



Contact: Jonathan Jelen, (503) 227-2807

Email: [jonathan@nwei.org](mailto:jonathan@nwei.org)

---

### Take Care of Yourself, Better the Earth

Northwest Earth Institute Unveils New Course Aimed at Exploring the Link Between Human and Environmental Health

**PORTLAND, Ore., Sept. 7, 2010**—The [Northwest Earth Institute](http://www.nwei.org) (NWEI) is introducing a new curriculum, *A World of Health: Connecting People, Place, and Planet*, designed to improve both personal and world health. The curriculum consists of six sessions, including video, reading, assignments and group discussion questions. The overall goal of the curriculum is to increase awareness of the connections between health and the environment and inspire people to take actions that promote good health for ourselves and our planet.

In the past two weeks more than 500 participants have pre-ordered the *A World of Health* curriculum, and an estimated 5,000 are expected to participate over the coming year. The curriculum is part of an on-going effort by NWEI to educate and inspire people to make small lifestyle changes that have a long-term, positive benefit for themselves and the planet. Since its launch in 1993, more than 125,000 people in all 50 states have participated in NWEI discussion courses.

“Our goal with this curriculum is to help people explore the link between personal and environmental health and provide individuals with inspiration and ideas to help them live healthier lives,” said Mike Mercer, executive director, Northwest Earth Institute. The expectation is that by making small changes in their daily lives, people will improve their personal health and also –their impact on the environment which sustains us.”

With the new *A World of Health* curriculum, NWEI aims to provide a wide range of actions participants can take to improve their personal health, and in turn, reduce their ecological footprint. While the course is not prescriptive in nature these are a few of the actions that come up for consideration:

- Use a reusable bag to haul groceries—plastic bags aren't biodegradable and, when discarded, become problematic for people and wildlife alike. And shop smart—the stuff in the bag has a larger impact than the bag itself.
- Examine your food products for packaging that contains bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical with harmful health consequences.
- Map the accessibility of your neighborhood via walking and biking to encourage to a healthier lifestyle while also reducing our dependence on fossil fuels.
- Consider the broader health impacts brought about by a consumer-based culture.
- Make your own household cleaners. They cost much less, are just as effective and are a safer alternative to relying on harsh, toxic commercial products. Effective cleaning products can be made with borax, washing soda, distilled white vinegar, baking soda, salt, club soda, cooking oil and lemons. On their own or combined together, you can make scouring powder, furniture polish, an all-purpose cleaner and more!

### **About The Northwest Earth Institute**

The Northwest Earth Institute is recognized as a national leader in the development of innovative programs that empower individuals and organizations to transform culture toward a sustainable and enriching future. Today, NWEI offers nine study guides for small groups. These self-guided discussion courses are offered in workplaces, universities, faith centers, neighborhoods, and community centers throughout North America. Through discussion with others, each program encourages participants to explore values and attitudes, and then take action on behalf of the planet.

###