



Produced by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay with support from the Chesapeake Bay Program  
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# ***Around the Home and On the Road Easy Lifestyle Changes to Help Restore the Chesapeake Bay***

## ***Chesapeake 2000 -- Preamble***

“ There can be no greater goal in this recommitment than to engage everyone in our effort. We must encourage all citizens of the Chesapeake Bay watershed to work toward a shared vision -- a system with abundant, diverse populations of living resources, fed by healthy streams and rivers, sustaining strong local and regional economies and our unique quality of life...Through their actions each individual can contribute to the health and well-being of their neighborhood streams, rivers and the land that surrounds them.”

## ***For More Information***

[www.epa.gov/owow/nps/dosdont](http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/dosdont)

*Do's & Don'ts Around the Home*

Addresses best practices to avoid non-point source pollution by homeowners

[www.epa.gov/ow/citizen/thingstodo](http://www.epa.gov/ow/citizen/thingstodo)

*Things You Can Do*

Lists sites with realistic goals for individuals to protect the work/home environment

[www.bayjournal.com](http://www.bayjournal.com)

Time sensitive information on environmental issues affecting Bay restoration

[www.greenmatters.com](http://www.greenmatters.com)

*The Busy Person's Guide to Greener Living*

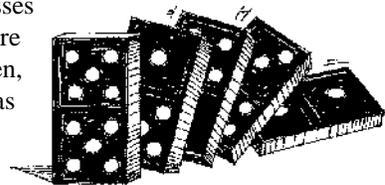
## ***INTRODUCTION***

The health of the Chesapeake Bay is dependent on the actions of its citizens. Now, more than ever, state governments are seeking the assistance of individuals to aid in the restoration of the Bay. Increased population, sprawling development, industry and farming practices have challenged the watershed. Through the *Chesapeake 2000* agreement, states within the Bay watershed have agreed to incentives designed to attack the sources of its decline. Individual areas of concern within major tributaries will have specific goals and load reductions designed for their own problematic issues. Policies tailored to zones and areas will assist local restoration efforts with measurable results.

The development of a broad conservation ethic and an understanding of the role of the individual in the process of protecting both local and Bay watershed environments is a focus point for restoration. *Chesapeake 2000* seeks to actively engage, encourage and educate citizens through information, outreach and involvement in community watershed organizations and partnerships. Working with shared vision, local commitment and personal incentives to improve the quality of life in our ecosystem – through citizen involvement – restoration of the Bay and our heritage of clean waters is possible.

## ***HOW YOU CAN HELP***

While the *Chesapeake 2000* agreement addresses many collective goals, there are segments where local participation can make a difference. Often, an individual may assess his/her own actions as being unimportant in achieving a watershed wide, long-term restoration goal. But through one small push of a domino, a sustaining force can be unleashed and a goal can be accomplished. One citizen's newly acquired environmental actions will lead to another and, by example, will become the force to assist the goal of restoration of the Bay. The first step is to become an environmental steward and get involved.



The largest problems for the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem are excess nutrients, chemical and toxic contamination, air pollution and land development. More than 15 million people live in the 64,000 square mile Chesapeake Bay watershed. Each one lives only a few minutes from one of the 100,000 streams and rivers that feed the Bay. Each time a citizen turns on a light, washes the dishes, drives a car, takes out the trash, fertilizes the lawn, changes the oil or walks a dog, a chain of events occurs that can affect the Bay.

To accomplish the pollution reduction goals of *Chesapeake 2000* in these areas, the following actions for citizen participation are encouraged.

## Simple Ways to Cut Nutrient and Sediment Pollution

### Did You Know...

- ▲ Five gallons of water can run down the drain if the faucet is left on while brushing your teeth; 15 gallons if left on while shaving.
- ▲ The average American family produces over 1200 pounds of organic garbage per year, 70% of which is compostable.
- ▲ Cars emit over 34 % of the nitrogen oxide in our air. NOx emissions, byproducts of fossil fuel combustion, make up 75% of the amount of nitrogen entering the Bay from airborne deposition.
- ▲ A dripping faucet can waste 20 gallons of water per day.
- ▲ One single quart of oil can contaminate 2,000,000 gallons of water. Four quarts of oil can form an oil slick covering more than 10 acres.
- ▲ Eliminating one 20 mile trip per week can reduce weekly carbon emissions by 18 pounds.

### ...around your home

- Plant buffers along streamside property to slow erosion and to capture flow of polluted runoff. Tree roots absorb and slow the flow of nutrient runoff and prevent eroding soil from flowing downstream.
- Pump out septic tanks regularly, every 3-5 years.
- Pick up and dispose of pet litter. Pet waste contains bacteria and nutrients that can wash into storm drains and into streams affecting water quality.
- Conserve water. Take shorter showers with low flow aerators, use full load for dishwashers and laundry, garden with native plants that require less water than annual, tropical ornamentals. Use kitchen rinse water for watering plants. Overloading at sewage treatment plants can cause overflows of raw sewage and debris into waterways, especially during heavy rains.
- Reduce household food waste by cooking only the amount that will be eaten and recycle non-meat/non-fat leftovers to a compost pile. Using garbage disposals for compostable food waste consumes unnecessary electricity, overtaxes septic and sewage systems, eliminates a natural source for replenishing soil and contributes to excess nutrients in Bay tributaries.
- Use phosphate free products. Check labels on household products before you buy. Try non-toxic alternative products.
- Drain rain gutter downspouts into gravel or grassy areas to increase adsorption and decrease runoff.
- Use integrated pest management techniques and non-toxic alternatives for pest control.

