

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY: What you can do



An A to Z of Environmental Actions

9.1 Helpful Links and Resources

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TAKING responsibility



Can one person really make a difference to our environment? Yes!

We are all connected to the world around us. The three spheres of our natural environment: land, water and air impact the quality of our lives every day. In turn, we must take responsibility and manage these resources wisely.

Every person, family and business in York Region can make choices to strengthen our connection to our environment. Choosing to manage our resources wisely is important. One small positive change in each of land, water and air will make a significant, positive difference. In turn we will all benefit.

Small steps add up to a much bigger whole.

How do you manage wisely? To find out, you can start by determining your own ecological footprint. An ecological footprint tells us how our lifestyle affects the natural environment. It measures how much land and water we occupy or use in order to produce the resources we consume, and absorb all the waste we produce. By measuring the impact we have on our natural environment and comparing it to nature's own productivity, we can determine how sustainable our current practices and lifestyles are. Go to: www.wrwcanada.com/09ecofootprint.htm or www.eya.ca/steplightly/ecofoot.pdf or www.earthday.net/footprint/index.asp# to calculate your own ecological footprint.

Make some of the suggested changes below, then re-test yourself to measure your progress (our environment's progress) and the good work you have done.

DID YOU KNOW?

If every person in Canada replaced one standard light bulb with a compact fluorescent, it would be equivalent to taking 66,000 cars off the road.

Source: Your Guide to the One-Tonne Challenge, Government of Canada, 2004.

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Attract insect-eating birds to your backyard. They are a natural alternative to pesticides.

Be an environmental champion! Volunteer for a local environmental or conservation group, or make environmental improvements in your own home. Your children are watching you.

Compost. Buy or build a backyard composter, or use your local municipal curbside composting program. Adding compost to your gardens is an excellent way to improve soil quality.

Don't idle. Drive your car less. Consider driving a smaller or more fuel efficient car.

Energy efficient and environmentally friendly products are available at many retailers. Consider replacing your standard lightbulbs with compact fluorescent ones, check the energy efficiency of your appliances and try using non-toxic products rather than harsh cleaners in your home.

Forests are good for you. Plant a tree. Take a hike. Get re-acquainted with nature and breathe the fresh forest air.

Get involved in community events such as Earth Week activities, Green Up/Clean Up Days, curb side exchange days or trail, stream or lake rehabilitation. Your involvement will make a difference. York Region, through the Greening Strategy, has a number of motivating programs to help you get started.

DID YOU KNOW?

10 seconds of vehicle idling uses more fuel than restarting your engine.

Source: Natural Resources Canada, www.oee.nrcan.gc.ca/autosmart/idling





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DID YOU KNOW?

Each month forestry staff and the Regional Forestry Advisory Team host free Forest Events. Come out, enjoy and learn. For more information, contact the Regional Greening Co-ordinator at (905)830-4444 or 1(877)GO4-YORK, or visit our website at www.york.ca.

Hazardous waste. Take your used batteries, half-empty paint cans and dirty solvents to your local Household Hazardous Waste Depot.

Install water saving devices in your home such as low flow showerheads or early closing toilet flappers. Water your lawn less often.

Join neighbourhood bird counts or a frog watch program.

Keep your car and tires in good repair. This will keep your fuel consumption in check, reduce emissions and cost you less in the long run.

Litterless lunches. Bring re-useable containers. If you often buy coffee or tea, why not bring your own travel mug? Each time you do, it is one less cup into landfill.

Municipal pages of this Report have lots of useful information. Find links and contacts for environmental services in your own municipality.

Naturalize your lawn, garden, workplace, school or local park.

Organize your time to reduce your number of car trips - help us work on decreasing the total amount of York Region resident car trips per day!

Protect our lakes and local beaches. Do not attract birds or animals by feeding them. Practice stoop-and-scoop if you own a dog.

Quit the elevator or escalator. Use the stairs. It's good for the environment and your heart.

Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, and Repair.

Switch to renewable energy. Solar power doesn't necessarily mean you have to install expensive panels. Hang laundry to dry whenever possible.

Take transit. Or Viva. Or carpool. Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) are there to make it easier for you. Help us to reach our target of 17% public transit use by 2031 and save the air.

HOW CAN I USE LESS WATER?

On average, every resident in York Region uses approximately 260 litres of water a day. That's a lot of water — enough to fill 2 bathtubs. Compared to households in other countries, Canadians use far more water than necessary.

Where does it all go? Based on measurements from homes in Southern Ontario, the largest water users are the shower, toilet, washing machine and leaks.

The good news is that by upgrading fixtures (such as showerheads) and changing some habits, it is possible to reduce a household's water use by over 20% without affecting lifestyle.

For more information visit: www.water4tomorrow.com

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Use fans at night and shades during the day as an alternative to air conditioning.

Visit the local farmers market. Buy local organic produce. Avoid buying over-packaged products.

