



GULF COAST CENTER FOR
**ECOTOURISM &
SUSTAINABILITY**

50 Things You Can Do to Celebrate Earth Day's 50th Anniversary!

1. Don't litter and pick up litter when you see it. [Woodside Restaurant at Gulf State Park](#) has been known to serve up a free "Trail Trash" coffee or drink if patrons bring in a piece of trash off any of the nature trails!
2. Bring your own reusable grocery bags whenever you shop. If you forget, try to carry what items you can without a bag.
3. Do not feed wild animals (see a reason why in this Gulf State Park Nature Center video on their resident [alligators](#). This is not to be confused with putting out bird feeders or nectar for pollinators in your yard).
4. Use reusable items. Save glass and plastic food containers with lids to use for left-overs at home and in restaurants. Always choose reusable items over disposable ones! (beverage containers, reusable tupperware, reusable zip lock bags, or make beeswax wraps with your family and friends to use instead of plastic bags, plastic food wrap, or aluminum foil)
5. Refuse single use items & things you do not need (items like free samples, flyers, plastic straws, receipts, goody bags when polite to refuse, business cards, takeaway drink cups, etc)
6. Volunteer & donate to environmental groups (Link: [Coastal Environment Groups, Organizations and Agencies](#))
7. Plant a native tree (Link: [Common Trees in Alabama Useful in Conservation Planning](#))
8. Remove invasive plant species (Link: [Alabama's Worst Invasives](#))
9. Build bird feeders (Link: [DIY Water Bottle Bird Feeder](#))
10. Keep your distance from animals when observing them in the wild or observe them on a webcam. For example, spend a couple minutes observing the Ospreys in Orange Beach (Links: [Wolf Bay Osprey Cam](#), [Note on observing wildlife from Gulf State Park](#))
11. Compost your natural waste and/or ask local authorities to begin a food waste collection service for city-wide composting efforts. The resulting nutrient-rich soil could be used in community gardens or in local residents' gardens. (Link: [Things You Can Compost.](#))
12. Walk, bike, skate, or carpool to reduce carbon emissions from vehicles.
13. Reduce your meat consumption & buy fruits and vegetables from local farmers (Link: [Baldwin County Farmers Markets](#))
14. Do not overuse fertilizers and pesticides & try to avoid using insecticides and herbicides.
15. Turn off lights at night to avoid interrupting nocturnal wildlife's behavioral patterns (Link: [Animals Need the Dark](#))
16. Shop at thrift stores instead of purchasing new & donate any clothes and shoes you've outgrown, any toys or electronics you no longer use, etc
17. Conserve water by taking a quick shower instead of a bath, only running full loads of laundry or dishes, and turning water off when brushing teeth (Links: [Alabama 40-Gallon Challenge](#), [2-minute shower songs](#) to conserve water, [Splish splash: How music playlists are helping save water in the shower](#))
18. Practice sustainable fishing and hunting methods (Link: [Outdoor Alabama](#))

