

Steps to a greener lifestyle

By TOM CAMPBELL

Kevin Gurney's maps are helping policymakers and the public see where carbon dioxide is being emitted around the world.

And Gurney is making sure his own little corner of the world is producing as little carbon dioxide as possible.

During the summer months, Gurney and Helen Rowe, a research associate in the Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, head for southwest Colorado, where they live in a cabin powered by a solar grid they built.



Gurney

Their solar cells produce approximately 800 watts of power, which meets most of their electrical needs including lighting, computers, power tools, and their most important survival item, a coffeemaker.

Their heating needs have been reduced through the use of passive solar techniques such as south-facing windows and interior thermal mass (stone walls). Waste is composted using a simple solar cooking system, ultimately reducing it to soil.

Water needs are met by a combination of collected rainwater and water they bring with them. The water is gravity-fed down a hill to their cabin, creating water pressure for cooking and washing.

While these alternatives may not be options for most lifestyles, here are 10 simple things everyone can do:

REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

- 1. Change your light bulbs.** You could save about \$92 every year just by replacing 10 traditional, round incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lights. If all 113 million U.S. homes did this, 81 million tons less CO₂ would enter the atmosphere annually.

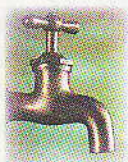


- 2. Chill out.** By keeping your home at 68 degrees during the heating season (60 degrees when you're away), you can make a big reduction in your heating bill. Each 2-degree difference will change your bill by 10 percent. The amount of CO₂ produced in the United States annually would decrease by about 35 million tons if people followed that heating plan and kept their air conditioning at 78 degrees when they're home and off when they're gone.



- 3. Tap into it.** Worldwide, making the plastic for bottled water emits nearly 5 billion pounds of CO₂ a year. Consider how many bottles you won't have to throw away (and how much money you'll save) if you use a reusable container instead.

- 4. No drips.** If you let the water run while you're brushing your teeth, 1.5 gallons of water per minute is going down the drain. A dripping faucet wastes 37 gallons of water a week, enough for a whole laundry load.



- 5. Shower power.** A family of four would save 63,000 gallons of water a year by showering instead of taking baths. Insulating your water heater will cut the average heating bill by \$38 a year.

- 6. Don't (plastic) bag it.** Bringing your own tote to the store saves trees and petroleum by not using paper and plastic bags. Worldwide, people use enough plastic bags every six months to carpet the planet.

- 7. Hang it up.** If you hang all your clothes on a line in the yard or the basement to dry, you could save up to \$80 and shrink your carbon footprint by up to 1,200 pounds of CO₂ a year.



- 8. Save — or plant — a tree.** Every Sunday, Americans throw away so much newspaper it's like killing 500,000 trees. Every tree saved can filter out as much as 60 pounds of CO₂ annually. If you recycle your newspaper, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that you can shrink your carbon footprint by up to 184 pounds. And if you go even further and plant a tree or two so they shelter your home, that canopy of leaves and branches can cut your heating bill 2 to 8 percent and your cooling cost 8 to 18 percent.



- 9. Go unplugged.** If you have appliances completely off instead of in standby mode, you can save about \$250 a year on your electric bill. A DVD player in standby mode uses 85 percent of the energy it does when you're playing a movie on it.



- 10. Keep your vehicle in good working order.** Replacing a clogged fuel filter can improve your car's gas mileage by as much as 10 percent. Keeping tires properly inflated can improve mileage by 3 percent.

Purdue's Hardwood Tree Improvement and Regeneration Center planted 10,000 trees on Purdue property last year.