6. Appendix: Simple things residents can do in their homes, schools, and businesses to improve the environmental and social conditions of the TRW

## Water quality and quantity

1. Avoid opening manholes during flood events or storms. Find other means to control flooding, such as building culverts and storm ditches. The wastewater treatment plants in Mexico currently do not have the capacity to treat the quantity of storm water, nor the storm water pollutants. The addition of storm waters to the wastewater causes overflow of wastewater into the estuary and ocean.
2. Never throw anything (trash, chemicals, oil, even organic materials) down the storm drains. These items clog the system, pollute streams and oceans, and harm wildlife. Clogging storm drains can also cause more flooding problems in city streets when it rains.
3. Pick up your animal waste. The bacteria from animal droppings can seep into the ground and contaminate ground and surface waters.
4. Detect water leaks. Check your water meter before and after leaving your home vacant to see if there is a leak that needs to be reported to the landlord or water agency.
5. Reduce water consumption. Water is a limited and costly resource in this region. Do not run water when washing dishes, clothes, brushing your teeth, or shaving. Use a bucket to wash your car. Take short showers. Collect dishwater for watering plants and lawns. To reduce water consumption by 1 to 2 gallons per flush, place a 1 gallon plastic milk jug full of rocks and water in the tank of the toilet.
6. Report all sewage and water leaks immediately to your city’s Comisión Estatal de Servicios Públicos or the San Diego County Water Authority.

## Environment and Natural Resources

1. Plant native shrubs and drought-resistant trees and shrubs in your yard. This will decrease water use, increase habitat area, and attract local birds, insects, reptiles, and mammals. The shade provided by native trees cools your house and yard. The roots of the trees help retain soil in your yard.
2. Avoid exotic plants. Avoid using grass—you will help the environment and heavily-watered lawns are attractions for skunks, opossums, and other unwanted guests. If you have a grass lawn, place tin cans around the lawn and time how long the sprinklers take to fill the can 1 inch. That is how long the sprinklers should run.
3. Place bird feeders and baths in your lawn. The TRW is a migratory stopover for birds in the Americas. The wetlands they have used for centuries are diminishing, but households can help in small ways until our local wetlands recover.
4. Cut up plastic beverage six-pack holders and never let helium balloons go—these can strangle wildlife.
5. Bring your own bags to the store, or avoid using bags. Plastic bags are increasingly seen as a major threat to the environment, wildlife, and our landfills.

## Solid and Hazardous Waste

1. Avoid the use of household cleaning products and insecticides with chemicals. Never throw unused chemical products into the sink or rivers. Remember, these chemicals can end up in your well water, streams, and oceans.
2. Use water-based paint. Chemicals and heavy metals in lead-based paint can harm humans and the environment.
3. Use rechargeable batteries; can save you money. Dead batteries should not be thrown away or burned, because they leak hazardous materials into the soil and water, and can explode. Deliver them to the San Diego Household Hazardous Waste Transfer Facility (858-694-7000).
4. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Aluminum foil, glass jars, plastic containers and other items can be rinsed and reused. If an item is unusable, rinse it and recycle it.
5. Chidren should educate their parents about litter. When hiking in the hills, at the beach, or along the streams and rivers, carry a trash bag and pick up trash.
6. Start a recycling program. Children should ask their teachers to start a recycling center at their schools. Recyclables can bring in money.
7. Take toxic household products to the appropriate hazardous waste centers. Examples of toxic products are pesticide containers, used motor oil, gasoline, paint thinner, batteries, paint containers, and so forth. Studies in the TRW show that residential pollutants in wastewater are even more of a problem than industrial pollutants.
8. Compost your organic waste in a corner of your yard. In addition to helping reduce bulk in the landfills, this compost is excellent fertilizer. Sprinkle the compost pile with ash or lime (*cal*), and turn the compost pile so that the sun “cooks” the compost for about a month before using it in plant beds. Lightly watering the compost pile helps speed up the decomposition process.
9. Report illegal dumping to DGE, EPA, or similar authority.
10. Never dump unwanted items in public places like rivers or arroyos. Take them to recycling centers, donation centers, or landfills that have liners proventing leakage into the groundwater and soil.
11. Donate your old car to charity. This will keep cars out of the landfills and prevent automobile fluids from leaking into the soil and groundwater. Car donations can be tax deductible in the United States.
12. • The City of San Diego Environmental Services Department collects recyclables in blue bins from the street curb. Permitted mixed materials in the blue bins include magazines, newspapers, catalogs, phonebooks, dry food boxes, packaging, paper bags, cardboard, white paper, colored paper, letters, junk mail, steel, tin, aluminum, foil, pie plates, glass, plastic bottles (1 and 2), all California redemption value (CRV) containers, and empty aerosol cans.
13. • The City of San Diego Environmental Services Department also can recommend companies to recycle construction, demolition, and yard wastes. They offer condominium and apartment recycling programs, and commercial recycling programs. Household hazardous wastes are accepted at the hazardous waste transfer facility which is open Saturdays at the Miramar Landfill entrance on Convoy St. just north of 53-Frwy. For all questions regarding recycling in San Diego call 858-694-7000.

## Air Quality

1. Bike, carpool, and take the bus or trolley as much as you can. Apply for a SENTRI border crossing pass to help alleviate border area traffic and pollution.
2. Turn off your lights and appliances when not in use. This practice saves money and reduces the power plants’ use of fossil fuels.
3. Use incandescent lightbulbs or higher wattage lightbulbs for the above reasons.
4. When building your house, calculate how much money could be saved by installing solar panels.
5. Avoid using styrofoam products. The production process contributes to ozone depletion. In addition, styrofoam is slow to biodegrade and takes up much landfill space.

# Socioeconomic Issues

1. Vote in elections, and write or call your representatives. Demand that politicians be responsible with your watershed resources. Put your local issues on their agenda.
2. Volunteer for a local charity, NGO, orphanage, senior center, etc. Community involvement and pride can increase the quality of life for many.
3. Buy local. Try to buy local produce, nursery plants, and household products; avoid larger chains. Transportation of goods from outside the watershed can have negative effects on the TRW’s air quality, environment, traffic, and local economy.
4. Take a vacation in your own neighborhood. Enjoy the local beauty of the TRW by hiking in the Otay Mountain Wilderness Area; bird watching at the Tijuana Estuary; visiting Playas de Tijuana, tourist districts in Tijuana, tourist ranches in Tecate; and camp in the upper watershed near El Compadre, La Hechicera, or Valle de Las Palmas.
5. ADDENDUM
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