19. Save electricity by shutting down your computer every night or put it on Sleep Mode when you are not using it, turning off lights in rooms that are not being used, and dry your clothes on a clothesline outside instead of putting them into the dryer (sunshine helps whiten whites and eliminate bacteria) ([Baldwin EMC Kid's Corner: DIY Home Energy Efficiency](#))
20. Become a certified water quality monitor with AL 4-H + AWW to help protect natural water bodies in your community (Link: [Alabama Water Watch](#))
21. When shopping, shop for products with minimal to no packaging (Image Link: [NOAA's "How Long Until It's Gone?" infographic](#))
22. Next time you order takeout from a restaurant, ask for them to exclude napkins, plasticware, and undesired condiments in your order
23. Choose a “paperless” option when receiving receipts & print as little as necessary
24. Use rechargeable batteries
25. Recycle used oil (Link: [ACF's Map of Coastal AL Cooking Oil recycle locations](#)). When oils go down the drain, it can clog and break the sewer lines, leading to contaminated groundwater
26. Cut beverage rings before throwing them in the trash to limit wildlife threat or choose drinks without the plastic packaging.
27. When walking on trails be sure to avoid stepping on vegetation and make an effort to stay on the pavement. “Plants grow by the inch and die by the foot”
28. Use an entire sheet of paper front to back for notes or drawing
29. Find out what can be recycled in your community-check with your specific city on what is accepted (Links:[Items that can be Recycled in Baldwin County](#) & Drop off locations: [Trash & Recycling Services in Gulf Shores, AL](#))
30. Write about an environmental topic and submit it for publication or to State Representatives to let them know what issues you care about (Link: [Publications that publish student writing](#); [Contact your U.S. Senators & Representatives](#))
31. Participate in surveys designed and distributed by the AL Dept of Conservation
32. Start an Environmental Club at your school, with your homeschool group, church, or neighborhood.
33. Research different careers that help conserve natural resources or protect the environment (Link: [Environmental Science Careers & How to get into them](#))
34. Create a piece of art that raises awareness about an environmental issue and try to display it at school when you go back, at a library, nature center, or even City Hall
35. Visit local city parks, state parks, and national parks. This is one of the best ways to show your support for their land conservation efforts!
36. Find more eco-friendly ways to decorate and celebrate for birthday and holiday parties (no balloons, get creative with gift wrapping by reusing, give environment themed gifts or thrifted treasures, etc)
37. Start eating less fast food-if you want to go out to eat, choose a locally owned restaurant
38. With your parents or guardians, unsubscribe from junk mail (write “Return to Sender” and put it back in the mailbox, contact the company to be removed from their list, [Opt Out of mail offers](#), [Choose what info you want to receive by mail](#), [cancel unwanted catalogs](#), etc)
39. Repair! Instead of tossing broken toys, computers, phones, clothes, or anything else, see if you can fix it first. It’s better for the environment to repair objects we already own than to buy a brand new product. If you don’t know how to fix an item, ask a family member, friend, or a local repair person
40. Pick up after your pet. Pathogens and other yucky germs can spread from pet poo by getting washed into water bodies whenever it rains. Use a doggie bag to pick it up and stash it in the trash (Video: [Clean Water Future talks Bacteria](#))
41. Only fill your plate with as much food as you need-Americans throw out almost 25% of their food!

42. Use your school library and join the Baldwin County Library system to borrow books, movies, magazines, newspapers, and more instead of buying (Link: [Baldwin County Libraries & How to get a Library Card](#))
43. Research Plastic Free July (Link: [Plastic Free July – Be Part of the Solution](#)) and list out some items in your home you could swap or do without to lessen the amount of plastic your family uses.
44. Ask your parents to set up a recycling bin in your house! You can easily make one by reusing a cardboard box or any old bin, then label it “Recycle” to help remind everyone what goes in it. Tape a list of recyclable items on the lid so everyone knows what can or can’t go in the recycle bin. (Link: [Some recyclable items](#))
45. Watch a Nature Documentary (Link: [2020 Nature Documentaries](#))
46. Research young environmental activists and the work they are doing. Which person are you inspired by? What are they doing to raise awareness for the Earth? Organizations like [350.org](#) and National Wildlife Federation’s [EcoLeaders](#) are some platforms for young people’s voices to be heard.
47. Calculate your carbon footprint (Link: [Carbon Footprint Calculator](#))
48. Research major environmental milestones (events that had a major impact) that have occurred along the Gulf Coast since the first Earth Day in 1970. What good has come out of any of these milestones?
49. Have a picnic outside in your yard, outdoor common area, or in a park.
50. Tweet, post, share, like...your voice matters! Speak up for the environment and let others know you care. Lead by example. You can teach your friends and family ways to protect the Earth, but your actions speak louder than words. You may set a good example that inspires others to do the same!