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habitat

2008

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how to live
green
in the Wood River Valley

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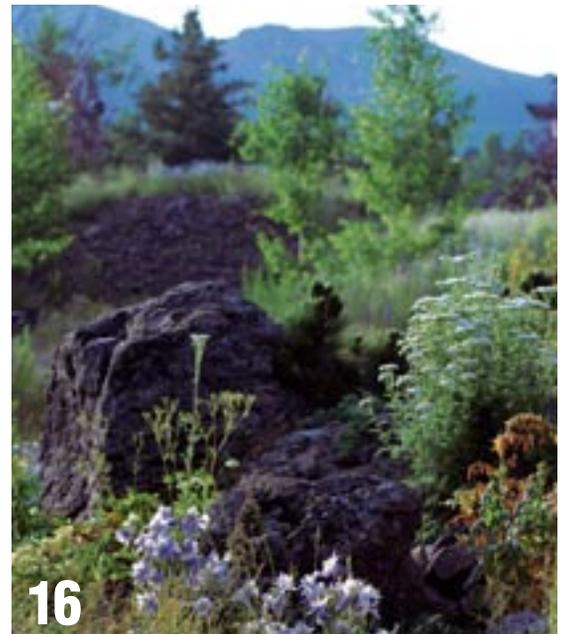


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FROM THE

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PHOTO BY DAVID N. SEELIG

W

elcome to the first green issue of *Habitat*. Full of information and tips to help Wood River Valley residents lead greener lives, this issue explores how to limit our environmental impact here in our pristine mountain home.

The bad news? Living in this spectacular rural beauty may appear to be an eco-friendly option, but in reality our lives are not as green as we might imagine. While our community emits less pollution than a large city, most valley residents have a carbon footprint comparable to that of their metropolitan counterparts. Our isolation and the energy required to keep us connected is largely to blame. This illustrates the importance of the individual in the green movement. What each person does has an impact on the planet and by making changes—be they large or small—we can all make a difference.

The good news? It is much easier to understand and mitigate our impact on the environment today than it was even a year ago. Thanks to the good works of many valley-based businesses and activists, almost every aspect of life here now has a green alternative. All we need to do is make a choice. The stories in this magazine will help you make those choices: from how to garden green, decorate green and eat green to tips on partying green, traveling green and building green.

On a personal note, since I began researching this issue over a year ago, I have been inspired to make such choices in my own life. From changing small habits (taking reusable bags to the grocery store) to larger commitments (purchasing a fuel-efficient hybrid Toyota Prius), I have seen these choices have a positive impact on not only my health (and that of my soon-to-be-born child) but also on my bank account. For while there are still premiums on some green items, being green does not always cost more and in many cases can actually save you money. In fact, increasing consumer awareness coupled with escalating oil prices is quickly leading us to a state where choosing to live green will make not only environmental sense but economic sense as well.

We are all privileged to live in this beautiful white, green and golden valley, and it is my hope that after reading this magazine you will be similarly inspired to make eco-friendly choices in your own life and help protect this place for our future generations.

For information on the sustainability of the paper this magazine is printed on see Page 48.

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IDAHO PRESS CLUB AWARDS

Sun Valley Guide, 1st place General
Excellence, 2004 and 2005
2nd place General Excellence, 2006

Magazine writing: Serious Feature

Sun Valley Guide
1st & 2nd place, 2006

Magazine writing: Light Feature

Sun Valley Guide
1st, 2nd & 3rd places, 2006

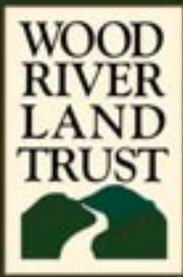
Magazine Photography

Sun Valley Guide,
1st & 2nd place, 2006

Habitat is published annually as part of the **Sun Valley Guide** by Express Publishing Inc., P.O. Box 1013, Ketchum, ID 83340. For advertising and content information, call (208) 726-8060 or e-mail editor@sunvalleyguide.com. Find us at www.sunvalleyguide.com. ©2008 Express Publishing Inc.

Cover: The Boulder Mountains seen from the Harriman Trail at the Big Wood River
Photo by Todd Kaplan
Photo illustration by Tony Barriatua

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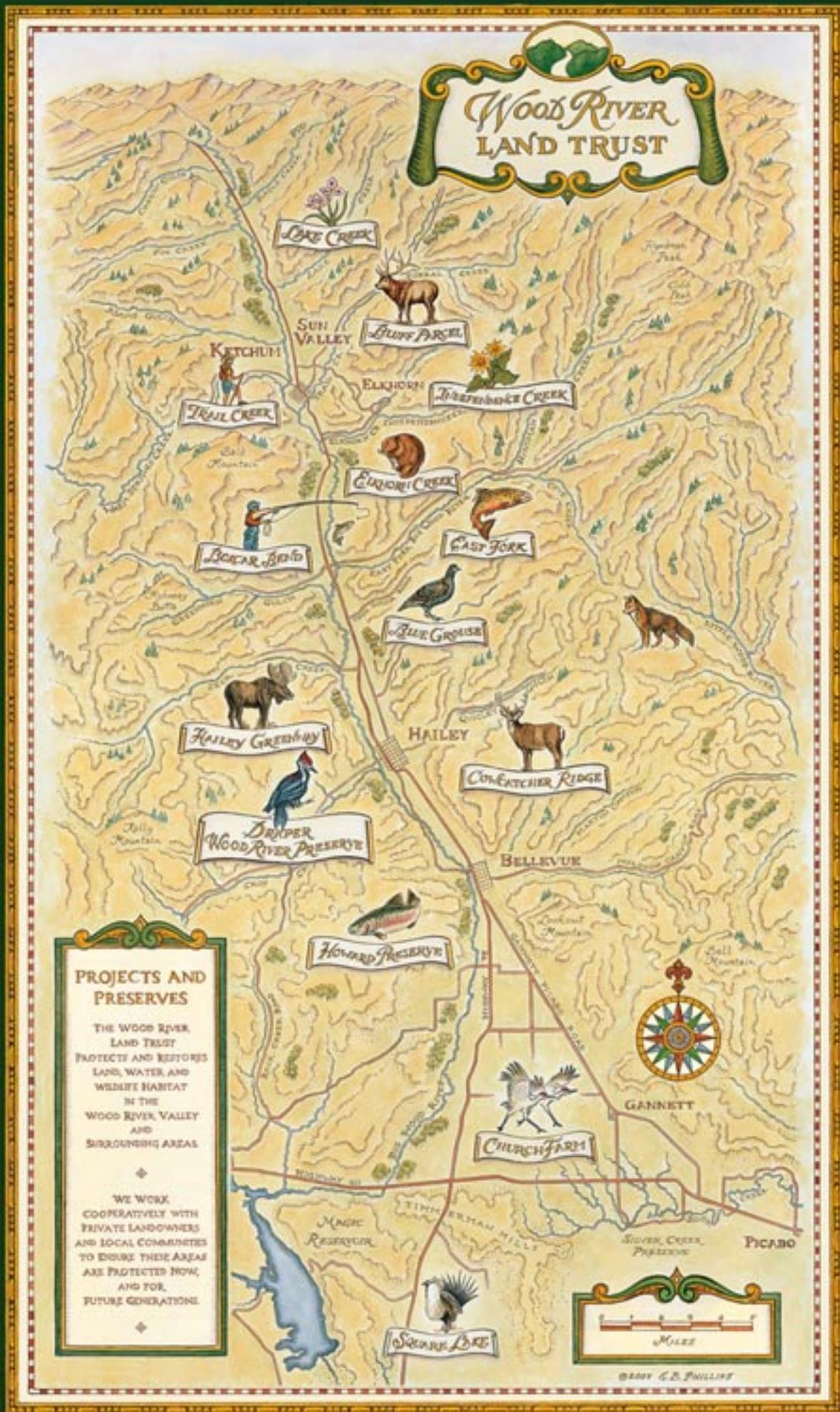
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habitat hits

designed by Mother Nature

From tables manufactured in Twin Falls (less transport equals less carbon emissions), storage boxes made of water hyacinth (a fast-growing plant that needs minimal processing) to art made by local artists (using recycled materials), all it takes is a little alternative thinking to furnish your home in the most environmentally sound manner possible.

Building a green house may reduce your carbon emissions (and utility bills), but bragging rights only go so far if you fill it with non-eco-friendly furnishings. So the next time you buy furniture remember to consider its impact on the environment.

The first step is to shop locally. A wander through the Wood River Valley's home furnishing stores turned up this stylish selection of contemporary items, antiques and vintage pieces that all fit well into the green mold.

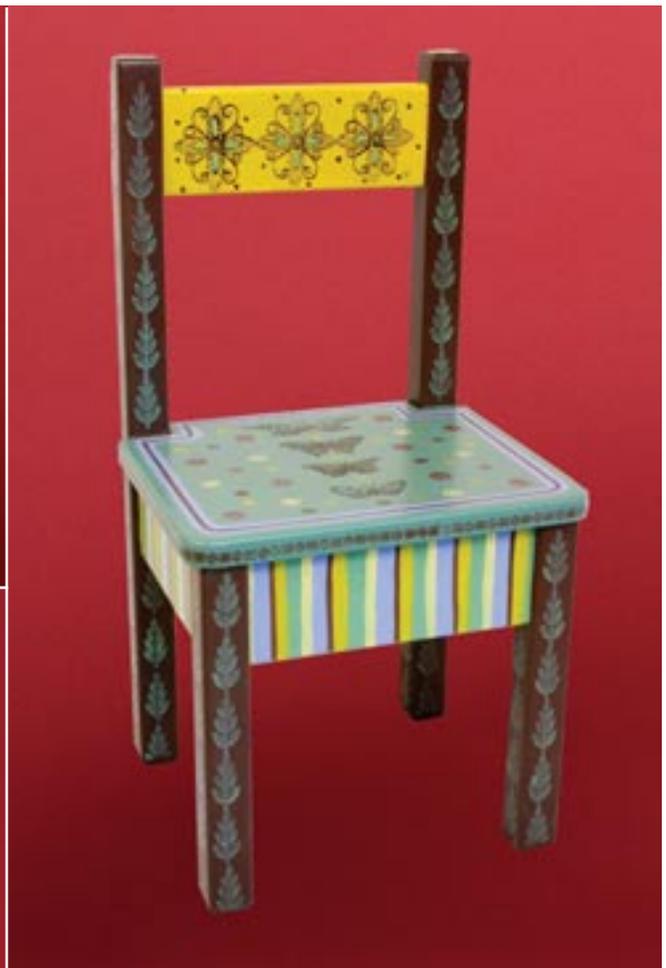
Look for products made from materials that are salvaged, recycled or certified sustainable. Choose fabrics that are organic or 100 percent sustainable (such as cotton, linen, wool, silk, jute, hemp or bamboo), and select finishes that don't contain formaldehyde, and paint that has low volatile organic compounds.

writer: **Dana DuGan**

photographer: **Paulette Phlipot**

From left: *Untitled*, \$1,800, the Green Antelope Gallery, Bellevue—this sculpture by Wood River Valley artist Katie Flood is made from salvaged wood and other recycled materials. *Clerestory side tables*, \$2,995, the Open Room, Ketchum—handcrafted from reclaimed rock elm with a floating steel top. *Recycled glass bottle*, \$60 and *willow tree bowl*, \$45, from Red Door Design, Bellevue, the company also specializes in sustainable and recycled materials for home building.





Clockwise from top: Custom made console table, \$6,500, Tribes, Ketchum—made from salvaged wood at the Tribes furniture factory in Twin Falls. Lilipad Chair, \$249, lilipadstudio.com—handpainted with non-toxic paint and handcrafted with FSC certified hardwood by Hailey artist Laura Higdon. Bamboo dining table, \$3,042, the Open Room, Ketchum—made by Austrian company Xpand System, the table expands from 55" to 73" long. Large, wood-framed mirror, \$2,345, Tribes, Ketchum—made from 100-year-old reclaimed wood in Parana, Brazil by Environment Furniture. Wooden carousel horse, \$300, Worth Repeating, Ketchum—handmade 50 years ago in Twin Falls. One of the easiest ways to be green is to buy used, recycled and repurposed vintage and antique furnishings. Water Hyacinth storage box, \$85, Your House, Ketchum—an extremely fast-growing plant, water hyacinth is an ecologically responsible alternative to wicker and rattan, as it can be used in its natural state and quickly replenishes itself. Maison, \$250, the Green Antelope Gallery, Bellevue—mixed media art made with found objects by Wood River Valley artist Sharon Payne.



Seventeen

WAYS TO BE GREEN IN THE WOOD RIVER VALLEY

Whether you are a dyed-in-the-wool environmentalist or a serious skeptic, the one thing we all have in common is a love for the Wood River Valley. And, as temporary stewards of this beautiful place, it is our responsibility to have a positive impact on it. From following the three Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) to monitoring the amount of carbon dioxide we release into the atmosphere, there are many small ways we can do our part. The Habitat team has rounded up these handy tips to help us all keep this valley green (and save money, too).

1 Know your CO₂

Every person on the planet has a carbon footprint, the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) he or she is responsible for releasing into the atmosphere. One of four major greenhouse gases, CO₂ contributes to the greenhouse effect, a naturally occurring phenomenon that warms the planet. Human activities such as the combustion of fossil fuels and deforestation have raised the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere by about 35 percent since the start of the Industrial Revolution. This increase is thought by scientists to be causing the planet's climate to rapidly change and warm. According to the Environmental Resource Center, the average American contributes nearly 45,000 pounds of CO₂ to the atmosphere annually. You can help cut this figure by reducing and offsetting your carbon footprint.



Go to epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind_calculator.html and calculate how many tons the activities of your household add to the atmosphere. Then mitigate your emissions using the ERC's CO₂mmit! program. "The program helps people see how their footprint compares to other 'normal' Americans and gives them tangible ways to reduce their footprint," said Craig Barry, executive director of the ERC. Sign up at ercsv.org. You can also purchase carbon offsets (which reduce an equal amount of carbon emissions with one activity to counterbalance contributions from another) at Web sites such as carbonfund.org and terrapass.com. For more hints and tips on how to reduce that smelly footprint, read on...

2 Go organic

Buying organic food in the Wood River Valley is now relatively easy, thanks to an expanding selection of organic produce and products at local supermarkets and the establishment of the local farmers' markets. Purchasing organic food supports organic farming, a form of agriculture that uses no toxic or persistent fertilizers and pesticides. Consequently, there is little harm to soil life, depletion of nonrenewable resources or impact on air or water quality. For meat and dairy, it means the animal was raised on feed that meets the same standards as produce and was given no growth-promoting hormones or antibiotics. So, buy organic to sustain global health, animal health and your health. Unfortunately, organics are not always an option, due to availability or budget. In that case, turn to the Environmental Working Group's *Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce*, which highlights "The Dirty Dozen" (produce you should strive to buy organic)—peaches, apples, sweet bell peppers, celery, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, lettuce, grapes (imported), pears, spinach, potatoes—and "The Cleanest 12" (those lowest in pesticides)—onions, avocado, sweet corn (frozen), pineapples, mangoes, sweet peas (frozen), asparagus, kiwi, bananas, cabbages, broccoli, eggplant. For the full guide, visit foodnews.org/walletguide.php.



PHOTO BY PAULETTE PHILIPOT

You are what you wear



PHOTO BY DAVID N. SEELIG

Taking clothes recycling to a new level, LaRece Egli of Hailey (pictured) creates a unique collection of accessories and garments from fabric remnants she finds at garage sales and secondhand stores. When you consider that growing conventional cotton accounts for 16 percent of global chemical pesticide use, more than any other single crop, it is clearly important to get the most out of a piece of clothing before it diverts to the landfill. The easiest way to recycle fabric is to shop at and donate to secondhand clothing stores, and with a bevy of thrift stores valley-wide, there is ample opportunity to find wearable, eco-friendly wardrobes. In Ketchum, high-end vintage clothing is available at Déjà Vu, while contemporary consignment clothes can be found at The Dollhouse and Worth Repeating. You can also recycle Patagonia clothes at outdoor clothing stores.



