

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.

Global Warming?



After all the shoveling, plowing and treacherous driving this winter it sure seems that we had a lot

of snow, but it hasn't been quite as good water-wise as many hoped. Snow pack in the Spokane River Basin is at 97% of average (through January) with stream flows predicted to be 90-94% of average for the upcoming year. Precipitation has been a little above average at 111%.

So in what appeared to be a good snow year for the Spokane area, it is still a little below normal for snow and predicted stream flow. But because of this seemingly wet, cold winter, a few people are exclaiming "what global warming?" as if one near normal winter changes trends in our climate. Climate of course is the average of daily weather conditions over a long period of time.

Here are some interesting climate facts from NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies:

- World wide, every single year since 1992 is in the current list of top 20 warmest years on record.
- The eighth warmest years on record have occurred since 1998 and the 14 warmest years in the record have occurred since 1990.
- 2007 was tied for the second warmest on record, 2005 was the warmest.

"Barring a large volcanic eruption, a record global temperature clearly exceeding that of 2005 can be expected within the next few years,

at the time of the next El Nino, because of the background warming trend attributable to continuing increases of greenhouse gases" said climatologists at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies.

With seemingly unstoppable climate change, what issues can we expect in the future for the Spokane area? It is predicted that we may still receive close to the seasonal average precipitation but it may come at a different time of the year. Runoff may occur quicker in the spring leaving less water in the Spokane River during the summer. Summers may experience longer periods with little or no precipitation. As we continue to overuse ground water from the Spokane Aquifer, less ground water will enter the Spokane River, causing lower water flow and continued water quality problems.

Another water issue to be concerned with is that Spokane County leads the state in the number of exempt wells allowed since 2000. Exempt wells provide water for a single dwelling which can use up to 5,000 gallons per day. These wells are located in areas not served by water purveyors. We all know ground water is not inexhaustible. Some Columbia Basin aquifers have dropped 400ft from over pumping. Ground water supplies in portions of the West Plains and Cheney area are already overused, with withdrawal exceeding recharge and water tables falling. How long can we continue to grow in the unincorporated areas of Spokane County, with more exempt wells being installed, before water supply problems become serious?

Upcoming Events

Thursdays Indoor Spring Farmer's Market, from 11am-3pm in the Community Building; 35 W Main.

3/11, 4/8 Green Drinks at Brooklyn Nights; 122 S Monroe. Starts at 5:30 and goes late. See www.greendrinks.org.

3/13 Environmental Education Regional Summit at Center Stage; 1-7pm. Contact Brook Beeler 329-3478.

3/20 Spring Begins

3/24-4/21 Master Composter Training, Mondays 6-8:30pm. Call Spokane County Extension at 625-6800.

3/27 Slow Food Spokane River Dinner at Beverly's/CDA Resort; 6:30. Email sf.spokaneriver@gmail.com.

4/1 Bioneers Film and Brown Bag Lunch Showing Judy Baca, world renowned community arts pioneer. Magic Lantern Theater; 25 W Main. See www.sustainspokane.org for more info.

4/19 Earth Day Celebration at Riverfront Park; 11-3pm. Official Earth Day is **April 20th**.

4/21 Kayak 101 By Spokane Mountaineers at REI, 1125 N Monroe. Free, 7pm. Call 328-9900.

4/21-4/27 National TV Turnoff Week

4/22 Earth Dinner at Wild Sage Restaurant for Earth Day by Slow Food Spokane River. Email sf.spokaneriver@gmail.com.

Spokane's Path to Sustainability

Spokane's Mayor Mary Verner hosted a strategic planning meeting to address Climate Change and Energy Security on February 6th. Presenting to the public was Daniel Lerch of the Post Carbon Institute (PCI). His speech explained the connections between climate change and peak oil production. "That's why it's important for local leaders to take matters in their own hands," Lerch said.

From the PCI website www.postcarbon.org, Lerch writes "Spokane has become the first to tackle climate change and global oil depletion together, marking a new step in local government responses to these increasingly urgent challenges." Leading the world in new strategies for a sustainable future, Spokane has joined the likes of Seattle's Mayor Greg Nichols who wrote the US Mayor's Climate Protection Act and Portland's Peak Oil Task Force.

Over the course of the next year the Citizen Task Force and its work groups will develop a strategic plan to be proposed to the Mayor in 2009.

GreenDrinks Come to Town

GreenDrinks is a new gathering movement for folks interested in environment-related issues. Including people whose work is in any way tied to the environmental sector, the spontaneous gatherings have occurred in cities throughout the states and Spokane is the newest addition.

As a movement, it has no higher structure or funding, just participants. One of the grassroots organizers Cassie Taylor says, "The synergy that comes out of people's participation in GreenDrinks is remarkable. Strong communities are the backbone and the catalyst for change of any kind."

Spokane Community Gardens

Community gardens are springing up all over town. As interest in gardens has grown over recent years, folks have noticed that

Spokane lacks growing space. That's why Spokane Community Gardens formed. Their hope is to find people who want gardens and help get them established in neighborhoods.

According to one of the founding members, Jon Lossing, the Twin Owls



garden (on the South Hill) is ready for a full force of gardeners to make use of its new green house. In Browne's Addition the Emanuel Lutheran Church is looking forward to having its first full year of harvest. Saint Margaret's Vinegar Flats garden has expanded growing space and added a 3-tier compost bin. Also, West Central is welcoming its new Riverfront Farm community garden which will be a host to many hours of outdoor activity.

Riverfront Farm is part of Project HOPE – Helping young People Excel. This community garden in West Central allows kids to garden in the neighborhood sites of their choosing. It's a unique organization of scattered sites used for urban farming. Riverfront Farm also has the Eco House where kids learn organic gardening methods, how to use tools, and growing schedules for different plants and vegetables. To keep in touch with the Spokane

Green Challenge Answered!

Congratulations to Owen and Bill for telling us about how they reduced waste! They were the first to win our new green bags with the Living Green logo.

But you can still win, too! Tell us whether you used the junk mail removal guide in the Nov/Dec issue or if your household has made other strides in reducing waste. Email us at: livinggreen@snapwa.org or call Argyle at 744-3370 x 242.

Community Gardens group, check their website for updates and monthly meeting dates. Jon says, "These meetings are open to anyone who has interest. They serve as a hub and switching yard for people who are looking for community involvement. We have many items on agenda but need fresh minds to expand them and help us make concrete what is planned. Also new direction with and creative thoughts are welcome to the table as we are constantly cultivating new ideas. So follow the website www.spokanegardens.com and keep up with the latest events in Spokane's Urban Gardening Community."

Green Recipe: Irish Scones

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup butter, very cold
1/2 cup buttermilk (minus 2 tablespoons)
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1 cup currants

Preheat oven to 400 F and butter a baking sheet. Mix dry ingredients well. Cut in butter until the mixture resembles coarse pebbles. Beat together egg, vanilla, and buttermilk, add to dry ingredients. Mix briefly. Add nuts and currants, mix. Turn dough out on well-floured cutting board. Knead briefly, working in enough flour to make a stiff dough. Shape into a square about 1-1/2 inches thick. Cut into 12 squares, then place on prepared baking sheet about 2 inches apart. Bake 20 minutes or until tops are golden brown. Enjoy while fresh and hot.

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E-mail us at livinggreen@snapwa.org for the newsletter and other local green information.

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