

Environmental Best Practices



How Can You Lessen Your Impact on Our North Brunswick Environment?

Think about everything you do during your average day. The things you buy and their packaging, the number of plastic bottles you consume, what chemicals you put on your lawn, the vehicle you drive and the number of miles you drive all impact the environment. Now what changes are you willing to make, no matter how small, to improve the environment and minimize the impact? You can pick up garbage in your community (See Plogging [Video](#)) , create a rain garden to reduce run-off to the sewers, install solar panels, car pool, create a compost pile and employ many other practices.

The environmental problems in the world today can sometimes seem overwhelming. You as an individual can make a huge impact to fix them.

Click on each link to see some practical and very easy ideas for environmental best practices. There are of course many more you can implement when you think about the impact of your actions every day.

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Automotive



In the market for a new car? Buy a fuel-efficient vehicle - hybrid or electric. A \$5,000 rebate is now available in NJ when buying an electric car.

Don't idle or warm up the car before driving. The EPA and DOE explain that it is better to turn your engine off and start it again than to leave it idling.

Try to carpool with co-workers. Plan your trips and routes to minimize mileage and frequency of trips. Perhaps you can stop for groceries on your way home from work.



Composting



Create a compost pile in your back yard. Compostable materials include leaves, grass, fruit and vegetable waste, and egg shells. Items not suitable for composting include meat, bones, dairy items and grains.



Conservation

Get involved. Encourage your town to consider banning materials that adversely impact the environment (Styrofoam containers, plastic cups, single-use plastic water bottles, etc.), participate in a community clean-up or attend town meetings (Township Council or Environmental Commission).



Environmental Goals

Set a list of goals to lessen your impact on the environment. Review your progress annually. You can break your goals up into weekly, monthly, quarterly... here's an example: This year –

January – March

- Use Pet Safe ice melt
- Have an Energy Assessment done on your home.
You can do a free assessment on PSE&G website.
<https://myenergyanalyzer.pseg.com/?mode=explore>

April - June

- Plant an herb or vegetable garden
- Create a compost pile

July – September

- Support local farms and locally sourced ingredients.
- Buy a mulching mower to cut your grass.

October - December

- Program thermostat to lower heat setting when at work or when sleeping.
- Seal up cracks that let in cool air from outside.

Fast Food



Coffee shops and other fast foods generate a lot of garbage and containers hazardous to the environment. Reusable cups are a great solution. Bring your own refillable container when going to the coffee shop. Avoid fast food establishments that utilize single-use containers. If you do go to fast food restaurants be sure to dispose of waste properly.

If you're a water drinker, consider bringing your own water in non-disposable, reusable container. It's also a good idea to have a reusable water bottle in the car, especially for long trips.



Garbage

First rule of thumb is to try to avoid generating waste. Buy only what you need, avoid excess packaging, buy used items, and be sure to sort out recyclable items. Don't buy disposable plates, cups or silverware. Limit yourself to one township-issued trash can. Many households use two cans putting leaves and other yard waste in the trash unnecessarily (See [Composting](#))

Leaves that cannot not be mulched by a lawn mower can be put in township-provided leaf bags in the fall for designated pickup days. Leaf bags are available at the Public Works building on Quarry Lane.



Link for collection dates: https://northbrunswicknj.gov/programs_and_service/leaf-collection/

Sticks can be tied up and scheduled for pickup.

For businesses and residences with dumpsters, choose the ones with tops to prevent wind-blown litter. If you live in a community with an open dumpster, request closed dumpsters through your association.

The dumpster below is not a good choice because wind can blow trash out.



The dumpster below has a top and is therefore less likely to have trash blown out.





Consider giving fewer material items as gifts and give movie passes, restaurant certificates or spa or other membership certificates. When giving a material item, make sure it is something the person will use.

Hazardous Chemicals and Electronics

Utilize the Middlesex County Household Hazardous Waste Disposal days to drop off things like paint, oil, old gas and other hazardous materials rather than putting these in the garbage. Link: <http://www.middlesexcountynj.gov/Government/Departments/PSH/Pages/Household-Hazardous-Waste.aspx>



Electronics contain many hazardous materials including lead, mercury, cadmium and others. Residents are required by State Law to recycle computers, computer monitors, televisions, printers and fax machines.

Electronic waste (computers, printers, monitors, TVs) **is not** collected by the township curbside. A regulatory change now bans them from going to the landfill. Residents can drop off items to New Tech Recycling at 600 Apgar Drive Somerset NJ 08873. Residents should call (732) 564-3110 to schedule a drop off appointment.



Lawn

Property owners should adopt environmentally friendly practices such as not using pesticides, minimizing watering of lawns and planting native plants.

Pick up garbage before mowing. This prevents generating microplastics which make their way into waterways.

Yard waste should **not** be placed in the garbage. Using a mulching mower for grass and leaves reduces your labor, helps keep nitrogen and other nutrients in your soil and reduces the waste put out to the curb.



Participate in public clean-up events or take it upon yourself to clean up your [neighborhood](#) .



