

An Inconvenient Truth, With Rather Convenient Solutions

By Rachel Dickey, CBNERR Intern

In the midst of Al Gore's success with *An Inconvenient Truth*, it seems the country is buzzing about melting ice caps, declining polar bears, flooding Asian countries, and many other catastrophic implications of global warming. Even the label "global warming" makes the problem feel insurmountable. At this point, the damage is being done, and it is up to us as individuals to change our lifestyle and fix it the best we can. The smallest changes will make a big difference if we all contribute in a small way as a large group of people. Why should we do it? We need our natural resources and if the environment changes too quickly, ecosystems may not be able to adjust. We have a lot to lose. We will only be able to make it better gradually.

1) Drive less.

One third of green house gases come from transportation. Taking public transportation is a great alternative to driving because you can lower your net green house gas emissions by 20 pounds per day (or more than 4,800 pounds per year!) and you can spend your travel time reading or catching up on work. Otherwise, you could combine a couple of trips into one, carpool, ride your bike, or walk instead of climbing into your car. Also, if you have a choice, don't drive your SUV or truck. If you're in the market for a new car, buy a hybrid. Your investment in a more fuel-efficient vehicle will pay off in the future.

2) This winter, lower your thermostat 2 degrees.

Buy a thermal shirt or invest in some fleece blankets. According to climatecrisis.net, this simple step would save 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per year per household. That's the equivalent of the amount of CO₂ your car would produce with 100 gallons of gas.

3) Turn off lights, stereos, and televisions when you're not using them.

Even when your electric devices are off, some appliances, including hairdryers, cell phone chargers and televisions, still consume

energy when they are plugged in. In fact, the energy used to keep display clocks lit and memory chips working accounts for 5 percent of total domestic energy consumption and spews 18 million tons of carbon into the atmosphere every year! We often forget that the electricity we use to power our homes does not simply come out of the wall; three quarters of our electrical power is produced by burning fossil fuel.

4) Inflate car tires to proper pressure for better mileage.

The Natural Resources Defense Council projects that if everyone followed this step, gasoline use nationwide would decrease two percent. Furthermore, a tune-up could boost your miles per gallon anywhere from four to 40 percent; a new air filter could get you 10 percent more miles per gallon.

5) Buy produce locally.

At <http://www.localharvest.org/csa/> you can subscribe to a farm near you and receive a regular share of their crops. This reduces the amount of fuel used in transporting food to grocery stores, and it supports the local organic farmers. Perhaps your food will even taste better.

6) Instill environmental values in your children.

The upcoming generation holds a lot of power when it comes to changing the course of global warming. Teach your children the value of recycling, conserving energy, and appreciating the outdoors. Teach them to live in a way that will not destroy the environment so that they can live in a clean and healthy world. The young generation is already showing promising signs of making the world better. At University of Maryland, College Park, today's youth came together at a rally called Powershift to learn how to make a difference: by establishing global networks of young people who want to help reverse global warming, by comparing notes with other students from their state on the changes they have made and future goals for their hometown, and by brainstorming



Chesapeake Bay
National Estuarine Research Reserve
MARYLAND

Jug Bay is one of the three components in the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Maryland. The purpose of CB-NERR is to manage protected estuarine areas as natural field laboratories and to develop a coordinated program of research and education as part of a national program administered by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

STAFF

Beth Ebersole
Reserve Manager
410-260-8720

bebersole@dnr.state.md.us

Bart Merrick
Education Coordinator
410-260-8827

bmerrick@dnr.state.md.us

Candace Morrell
Stewardship Coordinator
410-260-8712
cmorrell@dnr.state.md.us

Sasha Bishton
Coastal Training Program Coordinator
410-260-8718
sbishton@dnr.state.md.us



**Check out the new
CBNERR-MD web page at
www.dnr.state.md.us/bay/cbnerr**

about how to encourage more young people to become involved.

An Inconvenient Truth raised the alarm on our impact on the environment, but it was not meant to create panic. The solution is within our reach, and by gradually changing the way we live, we can avoid catastrophic problems in the future. Collectively, individuals like you and me hold the power to make real changes and set the course for future generations.