

Living Green is making choices in our day-to-day lives that reduce our impact on the environment and move us in the direction of a sustainable lifestyle – one that is healthy, ecologically sound, economically viable and socially just.

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By now half the country has heard the story of soap smugglers in Spokane. It was in the Spokesman-Review, local news channels and major media outlets across the country. This very true story is about people going to Idaho to buy dish detergents with phosphates, the sales of which have been banned only in Spokane County. The rest of Washington State will adopt the ban in 2010 as will many other states. The good news is that the ban is working – phosphate levels in Spokane River have decreased 14% since adopting the ban in 2008.

Dishwashers also require maintenance as much as any appliance. It is beneficial to run an empty load with ½ cup of white vinegar as needed. This helps it to clean dishes effectively.

The phosphate content in dishwashing detergent is very high, but it is also in other household cleaners, fertilizers, and industrial waste. All this flushes down the drain into the river. Phosphorous is an essential nu-

Soap Solutions

trient that helps plants grow and in the Spokane River it is naturally at low levels, so the amount delivered from our waste stream is a shock to the ecosystem. High levels of phosphates have led to major blooms of algae which suck up the oxygen when they die causing a dangerous environment for aquatic animals like fish.

Most of the phosphates and other pollution are removed in wastewater treatment but not enough to meet the required levels. While a new treatment plant is in the works, pollution still needs to be tackled at the source. In fact this process began in 1993 when phosphates were banned nationally in laundry detergent. The story was similar then, the new detergents didn't work as well until the companies reformulated their products. When the ban spreads to more states the Soap and Detergent Association will likely catch up with the demand for a new formula that will work better on dishes. *Continued p.3*



The Problem:

Low Phosphate detergent doesn't work well in some households. (Some report there isn't a problem at all.)

Some Solutions:

Living Green staffers get out in the community a lot and it has been heard in conversations that some people use the brands Seventh Generation, or Ecover. Another person in the Living Green program said they use one of those brands with a rinse agent that cleans their dishes and removes residue from powder detergents. These can be completely biodegradable and only need to be refilled in the agent dispenser once 3-4 weeks. With any brand, read the entire label. Some recommend using a tablespoon of white vinegar to help the product work well.

Garden Pesticide Alternatives



Sprays which kill problem insects will also kill beneficial insects. Use these sprays selectively, only spray the infected plants.

There is no replacement for good growing techniques for insect control in a garden. Companion planting, keeping the garden clean, well fed and disease resistant plants can ward off most problems. Unfortunately some occasions may call for pesticides, but there are a number of commonly used and safer alternatives to the persistent and toxic chemicals in insecticides.

Insecticidal soaps have been around for years and are a commonly used alternative. Insecticidal soaps can be purchased at most garden stores, but they can be made easily and inexpensively at home. They work by smothering and desiccating insects on contact. They are effective on a variety of soft bodied insects like aphids, whiteflies, and spider mites, but also on some scale insects, leafhoppers, grasshoppers,

earwigs and others. Generally thought of as environmentally safe, they are also biodegradable. However, remember that if sprayed on beneficial insects it will also kill them.

A common recipe for insecticidal soap is 1 teaspoon of real soap, not a detergent, in 1 quart of water. Only about 1 percent soap solution is needed. Soap contains fatty acids from the animal or vegetable fats and these are what make insecticidal soaps effective. Unfortunately most "soaps" we buy are not soaps at all but detergent. Soap is made from lye and an oil - animal or vegetable fat. Detergent "soap" is chemically derived. Some true soaps to try are Dr. Bronner's liquid castile soap, Kirk's castile bar soap, and Ivory bar soap.

To make the liquid soap using a soap bar, grate

or shave one quarter of a bar into 1 quart of heated water and stir until dissolved. This will be your concentrate. To use the concentrate, mix 1 teaspoon per quart of water into a sprayer. Spray directly onto the insects early in the morning or just before dark, not during the hottest time of the day. Re-apply after a rain.

Another option is diatomaceous earth, a powder made up of the glass-like exoskeletons of microscopic diatoms. It can be purchased at many garden centers. It will kill earwigs, slugs, and other soft-bodied garden pests that come into contact with it. Spread it around where insects occur and keep it dry. But be aware that it will kill beneficial insects also.

Nice Day For A Green Wedding

Spring is here and for many couples this time of year means a wedding day is quickly approaching. If you are planning a wedding, there are a growing number of resources for keeping the whole event, from invitations to honeymoon plans, in line with your environmental values.

It has become a popular topic, but greening a

wedding requires some research. Umbra at Grist.org writes, "Environmental issues to consider for weddings are going to be quite similar to the everyday issues: transportation, food, non-transit energy use, consumer waste."

Another big tip is to make the event small. A small guest list will keep resource consumption in check.

The magazine *Portovert* is all about green weddings and they teamed up with Native Energy to launch the Wedding Carbon Calculator available online.

Many books are also available for tips, check out *The Green Bride Guide* and *Eco-Chic Weddings*, both available at the library.



Visit these websites for more information:

www.thegreenbrideguide.com, www.Portovert.com, www.nativeenergy.com/pages/portovert/168.php?portovert



Bike To Work Week May 11-16

Last year Bike To Work Week attracted almost 1,000 participants. This year's goal is 1,200 participants and more than 25,000 vehicle miles avoided. Bike commuting provides benefits to commuters, employers and the community as a whole.

