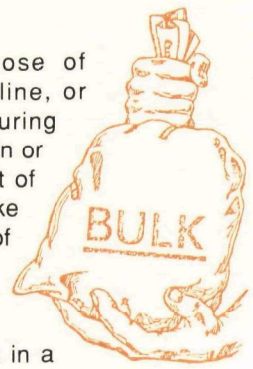
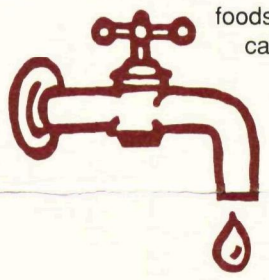
50 WAYS

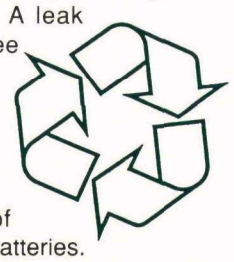
to make your world a better place

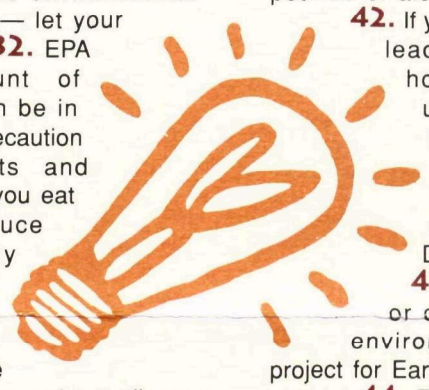
COMMON SENSE IDEAS TO HELP PROTECT AND IMPROVE YOUR HOME AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT.

