc.ca/>).

Golden grass – It's cheap, it's simple and it's getting to be the norm during our parched summers. We usually don't get rain during July and August so without the sprinklers, your lawn will go dormant. Rest assured it will bounce back when the rains return in the fall. You save water, gasoline or electricity, and time spent mowing – how bad can that be?

CRD factsheet available at <http://www.crd.bc.ca/water/conservation/education/factsheets/index.htm>

Naturescape – By using more native plants and fewer inputs like water and chemicals, you can actually encourage more small wildlife to your yard. Naturescape BC offers excellent resources (<http://www.hctf.ca/nature.htm>) and workshops are offered at community centres, the Swan Lake Nature Centre (<http://www.swanlake.bc.ca/>), local garden centres and by the CRD

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/water/conservation/outdoorwateruse/workshops/index.htm>

Irrigation Systems - If you are considering installing a watering system for plants that must be watered during the summer, especially vegetable gardens, invest in a super efficient irrigation system with timer or other CRD approved method. See

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/water/conservation/outdoorwateruse/workshops/index.htm> for rebates, details, and free workshops.

Rain barrels – While our climate is not ideal for capturing rainwater in barrels when we need it most (July and August), it can help with the “shoulder seasons” of spring and fall. Advice can be found at

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/water/conservation/outdoorwateruse/recycling/rainbarrels.htm>, <http://www.cityfarmer.org/rainbarrel72.html>, and http://www.calgary.ca/docgallery/BU/water_services/conservation/lawn_garden/rain_barrel_info_brochure.pdf.

Cisterns – Storing more water than a rain barrel, cisterns can be in-ground or above ground, made of plastic, concrete or metal. Until quite recently many homes and farms in Canada relied on rainwater harvesting to meet their water needs. While our urban areas now have excellent drinking water supplied by the CRD, cisterns not only allow storage of rainwater for irrigation, but are a form of downspout disconnection that helps delay peak storm impacts on our rivers and creeks. (<http://www.zonagardens.com/landscape/rainwater.asp> and <http://www.cityfarmer.org/rainbarrel72.html>.) For rainwater harvesting in general, visit <http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/projects/rainwater.cfm> and check the “publications” section.

On my street ...

Demonstrate - Your front lawn can say a lot about your values and be a great opportunity to talk to neighbours about any water conservation changes you are making there. A small home made sign saying something like “Water Conservation in Progress” or an official “Naturescape BC” sign can let people know your intentions and they will

often stop to chat about it, ask advice and give compliments. You could be surprised at how many yards in the neighbourhood will then begin to mirror your example! <http://www.hctf.ca/nature.htm>. Look for topical courses at Glendale Gardens (www.hcp.bc.ca), Swan Lake Nature Centre (<http://www.swanlake.bc.ca/>), local community centres and at retail garden centres.

Challenge – Set up a friendly challenge with your neighbours to reduce your water use. Check your water usage noted on a bill from the same time in the previous year. Begin your conservation actions on the same day as other entrants and run for the same length of time. The winner will be the household that reduces consumption by the largest percentage, which allows for differing numbers of people in the household.

No Dumping – If you see a construction, painting, powerwashing or landscaping project in your neighbourhood that is causing any kind of waste or dirty water to go into stormdrain or ditch, have a friendly chat with the workers or contact the View Royal bylaw officer at 479-6800 or bylawcompliance@town.viewroyal.bc.ca

With my kids...

Scouts for Spouts – If your child belongs to an organization that raises money for activities, develop a program to help homeowners disconnect downspouts and allow rainwater to seep back into the ground naturally. Not all houses will be good candidates for disconnection, but by using a checklist and some sound criteria, the kids and their leaders could provide some helpful education and a service in exchange for donations or a small fee.

http://www.toronto.ca/water/protecting_quality/downspout_diy.htm,
<http://www.portlandonline.com/BES/index.cfm?c=edaib>

Yellow Fish – Your child's activity group can also participate in a program that teaches about watershed connections and water quality. The kids paint yellow fish symbols beside catch basins on local streets. This program shows the community that all storm drains lead to fish habitat, be it a stream, lake or directly to the ocean. It also reminds us not to dump or sweep toxic products like oil, grease, paint, solvents, or hot tub discharge into our storm drains. http://www-heb.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/community/stormdrain_e.htm

When I shop...

