Worldwatch Institute Releases Report
www.worldwatch.org

Paper or plastic bags? Bottled or tap water? Making environmentally responsible purchases can be a daunting task. Fortunately, concerned consumers can now find answers to many of their questions in Good Stuff? A Behind-the-Scenes Guide to the Things We Buy, a free online publication by the Worldwatch Institute.

Produced in partnership with nine organizations as a hands-on companion to Worldwatch’s annual State of the World report, Good Stuff traces what goes into the production, use, and disposal of 25 common consumer items. In addition to educating buyers about the environmental and social impacts of their purchases, the guide includes practical suggestions for living a greener, healthier life; an “eco-IQ” quiz; and a challenge page where readers agree to take three actions for a better environment.

Worldwatch’s annual State of the World report focuses on consumption too. The report finds that the world is “consuming goods and services at an unsustainable pace, with serious consequences for the well-being of people and the planet.”

“Rising consumption has helped meet basic needs and create jobs,” says Christopher Flavin, Worldwatch Institute president. “But as we enter a new century, this unprecedented consumer appetite is undermining the natural systems we all depend on and making it even harder for the world’s poor to meet their basic needs.”

Worldwatch encourages a combination of tax reforms, new laws, better use of raw materials, and personal responsibility to combat excessive consumption.
Running a nonprofit organization like a business is easier said than done. The Management Assistance Program for Non-profits (MAP) provides management and board development services for nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies, such as water utilities.

From financial management and accounting to strategic planning, MAP will conduct an assessment of your needs at no charge and with no obligation. They will then give you a cost estimate for services. Call MAP at (651) 647-1216 or visit their Web site for more information.

Located in St. Paul, MAP provides services in Minnesota. Their Web site provides links to similar training in other areas, although not all states are represented.

The MAP Web site also provides a link to the Free Management Library (www.managementhelp.org). With more than 675 topics arranged in 75 categories, this site provides comprehensive coverage of management issues. Whether it’s problem solving or public relations, customer service or computers, risk management or research methods, you’ll find the information you need for your system presented in an easy-to-comprehend style.

P.O.V. Borders, the PBS award-winning documentary series, begins its second year of Web-only programs by focusing on the environment. Water figures prominently in the new season, with Webcasts devoted to polluted waterways, bottled water, and the invisibility of water.

“We launched P.O.V. Borders in October 2002 to explore the potential of interactive, online narrative,” says Cara Metes, P.O.V. executive director and producer. “We see the series as an ongoing showcase for engaging point-of-view storytelling experiences conceived especially for the Internet. Each episode will ask visitors to consider an aspect of their everyday lives in ways that challenge their preconceptions and expand our own borders of understanding.”

To view P.O.V. Webcasts, you’ll need a media player (RealPlayer, QuickTime, or Windows Media Player) and a modem capable of 56k (cable or DSL is better).

P.O.V. also produces television shows, including a new documentary about privatizing water. Looking at tensions in Bolivia, India, and Stockton, California, “Thirst” reveals how water is becoming the catalyst for community resistance to globalization. Focusing on one of the 21st century’s greatest issues, this film by Alan Snitow and Deborah Kaufman examines the conflict between public stewardship and private profit, where activists claim that water is a human right and corporations declare it a commodity.

“Thirst” is scheduled for a July release. Check local listings for showtimes in your area.