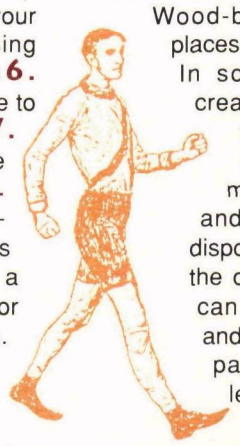


1. Never dispose of motor oil, gasoline, or kerosene by pouring them down a drain or sewer. One quart of motor oil can make 250,000 gallons of water undrinkable. This is more than 30 people can drink in a lifetime. **2.** Convert a space under your sink or somewhere in your kitchen for a recycling center. In 1988, Americans recycled over half of the 80 billion aluminum beverage cans produced. **3.** Drive fuel efficient cars. A car that gets only 18 miles per gallon (mpg)—the current average for cars driving U.S. roads—will produce about 60 tons of carbon monoxide during its lifetime. A car that gets 26.5 mpg (the standard set for auto makers' 1989 fleet) will emit 20 tons less. **4.** Purchase foods in bulk whenever you can. You'll not only save money, you'll have less packaging to recycle, or throw away. **5.** Have a household "environmental meeting." Get everyone involved in your effort to conserve water and electricity, and to recycle. **6. Conserve** energy and save on your hot-water bill. Wash your clothes in cold rather than hot water. A typical hot wash/ warm rinse load costs you approximately 58 cents. The same load in a cold wash/cold rinse cycle costs only 3 cents. **7.** At the supermarket, purchase products with the least amount of packaging necessary. **8.** Use traps instead of rat and mouse poisons, roach and ant killers. **9.** Protect groundwater by using less chemical fertilizer on your lawn. 50% of the U.S. depends on groundwater for drinking water. (Fertilizer can leach into groundwater.) **10.** Avoid aerosol spray can products that use cloroflorocarbons (CFC's). Use stick deodorants, pump hair sprays, and the old fashioned (but fun) shaving cream bars and brushes. CFC's can remain in the atmosphere, destroying ozone for 70–100 years. **11.** Make cardboard recycling bins for cans. Bottles. Paper. And plastics. Have your children help you decorate the bins to make them colorful. Six billion tons of waste are generated in the U.S. each year. **12.** Reuse plastic and paper shopping bags. Reuse glass jars, containers and squeeze bottles. **Reuse. Reuse. Reuse.** **13.** Fix leaky faucets. Just one drip of water per second from a leaky faucet can waste up to 200 gallons of water a month. A leak that can fill a coffee cup in ten minutes can waste up to 3,280 gallons a year. **14.** Use rechargeable batteries instead of non-rechargeable batteries. **15.** Water your lawn or garden in the early morning or evening to reduce evaporation. **16.** Weed your lawn or garden by hand—rather than employing hazardous chemicals. **17. Plant trees.** Trees can help offset global warming by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is the leading contributor to the breakdown of the ozone layer. Trees also prevent erosion and provide shade and beauty to your home. **18.** Participate in your community's recycling Program. If it doesn't have one, help start one. Some places to start could be your office, apartment building, or school. **19. Support** environmentally sensitive manufacturers that offer "refillable or reusable" packaging. **20.** Reduce your use of disposable diapers. Use cloth diapers or a diaper service. In 1988, approximately 18 billion paper and plastic diapers were landfilled in the U.S. **21.** Trim your trash—think the Three R's: REDUCE. REUSE. RECYCLE. **22.** Install storm windows and caulk and weatherstrip doors and windows. If your windows aren't insulated, 10-35 percent of your home's heat may be escaping. **23.** Join a Citizen's Environmental Group. EPA has a list of groups in your area. **24.** Wrap your water heater with insulation to keep heat from escaping. **25.** Keep your own coffee cup at work—avoid using disposable plastic or foam. **26.** Maintain your car properly and adhere to auto emission standards. **27.** Support fastfood outlets that have eliminated wasteful packaging. **28.** If you think someone—developers, farmers, anyone—is illegally filling or dredging a wetland in your area, notify EPA or the Army Corps of Engineers. Wetlands are vital natural resources. Wetlands are being destroyed at a rate of 350,000 –500,000 acres/year. Between 1955–1975, more than 11 million acres of wetlands were lost entirely—an area more than half the size of Ohio. Permits from the Corps are required to fill or dredge wetlands. **29.