Wash Day – If you're in the market for a new washing machine, consider a highly energy and water efficient, EnergyStar qualified, front-loading type. As of winter 2007/2008 the CRD is offering a rebate worth \$125.

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/water/conservation/rebates/smartwash.htm>.

At work...

Design Contest -If your workplace has a water-thirsty landscape, especially one that boldly displays green lawns while the rest of us are going golden, hold a Xeriscape redesign contest. The ideal winning design should save money, greenhouse gases, and energy use, and even provide some stormwater management, wildlife and human comfort benefits.

Water Audit – Your business or employer can take advantage of the CRD's free water use and efficiency audits, and their assistance with measurement and cost-benefit analysis of various conservation measures.

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/water/conservation/ici/index.htm>

At school...

Participation Gardens - Can any of the parent's or teachers organize a small butterfly garden, waterwise garden or rainwater garden

(www.urbanraingarden.ca &

<http://www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?a=172138&c=45382>)

on the school grounds? These can provide outdoor classrooms for all types of curriculum, cleanse the air and water, recharge the soils, sequester carbon, provide quiet and shady places for children and small wildlife, and beautify a community.

School Work – the CRD offers curriculum materials about water conservation aimed at the grade 2 level, and “train the trainer” sessions for teachers.

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/water/conservation/education/index.htm> ♦

Stream of Dreams – See if your school will participate in this education program that raises student awareness of how watersheds function, and how our activities affect the quality of salmon habitat. It also leaves a beautiful permanent art project legacy on the school grounds. www.streamofdreams.org

Class Time – Encourage teachers at your child's school to incorporate resources from Fisheries and Oceans “Stream to Sea” programs for primary to secondary grades. These programs teach students to understand, respect and protect freshwater, estuarine and marine ecosystems, and to recognize how all humans are linked to these complex environments.

http://www-heb.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/community/education/eduintro_e.htm

3. GARBAGE (solid waste)

TIPS & IDEAS

In my home...

Household Recycling – Not sure what's OK to put in the blue box or when your pickup day is? Check out the Town of View Royal website for details of household waste removal and recycling services at

<http://www.town.viewroyal.bc.ca/contacts/index.php>.

Charities – Many charity shops in town will take items not accepted by municipal recycling services, such as clothing and small furniture and appliances. Some will even pick up from your home. Look in the Yellow Pages under “Social Service Organizations” or check the regional recycling directory

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/waste/recycle/index.htm>.

Recycled Reno's - When renovating, consider using recycled materials such as wood, doors, glass, cupboards, counter tops, hardware fixtures, etc. Look up “Salvage Companies” in the Yellow Pages, and check stores such as Habitat for Humanity's Re-Store in Victoria (www.habitatvictoria.com/restore) and the CRD's Recycling Directory

(<http://www.crd.bc.ca/waste/recycle/index.htm>). You can often take the unwanted materials you remove during a renovation to these same places. Always call ahead to make sure your items are being accepted. It could save you a trip to the landfill, haulage costs and time!

On line Recycling - Another way to find or give away everything from renovation materials to kids clothes; bikes to art supplies, is to use local exchange websites such as www.usedvictoria.com, www.freecycle.com and www.craigslist.com or to post your needs/surpluses on employee intranet 'buy and sell' sites if you have them at your workplace.

Major Appliances – Don't just junk your old appliances. While they can be taken to the landfill for recycling, some service and repair companies will either buy or take them from you for no fee. That way, they get a new life in another home before they are recycled, saving the embodied energy that was invested in their manufacture.

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/waste/hartland/recyclingarea.htm>,

<http://www.crd.bc.ca/waste/recycle/index.htm>

In my yard...

