

# THIS LAND IS OUR LAND

## 75 WAYS YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND KEEP OKLAHOMA BEAUTIFUL

Oklahoma is a state of incredibly diverse natural beauty. Clean air, water and beautiful landscapes are some of our most magnificent natural assets. The simple tips below are designed to help us think of every day as Earth Day. Environmental stewardship is the responsibility of each Oklahoman, and one individual can make an important difference.

### REDUCE

The key to cutting down waste is to reduce how much you produce in the first place. The easiest way to do this is to look at a product's packaging. Here are some tips:

1. Compare the packaging of similar items and opt for the one that has less.
2. Single-serve items have lots of packaging! Instead, buy in bulk or concentrated products when possible. Then use smaller reusable containers to divide the bulk item, which can save money and resources!
3. Look for containers that can be reused or recycled, like aluminum, plastic and glass, or those that can be composted, like paper.
4. Avoid items that are made to be thrown away after only one or a few uses like disposable razors or disposable batteries.
5. Look for products that can be used again and again, like thermos jars, cloth towels and napkins, glass plates, a reusable water bottle, etc.
6. Use cloth bags when shopping.
7. Write to companies that send unwanted junk mail and request to be taken off their list. Or opt out by signing up with the National Do Not Mail List.
8. Print or copy on both sides of the paper.

### REUSE

Reusing an item is the best way to keep it out of the waste stream. Try to find a new purpose for an old item, or find someone who can! Here's how:

9. Save plastic and paper bags for reuse instead of throwing them away.
10. Store leftovers in glass or plastic containers.
11. Take hangers back to the cleaners.
12. Use the back side of paper for scratch pads.
13. Start a backyard compost bin for kitchen and yard scraps.
14. Encourage your school to start a program composting cafeteria food waste.
15. Share newspapers, books and magazines.
16. Reuse Styrofoam peanuts or newspaper as packing material.
17. Purchase used, rather than new. Look for items at garage sales or thrift stores.
18. Organize a "swap" event with friends. You can swap clothing/accessories, children's items, books/CDs/DVDs, housewares, etc.
19. When finished with something, consider loaning it, giving it away or donating it to someone else rather than sending it to the landfill.

# RECYCLE

When you can't reduce or reuse, the next step is to recycle!

20. Buy recycled content products. To complete the full recycling cycle, you could buy items with recycled content. Look for items that are made from recycled content that can be recycled again.
21. Start a paper recycling program at work or school.
22. Recycle food waste in your back yard! Start a compost pile and make wonderful fertilizer for your garden.
23. Save your grass clippings and leaves for your compost pile too! You need a proper mix of "greens" and "browns" along with water and air for proper decomposition to occur.
24. Separate plastics, steel, aluminum, glass and paper waste at home and work for recycling.
25. Take time to learn about how to prepare recyclable items.
26. Have your printer cartridge cleaned and refilled instead of throwing it away and buying a new one.
27. Dispose of your old cell phone, rechargeable batteries and electronics responsibly. Take them to an e-cycling event or find a drop-off location such as an electronics, home improvement or office supply store.

# CONSERVE ENERGY

Reducing our electricity consumption can help maintain and improve our environment and save money.

28. Keep your car well-tuned and filters clean. When vehicles have been properly cared for, gas mileage and emission rates will improve.
29. Keep your tires properly inflated to save gas.
30. Turn off the light and other electronics when not in use.
31. Adjust your thermostat to a moderate temperature when you leave for the day. Or install a programmable thermostat that you pre-program to adjust on a daily basis.
32. Use a ceiling fan to cool a room rather than lowering the thermostat.
33. Change your HVAC filters often to keep your system running efficiently, and have your system inspected regularly.
34. Block the sun from overheating your house. Close blinds, curtains or drapes on hot sunny days. Outside, use awnings or plant trees or shrubs to help shade the house.
35. Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.
36. Use your microwave, toaster oven or grill rather than the oven to cook.
37. Have an energy audit done and follow the suggestions to save energy.
38. Replace old appliances with new energy efficient models.
39. Caulk and weather-strip cracks around doors and windows.
40. Insulate your water heater.
41. Close the fireplace damper when not in use.
42. Carpool and share rides whenever possible.
43. Only wash full loads of dishes. While you are at it, skip the dry cycle and let your dishes air dry.
44. Only do full loads of laundry and let clothes dry on a clothesline or drying rack.
45. Clean the lint filter after every load to keep the machine running efficiently.
46. Keep your freezer full to use less energy.
47. Plug electronics into a power strip and turn off the strip when not in use.
48. Avoid energy vampires, such as battery chargers and electronics with stand-by mode with features such as a clock.

