



## PERSONAL PRACTICES TO SAVE ECOSYSTEMS

# Maintaining Clean, Plentiful Water

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### HOME

- 1. Toilet.** Practice minimal flushing or purchase a low flush (1.6 gal) or dual flush toilet (1.6 and .8 gal for solid waste and liquid waste respectively). Toilet flushing accounts for over one-third of inside home water use.
- 2. Cleaning.** Use basic, nontoxic cleaning products, such as castile soap, white vinegar, and baking soda rather than manufactured chemicals for cleaning. When you do purchase manufactured chemicals, read labels; they can indicate potential pollution problems.
- 3. Laundry and dishes.** Use a plant-based detergent, such as Seventh Generation, Bio-Clean, or Ecover, rather than petroleum-based detergents, which often contain whiteners, fragrances, and bleaches that can harm aquatic life. For dishes use a non-phosphate detergent, such as Seventh Generation.

### FOOD

- 4. Meat.** Reduce meat consumption, especially beef. Agriculture accounts for about 75 percent of the world's water consumption. The water required to produce one pound of California beef—primarily for the irrigation needs of pasture—is equivalent to taking a five-minute shower every day for one year.

### CONSUMER GOODS

- 5. Clothing.** Purchase used clothing as much as possible. Production of synthetic fibers, pesticide use on cotton, and dyeing and bleaching of cloth contribute to water pollution.
- 6. Household goods.** Select products made of natural materials (wool, linen, wood, ceramic, glass, and natural latex rubber) rather than synthetics to eliminate the release of persistent pollutants and endocrine disruptors into our water.
- 7. Hazardous products.** Assure that products containing heavy metals, such as fluorescent light bulbs, electronics, batteries, and used motor oil are safely recycled.

### YARD

- 8. Maintenance.** Practice natural gardening in the yard rather than using pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, which run off into streams and pollute ground water. Pull weeds by hand, mulch heavily, and don't expect perfection.
- 9. Lawn.** Replace grass with native or edible vegetation, such as herbs or berries. Switching from grass to shrubs or groundcovers can reduce outdoor water use by 80 percent. Or, if you live in a region that receives adequate rainfall part of the year, do not water your lawn during the dry months. Lawns require more water than other plantings. If allowed to go dormant, they become green again when the rains start.
- 10. Gardens.** Use drip irrigation or soaker hoses, or water by hand only when plants need it.