Compost – Over 30% of the garbage going to our landfill is organic (yard waste and kitchen scraps). Composting is so simple that if you can garden, you can compost. Compost is a fantastic soil conditioner and helps return nutrients to the soil where we need them rather than burying them in the landfill. While the CRD is running a pilot collection program in View Royal until the end of 2008, it takes energy and generates CO₂ emissions & other air pollutants to truck the waste “away” to a centralized facility. While the list of items that can be composted at home is more limited,

keeping it local is more sustainable. If you want some pointers or have any problems or questions, the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre will be happy to help you (ph. 386-worm), and they even have classes. www.compost.bc.ca

Worm bins - If you cannot do backyard composting for whatever reason, consider a worm bin to turn kitchen scraps into compost. These blue-box sized bins are designed to work inside your home or in a sheltered spot such as a garage or balcony.

www.compost.bc.ca

On my street ...

Free Piles – Many CRD communities have a tradition of putting useable household goods and clothes out at the end of the driveway with a “Free” sign on it. Most items disappear within the day. Make sure things are not left to get blown around or mouldy in the rain and your neighbours will appreciate it! Anything not gone in a couple of days can then be disposed of.

Other Recyclables - Pacific Mobile Depots partners with various community associations to provide collection services for some items not taken by regional recycling services such as foam peanuts, food containers and insulation, and drink boxes and cartons. While no pick up site exists in View Royal, anyone can save up their recyclables and drop them at any of the depots listed on the website

<http://www.pacificmobiledepots.com/>. Why not car

pool with the neighbours to take all your items in one vehicle next time someone heads into town on a depot day?

Sharing Shredding – If your yard produces a lot of woody trimmings that you would typically have to drive to the landfill for composting, or pay to have removed, consider jointly buying a shredder with some of your neighbours. You can work together a couple of times a year to shred garden waste, putting the resulting mulch back onto your garden rather than buying mulch from elsewhere. Make an afternoon of it with some hot drinks and snacks, and you build community as well as soil.

With my kids...

Stuff chat – Sit down as a family and see the very powerful yet easy to understand on-line video “The Story of Stuff” and talk about the things you have in your home, where they come from, how they are made, who makes them, and if you really need a lot of stuff to be happy.

www.storyofstuff.com

With my friends...

Eco-gifting – At a certain age, your friends and family members will have all the “stuff” they need to be comfortable, and more. Instead of feeling obliged to get them more stuff at traditional gift-giving times, consider the following ideas: Local professional services (e.g. massage, hair care, personal coach, expert tree pruning, cloth diaper service) Your own time (e.g. babysitting, leaf raking, dog walking, meal making, teaching a craft)

Local food - (e.g. a basket of locally grown/made

produce and foods, perhaps with a recipe attached or a note about the farm they came from, a community-sponsored agriculture (CSA) food delivery service)

Local arts and music - (e.g. tickets for a entertainment event, preferably one the recipient can walk or bike to see)

Eco-charity - donation (on behalf of someone else, you could donate to a local charity, perhaps one that helps preserve natural habitats, builds affordable housing, supports organic farming, or helps with ecological or social projects abroad)

When I shop...

Don't! - Check out the Ad Busters program "Buy Nothing Day". Originally conceived of by a Vancouver artist as a way of calling attention to the coercive nature of advertising and consumerism, it is now an international movement that occurs on the day after US Thanksgiving, America's busiest shopping day. Consider having one (or more) day in the year during which your own household consciously decides to not buy a single thing. Celebrate something completely different instead: perhaps a home made picnic at a local park, a meal with neighbours, or something more spiritual in keeping with your family traditions. www.adbusters.org

BYOB – Plastic shopping bags, which we humans use 500 billion of annually then usually discard, are part of a huge ocean pollution problem (see <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3892310789953943147>). Counties and individual cities around the world are beginning to ban or restrict them but why wait to be told? Take your own bags shopping. Keep a few fold-up bags handy in briefcases, purses, pockets, car trunk etc. so you'll have them handy when out and about.