New Construction

North Brunswick is very developed. When there is new construction planned, the North Brunswick Planning Board takes into consideration many factors including:

- controlling density;
 - preserving open space; and
 - ensuring that adequate water, sewer capacity and other necessary utilities are available for developments.
 - the uses to which real estate can be put (e.g., industrial, commercial, residential or institutional);
 - the density of development (e.g., number of square feet of building space per unit of land area);
 - the height, setback and overall architectural configuration of individual buildings;
 - the sizes and configurations of yards and open space; and
- street frontages.

If new construction is planned for your neighborhood and you have concerns, attend Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustments, or Township Council meetings to voice your concerns.



Newspapers and Flyers


Many free newspapers and flyers are distributed to residences. Be diligent about picking these up on a regular basis and recycling when possible. Newspapers that are not picked up are an eyesore and often make their ways to the sewer along with plastic bags that contain them.




Pets and Pet Waste

Dog waste should be collected and disposed of properly. There are pet waste disposal stations in our parks and in some neighborhoods. Pet waste bags are also inexpensive and some are biodegradable. Pet waste left out is not just an annoyance if you step in it. Pet waste doesn't just decompose. It adds harmful bacteria and nutrients to local waters, when it's not disposed of properly. It might not seem like a [stormwater](#) problem, but animal waste is one of the many seemingly small sources of pollution that can add up to big problems for water quality, and even human health.



For feral cats, contact the [North Brunswick Humane Association](#) , serving the Greater Brunswick area. They may be able to help with the issue in a humane manner.

Unowned cats (who may be lost, abandoned, or “born free”) sometimes live in colonies, and a kind human may be taking care of them to some degree. The most humane (and long-term cost effective) way to deal with unowned cats who are too wild to be adopted is via Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return (TNVR), whereby cats are trapped, spayed (if female) or neutered (if male), vaccinated, and returned to the location where they are used to living, if this is feasible, or another suitable one. The tips of their left ears are often cut off to identify them as members of a managed colony. There must be a caretaker in charge of providing food, fresh water, and veterinary care. Assistance is available through various organizations including , [Alley Cat Allies](#), and other local volunteers.

Recycling

Know what materials can be recycled and what cannot in North Brunswick; you can find out about recycling in our town [here](#) .

Most commonly recycled:

aluminum
tin
glass
#1 plastic
#2 plastic
Paper (except for shredded paper)
cardboard



The recyclable symbol looks something like this:

Not typically recycled:

- ◇ food-contaminated boxes like pizza boxes
- ◇ containers still containing food
- ◇ Styrofoam
- ◇ food waste
- ◇ Tech items like computers, tablets, phones

Some of these things may be recycled elsewhere. Recyclables should not be put in plastic bags. Often plastic bags containing recyclables are discarded at the sorting facility without being opened. Putting the wrong things in your recycling container often ends up resulting in more material going to the landfill.



Shopping

Plastic bags are a large contributor to litter and garbage generation. Keep reusable shopping bags in your car and use them when you go shopping. Recently, legislation was enacted regarding the use of plastic bags and straws, for more information use this link: <https://anjec.org/plastic-pollution-pollution/>



Buy products that are environmentally friendly with minimal packaging.

Buy only what you need. It is estimated that around 30 percent of food is wasted at the consumer level.

Solar

Consider installing solar panels. Many companies offer free installation and electricity credits for utilizing their panels. Not only can you save on monthly energy costs but you can reduce your carbon footprint.



New Jersey's Clean energy site gives some useful information for evaluating alternatives for installation.

Utilities

Use a programmable thermostat to control heat. The heat setting can be lowered when working or at night when you are in bed. Homes with multiple heat zones can similarly be controlled by using lower heat settings when rooms are not in use.



Water

Do not buy single use plastic water bottles. Single use water bottles are problematic because there is currently not a viable recycling option and many end up in the landfill or as litter along the road or in the waterways.



Home filtration systems (pitchers with filters or in-line filters) are a cheaper alternative. Another alternative is to use 5 gallon returnable bottles from a supplier.



Try to minimize water consumption. Install shower heads and toilets with low water consumption rate (often referred to as low-flow). Turn off water when brushing your teeth or soaping up your dishes. The water you run unused down the sink does not just go back into the usable system where it can be poured out again. It goes to the same place dirty dish water and human waste goes. Clean water running down the sink for nothing goes off to the sewer. This runs your meter and your bill up. It also takes energy to make water clean for use by everyone, so if you want the water bill to be less, be mindful of running taps. And save yourself, and all of us, some money while you're watching your water waste.

Wildlife

Have respect for other species – and be careful when driving. It is best to leave wildlife alone unless he/she is in trouble. Even then do not approach or put yourself at risk. Contact a wildlife rehabilitator, or Animal Control for assistance or advice. The New [Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife](#) has information on what to do about injured or orphaned wildlife, and has a [link to a list of licensed wildlife rehabilitators](#) in the state. Note that there are no licensed rehabilitators in Middlesex County. If interested, you can apprentice with an existing facility.

