

# Making Ripples

by Amanda Bancroft

Sustainability makes us stronger both mentally and physically as we tackle challenging problems like air pollution and tough out long bicycle commutes. Nobody wants to see us wimp out and get wiped off the planet because of environmental damage. The journey to be eco-friendly takes guts. It's an adventure that can last a lifetime for those courageous enough to pursue the lifestyle. To protect our families and ourselves, we can create healthy, sustainable environments that allow everyone to be at their peak performance.

In Denmark, the Green Kayak Initiative aims to clean up trashed waterways by giving out free kayak rentals to anyone willing to pick up litter along the way. From experience, kayaking takes some serious upper-body strength, which I unfortunately lack. This is just one in a million examples of how people can get fit while helping save the planet and money. Littering is not cool, but picking it up from a kayak is! Lake Fayetteville has also utilized volunteers for on-the-water trash cleanups from canoes and kayaks coordinated by local non-profits, so keep on the lookout for future events.

Bicycle commuting in all kinds of weather isn't easy. It takes inner strength and powerful muscles, too. When people honk just to frighten the cyclist, courage is needed. Toughing it out and peddling to places rather than driving saves money on car insurance, gas, and repairs. It increases endurance and stamina, too!

Protecting one's family is easier when the house doesn't hurt them. Purchase greener products, such as organic clothing, non-toxic cleaning supplies, low or no-VOC paints, and sustainable food, so that everyone's health benefits. Home repairs, remodeling or green retrofits can be just another way to show your family that you've got what it takes.

If you're single and looking to meet someone new, sharing an interest in sustainable living (or a related topic) is a great way to strike up a conversation. Sustainability is sexy! People who care look like good partners. Non-profit fundraisers, social meet-up groups or online groups involved in saving the planet could be just what you need to begin a new romantic relationship.

Lagging behind in going green? Catch up with the competition and find a way that appeals to you to do one small sustainable action this week. Just like a workout, it takes repetition to form new lifestyle habits. Never give up!

Amanda Bancroft is a writer, artist, and naturalist building an off-grid cottage for land conservation on Kessler Mountain. She and her husband Ryan blog about their adventures and offer a solar-hosted online educational center on how to make a difference with everyday choices at: [www.RipplesBlog.org](http://www.RipplesBlog.org).