Resales – Check out the many retailers in town that carry used items such as charity shops, consignment and second hand stores. For a listing of second hand and consignment shops check <http://www.foundlocally.com/Victoria/Personal/GoodsThrift.htm>

New To You – Sometimes, a pre-owned item will meet your needs as well as a newly made one. You save money and the energy used and emissions created in manufacturing, advertising, packaging and transportation – plus you keep something else out of the landfill or from having to be recycled, which takes more energy. Antique, consignment, and charity shops can be found throughout our Region.

At work...

Water bottles – Switch to a cup, a glass or a metal drink container for your workday or exercise water break. Worldwide consumption of bottled water was 167.8 billion L in 2005 and Canadians consumed 1.9 billion L of that. That's a lot of plastic that cannot safely be reused and most of which is never recycled. It ends up incinerated, landfilled, or floating in the ocean. Some reports indicate that it even takes more water to make one PET water bottle (polyethylene terephthalate) than the bottle can contain. You also save the energy used to make and transport that bottle of water.

Recycling – Does it drive you crazy to throw things in the garbage at work that you know can be recycled? Is single sided paper being

thrown out without being used again? If there's no recycling program at your workplace, consider starting one up. Get some advice from the Recycling Council of BC (www.rcbc.bc.ca) or the CRD (ph. 360-3030), then talk to your employer about supporting your efforts. Find out what similar businesses are doing with their waste in our region by talking to your industry organization.

Compost – Champion a small organics composting system at work for the inevitable coffee grounds and banana peels. You may have to find a keen composter who is willing to take the waste home with her/him every few days, or maybe an on-site worm bin will do the job. If your business generates organics as a by-product of its operations, a larger on-site system might be appropriate. Look for ways to divert it from your usual waste stream for savings, soil and landfill benefits.

www.compost.bc.ca, www.rcbc.bc.ca

Stuff – invite co-workers to screen the online video “the Story of Stuff” and then hold a discussion about how your workplace or home lives could be altered by what you learned. www.storyofstuff.com

At school...

Garbage-free lunches – Parent volunteers can start a once weekly or monthly garbage free lunch day, properly advertised to parents, where all the students are encouraged to use recyclable containers for their lunch contents. Waste volumes or weights are measured at the start of the term, during a waste free day, and at the end of the term with great fanfare and student involvement. The results can be shared with the school community and challenges even sent out to nearby schools to “beat the record”. Sundance Elementary, Strawberry Vale and Margaret Jenkins are just a few schools that have experience with this idea.

www.sierraclub.ca/bc/programs/education/students/greenstar/Action%20Challenges/ccep.htm#nowaste

Talks & Tours – Suggest to teachers that they invite a CRD solid waste speaker bureau volunteer to give an age-tailored presentation to their classes. A tour of the landfill or a “3-R’s workshop” can be arranged by calling 360-3030.

4. FOOD

TIPS & IDEAS

In my yard...

Grow it – If you have a yard, patio or rooftop deck, consider growing some of your own food. No space? Talk to your neighbours about yard sharing, put up a notice, or check out <http://www.sharingbackyards.com/> . Even a very small space can supply you with fresh herbs and some greens. It doesn't get more local than this and you can control what, if any, chemicals are used on your crops and in your soil. See Cityfarmer's website and the huge range of books at the local library for tips and ideas to get you started. www.Cityfarmer.org

Community Garden – No Yard? Try joining a community garden such as the one at Craigflower Manor, or starting one of your own. A great resource is the Garden City Handbook at <http://www.polisproject.org/PDFs/the%20garden%20city%20handbook.pdf> . For a course on starting community gardens contact the Glendale Gardens, ph. 479-6162 or see www.hcp.bc.ca.

City Chicks – Ah, too bad, but keeping chickens is legal in View Royal only on agriculturally zoned lands. Not only are they fun to watch, chickens can supply you with fresh eggs in exchange for a safe coop, water, proper feed, and the odd kitchen scrap treat. See <http://www.self-sufficient-life.com/> for tips on how to get started with backyard birds, and look for the annual spring tour organized by a local vet.

