

Peter's Personal Adaptations

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This is a list of things I am doing to adapt my personal behavior so that I can be part of creating a sustainable economy. This is important work, but I know that I can't change everything all at once. So I am taking one step at a time. I love to learn about all of the things that just one person or one family can do. And I have to say, it's fun!

Drive a hybrid car: My wife and I get 50 miles to the gallon in our Toyota Prius so we pollute much less than a regular car. It's half electric, half gas. Prius is an old Latin word that means "to go before." So we are going before to set an example for others to follow. If everybody bought a hybrid car we could reduce our impact on global warming and reduce our dependence on foreign oil by half. That's halfway to a solution. **Learn more:** www.hybridcars.com/basics.html

The other car: Right now I tour around Salmon Nation performing my *Salmonpeople* show and my *Leonardo da Vinci* show using a Volvo station wagon to haul my props and set pieces. It's a good old car. But each year my tailpipe emits about 8,000 pounds of carbon dioxide pollution – a leading cause of global warming. 8,000 pounds is almost three times what my car weighs. So I have signed up with TerraPass, a new company that makes it possible for individual citizens to offset their car pollution with investments in renewable energy projects. At the same time, I am driving less and I always combine errands when I do drive. At the TerraPass website you can read "Global Warming 101" and calculate your own carbon dioxide emissions. **Learn more:** www.terapass.com

Investing in Green Power: Every month I voluntarily add \$10 to my electricity bill. My power company, Puget Sound Energy, has a program where consumers like me can help develop more green power systems like wind farms, solar array farms and biomass plants. Each year my household uses about 500 kilowatt hours of energy. For every \$2 of my investment I buy 100 kilowatt hours from green energy sources. Since I contribute \$10 each month, that makes \$120 a year, which equals an investment of 6,000 kilowatt hours. Best of all, the energy system I am helping to build creates zero pollution, doesn't rely on dams which block salmon runs, and will never run out. **Learn more:** www.pse.com/renewable/greenpower/index.shtml

Banking solar power: In my house, we are saving up to purchase solar panels for our roof. We will tie our system to the electrical grid so that in the summer when we create more energy than we need we can "bank it" with the power company. In the winter when it rains a lot and there is not enough sunlight to power all the electrical needs in our house, we can draw energy from our "bank account." When we accomplish this we will have free and clean energy forever. **Learn more:** www.ucsus.org/clean_energy/renewable_energy/page.cfm?pageID=79

Rainwater harvesting and graywater irrigation: When we put solar panels on the roof I'll replace my old wood shingle roof with a metal roof. By connecting all of the gutters we can easily collect rainwater in a large storage tank beside the house. Next, we'll connect all the drains in the house (sink, shower, laundry, dishwasher) to this same system. With this much water stored, we can water the garden right through the summer without taking any new water from the watershed when the salmon and farmers need it most.

Learn more: www.awwa.org/community/links.cfm?FuseAction=Links&LinkCategoryID=5

Non-toxic, biodegradable soaps and cleaning products: In our house we only buy products that can easily be reabsorbed by nature.

Learn more: <http://seventhgeneration.com/page.asp?unitid=534>

I'm planning a drip irrigation system: Starting next summer, I will lay out a drip hose irrigation system that will reduce the amount of water that misses the plant or gets evaporated in the air. With drip irrigation, I can deliver just the right amount of water to just the right spot. **Learn more:** <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/garden/04702.html>

Certified backyard wildlife habitat: We are applying to the National Wildlife Federation to officially certify our backyard as a wildlife habitat. We will be joining 59,000 certified backyards across the country. Your school can get certified through this process too. Even a whole city can, like Bellingham WA. **Learn more:** <http://www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat/createhabitat.cfm>

We compost all our food scraps: Ever since we started to compost food scraps, instead of throwing them in the garbage, our garbage can is less full. That's good because less garbage goes to the landfill each day. Besides, our landfills are rapidly filling up. Best of all, by composting, we make lots of good soil to add to our garden each spring. **Learn more:** <http://www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/composting/index.asp>

Zero Waste: I don't buy products with packaging that can't be recycled. This is fun but can be tricky. Without all that extra plastic and styrofoam packaging we have almost nothing in our garbage can each week. And I already recycle metal scrap plus the usual paper and plastics. The state of Washington, where I live, just passed an e-waste law so manufacturers will be working to reclaim toxins like lead and mercury and compound plastics. Pretty soon, I don't think we'll need a garbage can at all. Zero garbage, that's our goal. Nature doesn't make garbage, why should we? More and more companies are saving time and money by viewing their waste streams as resources instead of garbage. **Learn more:** <http://www.zerowaste.org/case.htm>

Gardening to eat: Summer and fall we eat a lot of food straight from our garden. Food tastes great when you grow it yourself and it doesn't have to travel on a truck to get to your plate. Some schools are starting gardens to learn more about food, soil, water, and the cycles of nature. Many school cafeteria systems are switching to healthy organic food grown by local farmers. **Learn more:** <http://www.ecoliteracy.org/> **Also:** <http://agr.wa.gov/marketing/smallfarm/farmtocafeteria.htm>

CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture: Our family subscribes to a partnership with a local organic farm. We get a big box of fresh produce every week. It's dropped off right in our neighborhood with about 15 other families. By making this choice, we accomplish several goals at the same time. First, we eat healthy foods. Second, we support a small family farm. Third, we protect the soil and the watershed because our farmer uses only organic farming methods. And, fourth we help reduce sprawl by preserving green space near our city. Because of all this, the food tastes even better! **Learn more:** <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/>

Thundering Hooves Pasture Finished Beef: I have come to know a man in Walla Walla who raises beef, poultry, and pork with completely natural methods. His name is Joel Huesby. His ancestors were pioneer farmers right there on the same land that Joel and his family now farm. We buy half a beef each year all pre-cut into sections. We also buy about 20 chickens and some turkeys. We have stopped buying meat from regular grocery stores because of what's in it, how the animals were raised, and the water and air pollution that big feedlots produce. **Learn more:** <http://www.thunderinghooves.net/>

Vote with my wallet: As a good citizen, I vote in every election and take time to educate myself on the issues I am voting on. I also have learned that I can vote everyday with the way I spend money. You can be any age to vote this way. If I don't want to support a company that is polluting, or producing food that is not healthy for me, or making cars that are causing global warming, or making products in unfair sweatshops, I just don't buy anything from them. Then I write them a letter to encourage them to change so we can all enjoy a sustainable economy. **I have learned a lot from this website:** <http://www.coopamerica.org/> **and this one too:** <http://www.newdream.org/>