Well awareness. Protecting private water wells means protecting groundwater. Private wells should be properly sealed to keep contaminants out of your drinking water supply. Have your private well water tested and learn about your watershed. See section 3.3 for information about your watershed from the conservation authorities.

Xeriscape. Implement seven common-sense gardening principles that will help you save water while creating a lush and colourful landscape.

Your children are watching and copying you! Give them the tools they need to ensure their healthy future.

Zero emissions. Walk or cycle instead of taking the car when possible. Do it for your health and for the health of the environment.



We Want to Hear from You

Help us to understand what managing wisely means to you, and what York Region can do to manage wisely.

Tell us what you have done. What difference has it made to you and share your own ideas that will help others manage wisely. E-mail us at soe2005feedback@york.ca.





9.1 HELPFUL LINKS and resources

What follows is a list of resources to give you the necessary tools to use the *A to Z of environmental actions* and take responsibility:

Attract insect eating birds:

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Healthy Yards Program
www.trca.on.ca/events/take_action/default.asp#attract

Be an environmental champion!:

Join Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Volunteer Network
www.trca.on.ca/events/volunteer/default.asp?load=volunteer_form
For more information go to
www.trca.on.ca/events/volunteer/default.asp?load=jobboard

Get involved with Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority
www.lsrca.on.ca/GetInvolved/index.html
Take the Pledge to Save Lake Simcoe
www.lsrca.on.ca/forms/LakeSimcoePledge.html

Take the Federal Government's One Tonne Challenge: www.climatechange.gc.ca

Take David Suzuki's Nature Challenge
www.davidsuzuki.org/WOL/Challenge/default.asp

Organize an Earth Day celebration event in your community: www.earthday.ca

Participate in the Federal Government's Clean Air Day celebrations
www.ec.gc.ca/cleanair/index_e.cfm

GTA Clean Air Online: Individual Actions for Clean Air
www.gtacleanaironline.ca/index.jsp

20/20 The Way to Clean Air
www.toronto.ca/health/2020

Compost:

Where to buy or how to build your own composter
www.region.york.on.ca/Services/Composting/default+backyard+composting.htm#8

Composting Council of Canada: www.compost.org

Don't Idle:

Natural Resource Canada: Idle-Free Zone
oee.nrcan.gc.ca/communities-government/idling.cfm

Tips to cut down on idling
www.newmarket.ca/userfiles/HTML/nts_1_359_1.html and
www.earthday.ca/EDy2k/TakeA/TakeAfrm1.html

Markham's Idling Control By-Law
www.city.markham.on.ca/markham/channels/newscentre/initiatives/idlefree/overview.htm

Energy efficient/environmentally friendly products:

Natural Resource Canada: Energy star (International Symbol for Energy Efficiency)
www.oee.nrcan.gc.ca/energystar

Clean Air Foundation: Energy Smart Program - www.cleanairfoundation.org

Clean Air Partnership: Clean Air Consumer Guide
www.cleanairpartnership.org/cleanairguide/

Environmental Choice Program: www.environmentalchoice.com



9.1 HELPFUL LINKS and resources

continued

Forest Events:

York Regional Forest Events
www.region.york.on.ca/Services/Environmental/Greening+Strategy/default+greening+strategy.htm

York Region Take A Hike Trail Guide
www.region.york.on.ca/Services/Environmental/Take+A+Hike.htm

Get Involved:

Green-Up/Clean-Up Day in York Region
www.region.york.on.ca/Services/Forestry/Forestry_Forestry.htm#6

York Region Greening Strategy
www.region.york.on.ca/Services/Environmental/Greening+Strategy/default+greening+strategy.htm

Earth Day Canada: www.earthday.ca/EDy2k/Home/homefrm1.html

Evergreen: www.evergreen.ca/en/involved/involved.html

Hazardous Waste:

Household Hazardous Waste Depots in York Region
www.region.york.on.ca/Services/Household+Hazardous+Waste/default+HazardousWaste.htm

Install Water Saving Devices:

Water for Tomorrow: www.water4tomorrow.com/

Join:

Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas Registration: www.birdsontario.org/atlas/register.jsp

Bird Studies Canada: Christmas Bird Count: www.bsc-eoc.org/national/cbcmain.html

Frog Watch: www.naturewatch.ca/english/frogwatch/on/

Canadian Wildlife Federation Coast-to-Coast Butterfly Survey
www.wildeducation.org/resources/butterfly/buttrfly.asp

Keep Your Car in Good Repair:

Natural Resources Canada: Vehicle Maintenance
oee.nrcan.gc.ca/transportation/personal/vehicle_maintenance.cfm?attr=8

EarthEasy: Fuel Efficient Driving
eartheasy.com/live_fuel_efficient_driving.htm

Rubber Association of Canada: Be Tire Smart - www.betiresmart.ca

Car Heaven: Retire your older, more polluting car - www.carheaven.ca

Litterless lunches:

Waste Free Lunches: www.wastefreelunches.org/

Municipal Pages:

See section 3.3 of this Report.





