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TABLE OF CONTENTS****EARTHTALK FOR YOUNG READERS  
Week of 12/19/2004**[Print View](#) [Print View Without Graphics](#) [Mail to a Friend](#)**Dear EarthTalk Young Readers: Are there ways  
kids can do their own news reports on the  
environment?**

—Anne-Marie I., Saratoga Springs, N.Y

Hi Anne-Marie,

In one of E Magazine's "Conversations," Editor Jim Motavalli learned how Chris Meyers—a children's book author and environmental scientist—is encouraging kids to investigate the natural world and report on their discoveries. In Jim's interview, "Empowering Environmental Investigators" ([www.emagazine.com/view/?1016](http://www.emagazine.com/view/?1016)), Meyers spoke about Dragonfly—a PBS television series based in St. Paul, Minnesota (TPT-TV).

Inspired by Meyer's own environmental projects (including an environmental magazine and website), Dragonfly TV reports on kids' reporting! Kids are encouraged to write in from around the country about an issue they want to investigate. If they are lucky, Dragonfly will turn their research into a show! One episode was filmed in Washington State, where kid-reporters Andy, Mason and Marshall investigated salmon populations in two rivers. In Florida, Carlos and Akeem teamed up to track and monitor the nesting sites of loggerhead, leatherback and green sea turtles.

Perhaps there is an issue that you want to report on? Perhaps there is a special habitat or endangered species that needs your help? If you need a few ideas, check out Dragonfly's five program categories (Body and Brain; Earth and Science; Living Things; Matter and Motion; and Technology and Invention) to see what other kid-reporters are up to. And check out Dragonfly's program map to see if the show is aired in your hometown ([http://pbskids.org/in\\_your\\_town/index.html?nola=DFLY&program=dragonflytv](http://pbskids.org/in_your_town/index.html?nola=DFLY&program=dragonflytv)). If not call your PBS affiliate and ask for it!

You can also be a Scholastic news reporter by calling in your story to the Scholastic radio hotline free of charge at <http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/radio/kidnews.asp>, or you can share your opinions on news stories reported by Time for Kids Online at <http://www.timeforkids.com>.



♦ Ask an Environmental Question

♦ Editors, bring EarthTalk Young Readers to your newspaper or website!

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\*Keep organic foods organic  
Politicians and big businesses want to gut organic food laws. Help us stop them. **Take action!**  
\*Something is fishy  
Mercury is a toxic contaminant that is showing up in dangerously high concentrations in the fish we eat, yet the FDA isn't protecting us!? **Take action!**  
**GO Add the Action Box to your site!**

"Have Your Say," an online forum from EcoKids, is a place where kids get to speak their minds and share their opinions and comments on environmental issues. Every few weeks, "Have Your Say" posts a new question about an environmental, science or nature issue. You can share your opinion, check out what other kids have to say or submit suggestions for news stories ([http://www.ecokids.ca/pub/have\\_your\\_say/main.cfm](http://www.ecokids.ca/pub/have_your_say/main.cfm)). The National Wildlife Federation's Earth Tomorrow site invites you to share your poems, stories, essays, photos, artwork and music... whatever's on your mind (<http://www.nwf.org/kidzone/kzPage.cfm?siteId=4&departmentId=89>).

And, if you want to do something closer to home, think about suggesting that your school start a newspaper or newsletter--if they don't already have one. You may try contacting your local paper about being a reporter, too. Some local papers have a section for kid writers! Pitch them a good idea and they may go for it! Good luck!

**Dear Earth Talk Young Readers: I keep hearing this term "ecological footprint." What does it mean?**

—*Estelle E., Cambridge, MA*

Hi Estelle,

To answer your question, we spoke to Gilda Wheeler, program director for Facing the Future (<http://www.facingthefuture.org>). According to Gilda, "An ecological footprint is the amount of the Earth's surface that it takes to provide everything each person uses—food, water, energy, clothes, roads, etc." Gilda explained, "Everyone has an ecological footprint, which is a measure of their impact on the environment. It reflects everything they use and everything they throw away." So, even though our feet are literally quite smaller than those of larger animals, our ecological footprints are actually much larger!

When you add up all of the individual ecological footprints within a country and compare the total to other countries, you find that national ecological footprints vary quite a bit! People in the United States consume (on average) the greatest number of resources and collectively leave behind the biggest ecological footprint in the entire world. Gilda told E, "People in the United States have an average footprint measuring 24 acres, while in some other parts of the world, the average footprint may be as small as one acre."

If you're interested in learning more about your own ecological footprint, check out Facing the Future's "Fast Facts and Quick Action": <http://www.creativeaction.org/Facts/consumption.htm>. You can also visit the group's link to the Earth Day Network and take a footprint quiz that will help you understand how many resources actually go into making ordinary things like a meal, a car, or your favorite shirt! Check it out at: <http://www.earthday.net/footprint/info.asp>.

Gilda, who develops environmental activities for middle school and high school education, believes that when people take the time to understand the limited nature of Earth's resources, they usually stop to think about how their lives and their choices impact the planet and what they can do differently to conserve resources for the years ahead.

**GOT AN ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTION?** Send it to: EARTH TALK for YOUNG READERS, c/o E/The Environmental Magazine, P.O. Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881; submit your question at: [www.emagazine.com](http://www.emagazine.com); or e-mail us at: [stacy@emagazine.com](mailto:stacy@emagazine.com).

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