**Making Motorhomes Greener**

The recreational vehicle industry was struggling for a time. In the last few years however, it has seen record numbers of consumers purchasing everything from pop-up travel trailers to giant Class A motorcoaches. Fifth-wheels with slide outs that make them bigger than many luxury apartments have become very popular among snowbirds and oil & gas industry workers that travel to new job sites. Though advancements in technology have improved insulation and energy usage in RVs, there are many options owners can consider to make a motorhome greener.  
  
**Engine Choices**  
Travel trailers and fifth-wheels are typically pulled by tow vehicles. It is important to match tow vehicles with the recreational vehicles towed. An underpowered tow vehicle is a safety hazard, and the engine is often running at maximum RPMs up steep inclines. A better choice is a vehicle that does not have to strain as much to tow over mountains. Also, using tow vehicles for daily family chores in the off-season of camping is not eco-friendly. It is too much engine and too low fuel mileage for day-to-day needs.   
  
Class B, Class B+, and some Class C motorhomes have the Mercedes Sprinter class chassis options with very fuel-efficient Mercedes BlueTec turbo diesel engine. The V6 3.0 liter engine only has 188 horsepower, but it has a high torque power of 325 lb-ft. Some erroneously think of diesel as a second choice for fuel under gasoline, but diesel actually has more potential energy per gallon than gasoline.  
  
**Solar Panels and Lithium Batteries**  
Many RV owners connect to shore power at campgrounds. The latest RV power management technologies for solar panels and lithium coach batteries can increase the green energy potential of RVs for boondocking campers who are regularly disconnected from the grid. The old options were to either go without electricity or to run a generator practically around the clock. Rigid or [**flexible solar panels**](http://gpelectric.com/products/solar-flex-kits-modules) can be installed on the roofs of RVs or set up on the ground at campsites. Many new RVs have a solar plug ready to go. Lithium coach batteries store more energy, allowing enough battery to power other needs such as induction cooktops.  
  
**Composting Toilets**  
This is a topic that many campers turn their noses up at, pun intended. However, many gallons of fresh water are wasted for every blackwater tank drain and flush. Recreational vehicles with flush toilets drain into a blackwater tank. Sinks and showers drain into a graywater tank. The typical blackwater tank emptying method involves dumping it first down the sewer by pulling the blade valve followed by dumping graywater to flush the flexible sewer hose of fecal matter. Composting toilets eliminates the need for a blackwater holding tank.  
  
Composting toilets use coconut fiber or peat moss to compost solid wastes. Composting toilets are self-contained and have two separate holding containers. The lower one holds the moistened coconut fibers or peat moss and fecal matter. A handle rotates the contents to aid in natural composting. Urine is directed into another container that can be easily lifted out and emptied when full. Composting toilets also eliminate the need for using highly toxic blackwater tank deodorizers and other products. Jason and Nikki Wynn, of Gone With the Wynns, have a large Class A motorcoach, and [**they prefer composting toilets**](http://www.gonewiththewynns.com/composting-toilet).  
  
There is much that can be done to make recreational vehicles more ecologically friendly. For those who love to travel and experience nature while protecting it and being green, these tips will be a great way to start your efforts! There’s nothing better than knowing you can enjoy RVing and keeping the environment safe for you to continue to have adventures for years to come.