9.1 HELPFUL LINKS and resources

continued

Naturalize Your Lawn, or School or Park:

Environment Canada: What Can You Do to Protect Biodiversity?
www.cbin.ec.gc.ca/WhatCanYouDo.cfm?lang=e

Lake Wilcox and You: Naturalization of your property
www.town.richmond-hill.on.ca/documents/heritage_lake_wilcox.pdf

York Region: A Healthy Lawn A Healthy Family Reduce the Use of Pesticides brochure
www.region.york.on.ca/NR/rdonlyres/pgqecrathrulkcoatpq7gfogwsnwf7jc7rmapxps6k7mxdxe33mymdt5duj2fbzn4vesgltnpotav7tgm5xao7uj6kf/2004+Pesticides+brochure.pdf

Health Canada: Healthy Lawns: www.healthylawns.net

Wild About Gardening: www.wildaboutgardening.org/index.asp

Environmental Factor Inc: Organic Lawn Care - www.environmentalfactor.com/

Organic Landscape Alliance: www.organiclandscape.org/

Evergreen: Naturalize a local school or park
www.evergreen.ca/en/involved/involved.html

Lifecycles: Developing School Gardens
www.lifecyclesproject.ca/programs/food_agr_education/growing_schools/faq.htm

Organize Your Time to Reduce Car Trips:

Individual Actions for More Efficient Transport: www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm68.htm

Pollution Probe: Annual Clean Air Commute: www.pollutionprobe.org

Car Free Day in Canada: www.carfreeday.ca

Protect Our Lakes and Local Beaches:

York Region Beach Sampling Program
www.region.york.on.ca/Services/Public+Health+and+Safety/Environmental+Health/York+Region+Beach+Sampling+Program+2005.htm

Quit the elevator:

Public Health Agency of Canada: Stairway to Health
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sth-evs/english/index.htm

Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, and Repair:

Environment Canada: The 4 R's - www.ns.ec.gc.ca/udo/reuse.html

University of Waterloo: What You Can Do
www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infowast/reduce.html

Freecycle: Give or get items for free - www.freecycle.org/

Switch to Renewable Energy:

Canadian Renewable Energy Network: www.canren.gc.ca/

Canadian Wind Energy Association: www.canwea.ca/

Natural Resources Canada: Renewable and Electrical Energy Division
www2.nrcan.gc.ca/es/erb/erb/english/View.asp?x=68

Renewable Energy Action Tips: www.re-energy.ca/pdf/Reenergy_Conservation_tips.pdf

Bullfrog Power: Clean Reliable Electricity - www.bullfrogpower.com/

Ontario Clean Air Alliance: Electricity Choices - www.electricitychoices.org



9.1 HELPFUL LINKS and resources

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Take Transit or Carpool:

York Region Transit (YRT): www.yrt.ca
Viva: www.vivayork.com
Smart Commute: www.smartcommute.ca
Smart Commute 404-7: www.smartcommute404-7.ca
Smart Commute Black Creek: www.bcrmta.org/
Find the Way.ca: www.findtheway.ca
Go Transit: www.gotransit.com

Use Fans:

Green Ontario: The Two Fan Challenge
www.greenontario.org/solutions/twofans.html
Toronto Hydro Electric System: Conservation Tips
www.torontohydro.com/electricsystem/residential/energy_news_views/articles/get_ready_for_summer/pagethree.cfm#fans

Visit the local farmers market:

Farmers' Market Ontario
www.farmersmarketsontario.com/market_list.php
Newmarket Farmers' Market
www.newmarketfarmersmarket.com/

Well awareness:

York Region: Private well water
www.region.york.on.ca/Services/Public+Health+and+Safety/Safe+Water+Program/Frequently+Asked+Questions+About+Private+Well+Water.htm
Well Aware
www.wellaware.ca

Xeriscape:

Colorado Water Wise Council: What is xeriscape?
www.xeriscape.org/whatis.html

Your Children:

Environmental Protection Agency: Kids Club - www.epa.gov/kids/
Eco Kids: www.ecokids.ca/pub/index.cfm
Energy Information Administration: Energy Kids Page
www.eia.doe.gov/kids/index.html
Environment Canada: Kids Zone - www.ec.gc.ca/e-week/kids_e.htm
Environment Canada: Kids - www.on.ec.gc.ca/kids_e.html
Environment for Young Europeans
europa.eu.int/comm/environment/youth/index_en.html
Kids For a Clean Environment (Kids FACE): www.kidsface.org/

Zero Emissions:

York Region Physical Activity Network
www.region.york.on.ca/Services/Public+Health+and+Safety/Food+and+Nutrition/Healthy+Measures+Events.htm
Green Communities Association: Active and Safe Routes to School Program
www.saferoutestoschool.ca