PHOTO BY PAULETTE PHILIPOT

3 Green business leaders

Many valley-based businesses have made huge steps to improve their green credentials. From building the first commercial Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building in the Wood River Valley (as Rocky Mountain Hardware did) to ensuring their employees travel to work in the most environmentally friendly way possible (as Webb Landscaping does) the various changes these businesses have made make them stand out as eco-leaders in our community. However, for many businesses such steps are out of reach. Here are a few smaller steps local business owners can take to reduce their company's carbon footprint:

- Reduce energy costs by using CFL light bulbs and keeping temperatures comfortable.
- Reduce paper waste by filing electronic billing statements and paying employees through direct deposits.
- Buy recycled office supplies.
- Use green cleaning products.
- Supply ceramic mugs for coffee breaks.
- Reuse large envelopes and packaging materials.
- Contact Clear Creek Disposal for help implementing a work-site-recycling plan (ccdisposal.com, 726.9600).
- Contact the ERC to arrange a consultation on how to be more green in business (ercsv.org, 726.4333).

5 Be a green grocer

After unloading your weekly groceries, how many plastic bags do you throw away or stash in a deep, dark corner of the pantry with the weak promise you'll reuse them? Help is at hand. For only 99 cents, purchase these snazzy, reusable shopping bags at local supermarkets. Made of non-woven polypropylene, they are more convenient than their plastic counterparts and far more eco-friendly than paper bags (which consume four times more energy during manufacturing than plastic bags and require 91 percent more energy to waste recycle). Reusable bags cut down the amount of waste diverted to landfills, reduce the need to make more plastic and paper bags and gain you a CO₂ reduction of 34 pounds/year.



PHOTOS BY PAULETTE PHLIPOT

6 Green décor

Many traditional home décor materials have a negative environmental impact due to the source of the material or the manufacturing process. Thankfully, the mainstream design industry is catching on to the green scene. "You no longer have to compromise your design tastes to protect the environment," said Dottie Spencer, manager of Sun Valley Rug & Tile. "There are now many products available that are not just eco-friendly but design-attractive too." Spencer recently turned the Sun Valley Rug & Tile showroom into a green-friendly showroom. "Eighty percent of our products are green," said Spencer. Inside you can find tiles made from recycled materials (such as glass and stone) and carpets and flooring made from environmentally sustainable materials. Wools of New Zealand carpets (pictured left) are a popular option, along with other sustainable flooring materials (such as sisal, reed and bamboo). Wool is not only sustainable (it is generated from a totally renewable resource, grass) it is also biodegradable and releases no harmful emissions. Also look for products manufactured in an ecologically sound way. A material may be green but its manufacturing process may not be. Spencer has committed to working with only eco-friendly companies and LEED certified manufacturers. Locally, Rocky Mountain Hardware has made such a step. Its products are now classified as green because, as well as being made from recycled bronze, they are manufactured in the company's new LEED facility in Hailey.



Shop locally

These cute Shop Mom & Pop logos that have sprung up across the Wood River Valley aren't just about helping the valley be economically prosperous. Shopping locally is one of the cornerstones of the environmental movement. Understanding how goods are transported and how much energy is expended in that process, and then choosing appropriately, is essential to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Every time you buy a product locally or choose an item made in Idaho over one made in China you significantly reduce your carbon footprint. For example, the potential CO₂ reduction of buying locally grown produce is 5,000 pounds/year per person. And no, shopping online is not more green than shopping locally. A five-pound package shipped across the country by air creates 12 pounds of CO₂. However, all this doesn't mean a trip to Costco should leave you draped in shame; buying in bulk has the ecological benefit of reducing packaging waste. Next time, carpool or ask your neighbors what you can pick up for them.

7 Beauty and the earth



Is what you put on your face as healthy as what you put in your body? It can be, with a little research. Misleading labels and lengthy ingredient lists abound in the cosmetics industry. As a general rule follow these recommendations from National Geographic's *The Green Guide*: Avoid cosmetics that contain antibacterials, parabens, talc, mercury, synthetic colors, fragrance, formaldehyde-releasing preservatives and ingredients derived from petroleum. And remember, just because a product says it is natural or botanically derived, that doesn't mean it is organic or free of chemicals, read the label. Several good natural skincare lines are available at local supermarkets and health food stores, many of which use some organic ingredients. Look for Aubrey Organics, Jason, Zia, Alba Botanicals, Beauty Without Cruelty, Primavera Essential Oils and Better Botanicals. Higher-end organic beauty products by Sundari and Caudalie (pictured) are stocked by Pure in Ketchum. For the hair, Privé, an organic line of French herbal-blend products, can be found at the Sun Valley Salon. Ketchum's Vertu salon uses Organic Colour System.

8



Clean green

10 Attractive, sweet-smelling and eco-friendly—how can you say no? Switching to green cleaning products reduces your carbon footprint by 12 pounds/year, is healthier for you and your family, and avoids potential water pollution and depletion of non-renewable resources associated with traditional cleaning products. Consequently, these products have exploded onto supermarket shelves. Environmentally friendly cleaning product manufacturers such as Caldrea (pictured) Ecover, Seventh Generation, Mrs. Meyers, Method and Dr. Bronner's can be found locally. These brands offer an array of product lines to do your dirty work. According to National Geographic's *The Green Guide*, the majority of these products work as well as their traditional counterparts, albeit with a little extra elbow-grease. You can also make your own cleaning products with natural ingredients like lemon juice, vinegar and baking soda. Visit greenlivingonline.com/HomeGarden/three-natural-cleaners for recipes.

Get serious about solar

11 Sue Peterson's Hailey home is about to achieve the Zen-like status of a zero-energy-use home. Following the installation of solar electric panels on its roof, her NorthStar home should now consume only as much energy as it produces. "Sue's solar system should make hers a zero-energy home, because we designed it to match her electrical load," said Morgan Brown of Sun Valley Solar. Harnessing the clean energy of the sun to heat and/or power a home is the apex of being green—the apex of consciousness and the apex of cost. Two types of solar energy can be used, passive solar and active solar. Passive solar uses the sun's energy to heat and cool living spaces without the aid of mechanical units. Opening and closing windows, installing thermal mass (such as concrete floors and countertop materials that store heat) and designing a structure to capture the best of the sun are components of passive solar. "Active solar can be totally redundant if you've done passive right," said Brown. Active solar is the installation of mechanical tools that harness the power of the sun. These include solar electric panels that supply all the electricity in a home (a system costs from \$15,000 to \$500,000) and solar heating panels to heat water (which runs from \$8,000 to \$10,000). The good news? You don't need to build a brand new home to fit solar into your life. "Retrofitting solar electric is not terribly difficult as long as you have solar access (direct sun for at least four hours a day) and space to put the panels or trackers (on the roof or in the yard)," said Brown. Chris and Phoebe Pilaros' home in old Hailey (pictured) is an example of a successful solar retrofit.

Care to compost

9 Convert organic waste (yard trimmings, leaves and kitchen scraps) into a mixture that improves garden soil and reduces dependence on commercial fertilizers, and even water, by adding essential nutrients and microorganisms back into soil. Composting can reduce your carbon footprint by 616 pounds/year. Select a container (bins can be made of anything that allows for mixing, watering and has some ventilation) or just start a pile outside. Begin your compost with the first grass clippings and leaves of the spring. Add more items to make green and brown layers along with kitchen waste (except for eggshells, never compost animal by-products). Add twigs and coarse items to provide air circulation. Turn the pile once a week. If you need some professional advice, the Environmental Resource Center teaches a workshop on vermiculture (composting with worms). If making your own is too overwhelming, commercial outfits in the valley make organic compost. "My compost is based on ground-up organics such as tree limbs, grasses and bark," said Dennis O'Brien of Bald Mountain Excavation. "Then I mix in recycled horse manure, shavings and cow manure in my secret formula."



PHOTO COURTESY SUN VALLEY SOLAR



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Save Highway 75

Green transportation is an integral part of green living. According to environmentaldefense.org, the U.S. is responsible for 45 percent of the world's automotive CO₂ emissions, with U.S. autos emitting more than 333 million tons of CO₂ each year. Every little bit you do helps mitigate these overwhelming statistics. First, leave the car in the garage and take advantage of the valley's extensive local bus system and bike trails. Every gallon of gas you save by walking or riding your bike instead of using your car is a CO₂ reduction of 20 pounds. Riding the bus is a CO₂ reduction of 8,165 pounds/year. Mountain Rides (mountainrides.org) offers a variety of programs that help limit the number of cars on the valley's highway. These are: The Around Town Bus—a free bus service that runs throughout Ketchum/Sun Valley daily from 7:30 a.m.-midnight. The Down Valley Bus—For \$2.25 each way you can travel between Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. The Commuter Club—This new, year-round program starts this spring with Bike to Work Day on May 20. Vanpool—Geared toward local businesses

that have a large out-of-area workforce, this program operates eight 15-passenger vans daily between Twin Falls and Ketchum. Individuals sign up to ride the vans on a monthly basis (starting at \$128) and businesses can sign up their employees. Webb Landscaping currently uses five of the vans for its workforce. Carpooling—If you can't abandon the personal vehicle altogether, Mountain Rides' new online ride-matching program, rideshareonline.com, will match you with people who share your commute. "The single-occupancy vehicle is our enemy," said Sean McLaughlin of Mountain Rides.

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Buy biofuels

Craig Barry of the Environmental Resource Center (pictured) is an avid proponent of biodiesel. The organization recently converted this truck to run on vegetable oil, and is crafting a mobile learning center powered by biodiesel. Biodiesel is available at United Oil in Hailey. Its cost is comparable to regular diesel and it can be used (alone or blended with regular diesel) in any vehicle equipped to run on regular diesel. The primary ecological benefit of biodiesel is that spills are nontoxic and biodegrade four times faster than petroleum spills. Using biodiesel also helps reduce dependence on foreign oil. Another, more widely known biofuel in use in the U.S. is ethanol, most of which is produced from corn. Ethanol is generally mixed with gasoline to create a 10 percent blend. All gasoline-powered vehicles on the road can use E10, and many new cars can use a blend of 85 percent ethanol. However, E85 is currently only available at three gas stations in Idaho: in Boise, Nampa and Lewiston.



PHOTO BY DAVID N. SEELIG

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A lean green machine

Those nippy little compact Toyotas that have been spreading like wildfire throughout the valley over the past year or so are Priuses. One of the greenest cars available, a Prius gets about 48 mpg in our valley. Driving a fuel-efficient car (one that gets more than 41 mpg) nets you a CO₂ reduction of 3,687 pounds/year. Use this online guide epa.gov/greenvehicles to help choose the cleanest and most fuel-efficient vehicle for your needs. If a new car is not in your immediate future, there are things you can do to make your current one a stronger shade of green. Keep your tires at the correct pressure—they'll last longer and increase fuel economy (a CO₂ savings of up to 700 pounds/year). Drive better—studies have shown that up to 30 percent of the difference in mpg is due to driving habits. You can save more than a ton of CO₂ a year by accelerating slowly and smoothly and staying under 60 mpg. Visit ercsv.org for more tips on green driving.

15 Know green

Educating yourself on how to lead a green life is a constant process. The more you know about being green, the more easily it fits into your lifestyle. Attend these upcoming green events and absorb some serious green energy.

- *Green Your Scene environmental series*—March 11-13 at the Community Library, Ketchum. The opener to the 48Straight weekend of activities in Sun Valley, Green Your Scene will feature lectures on the impact of climate change on mountain communities.
- *Idaho Green Expo* (idahogreenexpo.org)—May 17-18 at the Boise Center on the Grove. Showcasing environmentally friendly products and services, this free event features exhibitors, workshops and seminars on green-living topics.
- *Sun Valley Sustainability Conference* (sunvalleysustainability.org)—October 23-25, Sun Valley Resort. “The three major themes are sustainability, green building and responsible growth in the community,” said Ellen Gillespie of Sun Valley Events. Alongside lectures, the conference will host an exhibit hall for green home and garden products and a tour of green homes, businesses and gardens in the valley.

Read green

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- *The Green Book* by Elizabeth Rogers and Thomas Kostigen provides hundreds of green solutions for all areas of life, from the smallest efforts to those that have the biggest impact.

- *Living Organic* by Adrienne Clarke, Helen Porter, Helen Quested and Pat Thomas, is full of ideas, photos, tips, recipes, resources and practical advice.

- *In Defense of Food* is Michael Pollan's new pro-vegetable manifesto. Also check out his insightful journey up and down the food chain, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*.

- *Fields of Plenty: A Farmer's Journey in Search of Real Food and the People Who Grow It* by Michael Ableman is a readable travelogue, a discourse on the agrarian movement, with recipes. It covers Ableman's 12,000-mile journey with his son in a VW van to farms across the country.

- *What Can I Do? An Alphabet for Living* by Lisa Harrow, has a list of Web sites to help anyone do anything in an eco-friendly way.

- *Cool Green Stuff* by Dave Evans, is a handy guide to finding recycled, sustainable and renewable objects to enhance your habitat.

Spruce up your home

Your home consumes the majority of energy associated with your carbon footprint. Implement as many of these energy-saving improvements as possible and give it the green glow it deserves.

- **Insulate.** Insulate. Insulate. Insulating your home is one of the most cost effective ways to improve its energy efficiency. ENERGY STAR® estimates a savings of up to 10 percent on a home's annual energy bill through proper insulating.

- **Install programmable lights and blinds.** C&R Electric (candrelectric.com) can put your blinds and lights on timers, helping capture as much sunlight as possible for heating and cooling efficiency. Programmable lights and dimmer switches also reduce the amount of light you use, reducing energy use.

- **When it's time to replace household appliances,** purchase items marked with the ENERGY STAR® label. These products reduce greenhouse gas emissions and cut monthly energy costs, an annual savings of over \$600.

- **When light bulbs burn out,** replace them with CFL (compact fluorescent lamp) or LED (light emitting diode) bulbs. According to carbonfund.org, each bulb can save \$40 or more over its lifetime, and by replacing one frequently used bulb your CO₂ reduction is 500 pounds/year.

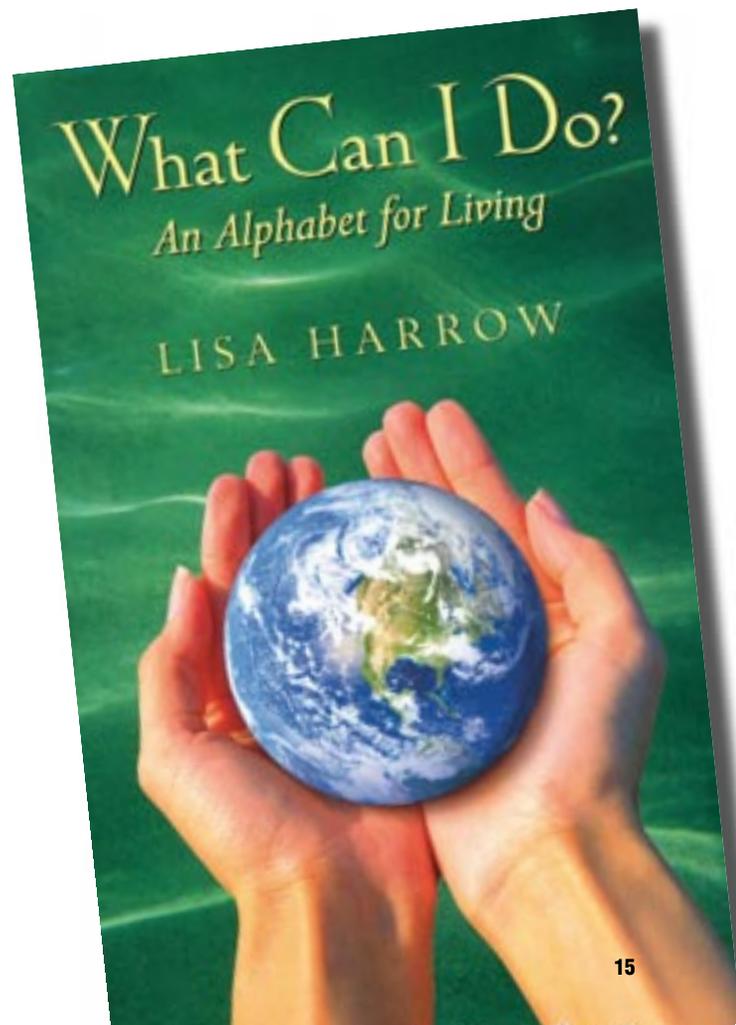
- **Install a programmable thermostat,** you will recoup this \$50 expense within the first year.

