



## Simple Things YOU Can Do to Help the Bay



Be a smart  
water user.

*On average, Californians use a third more water than necessary due to leaks, inefficient appliances, and over watering.*

- Learn how to monitor your household water use so you can find and repair leaks. Many Bay area water districts offer free services to help consumers audit their water use; contact your water supplier for information.
- Replace out of date washing machines and toilets—the biggest water users in your home—with more water efficient versions.
- Use a low flow showerhead and install aerators on faucets.
- Run the dishwasher only when it is full.
- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth, shaving, or washing dishes.
- Clean vegetables in a pan filled with water rather than under a running tap. Re-use the rinse water for watering plants.
- Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator rather than waiting for tap water to get cold enough to drink.
- Compost food scraps rather than using a garbage disposal.
- Use a broom rather than a hose to clean your driveway.
- Avoid over watering your lawn and garden. Water in the evening or early morning, when less is lost to evaporation, and don't water if rain is in the forecast. If you use an automated irrigation system, install a rain shutoff device or soil moisture sensor.
- Switch to less water-intensive landscaping more appropriate for California's climate. Check with your water district: You may even get a rebate for making the change.

- For more ideas, visit the California Urban Water Conservation Council website ([www.h2ouse.org](http://www.h2ouse.org)).



Don't pollute  
the Bay.

*Thousands of tons of pollutants reach the Bay each year from urban and agricultural runoff, wastewater and marine ballast discharges, air pollution, and other sources.*

- Use safer substitutes for household cleaners, lawn and garden chemicals, and other toxic materials. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "Envirosense" fact sheet (<http://es.epa.gov/techinfo/facts/safe-fs.html>) is a good place to start.
- Learn about less chemically intensive ways to control weeds and pests in your garden, such as mulching, hand-pulling, and using natural predators.
- If you use a pest control or lawn care company, make sure they use environmentally-sound Integrated Pest Management (IPM).
- To learn more about greener approaches to pest control, visit the Pesticide Action Network's "Pesticide Advisor" ([www.panna.org/resources/advisor.html](http://www.panna.org/resources/advisor.html)).
- Properly dispose of toxic materials such as automobile oil and antifreeze, or house and garden chemicals; never dump them in storm drains or household garbage.
- Wash your car at a carwash rather than at home, and monitor your carwash for water treatment compliance.
- Don't litter: Cigarette butts, gum, and other garbage dropped on pavement frequently ends up in storm drains and ultimately in rivers, wetlands, and the Bay.

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*The Bay Institute is a non-profit research, education, and advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and restoring San Francisco Bay, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and the Estuary's tributary rivers, streams, and watersheds.*

To learn more, visit our website at

[www.bay.org](http://www.bay.org)



- Know where the runoff and storm drains in your neighborhood go. Check out the Oakland Museum of California's Creek Mapping Project ([www.museumca.org/creeks](http://www.museumca.org/creeks)) to learn more about your local watershed.
- Help keep invasive species out of the Bay: Never dump home aquariums into creeks or storm drains. If you are a boater, avoid "hitchhikers" by thoroughly cleaning and drying all equipment before entering a new body of water. To learn more, visit the Protect Your Waters website ([www.protectyourwaters.net](http://www.protectyourwaters.net)).
- Particles and gases in air pollution can end up in rainfall and in the Bay. Help reduce air pollution by biking, walking, using public transportation, or carpooling. When possible, use information technology rather than traveling.
- Shop conscientiously: Make an effort to buy locally grown organic produce and products made from organic fibers.
- Host an organic dinner, barbecue, picnic, or block party.



### Restore your local habitat.

*Every city and county in the Bay region has an existing wetland, stream channel or shoreline that is under threat of development.*

- Join—or form—a community group or "creek club" and help make Bay cleanup and restoration a reality in your neighborhood.
- Plant native species in your yard.
- Volunteer for a fun, educational project, like monitoring water quality, removing invasive species, or propagating native seeds. Or, participate in a Coastal Cleanup Day ([www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/ccd/ccd.html](http://www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/ccd/ccd.html)).
- Find out more about opportunities to get involved in your own neighborhood by visiting The Watershed Project website ([www.thewatershedproject.org](http://www.thewatershedproject.org)).
- Learn more about wetland restoration projects at the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture website ([www.sfbayjv.org](http://www.sfbayjv.org)).



### Keep rivers flowing to the Bay.

*On average, about a third of the freshwater flow from the rivers that feed the Bay is diverted to farms and cities, degrading water quality and devastating fish and wildlife throughout the watershed.*

- Know where your water comes from and help to protect those sources. Millions of Bay Area residents rely on water not just from their local watersheds but also from the Delta and Sierra Nevada. Remember that there is an ecosystem at the other end of your tap!
- Support The Bay Institute and other organizations working to reduce the amount of water diverted from the Bay's watershed and to change how water supplies are managed throughout the state. Visit [www.bay.org](http://www.bay.org) to learn more.
- Get to know and appreciate the Bay and its tributaries. Walking along river banks and shorelines, kayaking, rafting, sailing, birding, swimming, and fishing are just a few ways to interact with your watershed and can be great activities for teaching your kids the value of protecting our natural resources. The California Coastal Conservancy's *San Francisco Bay Shoreline Guide* is a terrific resource.



### Vote for the environment.

- Pay attention to how your local, state, and federal elected officials deal with environmental issues. For information on politicians' voting records, visit the California League of Conservation Voters website at [www.ecovote.org](http://www.ecovote.org).
- Call, write, fax, or e-mail your elected officials to let them know what you think.
- Write a letter to the editor voicing your support for environmental protection and restoration.
- Support legislation and ballot measures to improve water quality, restore wetlands, protect endangered species, and increase freshwater inflows to San Francisco Bay.

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