

# Your Watershed

## Russian River Watershed Association



### When the Holidays are Over - Recycling Paper, Holiday Trees and Electronic Wastes

After the holidays, you'll likely be left with some cleanup—wrapping paper and packaging—not to mention the tree itself. If your gifts include new electronic devices, such as a new flatscreen TV, laptop or digital camera, you might find yourself with the challenge of properly disposing of your old equipment. Luckily, there are many opportunities in Sonoma County to easily recycle your wastes.

**Wrapping paper**--- Recyclable paper makes up a large portion, 27%, of what's going into our garbage in Sonoma County. Remember to recycle all non-reusable wrapping paper, carton and cardboard packaging in your single-stream curbside recycling cart. Only foil-backed and plastic wrapping paper cannot be recycled.

**Packaging**---If you accumulate packing peanuts and bubble wrap over the holidays, many local packaging stores, such as UPS Stores, are glad to accept these items for reuse.

**Veggie food scraps**---Compost your veggies! Fruits, vegetables, peels and seeds can be composted at home or put in the curbside yard waste carts for the municipal composting program. In fact about 35% of residential garbage is food waste, totaling nearly 800 tons a week in Sonoma County--a resource that could be used instead of landfilled.

**Christmas trees**--- Christmas trees can be recycled into compost and mulch. Your tree needs to be free of flocking, tinsel, decorations and its stand for recycling.

For curbside pick up and drop-off options, call the Sonoma County Eco-Desk at 565-3375 or visit [www.recyclenow.org](http://www.recyclenow.org)

**Electronics**---Under a State mandate, electronics cannot be put in the garbage. An electronic device is anything with a circuit board. Look for devices with digital displays or programmable features. Examples include computers, TVs, laptops, printers, answering machines, CD & DVD players, stereos and cell phones.

You have three options for proper disposal of electronics: 1. bulky item pickup, 2. curbside recycling, and 3. drop-off recycling.

**1. Bulky item pickup** is available by appointment for residential garbage customers in Healdsburg, Petaluma, Santa Rosa and Windsor. To schedule a home pickup, call your garbage company.

**2. Curbside recycling** for household electronics, not larger than 2 feet in any dimension, is available for garbage customers in Cloverdale, Cotati, Healdsburg, Sebastopol, Petaluma, Rohnert Park and in unincorporated areas. Devices with screens (such as TV's, computer monitors and laptops) and batteries are **not** accepted curbside.

**3. Drop-off recycling** for non-working and working electronics is available at all County Refuse Disposal Sites, at Goodwill Industries of the Redwood Empire donation centers, Salvation Army and at other businesses in Sonoma County. For a complete list, call the Sonoma County Eco-Desk at 565-3375 or visit [www.recyclenow.org](http://www.recyclenow.org)

**Batteries**---Batteries should not be placed in the trash. Batteries are recycled by different processes than electronic equipment and should be removed from electronic equipment prior to recycling. By law, retailers selling rechargeable batteries are required to take back used rechargeable batteries from their customers. It is often more convenient, however, to use local recycling programs rather than to take rechargeable batteries back to the store from which they were purchased.

Dispose off all kinds of batteries, including alkaline and rechargeable batteries, through Sonoma County's Household Toxics Program. Call the Sonoma County Eco-Desk at 565-DESK(3375) or visit [www.recyclenow.org](http://www.recyclenow.org) for more information.

**More Recycling Information**---For additional questions about recycling and disposal options in Sonoma County, see the Sonoma County Recycling Guide printed in the AT&T phone book Yellow Pages under Recycling, call the Sonoma County Eco-Desk at 565-DESK(3375) or visit [www.recyclenow.org](http://www.recyclenow.org)

# Mitzvah Moments \*

\* A mitzvah is a good deed.

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**Fuel and energy costs are down...** but conservation is still important, because global warming isn't going away anytime soon. While the new administration is taking the threat of global warming seriously and will work to reverse its trend, changes in policy take longer than individual change. We each can contribute to reducing global warming, and the problems that come in its wake, by continuing to make changes in how we live our lives—especially how we use energy from fossil fuels.

**While gas prices are the lowest in nearly four years,** we still need to save fuel. Using fossil fuels is a major contributor to global warming. And with the economy on the skids, we often can't afford to buy gas, even at under \$2.00/gallon. All the fuel economies we adopted when gas was nearly \$5.00/gallon this summer are still necessary.

- Reduce excessive idling to save up to 19% on fuel; most cars don't need to warm-up.

- Remove non-essential things from the car to save 1 mpg for every 100 lb. removed.

- Drive slower; every 10 mph over 60 mph reduces mileage 4 mpg.

- Walk, bicycle, and take public transit.

- Remove frost from the whole windshield to reduce drag.

**Winter's here...**and there are many ways to reduce fuel use and global warming—

- Lower your thermostat to 68°F, more if you aren't home. Each degree above 68°F uses 3-5% more energy. Reducing temperature by 3 to 5°F can lower heating costs up to 20%.

- Weatherstrip around windows and doors. Caulk windows, doors and anywhere air leaks in or out, but not around water heater and furnace exhaust pipes.

- Fix dripping faucets. Just one dripping hot water faucet can waste 212 gallons of water a month, increasing both heating bills and water bills.

**Save electricity with LED Christmas lights** and reduce energy use up to 90%. LEDs last up to 20 holiday seasons and produce almost no heat, reducing fire potential. Look for blue & gold PGE stickers at selected retailers for instant savings.

- Unplug electronics and battery chargers when not in use. If all Californians did this, it would be like taking 120,000 cars off the road. For other energy saving ideas go to [www.pge.com/myhome/saveenergymoney](http://www.pge.com/myhome/saveenergymoney).

**Still Christmas shopping?** If you can't find what you're looking for

locally (see Vesta's **Procrastinator's Shopping Tips**), shop online instead—it's up to 27 times more efficient than making that special trip. Have presents wrapped and sent directly to the recipient. Check out <http://www.freeshipping.org/> to save on shipping. If you're shipping yourself, try greener options. Because each American sends 300 lb. of packaging to landfills annually, reuse packaging materials if possible (shredded "junk" mail is great packaging material) or buy biodegradable or recycled packaging materials. Order free green-certified boxes and envelopes from the post office and have your packages picked up by your mail carrier. Go to <http://www.usps.com/green/> to calculate your energy savings.

**Send a card to a soldier.** Regardless of how you feel about the U.S. presence in Iraq, you might want to support those serving there. Go to [www.LetsSayThanks.com](http://www.LetsSayThanks.com) and pick out a thank you card, designed by children from across the country. Xerox® will print it and send it to a soldier serving in Iraq. While you can't pick who will get it, you can add your own message.

**The 4th "R."** We've all heard the 3 "Rs" of green living—Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle; now there's a 4th one—Rot. Methane causes 20 times more global warming than CO2. The second largest source of human-related methane in the United States is trash sent to landfills, especially food scraps. Composting these can significantly reduce methane in the atmosphere. A recent study shows that 30% of the residential waste stream in Sonoma County is food waste—about 800 tons/week. This resource can enhance Sonoma County soils instead of generating methane in a landfill. Many local garbage collection services now accept most food wastes along with green yard waste in specially marked containers. Check with your local service. You can also compost your food scraps with yard and garden trimmings. Go to <http://groups.ucanr.org/sonomamg/Workshops> for how-tips.

- **Recycle your Christmas tree.** Go to [http://www.recyclenow.org/r\\_christmastree.html](http://www.recyclenow.org/r_christmastree.html) or call 707-565-3333 to arrange for pick up by a non-profit - a \$5.00 donation.