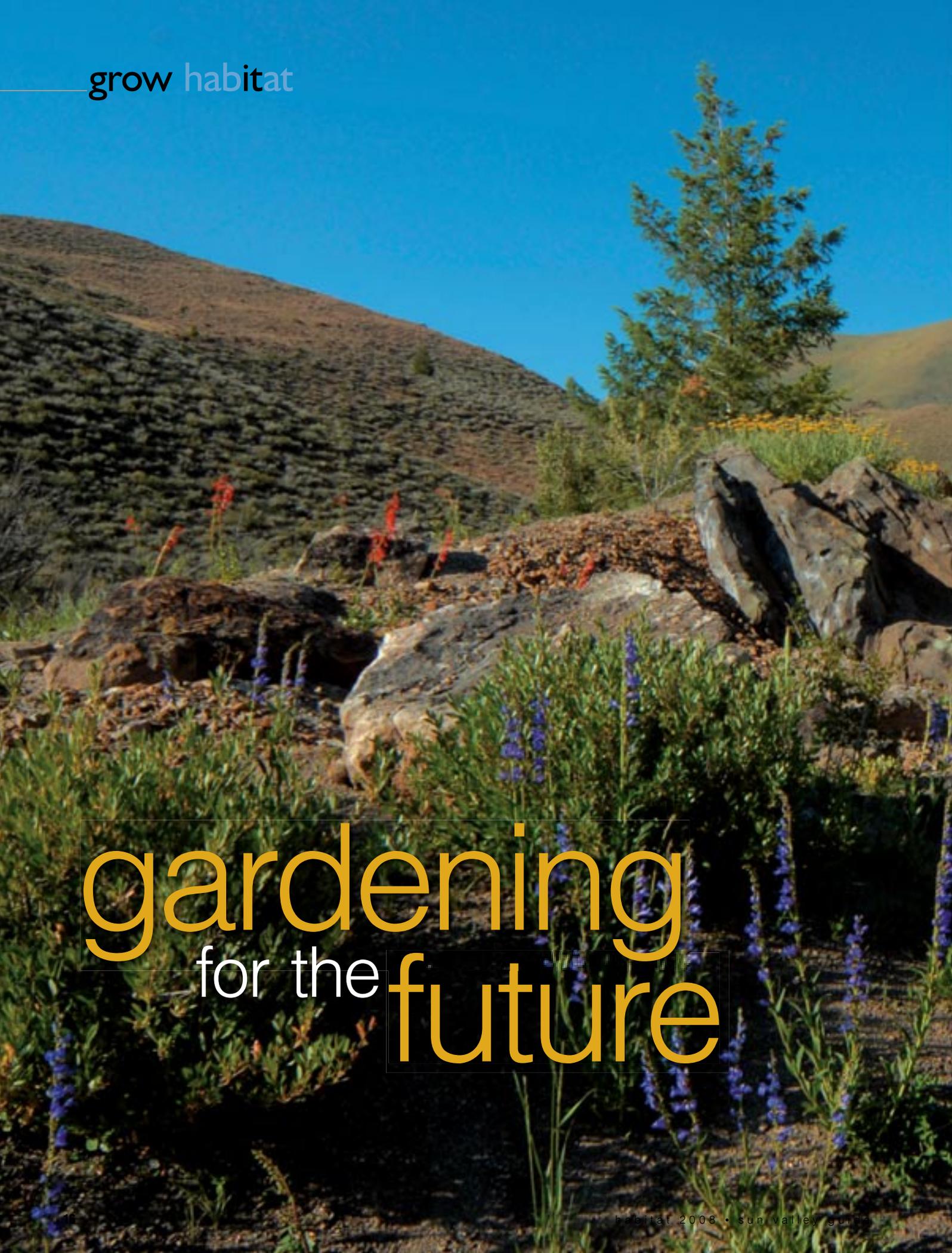
- **Install an on-demand water heater.** Water heating accounts for 14 to 25 percent of a home's energy consumption. The constant heating of a full tank is unnecessary, tankless or instantaneous heaters provide hot water on an as needed basis.

- **Turn down your water heater thermostat** (120 degrees is usually hot enough), a CO₂ reduction (for each 10-degree adjustment) of 500 pounds/year.

- **Conduct an Energy Audit** on your home (idahopower.com/energycenter).

16





gardening
for the future



Gardening is already a very green undertaking so it might seem redundant to suggest there is a greener way to go about it. But in today's culture many landscaping practices are the antithesis of what is green and sustainable.

Gardening with sustainability in mind requires attention to detail. A sustainable gardener must focus on how every decision is made and every component installed impacts the land. This means foregoing synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, applying xeriscape principles and having site-appropriate uses in landscape design. Kelly Weston, a partner with Native Landscapes, has been a champion of green gardening in the Wood River Valley since 1988. "The exposure and climate here is very intense," said Weston. "We have dry soils that are not fertile." The key, according to Weston, is to first create a well thought out, comprehensive design, "like an architect does with a building." Take into account sun exposure, water use, dry and wet areas and shade. "This doesn't mean you can't have vegetables, lawn and flowers," said Weston. "You can, but in appropriate places."

Essential elements of planning a sustainable garden in this high-altitude, desert steppe region include knowledge of native and non-native plant habitats, creative use of space and, most importantly, water. "Everything will have to be watered unless you're willing to plant totally native landscaping," said Weston. "Sheltering and microclimates are important (when considering water use), which is why we use south-facing walls and shade."

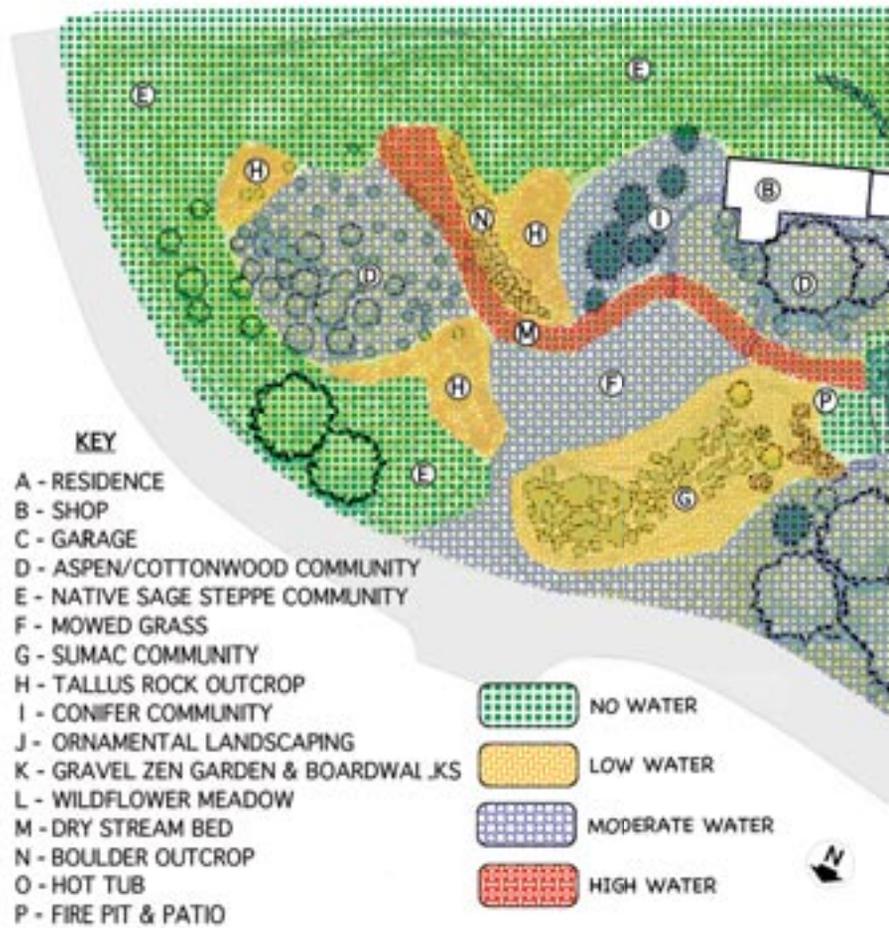
An example of Weston's principles can be seen in the landscaping of a home in the Bigwood subdivision north of Ketchum (pictured left), which is a perfect showcase for drought-tolerant, native landscaping techniques. The home's owner wanted to redesign a vast lawn area (pictured below) using a native landscape. The results turned an austere driveway of pavers that had been slated for an expensive removal into a positive visual element.





These images of a west Ketchum garden show a mix of native plant ecosystems in a Zen garden (right) bordered by walkways with a small lawn area (shown on the diagram as K). A wildflower meadow (above) transitions into boulders and then into the natural native steppe landscape that lies in the afternoon shadow of Bald Mountain (shown in the upper right of the diagram as L, N and E). Penstemon (left) and sage decorate the approach to the house.

WATER USE OVERLAY





It is a misconception that using native plants means sacrificing color and beauty. “Some people associate native plants with boring, but our native plants here are exquisite,” says Jennifer Colson, executive director of the Sawtooth Botanical Garden, an experiment in sustainable garden practices. “We have five native plant communities: riparian, lava desert, sagebrush steppe, montane and alpine.” The garden, situated just south of Ketchum, hosts a spring plant sale in early June that is a good place to find and learn about native plants.

Successful sustainable landscaping begins with good soil that is rich in nitrogen, well drained and with a pH of 7 or slightly lower. Most nurseries carry soil testers and Blaine County’s University of Idaho Extension Office in Hailey provides testing.

“One of the things I focus on is incorporating nitrogen-fixing plants into landscaping,” said Weston. Plants such as mountain mahogany, buffaloberry, lupines and buckwheat naturally contribute nitrogen to the soil, reducing the need for fertilizer. These choices also add texture to green areas and can replace the traditional, water-hungry lawn.

Still, many homeowners are adamant about a wide expanse of lawn, even though lawns are one of the biggest culprits to true ecological sustainability. But there are options. A good alternative to the thirsty Kentucky bluegrass commonly used here is blue-green colored hard fescue. Resistant to shade, disease and drought, hard fescue grows best in the north at high elevations. It also grows in adverse conditions, stays green longer and is low maintenance. Other options include native grasses and plants, such as buffalo grass or blue gamma grass, which are both low-maintenance and low-water plants.

Seeding a lawn rather than laying sod is another way to create a healthier, longer-lasting root system, although most people don’t

Alternative lawn care

The Wood River Land Trust began a program last year called Trout Friendly Lawns. The nonprofit organization recommends the following practices.

- Use an organic compost tea fertilizer to replace necessary micro-organisms in the soil. This can be homemade or purchased locally from Whitehead Landscaping
- Aerate the lawn to break up compaction caused by snow and gravity
- Water only at night, and deeply in the spring to encourage root growth
- Mow at a cutting height of at least 3 inches
- Mulch-cut and leave the clippings on the lawn
- Reduce lawn area and/or use native grasses and plants, such as buffalo grass or blue gamma grass.



A small concrete-bordered patch of lawn

next to an outdoor patio is this home’s alternative to an expansive lawn. Native perennials border walkways and the natural hillsides take over from there.

online resources

- www.IdahoNativePlants.org
- www.SBGarden.org
- www.ERCsv.org
- www.WoodRiverLandTrust.org
- www.WhiteheadLandscaping.com
- www.Native-Landscapes.com

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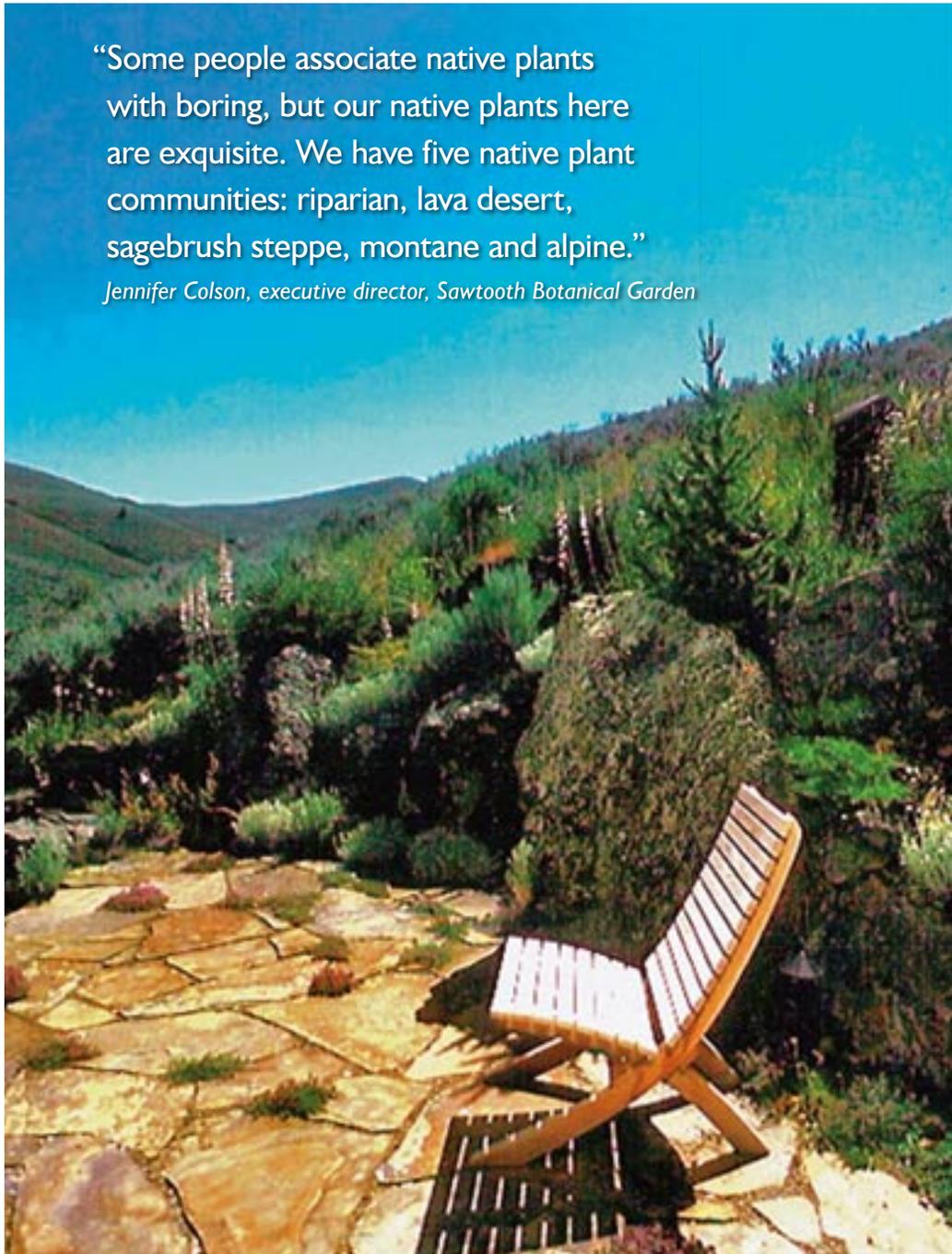
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“Some people associate native plants with boring, but our native plants here are exquisite. We have five native plant communities: riparian, lava desert, sagebrush steppe, montane and alpine.”

