

# Missisquoi

## *National Wildlife Refuge*

### *Consumer Guide to Home Energy Savings*

This visitor facility was built to demonstrate how we can all reduce our impact on the environment. Water-saving plumbing fixtures, fluorescent lighting, and electricity generated from our wind turbine and solar panels are some of the ways that we do that here.

#### **Home energy checklist for action**

According to the American Council for Energy Efficient Economy, here are some things you can do to conserve energy.

#### **To Do Today**

- Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (120°F). You'll not only save energy, you'll avoid scalding your hands.
- Check if your water heater has an insulating blanket. An insulating blanket will pay for itself in one year or less!
- If you have one of those silent guzzlers, a waterbed, make your bed today. The covers will insulate it, and save up to one-third of the energy it uses.
- Start using energy-saving settings on refrigerators, dishwashers, washing machines, and clothes dryers.
- Survey your incandescent lights for opportunities to replace them with compact fluorescents. These new lamps can save three-quarters of the electricity used by incandescents. The best targets are 60-100W bulbs used several hours a day. Measure the clearance in the fixtures to make sure they will accommodate compact fluorescents, which are slightly bigger than incandescents.
- Check the age and condition of your major appliances, especially the refrigerator. You may want to replace it with a more energy-efficient model before it dies.
- Clean or replace furnace, air-conditioner, and heat-pump filters.

#### **This Week**

- Visit the hardware store. Buy a water-heater blanket, low-flow showerheads, faucet aerators, and compact

fluorescents, as needed. If you can't find compact fluorescents locally, check out ENERGYguide or Energy Federation Incorporated.

- Rope caulk very leaky windows.
- Assess your heating and cooling systems. Determine if replacements are justified, or whether you should retrofit them to make them work more efficiently to provide the same comfort (or better) for less energy.

### **This Month**

- Collect your utility bills. Separate electricity and fuel bills. Target the biggest bill for energy conservation remedies.
- Crawl into your attic or crawlspace and inspect for insulation. Is there any? How much?
- Insulate hot water pipes and ducts wherever they run through unheated areas.
- Seal up the largest air leaks in your house—the ones that whistle on windy days, or feel drafty. The worst culprits are usually not windows and doors, but utility cut-throughs for pipes (“plumbing penetrations”), gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings, and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets. Better yet, hire an energy auditor with a blower door to point out where the worst cracks are. All the little, invisible cracks and holes may add up to as much as an open window or door, without you ever knowing it!
- Install a clock thermostat to set your thermostat back automatically at night.
- Schedule an energy audit (ask your utility company or state energy office) for more expert advice on your home as a whole.

### **This Year**

- Insulate. If your walls aren't insulated have an insulation contractor blow cellulose into the walls. Bring your attic insulation level up to snuff.
- Replace aging, inefficient appliances. Even if the appliance has a few useful years left, replacing it with a top-efficiency model is generally a good investment.
- Upgrade leaky windows. It may be time to replace them with energy-efficient models or to boost their efficiency with weatherstripping and storm windows.
- Reduce your air conditioning costs by planting shade trees and shrubs around your house—especially on the west side.
- Know that you are making a difference!