

## The Green Notebook

### Let's Talk Paper Products

Yes, there are many pressing issues out there, but let's pause for a moment and think about Spring and the beautiful budding trees and chorus of singing birds: all of which are being destroyed in certain areas to make toilet paper, facial tissues, paper towels and other disposable paper products. Three things you can do this year to save our forests and our birds are:

1. Buy paper products with recycled content—especially post-consumer fibers. These are fibers that are recovered from paper that was previously used by consumers and would otherwise have been dumped into a landfill or an incinerator.
2. Buy some paper products made with clean, safe processes. The bleaching used to make paper products whiter and brighter contributes to the formation of harmful chemicals that wind up in our air and water and are highly toxic to us and the fish. Look for products labeled totally chlorine-free or processed chlorine-free.
3. Tell tissue manufacturers to stop using virgin wood for throwaway products. Let your voice be heard—if a brand you buy and like doesn't have any recycled content, contact the manufacturer. Tell them to stop sourcing from ecologically valuable forest, such as those in the Cumberland Plateau and Canadian Boreal. Saving forests also helps reduce global warming pollution.

If every household in the United States replaced just one box of virgin fiber facial tissues with 100% recycled ones, we could save 163,000 trees; just one roll of virgin fiber toilet paper replaced with 100% recycled ones, would save 423,900 trees; one roll of virgin fiber paper towels (70 sheets) replaced would save 544,000 trees; and, here is the biggie, just one package of virgin fiber napkins (250 count) replaced with 100% recycled ones would save 1 million trees! You get the idea, here.

If you caught Oprah's recent green living show, you may have heard one of her guests suggest using one less napkin a day and what an impact that would have. Oh, heck, go whole hog and give up white paper napkins altogether! Head to the store or the thrift store and invest in beautiful cloth napkins—what a treat! And they are washable and reusable.

The point is you can help halt forest destruction by making smart shopping decisions—maybe you can't do it every time, but even one time helps. You have the power!

Source: Natural Resources Defense Council

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