Jennifer Colson, executive director, Sawtooth Botanical Garden

want to wait for their lawns. “It’s inverted maintenance,” Weston said. “More at the front end but, after two years, maintenance drops.” As well, making just a small reduction in the amount of lawn in a garden is a positive step, as it reduces the amount of water poured into it. Weston recommends designing other elements into a lawn area to break up that monotone expanse of green and provide interesting visual effects. “It’s much more viable and interesting to cover areas with outdoor spaces, walkways, edible landscape, fruit trees and shrubs, rather than just lawn,” said Weston.

“Wherever you plant a water-hungry, pesticide-ready plant you create a legacy that has a long-lasting impact on the environment for years into the future,” cautions Weston. Ultimately, the best choice for the environment is to mimic the natural landscapes rather than trying to create something artificial. ☘

writer: **Dana DuGan**

photographs courtesy: **Native Landscapes**

A native plant guide

Native plants are those that have naturally adapted to the area where they grow. Considered non-invasive, native species are low in maintenance and—if planted in the appropriate exposure in well-drained soil and offered the correct amount of water—can greatly enhance any landscape design. Transplanting plants from wild areas to a manicured landscape is discouraged because they are part of a naturally functioning eco-system that is greater than the sum of its parts, and generally they do not survive the move. Instead, find them at the Sawtooth Botanical Garden or local nurseries:

Native plants (bloom color)

Annuals/Perennials: Fleabane (various), Geranium of Cranesbill (white, pink, purple, blue), Lupine (various), Cinquefoil (white, yellow, orange, pink)

Perennials: Colorado Blue Columbine (blue, white), Rocky Mountain Aster (purple), Arrowleaf Balsamroot (yellow), Sulphurflower Buckwheat (cream, yellow), Wild Strawberry (white, fruit strawberry), Rocky Mountain Iris (blue to blue violet), Blue Lewis's Wild Flax (blue), Penstemon (various), Goldenrod (yellow)

Shrubs: Western Serviceberry (white racemes, fruit purple berry), Basin Big Sagebrush, Mountain Mahogany Shrub (pale yellow, fruit curly-cue plume), Rubber (Gray) Rabbitbrush (yellow), Red-osier Dogwood (white, fruit white berry), Oakleaf Sumac (white spike, fruit red drupe), Golden Currant (yellow, fruit orange), Woods' Rose (pink, fruit red rose hips), Blue Elderberry (white, fruit blue berries), Mountain Snowberry (white-pink, fruit white)

Shrubs/Trees: Ginnala (Amur) Maple, Rocky Mountain Maple, Sitka Alder, Water Birch, Mountain Common Juniper, Chokecherry, Willow Species, Concolor or White Fir, Sub Alpine Fir, Bristlecone Pine, Lodgepole Pine, Quaking Aspen, Douglas Fir

Groundcover: Thyme, Kinnikinnick, Creeping Oregon Grape

Grasses: Blue Gamma, Buffalograss, Idaho fescue, Hard fescue, Bluebunch



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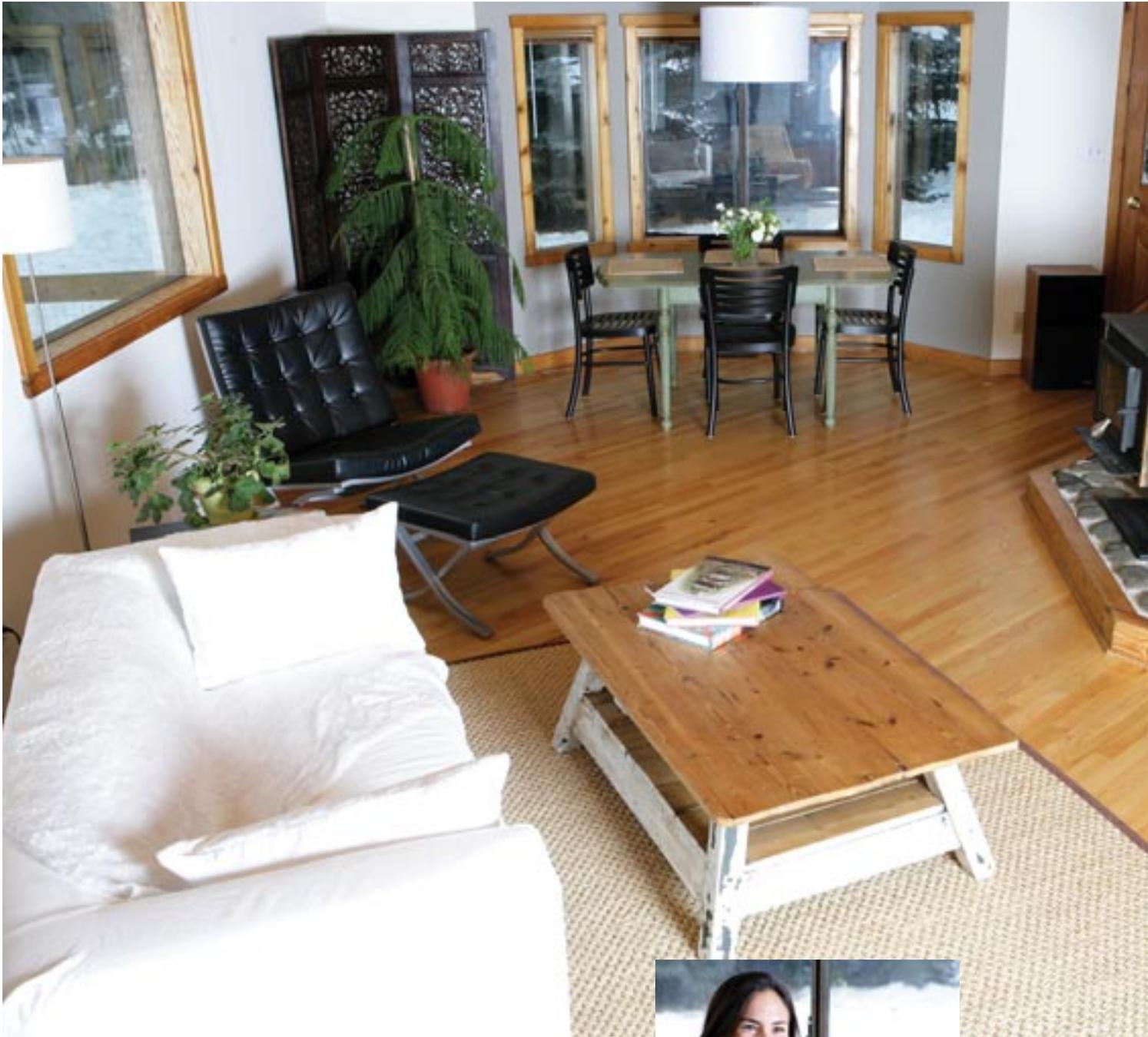
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“There is a chart that shows the highest production energy used for raw materials. Out of aluminum, lumber, plastics, glass and carpet, carpet was the second highest.”

Sarah Lyle

create an eco-friendly habitat



Lyle worked with the environmentalist's motto of reduce, reuse and recycle when furnishing her new Hailey home. The coffee table is recycled (from the Gold Mine Thrift Store in Ketchum), the dining room table is a hand-me-down from her grandmother, and the wood stove, which originally did not fit well with the home's layout, was repositioned instead of thrown out. The majority of the rest of the furniture is from Ikea. "They're very environmentally conscious," said Lyle. "They do a lot of low-VOC products and good particle-board, reclaimed types of materials. The only downside is the longevity, it's not forever. But it was the best we could afford and still be green."

Interior designer Sarah Lyle was thrilled to be able to practice what she preaches when she moved into her Hailey home last year. Her fledgling company, White Canvas Designs, specializes in finding environmentally conscious, green-aware materials for its clients.

So, she set about creating an eco-friendly habitat for herself and fiancé, Zach Latham. The work Lyle has done on her home and her plans for its future provide any aspiring green homeowner on a budget with a great starting point for the creation of a greener habitat.

"The most important thing to take into account when trying to achieve an eco-friendly home is each individual," said Lyle. "However lofty our goals are, we have to be realistic about them. We can't expect to jump off the edge of our budget scheme and timeframe just to be green." However, there are many small steps to take to reach that green goal. Often, it is simply about making a choice.

"When we moved into this house, we wanted to make it our own straight-away. Repainting was the quickest way to do that," said Lyle. So they made a choice, selecting a low-VOC (volatile organic compound) paint.

"Almost all paint manufacturers have low-VOC or no-VOC options. Basically, it has to do with your air quality; choosing low-VOC paint immediately affects our health in a positive way. Also, there is not much of a difference price-wise, if any." Another simple change is lighting. "That is the next thing on our list; we're really working on getting energy-efficient lighting."

Being on a budget when considering a home's décor places some restrictions on how well the owner complies with environmentally beneficial practices. Here, planning ahead is the key. "The greenest thing you can do for your home is to replace your windows and doors," said Lyle. Ensuring the least amount of heat loss through properly fitting windows can dramatically reduce heating and cooling costs, as well as the negative impact that loss has on the environment. "Ideally, if we had the budget, we would use a window company that makes their frames/casements out of FSC-certified wood and use appropriate materials. But there's a premium."

So, Lyle approached a local company for a bid to replace their windows. "The bid was very reasonable, but still out of our budget, so we might be replacing one window a year, but by replacing them, however long it takes, we'll be cutting back tremendously on loss of heat."

In the meantime, Lyle takes small steps to offset the negative impact her windows and doors have on the environment. "Open your blinds during the day when it's warm, to get the heat during the winter, and then close them at night to keep the heat in, and vice versa in the summer."

Considering the environment when undertaking big projects such as repainting and replacing windows is paramount, but it is equally important to think green when furnishing a home. Here, it is not simply about buying something that claims to be environmentally friendly; in fact, sometimes it can be the opposite. "It's also about

A greener remodel

When planning a green remodel, think “recycle” first and foremost. Purchase repairable products, buy used products, saving them from landfills, and check the Building Materials Thrift Store in Hailey. This will help reduce manufacturing, fuel, shipping, packaging and disposal expenses. Remember, every choice has environmental repercussions.

Another resource is Boise’s Green Foundations Building Center (greenfoundations.com). It sells green materials such as Skyblend (compressed wood) cabinets, paper stone counters, organic fabric and certified flooring. Green education lectures and a resource library are also on offer. Here in the valley, Englemann’s Resource Center (640 2nd Avenue South, Ketchum) has a display of eco-friendly building products that is open to the public.

Also, consider incorporating energy-saving elements into any structural remodel. Roof overhangs, overhead trellises and awnings save energy against a strong sun. Construct garages and sheds on the north side and place well-used rooms on the sunny side. Install windows to take advantage of cross ventilation.

The following tips and resources highlight some of the green elements to incorporate into any remodel.

Carpeting and flooring

- “Environmental and décor television channels are bringing in more homeowners with green questions,” said Beatrice Espinoza of Espinoza Flooring in Ketchum. Her suggestions: Opt for stone, cork, bamboo and eucalyptus materials, as these are more eco-friendly because of their abundance. Carpets made from 100 percent wool, sisal, jute and seagrass are also a good option.
- Carpet tiles (flor.com) make partial carpet replacements easy.
- Search for stain protections and adhesives free of harmful chemicals.

Lighting

- Think skylights, including the easy-to-install, slinky-like sky tube that flexes from roof to room ceiling around attic obstacles. Glass blocks and interior windowless openings also boost passive lighting and reduce power bills.
- Solar photocells and roof panels plus dusk-to-dawn exterior light photocells use the natural energy sources of sun and motion.

- Install a smart Lutron Homeworks System. Craig Patterson of C & R Electric (candrelectric.com) suggests implementing this energy-saving program, citing the mid-valley’s Village Green housing project as a model. It is a room-by-room keypad system that automatically turns electric appliances, lights and heating on and off as programmed for energy-efficiency throughout the home, saving energy and money.
- Install timers and wireless plug-in dimmers, an inexpensive remedy to control energy use.

Wood

- Recycled wood: IGL Recycled Timbers in Carey carries seasoned, dried recycled and salvaged woods. “Our wood is generally rummaged from old buildings, a green source, and bears desirable historical defects,” said owner Chris Gammon.
- FSC Certified: “Look for the marking FSC on lumber. This is for the Forest Stewardship Council and certifies that it comes from green practices,” said Marc Boudart, a licensed area green builder (environmentalbuildingsolutions.com). Another stamp, the Sustainable Forest Initiative® Program, indicates lumber from certified forests.

Siding

- HardiPlank: This longer-lasting, exterior fiber-cement board is straighter, heavier and more water-resistant than typical wood siding. It retains paint for approximately 10 years, much longer than traditional siding and is available at Stock Building Supply, Ketchum.

Insulation

- Window coverings and solar screens (available at Sun Valley Shutters and Shades, Ketchum) plus window tinting (through SolarControl, Hailey) offer excellent ways to minimize heat loss and heat/cold infiltration.
- For the walls, there are various insulation materials available that are more energy-efficient and eco-friendly than traditional fiberglass batting, according to Pat Buchanan of Anderson Insulation, Ketchum. Mineral wool and cotton batting or soy-based spray foam are good alternatives.

—Cornelia Russo



reusing things,” said Lyle. “With my clients, I constantly look at the opportunities to reuse what they already have. I always draw their existing furniture into the new house. Everyone’s got to get a new sofa at some point, and there’s nothing wrong with that. But, when you get that new sofa, that’s when it’s important to consider what is this sofa made of or what is the fabric on this sofa?” Furnishings that use organic fabric or 100 percent sustainable fabrics, such as cotton, linen, wool, silk, jute and hemp, are good options.

The most important thing is to get educated, said Lyle. “Look at the product, and ask yourself, where is it made? Is it made in China or in Idaho? If it’s made in Idaho, it’s probably a better choice, due to the energy expended to export goods. Then look at what it’s made of. If it doesn’t outwardly say where it’s from or how it’s manufactured or you can’t ask someone what goes into the materials, it’s likely not a good choice.”

Three main areas to consider when selecting furniture for a home, are source, energy and life span:

Source: Is it from a sustainable source or from a rapidly diminishing natural resource? “There are certain companies that specialize in green furniture—they source the frames for their sofas from certified wood companies, and their cushioning uses cotton polyester from socially responsible factories,” said Lyle.

Energy: Consider the energy use required to produce and deliver the item. The less energy expended, the less strain is put on the planet’s resources. A prime example is carpet. “There is a chart that shows the highest production energy used for raw materials. Out of aluminum, lumber, plastics, glass and carpet, carpet was the second highest,” said Lyle. This is due to the nylon in most carpets, which



This eye-catching feature of Lyle's home is an excellent illustration of how being green, being creative and being on a budget can go hand-in-hand. "We had this open window frame into our bedroom, and it's not very private, so we thought how can we fill the space? After some research I purchased this sheet of post-industrial resin, with real birch branches in it from a company called 3form, based in Salt Lake City. I found it on a portion of their Web site (3-form.com) that offers reclaimed materials at a discount. As an added bonus the material can be recycled again after we are done with it."

is manufactured using petroleum-based products. There are alternatives. Wool is an environmentally friendly product and Nylon 6.6 is another, newer green alternative. "Nylon 6.6 is a synthetic recycled nylon. A lot of major carpet companies are starting to use it, and it has the added bonus of being recyclable." Lyle recently worked on Ruscitto Latham Blanton's remodel of The Community School in Sun Valley, where she specified a Nylon 6.6 carpet from Shaw. "At the end of that carpet's life span, which Shaw says is 15 years, they will take it back and find a way to mill it."

Life span: How long before the product will need to be replaced and end up in a landfill? "Don't buy an organic cotton chair if you know your dogs and kids will take it apart in a year," said Lyle. "It would be better to buy a leather chair that will last longer, even though it doesn't outwardly say that it's an environmentally friendly product. Sometimes the amount of use you will get out of something is more important than its other green credentials."

