

Perhaps you're thinking, "Whoa! That's enough rain. Give me some sunshine and heat!"

Well, hold on a moment! Remember how little snow fell this winter and that April showers didn't arrive till May. Our aquifers are low, low, low. Without a means to predict if they will be restored, all of us can use some simple steps to protect this shrinking resource. Here we go!

Step 1: Often dish soaps contain hazardous chemicals like sodium laureth sulfate, triclosan, ammonia, or bleach. These chemicals are harmful to aquatic ecosystems so check product labels. Find a safer product in the list provided by the Environmental Working Group at [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org). Type "dish detergent" in the search bar. Also, get the free "Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce".

Step 2: Direct rain gutters away from your home's foundation and towards the lawn to prevent the water from flowing down hardscapes like driveways, then into the sewerage system. This moving water is cheap irrigation.

Step 3: Be aware of water wasters. Repair leaky toilets, wrap hot water pipes and use efficient shower heads, dish washers, and faucet aerators. Water by hand or use a wireless sensor for your irrigation system. It's just too ridiculous to watch systems spray during rainstorms! When it's time to close the pool, let the water sit a few days so the chlorine evaporates. Then use the water to irrigate the lawn and potted plants. A soaker hose in the garden is covered with mulch, reducing water loss to evaporation. Collect cold water in buckets as you wait for water to warm water in the shower.

Step 4: Arctic drilling would generate just 3 years of oil supplies at the cost of fragile ecosystems, endangered wildlife, and impossible efforts to clean potential spills. Is this something to support? Find more info at [www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org).

Step 5: Grow or purchase organic vegetables which



are non-polluting and water efficient. Eat vegetarian meals 2 days a week. A pound of beef requires 1,850 gallons of water to produce. A pound of veges uses about 39 gallons. This cuts your water footprint by 16%.

Step 6: Choose EPA WaterSense products; these use less water and save you money. Look for the green and blue label. Go to [www3.epa.gov/water](http://www3.epa.gov/water).

Step 7: Water in plastic containers can be contaminated by components in the plastic. These leach into the water. Plus, 25% of the water comes from the tap! Use a canteen or collapsible bottle like Vapur at [www.vapur.us](http://www.vapur.us).

Step 8: Reduce junk mail. Annually, bulk mail produces more greenhouse gas than 9 million cars, destroys 100 million trees, and takes 28 billion gallons of water to print and recycle.

Step 9: Sweep patios, driveways, and sidewalks versus hosing them which wastes water and contaminates the fresh water system.

Step 10: Help clean the beach. In 2014, International Coastal Cleanup collected 16 million pounds of trash. Contact [www.signuptocleanup.org](http://www.signuptocleanup.org).