What's Happening:

5/10 Education Fair at River Park Square, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Free

5/11 Kickoff Breakfast at Riverfront Park, 7-9 a.m. Registered participants only. Pancake breakfast, coffee, live music, prizes

5/13 Walk & Roll to School Day at participating Spokane Public Schools.

- Elementary Schools: Adams, Bemiss, Cooper, Grant, Lynnwood, Regal, Stevens, Westview, Wilson

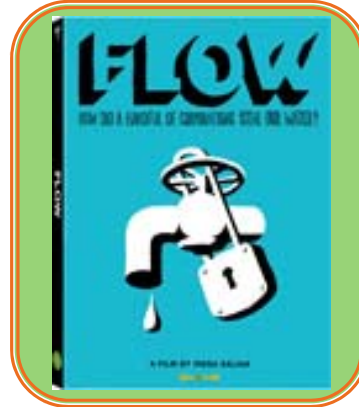
- Middle Schools: Chase, Glover, Sacajawea, Salk, Shaw

- High Schools: Ferris, Havermale, Shadle

5/13 Energizer Stations Gathering points around the county (bike shops, schools, businesses who want to sponsor them) for snacks and meet-ups for Bike Buddies. 7-9 a.m.

BikeToWorkSpokane.org

Flow: For Love of Water



Even though it is difficult at times to continue to hear of the environmental problems the earth faces, this documentary film will truly open your eyes. It addresses our growing water crisis, exploring problems all over the world. As we have been hearing for years, clean drinking water is becoming increasingly scarce. Polluted water contributes to over 2 million deaths each year, mostly children under five. But the most serious problem this film exposes is the corporate take over of water. Water, the film explains, is the third largest global industry.

In Bolivia the World Bank forced the privatization of water which had always been a free resource. It was cleaned and treated but Bolivians had to pay a price for water. Many people didn't have money to pay for water, and the only alternative was to use the water of polluted streams and riv-

ers, suffering the health consequences. The people of Bolivia rose up and forced the government to turn the water back to the people. The same problem is occurring in South Africa, Minnesota and other places around the globe.

The privatization of water brings up a major question put forth in the film: is water a property to be exploited, or is it a basic right for all citizens of the world to have access to clean, free or affordable water?

The film also discusses the bottled water industry which is almost completely unregulated. Most bottled water is simply tap water. But

this quote from the movie offers an interesting perspective; "The UN estimated that it would require an additional \$30 billion dollars per year to provide safe, clean water to the entire planet." Last year alone we spent 3 times that amount on bottled water.

If you feel like doing something about this issue, go to www.flowthefilm.com and sign the petition to add a 31st article to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, establishing access to clean water as a fundamental human right.

Not all bad news, the film shows very promising new technology to clean water that can be managed and controlled by small communities themselves. It also shows villages in India that had great success in capturing and storing rain water to recharge ground water, keeping water in wells which would otherwise go dry for part of the year.

Soap Solutions cont'd

The Spokane River is a source of local pride yet it is on the top ten list of the Most Endangered US Rivers. If you care for the environment, then try to do things that will improve it, not harm it. To have the biggest impact, try to reduce or eliminate the amount of

chemicals coming from household waste by using safe, environmentally friendly cleaners and soaps.

UPCOMING EVENTS

5/9 World Fair Trade Day at the Community Building. 35 W Main, 10-5pm.

5/9 Garden Expo at SFCC Lair; 9am-5pm.

5/9 Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge Work Party with Spokane Audubon Society; 9-12 Potluck lunch at 12 p.m. This is part of an on going community effort to restore native riparian habitat to benefit birds and other wildlife species. For info 235-4723.

5/9 Called To Care Workshop 2nd annual conference with the Faith and Environment Network. 9-2, faithandenvironment@gmail.com

5/12, 6/9 Green Drinks. May's event is at One World Café. 5:30 and on. 1804 East Sprague

5/11-5/15 Bike To Work Week See page 3.

5/14, "Beyond Organic: Building Community"; 5/21 "Food" A Global and Local Issue"; 5/28 "Cultivating Change and Food From the Hood". Thursdays in May at the Porch Church, 1804 W Broadway. 7pm. 328-6527

5/14 Women's Bike Maintenance 101 REI, 1125 N Monroe, 7pm. Free.

5/16, Spokane Tribe Cultural Day, 1-3, Mobius Children's Museum, Riverpark Square, 808 w main, 624-5437

5/17 Community Roots Market Fresh Abundance, 2015 N Division; 11-4pm. Free

5/17 Eating Local Foods in the Inland Northwest a class at the Crossing Community Center and info from Slow Food Spokane River. 8919 E Euclid; 4pm.

Free. Millwoodcrossing.org

5/20 Taking a Bite Out Of Hunger Auction for Second Harvest Food Bank, Spokane Arena 252-6260.

June - October Meet Me at the River - Raft and Kayak Passport Series Raft and kayak all or part of the 111-mile Spokane River, from North Idaho College to the confluence of the Upper Columbia. Learn about the river's history, environment and wildlife. There will be optional side tours along the river. Beginners welcome! For details

www.spokaneriver.net/?page_id=307

6/6 Spokane River Bridge Walk Downtown Spokane, 9:30am. For info 625-6200, or www.spokaneparks.org



Living Green
SNAP
212 W 2nd, ste 100
Spokane, WA 99201

Phone: 509-744-3370
Fax: 509-744-3374
E-mail: livinggreen@snapwa.org

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