### ...on the road

- Drive less. Walk more. Combine shopping trips. Carpool. Eliminating one 20-mile trip by car per week can reduce weekly carbon emissions by 18 pounds. Exhaust fumes contain nitrogen oxides that, in excess in the Bay, can cause algae blooms that cloud the water killing underwater grasses and subsequently depriving aquatic organisms of oxygen.
- Use alternate transportation such as a bicycle, city buses or metro-rail systems.
- Keep the car tuned. Exhaust fumes contribute to smog and airborne nitrogen compounds that wash back to the ground in rain or snow and into waters flowing into the Bay. Cars emit over 34% of the nitrogen oxide in our air and are responsible for one-fourth of all nitrogen compounds that enter the Bay.
- Purchase a fuel-efficient vehicle. While reducing the economics of ownership, you will be reducing consumption of fuel and thus lessening emissions.
- Use the car air conditioner sparingly. It consumes extra fuel, adding to emissions while leaking fluorocarbons which cause ozone depletion.
- Keep tires properly inflated, saving fuel and reducing emissions. An estimated 50% of tires on the road are under inflated.
- Decrease idle time. Idling wastes fuel and increases emissions.
- Dispose of used engine oil at recycling stations and clean up spills promptly. Even small amounts of oil from driveway spills and improper homeowner disposal can wash into and contaminate local waterways during rainstorms.

### **Did You Know...**

- ▲ Homeowners use 10 times more toxic chemicals per acre than farmers.
- ▲ Sixty percent of Americans change their own oil, generating 200 million gallons of used oil annually but only 20 million gallons are collected through recycling. 180 million gallons of used automobile oil is dumped on the ground, in drains and in the trash each year.
- ▲ Lighting accounts for about 25% of energy consumption.
- ▲ Twelve percent of U.S. emissions of sulfur and nitrogen oxide that are key components of acid rain come from home heating.
- ▲ A mature tree can consume 13 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.

*By following all or even a few of the personal stewardship guidelines listed, citizens can fully participate in the achievement of the goals of Chesapeake 2000 and share in the vision of a restored Chesapeake Bay.*

### **Simple Ways to Cut Household Chemical Pollution**

- Use natural cleaners and dispose of household chemicals properly. Never pour toxic chemicals down a drain, they can pass right through a septic tank or sewage plant and into the Bay.
- Wipe up spills of car maintenance chemicals instead of flushing them with a hose. Dispose of used fluids at recycling centers.
- Many household chemicals are toxic including paints, solvents, pesticides, mothballs, rug cleaners, car fluids, furniture polish and cleaning agents. Use water-based paint and clean the brushes indoors where the wastewater will be treated at a sewage plant. If pesticides must be used, try natural alternatives first. Integrated pest management practices will reduce the need for pesticides in the garden. Bat boxes and birdhouses are alternatives for mosquito abatement. Many natural alternatives exist for household cleaning chemicals.
- Apply fertilizer, including dried animal waste fertilizers, sparingly. Excess amounts will runoff into nearby drainage areas with the next rain. Try natural fertilizers and compost instead. Buy organic produce to increase the number of farmers willing to grow it.
- Use native plants instead of hybrids requiring fertilizers and daily watering. Most lawn care practices create fertilizer or pesticide pollution, cut grass higher and leave the trimmings on the lawn to naturally fertilize it.
- Reduce runoff to storm drains and streams by minimizing paved and nonporous surfaces. Use wooden decking, gravel or brick instead of concrete or macadam. Increase yard hydration while decreasing runoff pollution by directing rain gutter downspouts onto lawns instead of driveways. Wash the car on grass allowing soapy water to soak in instead of flowing to a storm drain or use a commercial carwash that filters and recycles water. Plant a rain garden around downspouts.
- Use unbleached coffee filters. The bleaching of paper creates dioxin, a toxic that finds its way into our waterways.

### **Simple Ways to Cut Air Pollution**

- Use less electricity. Purchase Energy Star rated appliances. Industrial emissions generated in the production of electricity contribute heavily to the formation of greenhouse gasses and acid rain.
- Replace standard bulbs with energy efficient compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). CFLs reduce energy needs and save homeowner dollars.
- Use ceiling fans, window fans and open windows to ventilate your home. Fans use one-tenth the energy of an air conditioner.
- Tune up your furnace. Turn down the heat. Home heating spews over a billion tons of carbon dioxide into the world's atmosphere each year. Turning the thermostat just three degrees down/up in the appropriate season would prevent 1000 pounds of emissions annually per household.
- Plant trees. They filter the air, give off oxygen and their roots absorb pollutants and reduce erosion. Reforest or replant large open, grassy areas instead of maintaining unused, sprawling lawns. By providing shade and evaporative cooling, trees can affect the temperature surrounding a home reducing the need for air conditioning.
- Consider using a push mower or purchase a low emission or electric model.
- Use fewer styrofoam products. They are non-biodegradable and can be toxic to aquatic life who mistake it for food. Gases used to create styrofoam contribute to smog, air pollution and acid rain.