Tree Fruit – If you have more fruit on your trees than you can pick or process, consider getting help and sharing the harvest with the local Fruit Tree Project folks. A team of volunteers with tools picks all the fruit then divides it with you. Alternately, if you don't have trees you can exchange your volunteer labour for wonderful local fruit.

www.lifecyclesproject.ca/initiatives/fruit_tree/

On my street ...

Tree fruit – If your street has boulevards with sufficient room, see if you and your neighbours can get permission to plant some fruit trees. You may have to be creative about setting up a responsible maintenance program to ensure the fruit is picked and the trees watered. See Vancouver's Green Streets Program for ideas <http://www.vancouver.ca/engsvcs/streets/greenstreets/index.htm>.

Seed Swap – February is a great time to put up a sign inviting your gardening neighbours to a seed exchange. Many of our urban and suburban gardens are too small to do justice to a full packet of vegetable seeds, and seeds get less viable each year they are stored, so sharing makes sense. Neighbours bring leftover seeds to swap and give away, and deals can be made to jointly buy more fresh packets to share. The same kind of event can be held in summer and fall to share divided bulbs and perennials. Sharing advice, saving money and building community are the natural outcomes.

Veggie Swaps - Grew too many grapes? Planted too many potatoes? See if other gardeners will exchange their surpluses with you. You could even put up a sign at the end of the driveway to let

folks know what you have, or set aside one evening a week in the later summer and early fall to meet and exchange your bounty.

Share Boxes – If you are not sure about taking on the cost and commitment of a local farm delivery program, consider sharing with a nearby neighbour. Look for box programs from local farms at <http://www.islandfarmfresh.com/>

With my kids...

Show and Tell – Take the kids to see a real farm (<http://www.agritourismbc.com/>) and involve them in any food growing you do at home. That way, they will have a sense of where food comes from and perhaps the work that goes into growing it.

Food Miles – Kids might enjoy calculating their food miles for a meal, and how much greenhouse gas they saved by eating a local apple. This would make a great school project.

http://www.lifecyclesproject.ca/initiatives/food_directory/?q=foodmiles/inventory/add

With my friends...

FoodRoots Feast – Attend a monthly “Sustainable Feast” event, put on by FoodRoots where you can learn about food security, local farms and pocket markets while eating a 4course organic gourmet meal. www.foodroots.ca

Good Food – Eating out or cooking with friends? Check LifeCycles Good Food Directory to help find restaurants and food sources that offer things produced on Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands.

http://www.lifecyclesproject.ca/initiatives/food_directory/ .

When I shop...

Local Food – Heard of the 100 Mile Diet? (<http://thetyee.ca/Life/2005/06/28/HundredMileDiet/>) Buying local food not only keeps our rural landscape populated with real farmers producing real food, it keeps us tuned in to our own weather patterns, the health of our water and soil systems. It also means food can get to us without crossing oceans and being trucked across continents – think of the resource use and climate change impacts of a tomato trucked in from Metchosin versus a tomato from Chile. To find farm products grown on the Island check <http://www.islandfarmfresh.com/>. To calculate your “food miles” visit http://www.lifecyclesproject.ca/initiatives/food_directory/?q=foodmiles/inventory/add

Farmer’s Market – Support local producers by shopping at the View Royal market on Friday afternoons, 3-7 p.m., between June and November. It’s located at the Community Hall 279 Island Highway. To check times or become a vendor call Andria Tetlow 479-1947.

Go Organic – If you can, choose organic foods. Not only will you avoid potential trace pesticides, you help keep pesticides out of the environment and the workers, wherever the food is grown.

At work...

Cafeteria – If you have a cafeteria at work, talk to the operator and see what can be done to feature local, organic or seasonal food choices as often as possible. You can begin by asking where the food items came from and raising awareness about more sustainable approaches.

Pocket markets – Find out if your workplace is big enough to host a summer and fall “pocket market” which allows you to shop during your lunch hour or after work, then head home with some great fresh produce.

FoodRoots organization sets these up.

www.foodroots.ca .

At school...

Awareness Programs – See if Lifecycles or another organization can provide a food growing and awareness program in your child's school

http://www.lifecyclesproject.ca/initiatives/growing_schools/

Participation Gardens - Can any of the parent's or teachers organize a small food garden on the school grounds? These can provide outdoor classrooms for all types of curriculum, cleanse the air, provide quiet places for children & small wildlife, and provide beauty in a community.

5. AIR QUALITY/TRANSPORTATION

TIPS & IDEAS

Any actions that reduce energy use (see “Energy” heading in this checklist) will positively affect air quality but here are a few more ideas that may not have been mentioned earlier.

In my yard ...

Quiet Time – Gas mowers (35 hp) emit the same amount of pollutants per hour as cars from the 1940’s! Time to move on to something quieter and cleaner, like an electric o, better yet, a push mower.

With my kids...

Footprint Size – How many planets would humanity need if we all lived like me? Explore the Carbon Footprint idea with your children by visiting http://www.ngkids.co.uk/fun_stuff/other/23/carbon_footprint , http://www.zerofootprintkids.com/kids_home.aspx , <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/kids/index.html>

Class Time - Encourage your child’s teachers to consider the Sierra Club’s climate change, anti-idling and other eco-programs at <http://www.sierraclub.ca/bc/programs/education/programs/index.html>

With my friends...

Going to the Chapel – Is there a wedding in your future? Make your own wedding carbon neutral, asking your friends and family to help you out by supporting your values. Eco-gifts, carbon neutral travel emission offsets, local and organic foods, honeymooning locally, and avoiding plastics and wrapping waste could all be factors. Check out http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/What_You_Can_Do/green_wedding.asp and <http://portovert.com/>

Walk & Talk – Heading out for an evening with some friends? Make a stroll part of the fun. Even parking a couple of blocks further from where you would normally find a spot for the car means you get some fresh air, more time to talk, and save a few grams of greenhouse gases. Think of it as five fewer minutes on that boring elliptical machine at the gym!

When I shop...

Stay Local -Purchase locally-made and locally-grown products. By doing so, you not only support your community and eat fresher food, you also minimize your contribution to the carbon emitted for transporting products, and the other impacts on infrastructure and communities that trucking and air freight create.

Carbon Neutral – Support manufacturers and larger retailers that are trying to reduce their carbon impacts and have formal programs and public commitments to do so. See <http://www.happyfrog.ca/> for more ideas.

New Cars – In the market for a new car? A typical SUV uses

almost twice the fuel – and releases nearly twice the emissions – of a modern station wagon, although both seat the same number of passengers. Visit the Natural Resources Canada site <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/transportation/personal-vehicles-initiative.cfm?text=N&printview=N> to find the most fuel-efficient vehicles.

At work...

Go Green -Get your employer to participate in the annual Go Green Challenge or implement a transportation program. See <http://www.gogreen.com/choices>.

Conference Savvy - Impress them all by hosting a carbon neutral conference. Learn how at http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/What_You_Can_Do/carbon_neutral_events.asp

Carbon Neutral – Can your company aim to go “carbon neutral” in its operations? Find out more at <http://www.cool-companies.org/homepage.cfm> and http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/What_You_Can_Do/carbon_neutral_business.asp.

Fleet Upgrades – When replacing any work vehicles, get the most efficient you can afford. Do a cost analysis that includes environmental impacts when considering a purchase or lease. See “new cars” above.

Moving Around...

Idleness – One car, idling ten minutes a day can create 550 pounds of CO₂ emissions a year. An idling car gets 0 km/gallon and creates air pollution. Two minutes of idling time can use as much fuel as driving 1.6 km. Contrary to what some of us learned as young drivers, you won't save fuel, money, time or engine wear by idling your engine. Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency offers free resources to start your own anti-idling campaign <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/idling/idling.cfm> or one for your workplace, school or municipality. Also look for resources at Idle Free BC <http://www.idlefreebc.ca/>

Cheap Flights – The monetary cost of a cheap flight to Mexico may be low, but the environmental cost is high: Besides CO₂, burning jet fuel releases Nitrous oxides, Sulphate and soot, and creates high level cirrus clouds. The climate change impact of an air flight is 2-4 times greater than that of its CO₂ emissions alone. To get an idea of how much CO₂ you produce by flying, go to www.offsetters.ca or www.terrapass.com. Before planning a trip ask "Is this flight really necessary? Could we teleconference? Could I vacation closer to home?" "Is there a train or bus I could take?" For a good overview of the impacts and more travel tips see http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/What_You_Can_Do/air_travel.asp.