** It doesn't cost you a thing to be a good neighbor. If you see someone else's litter in the street, pick it up and deposit it in the trash barrel. Better yet, recycle any littered cans or bottles. **30.** Teach children to love and respect animals. But if you are a dog owner, please respect your neighbors, too—use a scooper. **31.** Get personally involved in protecting the environment in your community. Attend local government hearings, ask questions about the environmental effects of projects — let your voice be heard. **32.** EPA limits the amount of pesticides that can be in food. Take extra precaution by washing fruits and vegetables before you eat them. **33.** Reduce your electricity consumption by purchasing energy-efficient appliances. Look for and use the yellow energy label on major appliances. **34.** Walk to nearby destinations, or ride a bike, take public transportation or join a carpool. Between 1980–1984, Americans increased their driving by almost two billion vehicle miles. **35.** Get more light from your lightbulbs —keep lightbulbs and lampshades clean. **36.** Radon may cause 5,000 to 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year. Get your home tested for radon. It's easy to fix. Call EPA for a radon information packet. **37.** Leave asbestos undisturbed unless it is damaged or crumbling. Seek expert advice for removal or containment. (Older homes are most likely to have asbestos-containing materials.) **38.** Build small, hot fires using only dried wood. **Never** burn household rubbish or treated wood. Wood-burning stoves and fireplaces contribute to air pollution. In some communities, they create more carbon monoxide than cars do. **39.** Paint contains solvents and metals poisonous to people and the environment. When disposed of improperly —down the drain, or on the ground—it can contaminate the ground and water. Buy only as much paint as you need, or give leftovers to neighbors and friends. Also, find out how to dispose of it properly by contacting EPA. **40.** Make your toilet low flow by putting a gallon jug of water in the tank. Low-flow toilets can use as little as 1-1/2 gallons of water per flush compared with the usual 5-6 gallons used for many "conventional" toilets. **41.** Recycle to raise funds for community projects. In 1988, Americans earned more than $700 million by recycling 1.5 billion pounds of aluminum beverage cans. **42.** If you suspect that you have lead-based paint in your home, don't remove it unless you've had it tested. Lead-based paint is best left undisturbed. Cover it with wallpaper or other building material. Do not sand or burn it off. **43.** If you belong to a club or organization, tackle an environmental improvement project for Earth Year 1990. And every year. **44.** Fix leaky toilets. A leaking toilet can waste up to 200 gallons of water/day without making a sound. Test for a leaky toilet by adding food color to the tank. Without flushing, if color appears in the bowl after 30 minutes, you have a leak. **45.** Replace toxic cleaners, polishes and air fresheners with less-hazardous vinegar, baking soda, lemon juice, cornstarch and salt. For Example: Use cornstarch for cleaning rugs and upholstery. **46.** If you have lead pipes or joints, let the water run for several minutes in the morning to flush out the water that has been standing in the pipes. The main source of lead in drinking water is pipes and soldered joints. High lead exposure can cause anemia, kidney damage and digestive problems. **47.** Start a home composting program. Find a spot in your yard for composting leaves, grass clippings, and kitchen scraps. This makes great fertilizer for a garden. **48.** Cut down on the amount of disposable products you buy. Long wearing products are usually more durable and will reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills. **49.** Cedar chips and aromatic herbs are good substitutes for poisonous mothballs. **50.** Don't keep saying, "You're gonna do it." **DO IT.**









