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What living green means

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By WIGGS MENDOZA

Published: Friday, August 7, 2009 1:34 PM CDT

No matter where you turn nowadays, there are reminders that our planet is in trouble. And this is old news. Back in November 1992, the Union of Concerned Scientists, based in Cambridge, Mass., gained the signatures of over 1,500 members to emphasize the growing fact that humans and the natural world are on a collision course. And it is true. Human activities, whether intentional or not, cause harsh and many times irreversible damage to the natural environment. These human activities place a strain on the earth's resources as well.

From this one example alone, if not checked, many of our current practices put at serious risk our future. In fact, life on this earth may be so altered by our own actions that our world will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know it today. We already see this trend coming about in our own water shortage crisis. We don't need to travel any farther than our own valley by observing the drop in the water level at the local Diamond Valley Lake or even Lake Matthews. These are our drinking-water supplies.

Therefore, fundamental changes are urgently needed if we are to avoid the collision our present course is headed for. Many look to "the big picture" to bring about this change. We gaze at governments and the corporate world for this change to come from. But the real change begins with us. Neither institutions nor organizations can bring about the change we need; it begins with people. Individuals. We need to learn how to "live green."

Green living is not only about us, human beings. It is also about plants, animals, and the places where we live. Green living means choosing to become more responsible. It means thinking about our changing climate and conserving our resources.

This takes effort, but we can do it. Here is a useful list of simple steps to begin becoming more responsible; to begin thinking greener, acting greener, and living greener.

1. Take ownership: We can no longer point the finger of blame toward anyone else before we first see how we play a part in this problem. Look for ways in which to stop and then repair the damage within our sphere of influence.

2. Stay informed: Learn as much as possible about what can be done by you as an individual and how you can increase your effectiveness by supporting or joining groups that advocate green living.

3. Buy and install green: It is becoming easier and easier to know what effects the things you buy have on the environment and your pocketbook.

Wiggs Mendoza is the founder and president of the Green Coalition of San Jacinto Valley. He can be reached at greencoal@rocketmail.com.

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