Buy Offsets – If you must travel a lot in ways that contribute to climate change, consider buying carbon offsets. Your money is invested in carbon reduction projects but be cautious about the real impacts of any investment that claims to remove carbon from the

atmosphere. Consider focusing on energy efficiency and renewable energy projects which directly support a transition to a non fossil fuel economy. See

http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Climate_Change/What_You_Can_Do/carbon_neutral.asp and the links under "Cheap Flights" above.

Green Holidays – Can you care for the planet when on vacation? Yes you can. You're your travel agent about your values and check the travel tips and green hotel listings at

<http://www.greenhotels.com/>, www.happyfrog.ca and

<http://www.ec3global.com/products-programs/green-globe/>.

At school...

Participation Gardens - Can any of the parent's or teachers organize a small butterfly garden, waterwise garden or rainwater garden on the school grounds? These can provide outdoor classrooms for all types of curriculum, cleanse the air and water, recharge the soils, sequester carbon, provide quiet and shady places for children & small wildlife, and provide beauty in a community. www.urbanraingarden.ca & <http://www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?a=172138&c=45382>

6. COMMUNITY TIES

TIPS & IDEAS

In my home...

Kitchen parties – Many adults and children in your neighbourhood can play music or sing, or are learning how to, and yet, we rarely get together to make music. Blame it on being flooded with cheap entertainment technology and cheap heating sources, but all it might take to entertain ourselves is an invitation from a friendly neighbour - you!

Discussion groups – If you are troubled by an issue or have creative ideas you'd love to share, you probably aren't alone. Host a discussion group in your neighbourhood on a topic close to your heart and see where it leads you all.

Seed Exchanges – see above under "food"

Story of Stuff – Host Screenings of The Story of Stuff video and then have a discussion about what your community can do to live more sustainably. www.storyofstuff.com

In my yard...

Nutrient Nuts – You may be a compost fanatic but you know others can't bear the thought! So, find out who will give you their kitchen scraps for free. You can offer them some of the 'black gold' when it's ready to spread on the gardens. Remember to check local coffee shops, restaurants and greengrocers too as sources of nutrients that would otherwise be sent to the landfill or a very distant and large composting site.

Compost Demos – host a compost education session for the neighbours and ask the keenest composting neighbour, or a GVCEC Master Composter volunteer, to give you a "how to" talk and do some on-site troubleshooting too. www.compost.bc.ca

Yard Share – Avid gardeners often crave more growing space and it breaks their heart to see unused yards nearby. Sharing yard space, with some basic ground rules to suit the parties involved, is the natural solution. If you are either willing to share your own yard, or want access to someone else's, consider putting up some notices in your community, let the neighbours know, or check out www.sharingbackyards.com/ which can help partner you up.

Put Your Feet Up – Our newer communities tend to lack some civil amenities that really make a difference to quality of life, especially for pedestrians. One of these things is a place to sit down and rest when out walking the dog, the baby, or bringing a few groceries back from the store. Consider placing a bench in your front yard at the edge of, and facing, the sidewalk. Put a little welcome sign and a dog dish out and you have created community! If you are worried it won't work out, remember you can always remove the bench. For inspiration see Portland's City Repair Project site at www.cityrepair.org.

On my street ...

Work parties – Need help on a big project, not sure of your skill level? Set up a work share group that agrees to help each other with daunting tasks. You can use a token system if you are concerned about keeping labour hours scrupulously equal between members, but most people are just happy to help and be rewarded with a slice of pizza and a cold drink when the project is complete.