In the past few years, manufacturers and retailers have started to provide eco-friendly products that either use recyclable materials or source from sustainable natural resources. Some of the now more commonly available green products include wallpaper,

paint, lighting, carpets, flooring and furnishings. Most companies loudly proclaim their green credentials, but don't take everything at face value. Do the research. In an effort to cash in on this exploding consumer market, some green products are being hyped dishonestly. Last November, environmental marketing watchdog Terra Choice released a report titled *The Six Sins of Greenwashing* (available online at terra

"Don't buy an organic cotton chair if you know your dogs and kids will take it apart in a year. It would be better to buy a leather chair that will last longer, even though it doesn't outwardly say that it's an environmentally friendly product."

Sarah Lyle

choice.com), which claims many companies deliberately mislead the public about the environmental practices of that organization, from being vague to outright fibbing. Search Web sites such as usgbc.org, openco.org and buildinggreennnc.com to help select the right green products. Secondly, look for the "ECO" logo and "Green Seal," which are independent certifications

that a product is green. One of the simplest, safest ways to be green is to shop locally. "If you buy furniture from a local store that is not FSC-certified wood, that's OK, as they have location on their side," said Lyle. "It's a balancing act. If you hit all three—source, energy and life span—that's great, but two or even one is better than none." ❧

writer: **Jennifer Tuohy**
photographer: **Chris Pilaro**

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food for thought

From Idaho's Bounty to Slow Food, local organizations help valley residents explore how to be locavores.

Riley Boice of Hailey collects cantaloupes from Idaho's Bounty.

Something's afoot, and it's not just the latest fad. This has the deep rumble of a real movement, all the signs of significant change. We are reevaluating the way we eat, and it's not just in our choices—slow food instead of fast food, organic instead of mass produced. Now we're looking deeper, investigating how to merge growing passions for excellence in food with a desire to develop real community.

For many people, eating is about the flavor. Or maybe it's about how quickly we can grab a bite. Perhaps it's about how little we can pay for it. As a society, we seem more willing to spend money on remedies for various ailments than for healthy food choices that might prevent them in the first place. And generally, if we really think about our meal at all, it is seldom to consider where the food has come from.

However, our attitude about food sourcing is now changing.

In 2007, the *New Oxford American Dictionary* named locavore its word of the year. Referring to people who attempt to eat only food grown or produced within a 100-mile radius of their homes, the locavore movement was developed by four San Francisco women in response to the knowledge that most food travels an average of 1,500 miles before ending up on our tables. As the organization's Web site, locavores.com, explains, "This globalization of the food supply has serious consequences for the environment, our health, our communities and our tastebuds."

Here in the mountains of central Idaho, eating only food that has come from within a 100-mile radius is a considerable challenge.

But help is at hand. A small group of people with big dreams and workable methods created Idaho's Bounty, an Internet-based, grassroots food-distribution organization. Promoting and distributing organic (produced without the use of preservatives, growth hormones and pesticides), ethically produced and all-natural foods from as local a source as possible, Idaho's Bounty is trying to create a new model for food consumption. Members peruse an online catalog of available foods for the next delivery cycle, place their order via the Web site and then gather with like-minded neighbors in convenient Ketchum and Hailey locations to pick up their food on delivery day.

"What we're trying to do is help create a new paradigm for food production and distribution," said Jeannie Wall, Idaho's Bounty's director of operations. "One that harkens back to the wonderful aspects of traditional cultures and food cultivation on a local scale. But that also uses modern advances—like biodiesel for our

delivery truck—to allow us to have the selection, convenience and quality people have come to demand, without the destruction that we've created in conventional, industrial agriculture today."

Idaho's Bounty hopes it can also help local food retailers reduce the time and money spent researching those products by becoming a one-stop source for the best local and organic foods. This means that even people who are not members of Idaho's Bounty's might still partake of high-quality local foods by continuing their regular shopping habits at local markets.

"Idaho's Bounty is helping fuel

"This globalization of the food supply has serious consequences for the environment, our health, our communities and our tastebuds."

locavores.com



These images from the Hailey and Ketchum Farmer's Markets (held weekly from May through October) show the variety of fresh, organic produce and goods available to valley residents. All the vendors come from nearby Idaho towns.

Shop local

For more than 50 years, residents of the Wood River Valley have been blessed with a wide variety of excellent foods available at the locally owned and operated Atkinsons' markets, and the recent addition of seasonal farmers' markets in Ketchum and Hailey has been met with much enthusiasm.

Clearly our local food merchants have long had their finger on the pulse of the valley's demands for organic foods.

Remember, when you shop the farmers' markets in the summer and fall, you are getting to know your food sources up close and personal. Your closest farm may be Wood River Organics (woodriverorganics.com) in Bellevue. Look for owner/farmer Judd and Heather McMahan at the Farmers' Market.

Check out Morning Star Organic Farm (morningstarorganics.com) in Richfield. Well within 100 miles of the Wood River Valley, they also sell at the markets and supply local restaurants. Ditto Clarence and Tona Stilwill of Fairfield's Fair Mountain Farm. See them every week at the Ketchum Farmers' Market. Carol Rast of Prairie Sun Farm in Fairfield also grows vegetables for the farmers' markets and through Idaho's Bounty. Get organic meat products from Lava Lake Ranch. Located between our valley and Carey, they raise organic lambs in ethical, responsible and sustainable ways. Grow your own food when you can do so. Learn to preserve your crops by canning, freezing or drying, and trade with friends and neighbors to add variety to your pantry.

Join Idaho's Bounty

Hungry for trout, grass-fed beef or free-range chicken? Pork from MM Heath Farms? Danish Havarti-style cheese from Ballard Dairy? Apricot jam? Lamb from Lava Lake Lamb? Beans, squash, eggs, raw milk? Alligator for the dogs? All this and much more is available year round in Idaho's Bounty's Food Shed in Hagerman.

Founded in 2007, Idaho's Bounty is a nonprofit Internet cooperative based south of the Wood River Valley in Hagerman that links consumers with organic farmers and producers. An initial membership fee of \$75 allows consumers to shop from a changing list of seasonal produce every two weeks.

Visit IdahosBounty.org and click on "Join," then place products in your online shopping cart. Once the order cycle closes, the producer uploads weights and prices. Tax is added along with a 15 percent co-op fee (which pays for delivery and all the work in between). Then pay online with Pay Pal or bring a check to the pickup site (the National Guard Armory in Hailey and Hemingway Elementary School in Ketchum) and collect your goods. Drop-off is available for an extra charge.



This page: Ed and Christa Lucero survey the Morning Star Organic Farm's herd with grandson Hudson.

Opposite page: The Idaho's Bounty team—front row, Nancy Rutherford (left), producer, employees James Reed, Judy Hall and Jeannie Wall. Back row, volunteers Doug Crayton (left) and Evan Sofro, Laura Theis, employee, and volunteer Siouxe Essence. Not pictured, co-founders Kaz Thea, Diana Whiting, Kelley Weston and Leslee Reed.

community by supporting and distributing food that is fresh from the family farm, ready for a family's table in only a day's time," said Wall. "We're creating jobs through a thriving local network that brings kids back to the farm while eliminating the need for mass-produced food, transported over hundreds and thousands of miles that burns up millions of gallons of fuel, and spews out life-depleting pollutants."

Wall also emphasizes that through supporting a local food network, people are fostering a sense of local stewardship and responsibility to their neighbors. This in turn helps keep communities intact, air clean, water pure, environment life-giving, bodies healthy and taste buds bursting with flavors not experienced by conventional, industrial and processed food.

"We realize, of course, that we won't be able to source everything within 100 miles," said Wall. "But, we can do our utmost given where we are now, and promote new local producers and methods. For instance, we have an abundance of fresh greens produced locally throughout the summer, but we hope to be able to offer fresh greens well into the winter, too. They'll be grown in a geothermal-heated greenhouse (in Hagerman, along the Snake River) in the next year or so."

If it cannot be found close to home, Idaho's Bounty will source

high-demand items like chocolate and olive oil from reliable fair-trade sources.

If there is skepticism about this local supply chain, it concerns perceived cost. But that may be a misperception.

Ed and Christa Lucero own and operate Morning Star Organic Farm in Richfield, located between Carey and Shoshone. A dairy farm, they also provide vegetables to Idaho's Bounty and local farmers' markets. "We do everything we can to keep our prices as low as possible," said Christa. "We think this quality of food should be available to everyone." Wall agrees. "Idaho's Bounty is very value-oriented. If people compare the cost of our suppliers' goods with goods of equal value from other sources, they'll find that our pricing is very competitive. Part of our mission is to build community, and not to be exclusive."

Well before the current interest in eating from local food sources developed, a slightly different upstart idea came out of Italy. The slow food movement was founded on the concept of "eco-gastronomy," a recognition of the strong connections between plate and planet. Slow Food International (and Slow Food USA) proclaims slow food is "good, clean and fair food." Proponents believe that food should taste good; that it should be produced in a clean way that does not harm the environment, animal welfare or our health; and that food producers should receive fair



compensation for their work.

Many Wood River Valley chefs heartily endorse this belief. Chris Kastner of CK's Real Food in Hailey has followed slow food's tenets for years. A slow food offering is on CK's menu every night. Ketchum Grill's Scott Mason also regularly serves local, organic and slow food options. Many of the valley's restaurateurs and caterers buy from local food producers whenever possible and eagerly await an increasingly strong and reliable supply chain, the likes of which Idaho's Bounty and Slow Food International have in their sights.

As Christa of Morning Star says happily, "Big Belly Deli (Hailey) now features our homemade soups, and people actually call ahead to ask, 'Which one of Christa's soups do you have today?' The more demand there is for our products, the more we believe farmers like us can stay in business."

"One Farmers' Market producer routinely uses a three-legged stool as his metaphor for healthy business operations," said Lynea Newcomer, manager of the Ketchum Farmers' Market. "One leg represents the Farmers' Market, another represents sales to local restaurants and the last represents caterers or special orders." The point is that producers need different options for points of sale so that if something goes wrong—as with the Castle Rock Fire last summer, which cancelled one peak-season market and decreased attendance to subsequent ones—they are still guaranteed profits elsewhere. Idaho's

Bounty offers a growing opportunity as yet another stool leg."

Of all the logical and practical reasons that exist for eating local organic food, perhaps the most fulfilling is the emotional response to knowing where our meals come from. Often, shopping at the farmers' markets is as much about reconnecting with neighbors and vendors there as it is about good food. It's a social scene with a function.

"We feel really strongly about what we are doing here," said Christa. "This farm we're on was homesteaded in 1907 by my grandfather. We didn't actually realize that what we were doing here had the label of 'organic.' It's just the way we did things. We love our animals, and we've raised our family on this farm. It's our passion. It's such a great thing to take our vegetables to the Farmers' Market and have people be so appreciative, to have people thank us for being here and following through in what we believe. Well, it just restores our spirit." ❧

writer: **Deb Gelet**

photographer: **Paulette Philpot**

online resources

www.IdahosBounty.org

www.Locavores.com

www.SlowFoodUSA.org

www.100milediet.org

Find your 100-mile radius on this Web site. For a Hailey resident the 100-mile radius stretches west to Boise, south to beyond Twin Falls, east to Pocatello and north to Stanley.

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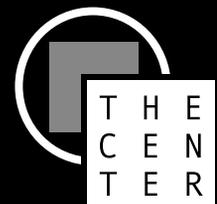
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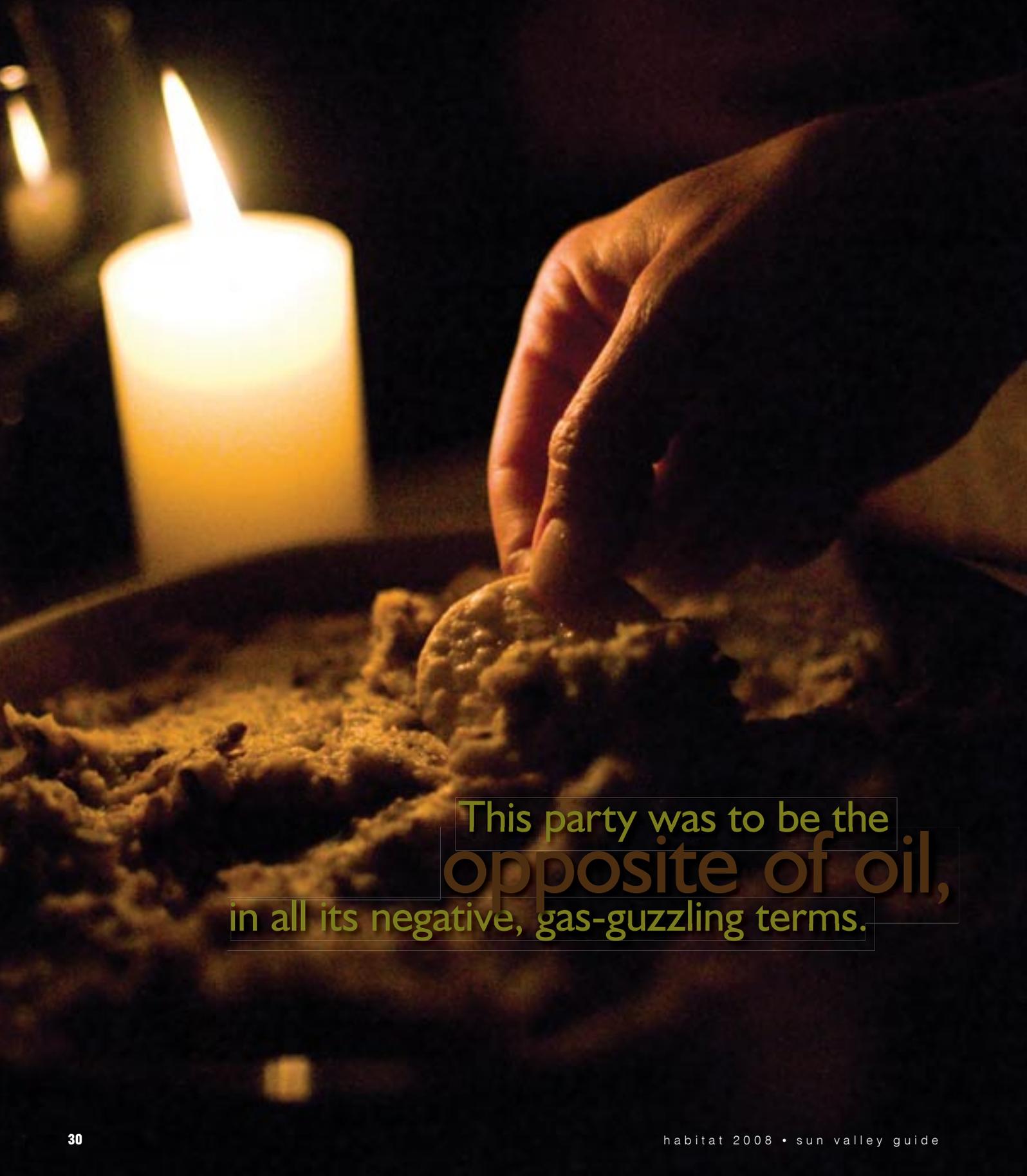


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This party was to be the
opposite of oil,
in all its negative, gas-guzzling terms.

party for the planet

Dana DuGan takes on the task of throwing an environmentally friendly party.

With all the talk simmering about green this and green that, I figured someone ought to throw a green party (no, that old vote-splitter Ralph Nader wasn't invited), just to see if it was possible. Since I'm not a fan of St. Patrick's Day (in New York City, we used to call it "amateur day"), I didn't want to wait for the obvious. Early December fit the bill and my calendar.

First, I considered what would be involved in hosting a green party, from invites to clothing to anything random that might impact the environment, negatively or positively. Reducing the energy expended on the party was the key to bringing it to fruition. So, determined to emit as little carbon as was feasibly possible, I went to work.

Using the online invitation service Evite.com, to save paper, I suggested people arrive at 7:10 p.m., a reasonable time in my estimation. But people did inquire. Looking at it from a different perspective, upside down and backwards, it spelled OIL. This party was to be the opposite of oil, in all its negative, gas-guzzling terms.

