



## OUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AS STEWARDS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

### Do you practice environmental stewardship?

Environmental stewardship refers to the responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conservation and sustainable practices. There are three types of environmental stewards:

- **Doers**- these are the ones who go out and help the cause by taking action;
- **Donors**- these are persons who help the cause financially; and
- **Practitioners**- they work on a day-to-day basis to steer government agencies, scientist, stakeholder groups, etc. towards a stewardship outcome.

### Why should you be a steward of the environment?

Human activities have impacted the natural environment since the first toolmakers learned to make fire. As our population grew the impact on the environment increased. Climate change, pollution, declining fish populations and the ever-decreasing range for wild ecosystems are the most obvious impacts. To combat this impact and to take climate action becoming a steward of the environment is the best choice for you.

### How can you become an environmental steward?

Starting with these few tips will make you a good example as an environmental steward.

Now let's start!

#### ***1. Reduce the carbon footprint of your food***

The production of some foods take twice as much energy as others, for example, frozen foods will use more energy to prepare for cooking as compared to using fresh foods. Many practices and processes used in the production of food are harmful to both people and the environment. Thus, it is essential that we are informed about the sources of the food we eat and the manner in which it is produced.

#### ***2. Reduce your meat consumption***

Regular consumption of meat is harmful to our health. There are numerous negative environmental impacts of meat production that stem from improper agricultural practices, particularly from livestock rearing. Pesticides are sprayed on food that livestock are fed and the water they drink is contaminated with chemicals from fertilizer

washed in the waterways. Additionally, large scale cattle rearing requires large tracts of land, and forested areas are often cleared for this purpose.

### ***3. Compost your kitchen and yard waste***

Our environment is full of waste that is both natural and artificial. Refuse from vegetables and fruits can be added to the farm or kitchen garden, which will form compost that enriches the soil, thus providing nutrients to the crops. Composting ensures that valuable materials do not end up in the landfill contributing further to the climate crisis by releasing methane.

### ***4. Avoid wastage***

Avoiding waste of water and electricity is not only good for the planet; it is also good for our pockets.

### ***5. Cut down on the use of single-use plastics and micro-plastics***

Purchasing and using reusable water bottles, food containers and cotton bags as substitutes would aid the reduction of plastic in the environment. With tons of single use plastic being wantonly discarded every day, the purchase of plastics items should be avoided as much as possible. Over the years, there has been tons of plastic converging in our waste bodies both inland and oceans. This has not augured well within the marine environment which has seen the death of various types of marine life due to suffocation and or ingesting the micro-plastics in water. Studies have shown that by 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish, meaning that we as humans have or will ingest some amount of plastic.

***Remember; say no to single-use plastics!***

### ***6. Become an environmental volunteer***

The time to act is now! You can volunteer right in your neighbourhood or community with a designated volunteer group or just with friends and family. Assist in an educational session, create a green space or help clean up some parapets. You are guaranteed to have a fulfilling experience as you become an agent of change.

*“Good stewardship of the environment is not just a personal responsibility; it is a public value. Our duty is to use the land well, and sometimes not to use it at all. This is our responsibility as citizens, but more than that, it is our calling as stewards of earth”- George W. Bush*

## References:

1. <https://www.ecowatch.com/national-park-week-virtual-tours-2645812852.html>
2. <http://guyanachronicle.com/2015/07/04/stewards-of-the-environment-our-personal-responsibility>
3. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333456150> The meaning and practice of stewardship in South AfricaSAJS Volume 115 Issue 56 - Cockburn Supplementary Material
4. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/f265/370fff75885bb16bdc57fcd574826fa67a02.pdf>

***You can share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: “Our Earth, Our Environment”, C/O Communications Department, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN, or email us at: [eit.epaguyana@gmail.com](mailto:eit.epaguyana@gmail.com) or follow us on Facebook and Instagram.***