

RUNNING HEAD: Carbon Footprint

Unit 2 Assignment

By Michelle Hoffmann

Kaplan University

SC225: Environmental Science: Ecosystems, Resources, and Carbon Footprints

Prof: Natasha Henry

February, 22, 2014

Each of us has some impact on the environment around us, some of us more than others. Most of us now realize the detrimental impact that our species has been incurring and are consciously trying to lessen this impact. Each time we turn on the lights, drive to work, smoke a cigarette, throw away a coffee cup or a pop can, we leave a footprint that contributes to the growing amount of damage we are doing to our Earth. If each one of us were to simply change one thing in our daily routine to minimize our own carbon footprint, we would be able to make the world's resources last a little longer and minimize the resulting damages.

On a typical day, I would drive 13 miles to work. Since my car gets approximately twenty-three miles to the gallon, it will use up just over 1.13 tanks of gas to make the trip there and back. Since I work only 4 days per week, I can usually go a week between tank fills. My car has a 12 gallon fuel tank. I realize this is not a very fuel efficient vehicle, so I am saving up to buy a more economical vehicle.

Dinners in our household consist of ninety-nine percent home cooked meals. Rarely do we turn on our oven; we prefer stove-top cooking, as using the oven causes the apartment to heat up quite a bit. When we do use the oven, it is for a short time. If we are baking cookies, then we will have something for dinner that can be cooked in the oven, this way we can maximize our usage.

On a typical day, we try not to throw out any food. If something does not get eaten, it gets put into a compost bin and used as fertilizer. If any vegetables go bad in our refrigerator, we give them to the fish. They love peas and cucumbers!

Lights, the television, and most other electronic devices are turned off when no one is home, but the fish tank, microwave, and computers are usually left on. The fish tank is left on because

the fish need the aeration, the microwave has a clock on it. We leave the computers on because we have them doing some occupational tasks, such as running a mailer.

The water usage in our household, I admit, can be lessened. Each of us takes one shower or bath daily, usually 15 - 20 minutes in length. However, my teenage daughter can last up to one half hour. My son likes to take baths, usually filling the tub about 1/4 full. When brushing our teeth, we all have this habit of leaving the water running while brushing. Leaving the water on for two minutes, times four people, times two to three times per, means that quite a bit of water is wasted.

As for leaky faucets, we have one in the kitchen. In order to stop the dripping, we simply move the arm of the faucet a little until the dripping stops.

Paper and other paper products are usually burned. Plastics, glass, rubber and other such materials are separated into bags and taken to the recycle center once a week. Our town does not have a recycle center so I have to take it with me to work. Food items that end up getting tossed into the garbage are put into our compost pile and used as fertilizer.

Our apartment building is heated by hot water. The water is heated by a water heater and pumped through the walls into heating ducts in each apartment. Because we live on the second floor of our building, we get the heat from below as well as from our own apartment; this reduces our heating bill quite a bit.

Now that I have determined the various ways that my family and I have an impact on our environment, if I really think about it, I can see a few ways in which I can lessen the impact. The most notable of these would be water usage. By taking shorter showers and by turning the water

off while each of us brushes our teeth, we can save thousands of gallons of water per year. The leaky faucet will need to be fixed so that we will no longer be wasting water through dripping.

If every one of us took a look at our daily lives and changed just one behavior that was creating a footprint, our Earth would be a much healthier place to live. We have only one Earth, we need to preserve it.