# CONSERVE WATER

In Oklahoma, we are lucky enough to have clean, abundant, affordable water resources as close as the faucet. We rely on water for drinking, growing our food, keeping us clean, running our businesses, generating power, and countless other uses. Having water so readily available at our fingertips often leads to taking that valuable resource for granted. Conservation is the most effective way you can help to protect our water. The decision to use water wisely is in your hands.

- 49. Avoid over watering your lawn. Most lawns require only 1-1.5 inches of water every 5 to 7 days during the growing season.
- 50. When you do water, the best time of day is during the early morning hours when temperature and wind speed are low.
- 51. Use mulch and ground cover in flowerbeds and gardens to reduce evaporation.
- 52. Install a water saving showerhead.
- 53. Turn off the water while brushing your teeth.
- 54. Fill the sink with a small amount of water to use while shaving.
- 55. Run the dishwasher and washing machine only when full.
- 56. Use a broom instead of the hose to clean sidewalks and driveways.

- 57. Adjust your sprinkler heads so they are watering your yard and not the street.
- 58. Reduce the water used per flush in older model toilets by placing a plastic bottle filled with sand in the tank (away from the flushing mechanism).
- 59. Replace toilets and other water using devices with newer more efficient models when possible.
- 60. Check faucets and pipes for leaks. On average, 10 gallons of water per day is lost to leaks in the average home.
- 61. Don't use the toilet for disposing of trash. Use the garbage can instead.
- 62. Check your toilet for leaks. Put a few drops of food coloring in your tank. Without flushing, wait a few minutes to see if the color appears in the bowl, if it does, you have a leak that needs to be repaired.
- 63. Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator. When you want a cold drink, get the pitcher out rather than letting the tap run while waiting for cool water.
- 64. Plant native, drought resistant plants that require less water and less maintenance.

# SPREAD THE WORD

Take what you have learned and share it with others. Leading by example is one of the best ways to change the behavior of those around you.

- 65. Set a good example for your family and friends by practicing the 3 R's (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle)
- 66. Contact managers where you shop to request they carry more products with recycled content.
- 67. Consider organizing a recycling program for your school, business or community.
- 68. Bring your own refillable water bottle or coffee cup to school or meetings instead of using disposables.
- 69. Form a group and join one of the "Adopt-A" programs such as Adopt-A-City-Street, Adopt-A-Park, Adopt-A-Highway, etc.
- 70. Participate in America Recycles Day, Earth Day and other environmental awareness campaigns and encourage your friends and family to join you.

- 71. When at the park or out for a walk, pick-up litter along the way and recycle or dispose of it properly.
- 72. Use your car less. Walk, bike, skate, etc. to your destination. It's great exercise, reduces air pollution, saves gasoline and money.
- 73. Remember your reusable shopping bags when you head to the store. Then when asked "paper or plastic" you can say "neither".
- 74. Find natural alternatives to chemical cleaning products. Baking soda, vinegar and lemon juice can clean lots of things! Natural cleaners are better for your health and your pocketbook.
- 75. Start using your compost bin! Use the fertilizer on your garden and share your vegetables with others and let them know how easy it is!

# CELEBRATIONS

Special celebrations throughout the year help remind everyone of the important role of Oklahoma's environment in our wonderful quality of life.

- World Wetlands Day** (February 2nd)
- World Water Day** (March 22nd)
- Oklahoma Arbor Week** (last full week of March)
- The Great American Cleanup** (Early April)
- Earth Day** (April 22nd)
- National Arbor Day** (last Friday in April)
- Air Quality Awareness Week** (Late April – Early May)
- Bike to Work Day** (third Friday in May)
- Drinking Water Week** (Late May)
- World Environment Day** (June 5th)
- Car Free Day** (September 22nd)
- World Rivers Day** (last Sunday in September)
- America Recycles Day** (November 15th)
- Buy Nothing Day** (Last Friday in November)
- World Soil Day** (December 5th)



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