Sorting out guest transportation in an area where residents are spread far apart was challenging. I knew that a line of SUVs and trucks parked outside my house would be the antithesis of green, so guests were requested to carpool or walk, and they did, overwhelmingly. On the day of the party, my husband was allowed only one combined grocery and liquor store run.





For my contribution, I whipped up mini-crustless quiches using cheese from the Gooding-based Ballard Dairy, local eggs and herbs from my garden.



Food for this potluck affair needed to be brought in recyclable containers. I also suggested that those not be paper, plastic or styrofoam, so that, except for numerous wine bottles in the recycling bin the next day, there was very little trash of which to dispose.

No shoes were to be worn indoors, and people complied—one or two carried slippers with them. This eliminated the need for vacuuming after the party.

By the time the party began, soy and beeswax candles were lighted all over the house, replacing my energy inefficient light bulbs—although thankfully, as it was pretty dark, the front door light and the kitchen light remained on, as both are Energy Star compliant compact fluorescents.

So much for details, but what's a party without music? I was dismayed late in the game to realize that turning on the stereo would be a drain on the electricity we had so far succeeded in carefully conserving. But it wasn't a problem. We are blessed hereabouts with many professional and amateur musicians who love nothing better than taking over a porch or living room. Soon, percussive instruments, guitars, a mandolin, piano and out-of-tune voices provided music.

While party planning and execution took into account as many different environmentally friendly practices and savings as possible, it was the food that emerged as the shining green star of the party.

I had requested guests bring only edibles that were organic and locavore—Idaho grown or produced—thereby reducing the impact of chemicals on the land and reducing the amount of energy needed to get our food to us. Also, because I decided not to use plates or silverware, to avoid using the dishwasher, finger food was the order of the day. The only guest who took offense was a 3-year-old who just couldn't get around doing something her parents had told her never to do, (eating without silverware from a communal dish). For her, I was forced to dig out a forbidden plate. At least she was comfortable, which is important for a tiny person in a room of giants.

For my contribution, I whipped up mini-crustless quiches using cheese from Gooding-based Ballard Dairy,

local eggs, and herbs from my garden. I also invented a spaghetti squash bruscheta, purchased through Idaho's Bounty (a regional food co-operative) with local tomatoes, herbs and an organic olive oil spread on Ketchum's Big Wood Bakery bread.

Though people called at the last minute with questions about where to find locavore food, the contributions were inventive, and guests said they were surprised how much was available in local stores.

Among the dishes were carrots and tomatoes from Hagerman, organic corn tortilla chips and homemade green salsa made with vegetables from a garden north of Ketchum, a dip made from grilled Idaho salmon, and organic Montana buffalo meatballs. A hunter, who climbed 2,000 feet into the mountains for it, brought an offering of grilled Idaho venison and elk. There were deviled local eggs, smoked Idaho Trout, little roasted red potatoes from the Ketchum Farmers' Market and Lava Lake Lamb bites.

Beverages were made from Blue Ice Vodka distilled in Driggs, Idaho, and wine included the Ketchum fermented and bottled Frenchman's Gulch, as well as several excellent French organic wines. A keg of beer came from valley-based River Bend Brewing Company, one guest donated a bottle of homebrewed brown ale, and several bottles of Sun Valley Brewery Golden Ale rounded out the impressive local selection.

The party was a success. Enthusiastic folks moved with care through my crowded house, keeping everything body-heat warm so I could keep the thermostat low.

The next day my clean-up time was reduced due to my careful precautions. Environmentally friendly cleaning fluid made by Method and Seventh Generation, both available at local stores, did the trick in the somewhat discombobulated kitchen.

Feeling a bit smug with the success of my experiment, I vowed, as did others in their thank you notes (Evite.com does those, too) to do all future parties as green as possible, with the exception of St. Paddy's Day on which I usually don purple. 

writer: **Dana DuGan**
 photographer: **Thia Konig**



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PHOTO COURTESY ERC

from the mouths of babes: the green generation gears up

Cameron Bingham and Illiah Pfau show their enthusiasm for nature during one of the Environmental Resource Center's Eco-Camps. At the week-long overnight get-aways north of Ketchum, third- to ninth-graders collect aquatic insects in the Big Wood River, learn how to build wilderness shelters and sing songs around a campfire. Encouraging environmental responsibility starts with children enjoying the outdoors and then learning how their actions impact the health of the planet. They tend to naturally accept their role as the next stewards of the earth. And thanks to the actions of valley youths, it's easier than ever for young people to go green.

Hop on the bus—it's hip

Since when has taking the bus to school been cool? Since we discovered it helps keep the Earth cool, too.

Until two years ago, competitive freestyle skier and ninth-grader Zana Davey hopped into her dad's car for the daily commute to The Community School. When she found out how car emissions harm air quality and potentially intensify global warming, she and a friend made the decision to take the bus. "This year there are 10 to 15 more kids who get the bus. It's super-crowded—standing room only," said Davey. "I think that's really great."

Valley youth are taking on environmental issues in unprecedented numbers, and some have achieved remarkable results. In early 2006, when Davey signed up for seventh-grade science and math teacher Scott Runkel's course, Activism 101, she had no idea that just a few months later, she would be speaking directly to local political leaders about global warming. The group's goal was to choose something, anything that needed changing, and work to enable it. The students chose climate control. "We did a survey, and talked to community leaders, and it became clear that there was a large education issue," said Runkel.

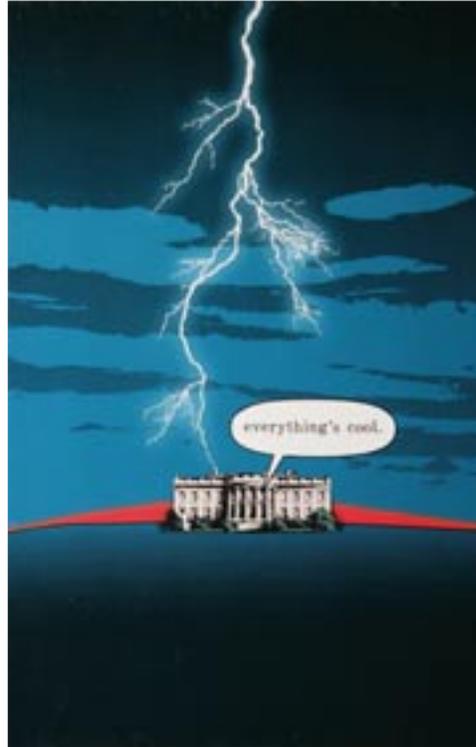
The students organized a screening of Al Gore's documentary film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, invited local politicians, and led a town-hall-style meeting afterward, during which the assembly generated a list of ideas on how to address the problem.

Of her meeting with then-Mayor of Hailey Susan McBryant, Davey said, "At that point, the town of Hailey wasn't even endorsing the public bus system. I think that was a surprise to her. It was really cool to be 13 years old and telling this person in power something she didn't know. We often assume that the people in power know a lot, and sometimes they don't."

The students then screened local photographer and producer Chris Pilaro's film, *Everything's Cool*. "When the mayor came to the movie," Runkel recalled, "she handed us a Climate Protection Agreement Act." In November 2007, the city of Hailey won a rare \$5,000 grant, sponsored in part by the Environmental Protection Agency that helps the government implement programs to reduce its carbon

"It was really cool to be 13 years old and telling this person in power something she didn't know."

Zana Davey



footprint. "Of course, we don't take full credit for the changes," said Runkel, admitting it takes the efforts of many to move a mountain.

Davey hopes to continue enabling the green movement through informational placards in grocery stores to educate consumers about the benefits of using environmentally friendly compact fluorescent light bulbs, and by initiating an incentive program to minimize the use of plastic grocery bags.

And then there's Max Harris, a senior who Runkel calls the "recycling guru of The Community School." If you want to know what a Techno Trashcan is, ask Harris—or any of dozens of students whose admission fee into a recent school dance was an obsolete piece of electronic equipment to be dropped into the trashcan for recycling. Harris, who started the Recycling Club, which placed recycle bins around the school, is an ideal ambassador for the issue. Why? According to Davey, "he's popular and everyone looks up to him." Rare attributes in leaders today.

From burritos to biodiesel

Whitney DeBree, now a freshman at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, started Wood River High School's Eco Club in 2005. Craig Barry, executive director of the Environmental Resource Center, remembers helping DeBree raise funds to travel to Boise to hear Al Gore speak on global warming. "That was a springboard for the excitement," Barry said.

"She really wanted to meet Al Gore, and tell him what she and her friends were doing," recalled her father, Mark. "So she went to a cocktail party where there were only adults, and she talked to him!" When asked if he'd influenced her to care for the environment, Mark said modestly. "We recycle, we vermicompost, so I suppose she comes by it honestly."

Junior Lyndsey Lascheck has since taken over the Eco Club, and has gained recognition as the originator of last November's wildly successful Green Generation Holiday Fair, organized by the Wood River High School honors seminar class. The fair was the culmination of a trimester of work by 21 students directed by teacher Michel Sewell.

"We spent the first two to three weeks researching local and international problems, then presented our findings and, as a group, decided what to focus on," explained Sewell. When the class chose

Continued on page 36



Lyndsey Lascheck, left, and Bailey Ireland bask in the success of the first ever Wood River High School Green Generation Fair, held last November. The fair—which was originated by Lascheck, who is the president of the Eco Club—was the culmination of the work of 21 students directed by teacher Michel Sewell.



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Biodiesel
from page 35

to target the environment, they broke into three groups. The first focused on transportation and created a carpool Web site for the entire school district. The second worked to bring recycling bins into every classroom in the high school. The third group concentrated on educating local businesses and helping to implement green strategies.

Ninth-grader Siomara Navarrete turned back to her roots. “I went out and talked to Mexican restaurants about recycling,” said Navarrete, 15. “They didn’t really know about recycling. It’s more awareness—they need to know about it before they act on it. They said yes, they’d be willing to recycle. And some wanted to start donating oil to make biodiesel!” If the Eco Club gets its way, this may be viable in the future; they have initiated discussions about how to run the school bus fleet on biodiesel.

Lascheck also pushes the issue on her own home front. “Now I’m starting to tell my mom to turn off the lights, to turn off the water.”

The green generation is indeed educating the gray generation. Barry chuckles knowingly when he says, “There’s a lot of pressure these young adults can exert.”

Grommets go green

How do you raise a child to be environmentally aware? Zana Davey grew up in an only slightly greener-than-average home that recycles and reuses plastic bags. “We probably don’t do enough,” admits her father, Walter, but he says communication has been key. “We have really good dinnertime discussions. Sometimes to the point where Zana says, ‘You’re depressing me!’”

The education can start early. Susan Deffé, mother of four-year-old twins Chloe and Myles, straps them into their car seats when she takes a load to the Ohio Gulch Resource Recovery Center. “Would you throw out a box or recycle it?” Deffé asked her son. “I would recycle it,” replied Myles solemnly. Why? “‘Cuz it’s important to save trees.” When asked how she helps her mom recycle, Chloe told how it was: “We go in the car, and we stay in the car.”

They may not understand the larger implications of saving a milk carton, but seeing their parents take the time to do it, helping fill the compost bin and giving away toys they’ve grown out of instead of throwing them out, instills responsibility early. The twins

are in their second season skiing Dollar Mountain; their father, Chip, owns Sun Summit South, a ski and bike shop in Hailey. In a remote community that depends on the environment for its livelihood, children are learning that what comes around goes around.

Discussing global warming, Davey insisted that skiing “definitely will be affected—I think it already has been. Living here, we have a bigger responsibility—there’s the cost of grooming, the cost of getting food all the way out here. We make more of an impact than other places.”

Thankfully, it’s easy for youngsters to befriend the environment these days through a wide array of community programs.

For the youngest set, the Sawtooth Botanical Garden invites

four- to six-year-olds to week-long summer Garden Camps. Each week focuses on a different theme, such as the connection between what’s in the ground and what’s on your dinner plate, or bug behavior and morphology. Garden Education Specialist Allison Kennedy runs an outreach program that brings her into elementary schools to instruct classes on such subjects as hydroponics,

“My main concern is for kids to connect the dots and live in a sustainable way. Not to have to wear flip flops and eat granola, or do without.”

Craig Barry, ERC Director

Honors Seminar class member, Rosie Gilcrest mans a booth at the Green Generation Fair.



the biosphere and flower morphology. The garden's Bug Zoo exhibit attracted 1,400 students last spring, and promises to reach more this year.

AmeriCorps member Kimberly Ralphs coordinates a vermicomposting outreach program through the ERC at Hemingway Elementary School. She explained that worms are definitely not too cool for school. "Each day of the week, we compost the lunch scraps from one grade. Each student has a chance to be a worm wizard."

The worm wizard stands by the trashcan to collect orange peels, bread crusts, apple cores—any vegetarian leftovers. These are taken out back to two large bins where the worms live in a bedding of shredded newspaper. "The younger kids want to hold the worms," said Ralphs. "It's a lot of fun to work with them because they're so curious." Ralphs teaches not only what worms do for us, but what the worms need to do their job. In three to six months, the lunch scraps have turned into useable compost. Ralphs hopes that in the future the compost will be used in classroom planting programs.

"My main concern is for kids to connect the dots and live in a sustainable way," said Craig Barry. "Not to have to wear flip flops and eat granola, or do without." 

writer: **Betsy Andrews Etchart**
photographer: **Chris Pilaro**



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Ski Hut

The challenge of building a sustainable duplex in an avalanche-prone area of Warm Springs brought out the best in problem solving for architect Daniel Johnston.

When the opportunity arose for San Diego-based architect Daniel Johnston to build his mountain dream house in Ketchum, he decided to build a sustainable, green structure. In addition, Johnston needed a home that could withstand the powerful force of an avalanche. “Once I decided to build, I wanted to know the best way to build,” Johnston said. “I ended up with a duplex in an avalanche-prone area, but it was near the lifts and suited me.”

The resulting Ski Hut at 100 Sage Road in Warm Springs is a two-unit residence—one for Johnston and one to sell—situated on an environmentally friendly 5,676-square-foot lot. He broke ground on the project in September 2005. “Sustainability was the focus of the design,” Johnston said. “And the most fundamental effort in designing a sustainable building is creating an efficient building envelope, where the transfer of air and moisture between the inside and outside is planned and controlled.”



Daniel Johnston (right) stands outside his avalanche resistant environmentally friendly duplex in Warm Springs (above) which consists of an 850-square-foot unit for himself and a 1,850-square-foot unit to sell.



This 2D drawing of the Ski Hut's first floor shows the layout of the duplex as well as highlighting the avalanche mitigation walls that have been incorporated into the construction of the building.

WALL LEGEND

	-REINFORCED-AVALANCHE-MITIGATION-WALL
	-WOOD-FRAMED, STAGGERED STUD WALL
	-REINFORCED CONCRETE WALL
	-WOOD-FRAMED WALL, THICKNESS PER PLAN
	-PARTIAL HEIGHT WALL
	-RIGID-INSULATION

Green design elements

The green design elements Johnston incorporated into the Ski Hut are designed to make the home as energy efficient as possible.

- **The building envelope:** The design of the concrete walls and the placement of the windows at the south and west sides of the house mean the structure requires less energy for heating and cooling. “The Ski Hut has intricate wall and roof assemblies that control temperature fluctuation and allow a passive space conditioning system to perform very effectively,” said Johnston.
- **A zinc roof:** Zinc is a durable material, similar to copper. It is a soft metal easily molded into shingles.
- **Photovoltaic solar panels:** These were integrated into the zinc roof structure at the home’s southern exposures. The panels have net metering, and are tied to the electric utility. Excess power generated by the panels will be sold back to Idaho Power. The panels, like many elements of the home, are integrated to follow the shape of the roof and appear as a continuation of the roof’s surface.



