

Environmental Stewardship

Caring for our land and natural resources is embedded in our community culture.

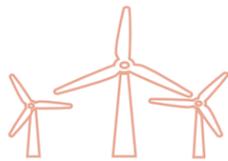
Now more than ever, our collective future depends on furthering sustainable solutions that support healthy economic growth and ensure community resiliency. Our opportunity lies in careful stewardship of our resources and embracing new technologies so that we sustain our quality of life for generations to come.

The most important thing to remember is that saving the planet can start right now, with your next trip to the supermarket or commute to work. While it might not seem like parking a few blocks farther from the store will make much of a difference, over time, all these changes add up to a positive impact on the environment. No effort is too trivial—so pick one of these new habits and take action today!



Habits

- Shop local.**
It's simple, straightforward, and an easy addition to your routine that **supports local businesses**, provides community jobs, and reduces transportation costs and carbon emissions.
- Reduce, reuse, recycle... in that order.**
Recycling is often thought of as the most important step you can take for the environment, but even better, reducing and reusing will eliminate the need to recycle—or worse, throw away—at all!
- Go digital.**
Do your part to reduce unnecessary paper use and opt for digital receipts, filing and bill paying; you'll be surprised how much waste (and space!) you can save when you start paying attention to your printing habits.



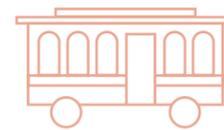
Advocacy

- Say yes to infrastructure initiatives.**
Improving transportation costs money, so the next time there is an infrastructure-focused ballot, vote yes. In addition to being a vote for the environment, better infrastructure supports more transit options, safer roads and less traffic.
- Understand how density fights climate change.**
Coupled with the infrastructure improvements listed above, **building taller, denser cities is the best way to reduce emissions** because it allows people to expend less energy living their daily lives. Smart development is the best way for a city to shrink its carbon footprint while preserving open space and agricultural land.
- Support Community Choice.**
Join the Chamber and encourage the remaining cities and SLO County to give their residents the opportunity (not mandate) to **support carbon-free electricity** through Monterey Bay Community Power. Morro Bay and SLO City are already in and Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach and Santa Maria will be joining in 2021.



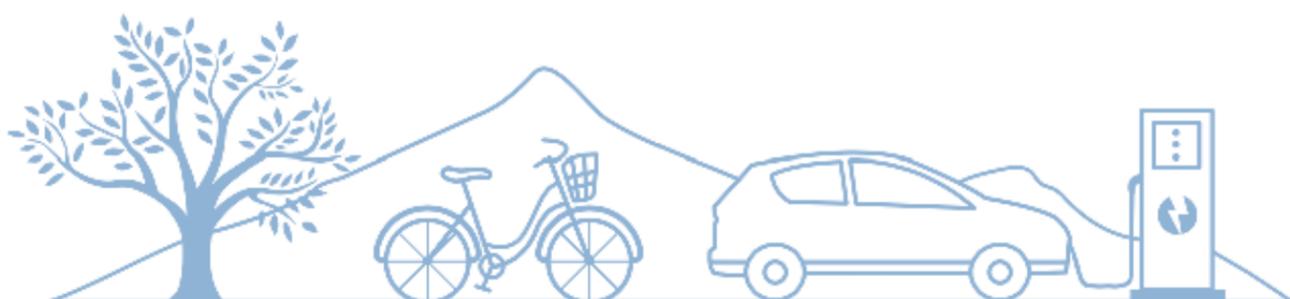
Home

- Reduce food waste.**
Whether it's left on your plate or rotting in your fridge, wasted food is a big problem in the U.S.—to the tune of **38 million tons** a year. Buying less, or even just more intentionally can make a big difference, and, if you do have food scraps, make sure to put them in your green waste bin instead of heading to the landfill.
- Get a home energy audit.**
Calculate your emissions, find ways to reduce them, and compete against your neighbors with the **SLO Green Challenge**. A simple, DIY **home audit** can help you save between 5 to 30 percent, while reducing your carbon footprint.
- Wash clothes in cold water.**
Most Americans still wash their laundry in warm water, which accounts for approximately 75% of the energy and emissions produced by a single load of laundry have shown that **cold water is just as effective as warm**.



Transportation

- Calculate your carbon footprint.**
Use an **online tool** to calculate and track your carbon footprint, and prepare to be astounded by how much transportation contributes to your total.
- Start with one day a month.**
In 2014, more than **76 percent** of commuters in the U.S. drove to work alone, most often in their own personal vehicle. Changing how you commute one day a month—by carpooling, walking, biking or taking public transit—will help you save money while reducing your carbon footprint. And it doesn't take a radical lifestyle change, just a little more thought 12 days a year. Get rewarded for your shifts at **iRideshare.com**.
- Map it.**
Hop on Google and take a look at how many places are an easy 15-minute walk (about one mile) away. You will eliminate unnecessary vehicle trips that make emissions and traffic worse while also getting in your recommended daily exercise.



Increase your impact by talking about it! Whether it's with friends, family, coworkers or even elected officials (or those running for office) you'll help inspire others, learn what else you can do and build relationships. **SLO Green Drinks** is a great place to learn and meet other people who care about our environment.