Street Games – Remember when kids used to play street hockey and basketball on the street? On most residential streets this could happen again. You may have to formally invite others out for the first few times but after that, you might find games in the street happen more spontaneously. You don't have to be a kid to enjoy recreation on the street, but you will benefit from not having to drive somewhere else to have fun and exercise.

Food buying co-op – Find out who'd like to save money on bulk purchases and set up a buying group.

Babysitting co-op – Can't afford a babysitter on top of the night out? Trade services with other parents of young kids for reliable and nearby help when you need it.

Lantern Festivals – Don't want to drive in to Beacon Hill Park for the big lantern festival but know your kids would love being out in the dark and make their own lanterns before hand. Set up your own mini festival at a time that suits most neighbours, parade the sidewalk or street and make sure set up some entertainment to add magic to the evening.

Street parties – It goes without saying that a street party is a great way to kick start any kind of community building. Food, chatter and fun help you get to know one another and start finding out what your shared interests and goals might be. You can even host a party in a couple of adjoining back yards if the street cannot be closed off for the afternoon. Great "how to" manual at <http://www.streetparty.net/>

Plant trees – Are there any community owned spaces (boulevards, unopened rights of way, etc.) that can be enhanced with trees? Trees absorb CO₂, filter the air, intercept stormwater, provide habitat for birds and insects, give us shade and beauty, and raise property values. If you choose the right species you can even get fruit or nuts as a bonus. www.treecanada.ca

Community Garden – Is there room for a community garden on your street? If so, find out if one can be created. The guidebook at <http://www.polisproject.org/PDFs/the%20garden%20city%20handbook.pdf> is a great resource.

Peak Oil Potlucks – Host a showing of "An Inconvenient Truth" and have a discussion afterwards about what you can do, as neighbours or individuals, to address climate change.

Neighbourhood Watch – It's been around for years but it works. Consider setting up a Neighbourhood Watch program on your street. <http://www.climatecrisis.net/>, <http://www.neighbourhoodwatchregistry.com/index.html>

Reclaim the Street – Go beyond the typical "hard" solutions that can often annoy motorists and embrace the idea of sharing your street with all users. Actually reclaim your street for multiple, community-based uses. Unless you are on a very busy street, there are hundreds of ways to help motorists drive respectfully and

share the road space with you, the residents, and your pets, kids and visitors. Just about anything you do to build sense of community along your street will actually help to reclaim it. Vibrant street life is the best way to calm traffic. An exciting source for this new philosophy is at www.lesstraffic.com

Cob Project – Invite the neighbours to help you build a community amenity, such as a cob bench (see “Put Your Feet Up above”) or a small bake oven for pizzas. S. E. Portland is renowned for these creative little features, no two alike, which offer community focal points, artistic accents, and civic comforts.

<http://www.alternatives.com/cob-building/whatiscob.html>

With my kids...

Walking School Bus – Walking your kids to school or letting them do so themselves also gives them exercise, fresh air, and quiet time, and allows them to get to know their surroundings and the people who nearby. However, many families feel they don’t have any alternative to driving their children to school. If they could rely on other neighbourhood adults to walk a group of kids each day, sometimes sharing in this task, they’d definitely give up driving. That’s the idea of the walking school bus. For details and more great ideas for keeping cars away from our kids’ schools, see <http://waytogo.icbc.bc.ca/>.

When I shop...

Shop local -Support your local stores whenever you can. It keeps you from driving more, let’s you build ties in the community, and you’re more likely to bump into people you know for a spontaneous conversation. If you feel your local store doesn’t offer the prices or choices you’d like, talk to the owner or manager who may be able to come up with a solution. After all, they want to stay in business!

At work...

Eyes on the Street – Working from home allows more people to stay in residential neighbourhoods during the day when it is typically pretty empty. Their presence helps to keep the neighbourhood safer. So, while you may not be able to work from home yourself, consider supporting bylaws which allow more people to do so. Also try to get to know who stays home on your street during the day and let them know you appreciate their keeping an eye on your place.