- **Lighting efficiency:** The home uses a mix of energy efficient lighting elements and fixtures including fluorescent, compact fluorescent, low voltage, incandescent and LED bulbs. Planned placement allows for more efficient lighting of spaces and fewer fixtures.
- **Stairway:** A glass stairway connecting the three floors and garage is designed to bring daylight into the house, and features a frit or non-skid material, with an enameled pattern and dots.
- **Sealed building envelope:** All chimneys, vents, ducts, electrical outlets, plumbing, doors and windows are sealed to prevent air leakage. Sealing improves thermal efficiency and minimizes condensation, which can cause mold and rot.
- **Hydronic heating:** The interior space is heated with hydronics, a system that circulates warm water through pipes beneath the floors, including those of showers, closets

and garages. The heat radiates upward from the flooring into the room. Exterior patios, walks, steps and driveway use hot water snow melting systems. The hydronic system is heated by a separate set of solar panels.

Green building materials

Ideally, when building a sustainable structure, all materials should come from within a 500-mile radius, to reduce the carbon footprint of the building process. Although Johnston was well aware of this principle, it is a difficult goal to achieve in rural Idaho. Instead, he strove to work with sustainable materials such as recycled products, natural materials, products manufactured with minimal environmental impact and materials that require minimal ongoing maintenance.

Some of the sustainable materials Johnston used included Alaskan yellow cedar from Washington State for the exterior. The wood is naturally resistant to decay and does not require a finish. The soapstone Johnston used for the base of the building, patios and landscape walls is from a quarry in Brazil, distributed through Denver. Since it is an organic substance, it too requires very little maintenance and wears naturally. “What is interesting about the green movement is that the ideas are out there, but whole materials and construction are not up to speed yet,” Johnston said. “There is a learning curve, but I don’t think it will be many more years before everyone will be involved.”



Avalanche resistance

Alongside learning how to build an environmentally friendly structure, Johnston also became versed in the ins and outs of avalanche-resistant construction, which is the primary purpose for the shape and structure of the house. The mitigation of an avalanche involves several processes that enable the structure to withstand the impact and prevent it from sliding off its foundation. Such buildings are not uncommon in Ketchum, but most have been excavated into hillsides so avalanches flow over the top. This wasn't possible for the Ski Hut.

Using European design as inspiration and conferring with Bruce Smith, a regional avalanche consultant, Johnston incorporated more than 300 cubic yards of reinforced concrete into the house. The avalanche impact wall is curved

and the structure is anchored to the ground by a 10-foot-deep, concrete substructure, which extends the width of the house. Tapered side walls act as the surface of a wing, and the arrangement of the house's three walls, combined with the angle to the flow line, have a shape and function like a wing in wind or boat foil in water, directing the flow of an avalanche around it.

"The shape and size of the house is designed to mitigate (a slide) and the wall being curved is like an arch on its side—it can't just break," Johnston said. "There are also buttress walls, which are at either end of the back wall holding it in. The whole system is anchored to the ground so it will not fall over or slide." In addition, the living space in the two units is elevated above grade with several accesses to provide safe egresses after the snow flow settles.

The curved roof and the divisions of the house are part of the avalanche-mitigation design. Construction includes a steel frame manufactured by a fabricator in Clearfield, Utah, that specializes in building roller coasters.

Johnston said he learned a great deal constructing his sustainable, avalanche-resistant house, which inspires him to do more. Most of all he enjoyed working with different shapes and contemporary building materials. "In the last two or three years, sustainable construction has paved the way to doing things a lot smarter, no matter global warming," Johnston said. "Why not design for the efficient use of materials and energy?"

writer: **Sabina Dana Plasse**
photographer: **David N. Seelig**



The Ski Hut's "building envelope" reveals a curved concrete wall strong enough to sustain the impact of an avalanche and shaped to allow the snow to move around the structure.

Emerging green builders

In the fight against global warming, the motor vehicle is often labeled public enemy No. 1. However, homes and buildings are bigger culprits when it comes to depleting energy sources.

The problem of diminishing resources and rising energy costs needs addressing, and the Wood River Valley is no exception. Fortunately, last July, the Emerging Green Builders set up shop in Blaine County to help local communities rise to the sustainable resource challenge.

EGB is a program initiated by the U.S. Green Building Council to integrate and advance young professionals into the green building movement. The council is the nation's foremost coalition of leaders from across the building industry working to promote buildings that are environmentally responsible places to work and live in.

"The EGB was started to create a network of emerging green building leaders, especially students and young professionals, to generate momentum for the green building industry," said Gunnar Gladics, co-chair of the Blaine County Chapter. "Most people don't even know that almost 50 percent of all energy consumed is by buildings. Our community is dreadfully behind many other resort and mountain areas."

Gladics' goals for the EGB are to advocate and accelerate the green building movement in the valley through education. "Right now we have architectural and engineering interns, contractors, developers, city officials, business and finance people working with us. We have been working with the Environmental Resource Center and Citizens for Smart Growth as well as the American Institute of Architects to help co-plan events."

For example, said Gladics, who works for local architecture firm Ruscitto Latham Blanton, the American Institute of Architects will host an educational workshop on alternative building energy systems in the valley this May.

Buildings in the United States are responsible for:

65% of electricity consumption

36% of energy use

30% of greenhouse gas emissions

30% of raw material use

30% of waste output...
that's **136**
million tons annually

12% of potable water consumption

SOURCE: USGBC.ORG

The EGB also arranges tours of LEED-certified green buildings in the valley. LEED, which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings. Using a science-based approach, it emphasizes such factors as sustainable site development, water and energy efficiency, eco-friendly materials and indoor air quality. Buildings are awarded points for each factor they employ; the more points a building earns, the higher its LEED ranking.

The tour includes several private residences as well as the new Rocky Mountain Hardware building in Hailey. This is the first commercial building in the Wood River Valley to be certified LEED-NC (New Construction). Other local projects registered and working toward certification include the residential Sweetwater Development in Hailey's Woodside neighborhood, targeting certification under USGBC's new LEED-ND (Neighborhood Development) pilot program, and the forthcoming 22,500-square-foot home of the Sun Valley Center for the Arts in downtown Ketchum.

“...almost 50 percent of all energy consumed is by buildings. Our community is dreadfully behind...”

*Gunnar Gladics,
co-chair EGB Blaine County*

“With so many components to sustainable building, it can be daunting,” said Nicole Ramey, co-chair of the Blaine County EGB and an employee with architecture firm Michael Doty and Associates. “We want to make it easier for everyone to understand.”

And people are beginning to understand. Whether it is creating an entire building to be LEED certified, adding photovoltaic panels to a roof or cutting home size to reasonable square footage, Ramey sees that people are beginning to be more active in seeking ways to incorporate green living into their homes. The EGB is there to encourage this kind of thinking and offer support in implementing the ideas.

Even as square footage of homes in the valley continues to escalate, Gladics and Ramey are optimistic about the future. “People are aware of the energy a home consumes and are looking to become more responsible members of society,” said Ramey. “A sustainable home is a healthy home, and helps to create a vibrant, healthy community.”

—Timi Saviers

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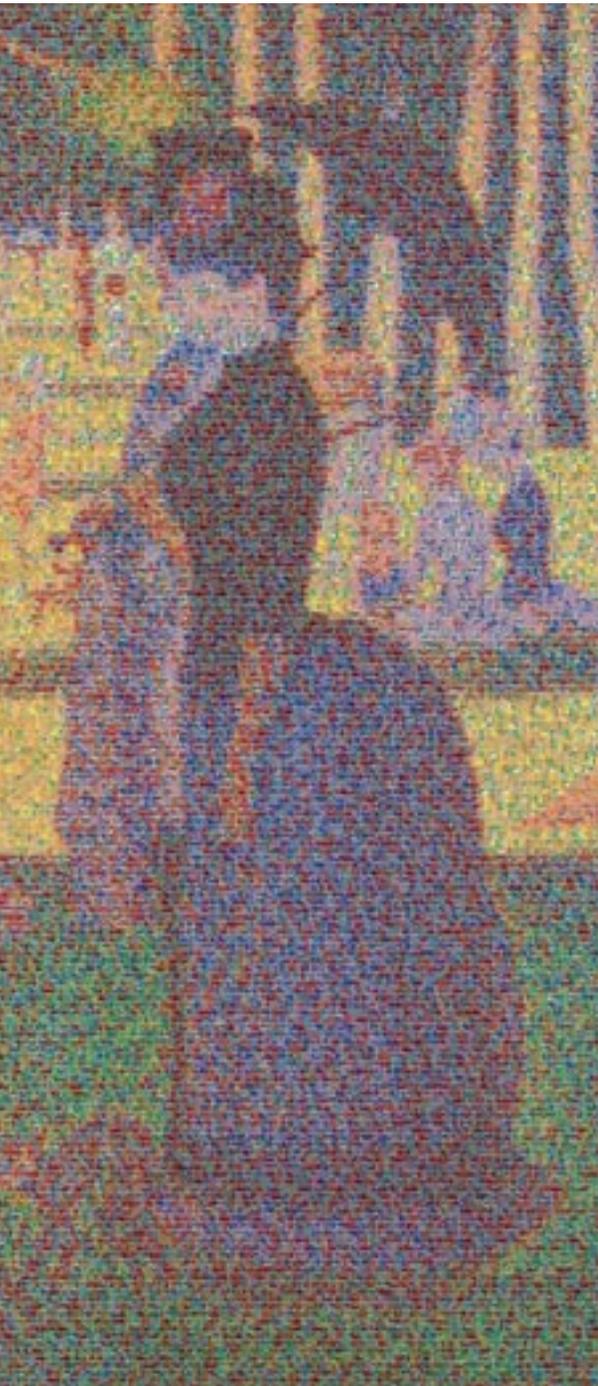
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Cans Seurat, 2007 (60" x 92") by Seattle artist Chris Jordan, depicts 106,000 aluminum cans, the number used in the U.S. every 30 seconds. A large, intricately detailed print, assembled from thousands of smaller photographs, the image is part of his series titled *Running the Numbers: An American Self-Portrait*. The series examines American culture through statistics. Each image portrays a specific quantity of something: 15 million sheets of office paper (five minutes of paper use); 106,000 aluminum cans (30 seconds of can consumption). "My hope is that images representing these quantities might have a different effect than the raw numbers alone," Jordan said. "Statistics can feel abstract and anesthetizing, making it difficult to connect with and make meaning of." The show is currently travelling internationally, visit chrisjordan.com.



recycling rules

Recycling scarce natural resources was a fact of life before the modern age of disposable excess. It wasn't the right thing to do, it was the only thing to do.

In colonial days, shortly after their Declaration of Independence was read, inspired lower Manhattanites struck down a statue of their former king and recycled it, symbolically and ironically, by smelting the statue and casting it into the bullets they used in the war for independence.

As the country developed and industry became more efficient at turning out cheap products, the age of waste emerged. After centuries of neglecting the land, its resources and the disposal of waste, civic leaders are once again focused on reuse. The Wood River Valley is no exception.

Modern recycling does a multitude of things, says Craig Barry, executive director of Ketchum's Environmental Resource Center. It reduces the size of landfills and saves natural resources, which in turn lowers costs for manufacturers who save money by reducing the energy it takes to harvest virgin resources, like aluminum, paper and steel. All this ultimately leads to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, leaving a lighter carbon footprint on the environment.

Dan Goldstein, the ERC's program director, points to the success story of recycling aluminum. "Aluminum's lightweight and easily recyclable. Manufacturers save up to 95 percent of their energy costs by using recycled aluminum instead of virgin aluminum." The savings, he says, are passed on to consumers.

But both agree that while recycling has numerous benefits, and has spawned an entire industry that employs thousands, recycling needs to be easy and convenient. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, only one curbside recycling program existed 20 years ago. Since then, almost 9,000 similar programs have cropped up, employing people all over the country.

Goldstein says it takes political will for communities to adopt such programs. Blaine County currently recycles 25 percent of its waste. That percentage may seem modest when compared to the rates of other communities, but Barry and Goldstein note that unlike most states, Idaho recycles through a grassroots movement, and does not have a statewide waste management program. Most Wood River Valley communities have convenient curbside pickup, however, the city of Hailey went a step further.

Continued on page 45

A grassroots guide to recycling

Problem

Blaine County residents produce 9.96 pounds of waste each day, twice as much as the average American's 4.6 pounds (source: ERC).

Solution

Recycling. The average U.S. resident recycles 32 percent of their total waste. Those in Blaine County recycle about 25 percent (source: ERC).

Curbside recycling

Clear Creek Disposal operates curbside waste removal throughout the valley. For residents of Ketchum, Sun Valley and Hailey, blue recycling bins are provided as part of the monthly waste collection charge and recycling can be placed curbside each week with regular trash pickup. Residents of Bellevue, Carey and Blaine County can arrange private curbside pickup and recycling (\$4.95 a month) through independent contractors, such as Clear Creek Disposal (726.9600) or Independent Rubbish, Inc. (788.0886).

Items recyclable curbside

All of the following can be recycled curbside; all must be separated (paper bags will do) and placed in the provider's recycling bins:

- Glass bottles
- Plastic containers, numbers #1 or #2
- Aluminum and tin cans
- Glossy paper (magazines and catalogues)
- Newspapers
- White paper and mixed paper (brown paper bags, envelopes, etc.)
- Cardboard can be picked up by arrangement for an extra charge

The following items are not acceptable for curbside recycling:

- Plastic containers numbers #1 or #2 that do not have a threaded neck
- Aluminum (tin) foil
- Pizza boxes and bags
- Cardboard milk or juice cartons
- Pesticide containers
- Chemical cans

Other recycling locations

Ketchum: Fourth Street Recycling Center at Fourth and Spruce Avenue in LDS church parking lot (cardboard only)

Sun Valley: Sun Valley City Hall, 81 Elkhorn Road, at the corner of Elkhorn and Dollar, and the Sun Valley Fire Station at Morningstar and Arrowleaf (takes cardboard and all curbside recycling items)

Hailey: Park & Ride, River Street and Bullion (cardboard only)

Ohio Gulch: The Blaine County Resource Recovery Center at Ohio Gulch (110 Ohio Gulch Road, off Highway 75 between Ketchum and Hailey, 788.0880, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday to Saturday) accepts just about every recyclable item. White goods (household appliances such as washing machines) can be recycled here for \$5. But if in working condition, drop them off at any valley thrift store. Computers (and related equipment) and other electronic devices (including batteries) can also be recycled here, free of charge.

Carey Transfer Station: With the exception of glass and plastics numbers 1 and 2, the station accepts everything accepted at Ohio Gulch, including hazardous household materials, motor oil and white goods. 1675 South 1800 East, Carey, 208.823.4308, 8 a.m.-6 p.m., Wednesday to Saturday.

Other ways to recycle

There are many businesses in the valley that take what consumers no longer need and will write a receipt for tax credit. For example, many mechanic shops take tires, used oil or antifreeze, and nonprofits and thrift stores accept books, furniture and clothing. The Building Material Thrift Store (3930 Woodside Boulevard, Hailey, buildingmaterialthriftstore.org) accepts resalable building and household materials; everything from working appliances, windows, shutters, fixtures, roofing, new carpet and doors, to entire houses. Open Tuesday to Friday, from 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. There is no charge to drop off items and pickup is available.

Nice shirt. Where did you get it?

The reincarnation of your plastic bottle of water

- **You (and several others) bought recyclable bottles of water**
- **Before recycling, you reused it a few times, filling it from the tap until it was spent.**
- **You (and others) recycle it.**
- **Your waste collector collects it from your curbside.**
- **Your collector sells it to an independent broker.**
- **The independent broker processes and separates your plastic, which he sells to a manufacturer as uniform plastic pellets.**
- **The manufacturer processes and mixes those pellets into fabric.**
- **Your new shirt is made of 50 percent recycled cotton and 50 percent recycled plastic.**



Recycling
from page 43

In the early 1990s, Hailey officials adopted a variable rate program, or “Pay As You Throw” (PAYT). According to Hailey City Clerk Heather Dawson, only a few dumpers (but enough to matter) trucked their trash to local canyons, rather than to designated landfills. But this, coupled with the fact that Hailey’s alleyways too often became strewn with trash, prompted the passing of an ordinance that mandated curbside garbage pickup. Residents can choose to use 33-gallon (currently \$11 per month) or 95-gallon (currently \$22) trash receptacles, encouraging users to keep an eye on their pocketbooks, as well as what they toss. Those who recycle more, and thus opt for the smaller receptacle, save \$130 each year on trash pickup.

