



## ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

*Principle (2)(f): Governments and members of society have an obligation to exercise responsible stewardship of the earth, thereby protecting not only the wellbeing of their citizens, but also that of both future generations and other citizens of the planet.*

*D&C 59:18-21; D&C 104:13-15*

### >>>> GOALS

- Determine what stewardship of the earth means to you.
- Investigate ways to exercise your stewardship, both as an individual and as a citizen of a larger community.

### >>>> SCRIPTURE STUDY

*“Yea, all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man. . . . And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used, with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion.”*  
*D&C 59:18 & 20*

***“We are inextricably connected to this earth. Our carelessness curses it; our righteousness blesses it. Its health affects our health. Our destinies are tethered; we share a common Creator.”***

*Newsroom, “In Honoring Creation, We Honor the Creator”*

Has God spoken to you through His creations (Job 12:7-8)? Perhaps through the lull of a river or the crash of waves, the majesty of mountains or the drama of a thunderstorm? The earth and its creative components help us know our place in this world — simultaneously reassuring us of our value and humbling us by our position. We are blessed through our physical and spiritual connections to the earth.

In addition to the blessings we receive, however, caring for the environment is a spiritual responsibility and a commandment (see D&C 104:13-17). As women of faith, we take seriously the important obligation to safeguard the earth and her resources for our children and generations that follow. We are personally accountable for

treating creation in a manner that honors its Creator.

This accountability encompasses our own personal impact on the earth as well as supporting and advocating for governmental and institutional policies that mitigate, minimize, and offset the negative impact of human activities. As we embrace our environmental responsibilities, we acknowledge that our activities on this earth affect those near and far from us. Although competing interests may require ethical compromise, we can strive for a symbiotic relationship with the earth and seek solutions that promote both long-term human and ecological health. We can “us[e] the earth’s abundance in harmony with divine dictates and prudent principles of preservation.” (Newsroom, “In Honoring Creation, We Honor the Creator”)

Adapted from an **article** by Amber Spackman Jones, co-lead of MWEG’s Environment and Sustainability Committee



## Caring for the Earth Is Caring for Others

“Some people will say, ‘Isn't there something more important to do? Shouldn't we be caring for the poor versus caring for the Earth?’ And my question is, are they not linked so inextricably that we can't do one without caring for the other?”

Sharon Eubank  
Director of Latter-day Saint Charities

Our treatment of the earth is interconnected with our treatment of other human beings. When we understand that our negative environmental actions, both as citizens and as individuals, bear disproportionately on the poor and needy, we are more motivated to address the problems of environmental change, waste, and depletion. In a **recent UN report**, one expert explained:

[C]limate change threatens the full enjoyment of a wide range of rights, including the rights to life, health, water, food, housing, development and self-determination . . . . As average global temperatures rise, deaths, injuries and displacement of persons from climate-related disasters . . . increase, as do mortality and illness from heat waves, drought, disease and malnutrition . . . . [T]he worst effects of climate change are felt by those who are already vulnerable.

Independent from climate change, marginalized people are also more likely to inhabit environments **polluted by** or **depleted by** affluent populations.

Without concerted, systematic action to address environmental issues, the most marginalized people will continue to face the most extreme harm. We can do our part to change our lifestyle habits as well as advocate for government policies that recognize and address these deprivations.

*“As Latter-day Saints, we tend to focus on our ecclesiastical and family stewardships, which is well and good. But I believe we will also be held accountable for how we treat one another, the community in which we live, and the land that surrounds us, even the earth itself. That stewardship has never been more urgent. Our generation, more than any other, has the ability to irretrievably change the land.”*

*Elder Steven E. Snow, “The Moral Imperative of Environmental Stewardship”*



>>>> LEARN MORE

Faith-Based Environmental Resources

**On Whose Green Earth** is an article on how religion affects our view of climate change.

**Environmental Stewardship & Conservation** is a resource page hosted by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**Interfaith Power & Light** is an interfaith effort to combat climate change.

Environmental News & Research

**Earthshare** has compiled a list of their **Top 30 Environmental News Sources.**

**Society of Environmental Journalists** has curated a list of climate news providers.

**The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** is the United Nations body and internationally accepted authority that assesses climate change research for policymakers.

How to Help

Check out environmental policy advocacy groups like **Citizens' Climate Lobby.**

Calculate your carbon output and learn how to offset it with the **UN carbon offset platform** or **CoolClimate Network's calculator.**

**Estimate your water footprint** and consider ways to reduce water consumption by visiting **watercalculator.org** or **Utah's Slow the Flow.**

Visit **LDS Earth Stewardship** to find actions for cascading levels of stewardship steps: personal, family, ward, community, and global.

Consider your purchases and consumption. When you can't reduce, reuse, or repurpose, check out fair trade options, like **the Good Trade's list of fair trade and ethical clothing brands.**

Look for this banner on other MWEG materials to learn more about the importance of the environment and sustainability.





### >>>> IDEAS FOR TEACHING CHILDREN

- **Take a nature walk.** Learn about plants and animals native to your region and then take a walk, looking for the things you learned about. Discuss what you can do to preserve them and what happens when we don't take those actions. Bring a trash bag and collect litter along the way!
- **Do a trash audit.** Collect your household's garbage for a day or two, then assess together. Discuss where trash goes and what items can be recycled or composted. Research recycling and composting rules.
- **Learn about your local water sources.** Where does your culinary water come from? Where does your home's wastewater go? Discuss ways to conserve water use and to take care of local rivers and lakes.

### >>>> THOUGHT QUESTIONS

- What do you consider to be some of your personal responsibilities as a steward of the earth?
- Read Job 12:7-8. When has the Earth "taught thee"? What did you learn and how did it feel?
- Consider environmental stewardship while reading the Word of Wisdom (D&C 89). What insights do you gain?
- Think about the last thing you purchased. Where did it come from? What resources were used to make it? What will happen to it when you're finished with it? Who should be responsible for it at each stage?

### >>>> TAKE ACTION

#### At Home

- Plan a "Family Home Evening" with your family or friends using some of the ideas suggested here or from **LDS Earth Stewardship**.
- Design and implement a plan to reduce waste in your home using the 3 R's: reduce, reuse, recycle. What other R's can you think of to incorporate?
- Consider your food sources. What can you do to obtain more of your food from local sources? Plant a garden!
- Think about how you can reduce emissions. Plan ahead so you can walk, bike, or take public transit and learn to consolidate your trips in the car. Don't let your car idle for more than one minute at a time.
- Use **ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance)** criteria to make investment choices.

#### In Your Community

- Discuss this principle with MWEG's Facebook discussion group, or host or attend an MWEG chapter meeting or an MWEG Neighborhood Informational Meeting on the subject.
- Bear testimony about your spiritual experiences with the earth and of the privilege of earth stewardship.
- Which environmental issues are most meaningful to you and your community? Get involved in local conservation groups. Educate yourself and encourage your local, state, or national governments to take action on climate change. Host or attend events that encourage environmentally sustainable practices, like **this one**.

## MORMON WOMEN FOR ETHICAL GOVERNMENT

MWEG is an organization dedicated to inspiring women of faith to be ambassadors of peace who transcend partisanship and courageously advocate for ethical government.