REMEMBER:

Our Earth has limited resources. That's why it's so important we conserve and preserve them. Get involved today—you can make a difference! For more information about how you can protect the environment, call U.S. EPA at:

1·800·572·2515
in Illinois
1·800·621·8431
in Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin

Safe Drinking Water Hotline 1-800-426-4791
Consumer Product Safety Commission 1-800-638-2772
Radon 1-800-SOS-RADON
Pesticides 1-800-858-7378
Waste Minimization Hotline 1-800-424-9346
Small Business Hotline 1-800-368-5888
Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know 1-800-535-0202
National Response Center Hotline (for reporting spills) 1-800-424-8802

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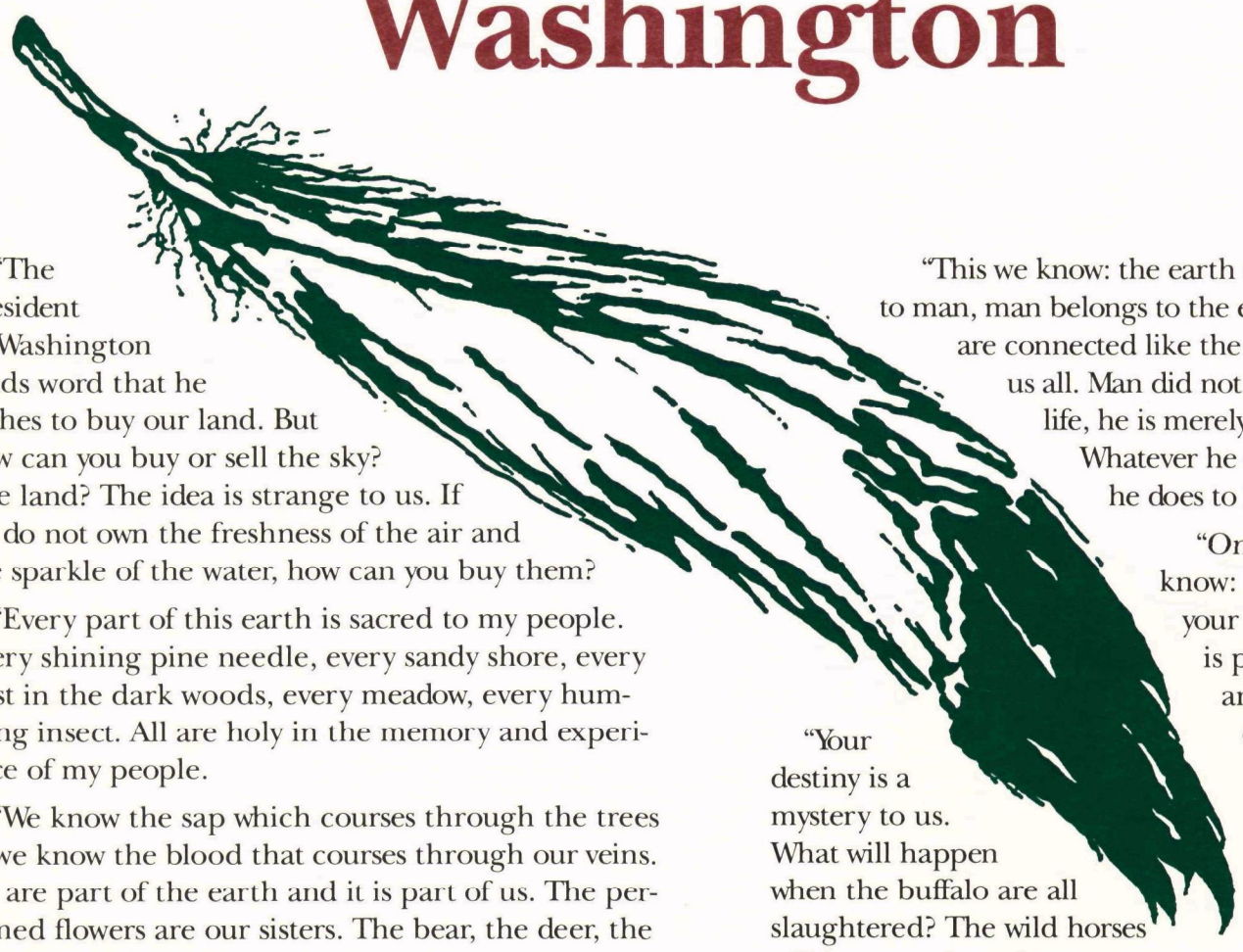
Chief Seattle's Letter to Washington



"The President in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. But how can you buy or sell the sky? The land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

"Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every meadow, every humming insect. All are holy in the memory and experience of my people.

"We know the sap which courses through the trees as we know the blood that courses through our veins. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters. The bear, the deer, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadow, the body heat of the pony, and man, all belong to the same family.

"The shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water, but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you our land, you must remember that it is sacred. Each ghostly reflection in the clear waters of the lakes tells of events and memories in the life of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my father's father.

"The rivers are our brothers. They quench our thirst. They carry our canoes and feed our children. So you must give to the rivers the kindness you would give any brother.

"If we sell you our land, remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives his last sigh. The wind also gives our children the spirit of life. So if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as a place where man can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow flowers.

"Will you teach your children what we have taught our children? That the earth is our mother? What befalls the earth befalls all the sons of the earth.

"This we know: the earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

"One thing we know: our god is also your god. The earth is precious to him and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its creator.

"Your destiny is a mystery to us. What will happen when the buffalo are all slaughtered? The wild horses tamed? What will happen when the secret corners of the forest are heavy with the scent of many men and the view of the ripe hills is blotted by talking wires? Where will the thicket be? Gone! Where will the eagle be? Gone! And what is it to say goodbye to the swift pony and the hunt? The end of living and the beginning of survival.

"When the last Red Man has vanished with his wilderness and his memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, will these shores and forests still be here? Will there be any of the spirit of my people left?

"We love this earth as a newborn loves its mother's heartbeat. So, if we sell you our land, love it as we have loved it. Care for it as we have cared for it. Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it is when you receive it. Preserve the land for all children and love it, as God loves us all.

"As we are part of the land, you too are part of the land. This earth is precious to us. It is also precious to you. One thing we know: there is only one God. No man, be he Red Man or White Man, can be apart. We *are* brothers after all."

EPA/Illinois 1-800-572-2515
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EPA
United States Environmental Protection Agency

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