Dawson says at first the program was met with strong resistance. But in the last 15 years, the canyons and alleys are cleaner and transplants to the area call not to complain, but to find out how they can recycle most efficiently.

Until that political will reaches critical mass, Barry and Goldstein say, there are numerous things one can do to improve recycling efforts in the valley. Besides recycling at home, valley residents should recycle at work, or persuade their employers to initiate a recycling program. Goldstein says many businesses think green by opting for electronic billing statements instead of sending paper through the mail. Sun Valley Company, owner of Sun Valley Resort, has recently begun a recycling program, which brings it recognition as a responsible corporate steward of the environment.

Of course, writing letters (or more eco-friendly e-mails) to persuade state representatives to adopt more progressive waste management goals, as well as pressing elected officials to pressure manufacturers to better design products and packaging with recycling in mind are also effective methods for eliciting further change.

Thinking green should also mean buying green products as well as recycling. “It’s not just putting something back into the system, but pulling from it as well,” said Barry. ♻️

writer: **Chad Walsh**

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80%

of the material in the airport's runway is recycled from the original runway

47%

reduction in Hailey City Hall's heating bill through 2-degree thermostat adjustments

256lbs

of lead was diverted from the waste stream by recycling the city's electronics

governing green

The path to green governance is not usually paved, so Friedman Memorial Airport in Hailey was at first surprised, and later a bit smug, at finding a green plan for resurfacing its tarmac.

When the airport's governing board decided to rebuild the Hailey field's single 6,952-foot runway in 2007, it approved a plan to grind and mill materials from the existing strip to use in the new runway.

As a result, 80 percent of the new runway is recycled from the original material; the remaining 20 percent recycled material was used for nearby parking areas and runway shoulders.

This recycling approach eliminated removing an estimated 66,000 tons of material from the airport and importing a like amount for the project. That in turn avoided 4,000 round-trip truck journeys, saving an estimated 80,000 miles of travel that would have burned 20,000 gallons of diesel fuel. In addition to sparing the environment, this strategy reduced the airport's runway construction costs from \$6 million to \$4 million.

Up and down the Wood River Valley, this sort of practical innovation and attention to detail are

Up and down the Wood River Valley, this sort of practical innovation and attention to detail are finding their way into public policy decisions to protect the environment.

finding their way into public policy decisions to protect the environment, upon which much of the local economy depends.

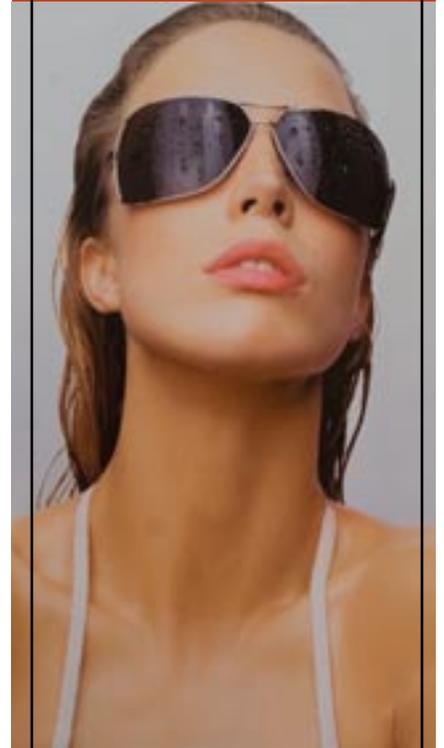
Actually, the Wood River Valley took its first tentative steps toward green policies several years ago when cities adopted the dark sky ordinance regulating outside lighting. Aggressive recycling soon followed.

Now, driven largely by the spirit of the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, the tiny local communities to varying degrees have either planned more ambitious green programs, when funds allowed, or have implemented them.

The city of Hailey is leading the way. In February 2007, then-Mayor Susan McBryant and the City Council created a Climate Protection Committee that has drawn up an ambitious, wide-ranging set of strategies and ideas for saving energy and creating environment-friendly habits.

Hailey's environmental matrix is not a government do-as-I-say edict, but an invitation to a do-as-I-do checklist of workable actions the city applies to its own operations that can also be adapted by its residents.

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An aerial view of Friedman Memorial Airport before the runway was rebuilt. East Hailey is in the background with the bike path and Buttercup Road heading north on the old railroad right-of-way.

habitat

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

It is our hope and belief that the stories in this green issue of *Habitat* will motivate our readers to reduce their carbon footprint and therefore benefit this beautiful Wood River Valley. However, we are aware of the impact the production of this magazine has on the environment. We have therefore ensured that our paper comes from an environmentally sound source. Manufactured in the U.S.A. by New Page, the paper you are holding is made from wood fiber sourced exclusively from verified sustainable sources. All of New Page's suppliers participate in certification programs such as the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® and the Forest Stewardship Council, and they do not accept wood from old growth forests, forests of exceptional conservation value or rainforests. In addition, this paper is acid-free and chlorine-free and is manufactured in a plant that conforms to strict regulations on air pollution, wastewater management and labor practices.

www.sunvalleyguide.com

There is nothing heroic or technologically difficult in the ideas: Never allow a car to idle more than 10 seconds when parked; use china plates rather than paper products; adjust house thermostats two degrees up in the summer, down in the winter; upgrade computers to laptops that use 90 percent less energy; reduce home landscaping that requires heavy irrigation; avoid chemicals for landscaping that could seep into nearby world-class trout streams.

Hailey's green coordinator Becky Stokes illustrates how small acts add up. The City Hall's heating bill has been reduced 47 percent through small thermostat adjustments. Other savings that have been realized include:

- 256 pounds of lead was diverted from the waste stream through recycling the city's discarded electronics
- 100 pounds of carbon dioxide per light/per year will be saved by the replacement of old light bulbs in city offices with CFL bulbs
- 13 percent reduction in the disposal of solid waste made by replacing virgin office paper with 30 per cent post consumer recycled paper
- 9.3 percent reduction in electricity use (measured in kilowatt-hours) achieved from March through October due to conscientious turning off of unused lights and electronics in municipal offices
- 10 percent reduction in therms (a unit of heat) used by municipal buildings from March through September

If Hailey, the valley's largest town with close to 7,000 residents, is cutting a wide swath with its green initiatives, the valley's smallest town, Carey, with barely 700 people, is also doing its part. Carey Mayor Rick Baird points out that the city is requiring open space as more residents move from urban areas to less congested rural places.

Baird also hails the town's energetic opposition to a series of 100-plus-foot-tall towers requiring a 220-foot right of way for a 500-kilovolt transmission line running through the small community—a project the residents consider degrading to the environment.

The spark plug of the valley's green movement, the Ketchum-based Environmental Resource Center, is not just concerned with the outdoors. The group is urging local governments to build

more efficient buildings to increase productivity of occupants. ERC Executive Director Craig Barry cites studies showing student grades improve 10 to 20 percent in buildings with better lighting and air quality. It is also vigorous in campaigning for computer users to dispose of old equipment at the central valley's Ohio Gulch waste station.

Other cities are doing their part, too. Bellevue City Administrator Tom Blanchard aims to replace all the lights on Main Street to conform to the dark sky ordinance as well as to acquire land for a greenbelt and hiking trail along the Big Wood River.

At the valley's largest private employer, the Sun Valley Company, green has been in for years at a resort operation virtually the size of a city.

Marketing Director Jack Sibbach says transportation is the largest and costliest of the company's green efforts. It funds two daily bus runs between Twin Falls and Sun Valley, picking up employees along the way. It also meets and transports by van all resort guests arriving at the airport. At least 80 passes have been bought by the resort and given to employees for use on Mountain Rides' local commuter bus. The company also bought four vans to use as rideshare vehicles for workers who live in distant areas.

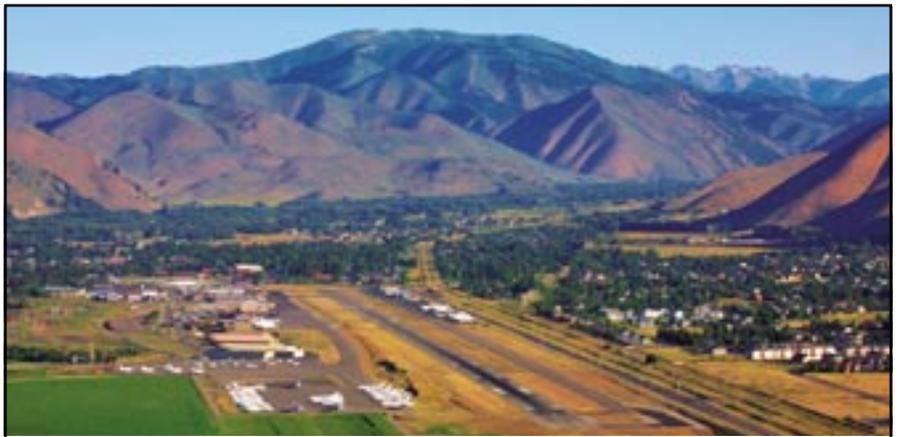
Each of these strategies aims at reducing the number of private vehicles on the valley's sole transportation artery, Highway 75, to save fuel and cut back on polluting emissions that would obscure the area's spectacular vistas.

In addition, recycling bins have been installed throughout the resort grounds. Shops are reusing shipping supplies and all the resort's housekeeping products and cleaning supplies are certified as environmentally friendly.

And, perhaps as a tribute to owner Earl Holding's long-range vision of the resort's legacy, Sibbach said a conscious decision has been made not to develop all the company's extensive land into housing or recreation activities, but instead to leave much of it as open space. ☞

writer: **Pat Murphy**
 photographer: **Judy Hanselman,**
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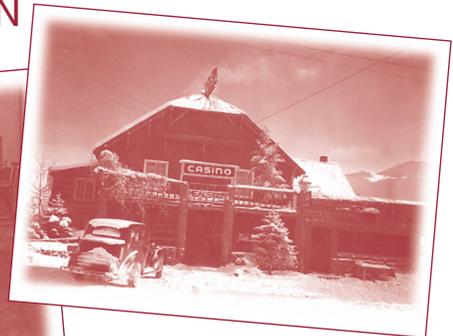
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pick habitat

Green gadgets: We scoured the valley to find this selection of simple, inexpensive tools that will help reduce your carbon footprint and, by being available locally, allow you to expend less energy.

Photos by Paulette Phlipot. Research by Sabina Dana Plasse.



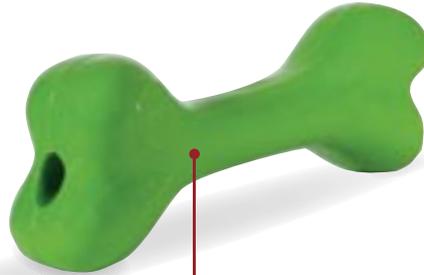
Planet Dog Hemp Dog Collar: Made from hemp (one of nature's strongest fabrics) this collar features a nylon-reinforced plastic quick-release buckle for extra durability. The purchase of Planet Dog items helps fund canine service programs.

\$14-\$17 at BasicsPlus in Hailey



Wineaway: Remove red wine stains from carpet and fabrics with this chemical-free stain remover. Made from vegetable extracts, it is safe for any environment and can prolong the life of carpets and furniture.

\$7.99 at Sun Valley Wine Company



Planet Dog Orbee-Tuff Bone: Made from non-toxic, recyclable materials this bone is available in a variety of sizes and "chew-o-meter" ratings. Peppermint scented, it floats, bounces and is very sturdy.

\$6-\$16 at Thunderpaws in Ketchum

Seventh Generation Free & Clear Dish Liquid:

According to Seventh Generation, if every household replaced just one 25-ounce bottle of petroleum-based dishwashing liquid with this non-toxic, phosphate-free alternative, it could save 81,000 barrels of oil.

\$3.99 at Atkinsons' Markets and Albertsons



Ecover Ecological Dishwasher Tablets:

These tablets are made from natural plant and mineral-based ingredients and promise to clean and degrease dishes effectively, leaving no residue. Ecover produces all its cleaning products in unique, eco-friendly factories.

\$5.49 at Atkinsons' Markets and Albertsons



Kiehl's Abyssine Cream+: Global warming, carbon emissions and air pollutants cause havoc to the skin. One of the best defenses is this luxurious moisturizer, made from naturally-derived ingredients, it defends skin against aging and free-radical damage.

\$42 at Pure in Ketchum



Campo light and cell phone charger:

This self-chargeable flashlight uses a side crank to create instant, manual energy for battery powered devices. It comes with adapters for five cell phone chargers.

\$15.99 at Chateau Drug in Ketchum



Garbage Pals: Get rid of chemical deodorizers and replace them with these holistic crystals to keep garbage pails odorless. Made with essential oil crystals, they contain 100 percent aromatic lime, grapefruit or orange scents. Just peel and stick inside the can.

\$3.99 for one sachet at Ketchum Kitchens



GE Energy Smart™ CFL bulbs: These use less energy and last longer than regular incandescent bulbs. A 15-watt CFL can replace a 60-watt incandescent and produce the same amount of light. The GE line includes spiral, bi-x and compact fluorescent reflector shapes that fit track, recessed and chandelier lighting.

\$5.99 at L.L. Green's Hardware in Hailey





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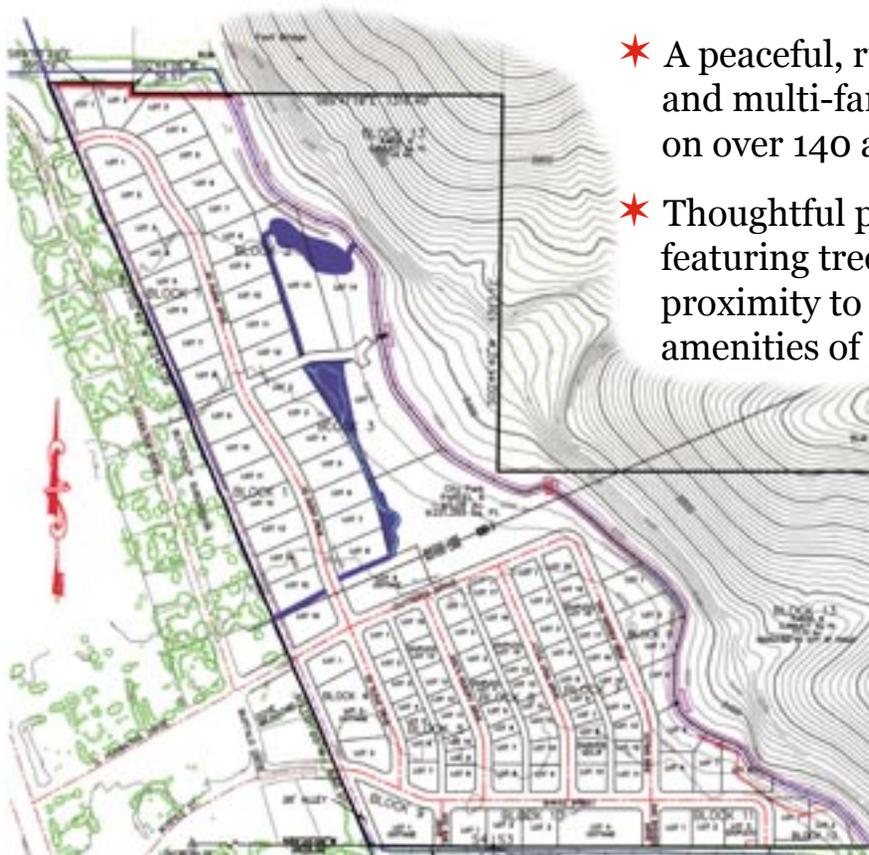
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