Community Spotlight: Shop Local for Holiday Gifts

Although it may seem easy and quick to shop for gifts at big stores or online, local shops can often offer something more special, or even items you didn't think of! We are so lucky to live in an area with great local shops, and even more options popping up this holiday season. Here are some events where you can find special gifts and support our community:

**Wasena Last Minute Market**
December 10 4PM-8PM

Located outside Roanoke Mountain Adventures, come shop outside and see some fantastic items made by local artisans. There will be music and plenty to see, plus you might even pick up something for yourself!

Learn more here

**Greenbrier Nurseries Gift Local Holiday Market**
December 12 9AM-2PM

A pop-up event with local vendors selling crafts and handmade gifts, plus plants at the nursery! Plus... Rumor has it that Santa himself is planning on putting on a mask
and coming down for this event, and he might even pose for a few photos.

Details here

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**Botetourt Farmers Market Holiday Market**

**December 19 10AM-2PM**

Located at the Daleville Town Center, this event offers the chance to buy all the edible gifts you can imagine! Find bread, baked goods, canned goods, and more just in time for Christmas.

[Check it out!](#)

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**Director’s Message**

**Happy December Everyone!**

I have been settling into my new role as director and spending time outside with my puppies in this wonderful crisp cool air. With the first day of winter on December 21, there are some ways that you can keep up the great work of being an environmental steward!

Take winter walks with your family and/or COVID pod and gather fallen natural objects like leaves, sticks, berries, rocks, and acorn caps to create temporary or permanent art. This is a great activity for all ages. The more time we spend outside, the more likely we will be to understand and protect it. So, carry a trash bag just in case!

I know that its cold out there, but I challenge each of you to lower your thermostat by two degrees compared to last year’s winter months setting. Send us a picture of you in your favorite cozy sweater, standing by your thermostat at info@cleanvalley.org enjoying your reduced electric bill and doing your part to protect the environment by reducing energy consumption. We would love to use your photo in future newsletters, as one of our environmental advocates.

Happy Winter Wandering!

Environmentally Yours,

Courtney Plaster
Executive Director

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**ADOPT-A-STREET**

You can also get involved to keep our city streets beautiful! The City of Roanoke’s Adopt-A-Street Program
DECEMBER 11, 2020
International
Mountain Day

DECEMBER 10-18
Hanukkah

DECEMBER 21
Winter Solstice

DECEMBER 25
Christmas Day

ALL MONTH LONG
ILLUMINIGHTS
Illuminights at
Explore Park
Click the image to learn more and see special discount nights!

Interested in volunteering your time to make Virginia a more beautiful place? Sign up here and apply for a section of highway to clean up!

Environmental Education is Our Passion

Educator's Corner

THE FAMILY CIRCUS Bil Keane

“Mommy’s waterin’ our roof garden.”

Sustainable Winter Eating
We have discussed responsible and sustainable food choices in previous newsletters, talking about eating seasonally and having a more sustainable Thanksgiving meal. This month, since people may be having another significant holiday meal or two, and because many of us are looking forward to eco-friendly changes for the new year, we are looking at reducing the carbon footprint of the food we eat.

Much of this information is based on this article: "Your food choices affect earth's climate", so please read more there if you are interested.

As of 2012, as little as 4 percent of men and 7 percent of women in the United States describe themselves as vegetarian. These people, according to studies done on the carbon footprint of various diets, may contribute up to half as much CO2 pollution due to their diets, compared to people who eat as much meat as the average citizen.

Of course, removing meat from your diet entirely is not the only way to eat with a smaller carbon footprint. There are countless small steps and considerations that can help you have a more responsible and less polluting diet. Here are some things to consider when shopping and cooking:

1. **Water**: How much water was required to produce this item? Plant-based proteins require less water to produce per pound than animal products, but not all animals consume the same amount of water. Consider poultry over beef for a less water-intensive meat choice. For plant-based proteins, look toward nuts and legumes like beans and peas.

2. **Packaging**: This is a pretty straightforward task, but it can take some real effort to think about the packaging around your food and not just the food inside. Look at how much plastic is in the package, and look for containers that can be reused or recycled. Be careful, many food packaging is made of types of plastic that are not recyclable at local facilities. Roanoke City and County only accept #1 and #2 currently!

3. **Greenhouse gases and food production**: Think about how far this product had to travel to get to you, and how much pollution was created by the transportation process. Was this food grown in a field that used tractors and petroleum-based fertilizers?

Sometimes it seems overwhelming to eat sustainably and responsibly, so just remember that any small step you take will make a difference! Maybe you can start by eating less meat in a meal and using some other proteins along with your meat, or maybe you can participate in Meatless Monday and eat vegetarian for one day each week.

One great way to start eating with a smaller carbon footprint is to eat local food. Your food traveled less time and distance to get to you, meaning it is both more sustainable and fresher!

Whatever steps you take to help the planet, good luck and happy eating!
Together We Can Build a Clean Water Legacy

**Water Corner**

**Prevent Water Pollution this Winter**

We LOVE Roanoke City's Stormwater division. They have been invaluable partners in many of our endeavors, and the work they do for the City of Roanoke is extremely important. Sign up for their newsletter here, and check out the Upper Roanoke River Roundtable, which we partner with them on as well. Thank you, Roanoke Stormwater!

**This month, we want to make a case against salting your sidewalk or driveway to melt ice.**

**Why?**

Negative effects of road salt include:

- Damage to bricks and cement. Salt can cause holes and permanent marks on walkways, and the damage is even greater if the cement or grout is new.
- Damage to plants. Salt is a common natural herbicide, meaning it kills plants. Though you may avoid using salt directly on grass or near the garden, the salty runoff can flow right into the grass or other plants you don't want to kill.
- Hazardous for aquatic life. Bugs and fish that live in freshwater cannot survive when the salt...
content of their water increases, which can happen when lots of snow melt containing road salt enter streams and rivers. This can drastically decrease fish populations in local waterways.

If not salt, then what?
- Here are some less harmful alternatives to road ice that will still help keep walkways and driveways safe.
- Sand. Sand will not melt ice, but it will increase traction and reduce the risk of slipping.
- Coffee grounds. Save up your coffee grounds and sprinkle them on the ground, even in conjunction with sand if you would like. This can help absorb sunlight and melt ice quickly.
- Alfalfa meal. This is a common fertilizer, so it certainly will be less harmful to your grass and garden than ice. This option melts ice and helps provide a grainy surface with traction for safer walking.

How do you live sustainably in the Winter months? We want to hear from you! You and your eco-friendly tip could be featured in our next newsletter! Email us your tips and any accompanying pictures, and check back next month to see if you made it in the Community Spotlight.