

# MY PERSONAL/FAMILY ACTION PLAN TO LOWER ENERGY USE

Created \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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*Bringing together the head, heart, & hands of community  
to re-localize and thrive.*

[www.TransitionAsheville.org](http://www.TransitionAsheville.org)

## **How to Change Your Habits, Reduce Your Carbon Footprint and Create Resilience in Your Community**

This booklet has been provided to you as a tool to use in planning how you and your family can lower your energy use and promote a resilient community. Resilient communities are those that can continue to function and even thrive in the face of outside challenges. With access to cheap fossil fuels declining, we can all look at how we use our resources and create a plan of action that lowers our use of energy and our impact on global climate. Each page of this booklet focuses on a different area of your life and asks you to get creative in identifying changes you can make to create your own plan to lower your energy use and dependency upon fossil fuels.

**Sample Guidelines – Here are some basic principles that may help you in developing your own plan, many of which are derived from permaculture design principles.**

- Produce no waste – rethink, reduce, repair, reuse, recycle, or phase out
- Use less, buy less; develop sharing & barter strategies
- Move to low maintenance & wherever possible to no maintenance
- Catch and store energy where ever and when ever possible
- Look at how to use elements that perform multiple functions – for example planting an apple tree provides food, shade, bird perches, pollinator attraction, and ultimately firewood
- Use the appropriate level of technology, i.e. why use high-tech if medium-tech will do

**Stages of lowering your energy use – Identify what you can do at each stage of your planning.**

- Immediate – something you can do right now that may not even require money, just a change in behavior
- Intermediate - projects or changes that require some learning and/or planning that may require up to a year to implement, such as planting a garden.
- Long-term goals – This step outlines how you build on what you have done so far and creates even greater energy reduction. These goals may be phased in over several years.

Completing this booklet is a step in creating a personal vision for living a more resilient and sustainable lifestyle. Share your ideas. Get your family and neighbors involved. If you add up all the changes that we implement as individuals we are on the road to creating a community-wide energy descent action plan.

## Food

- In the U.S. our current form of agriculture uses 17% of the energy produced from fossil fuels and less than 7% of the food consumed in WNC is produced locally. I can lower my carbon footprint by changing what I eat and where I get my food.

What I can do now:

My goals for the next year:

My long-term goals:

## Housing

Homes in the U.S. use 21% of all energy. Drafty building methods account for as much as 40 percent of our primary energy use, 70 percent of our electricity consumption and nearly 40 percent of our carbon-dioxide emissions. I can lower my carbon footprint by the way I maintain/ retrofit/design/live in my home.

What I can do now:

My goals for the next year:

My long-term goals:

## Transportation

We must travel to get to school, work and play but the way we travel could be changed. In 2013 greenhouse gas emissions from transportation accounted for about 27% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, making it the second largest contributor of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions after the Electricity sector. I can lower my carbon footprint by changing the way I travel and meet my mobility needs by rethinking the way my family gets around.

What I can do now:

My goals for the next year:

My long-term goals:

## **Clothing**

Based on estimated annual global textile production of 60 billion kilograms of fabric, the estimated energy and water needed to produce that amount of fabric is 1,074 billion KWh of electricity (or 132 million metric tons of coal) and between 6 – 9 trillion liters of water. I can lower my footprint by the way that I clothe myself and my family.

What I can do now:

My goals for the next year:

My long-term goals:

## Economics

Small, local businesses employ more than 52 percent of the nation's workers. For every \$100 spent at a locally owned business, \$73 stays in the local economy, creating jobs and paying for essential services. For every \$100 spent at a non-locally owned business, only \$43 stays in the community. I can lower my carbon footprint and support my community by buying local.

What I can do now:

My goals for the next year:

My long-term goals:

## Water

Less than 1% of the world's water is readily available for direct human uses and 1/3 of the world's population live in countries that are experiencing water stress. The U.S. family of 4 uses 400 gallons of water a day. Compare that to the 5 gallons used by the typical home in Africa. I can save this precious resource by conserving my use of water.

What I can do now:

My goals for the next year:

My long-term goals:



## Investments

According to the Slow Money movement, the 21st Century will be the era of nurture capital, built around principles of carrying capacity, care of the commons, sense of place and non-violence. Connecting investors to the places where they live creates vital relationships and new sources of capital for small local enterprises. I can help create a new generation of entrepreneurs, consumers and investors by the way I invest my savings.

What I can do now:

My goals for the next year:

My long-term goals:

## **Social & Neighborhood Networks**

As access to cheap fossil fuel declines, how we build and maintain social networks will help define how resilient we are. Building community in our neighborhoods increases our social wellbeing. At the same time, it creates resilience, sustainability, and a future where local needs can be met through skill and resource sharing, emergency preparedness, food production, and creating new “family” groups. I can make my neighborhood a place of belonging, a place of health and well-being and a place where people will want to live and work.

What I can do now:

My goals for the next year:

My long-term goals: