

# Making Ripples

## Go Off-Grid in 7 Steps

by Amanda Bancroft

Recently I connected with CountryLivingUniversity.com, whose slogan is “Skills you need now for the tough times ahead.” It isn’t an extensive website, with only three free videos posted currently, and the main focus is a Christian call to a country lifestyle in order to avoid the upcoming city apocalypse. That message is somewhat antithetical to Ripples, which encourages diversity in both religion and lifestyle (sustainable cities, for instance, are way cool!). But wisdom can be found in unusual places.

The second of their three current videos, “Seven Steps to Your Country Home,” was insightful and reassured us that we were on the right track in our journey to go off-grid and build a headquarters for future Ripples non-profit work. Here are the seven steps they recommend, with my own explanations based on the Ripples approach:

**#1 – Motivational Force.** When making so many lifestyle changes, a person needs motivation beyond the short-lived New Year’s resolution or weight-loss plan. This motivational force needs to be something pure and long-term, something that could sustain your energy regardless of obstacles. Our motivation is to be the healthiest people we can be and make the world a better place.

**#2 – Form a Plan.** Achieving a goal requires a solid plan to identify obstacles and steps you can take in the process. Everyone’s plan will look a little different based on your unique goals: do you want to be a goat farmer? Do you want to own a car or start a rural transportation cooperative?

**#3 – Practice a Country Lifestyle.** It helps to pretend you’ve already living the life you envision for yourself. Learn as much as possible about the life you want to transition into. For us, that meant spending over two years learning about gardening, composting, alternative energy, sustainable building, holistic design, interdependent systems, ecology, and more.

**#4 – Connect with a Mentor.** We suggest connecting with several mentors, and then connecting those mentors to each other, and so on. This creates a community of support for practices like sewing our own clothing or canning.

**#5 – Source of Income.** Living in the country and off the electrical grid will probably require a change of income. We think it’s best to diversify your income sources and try to telecommute. Don’t move houses before your income is secure, and create a budget for expected expenses.

**#6 – Experience the Location.** Spend as much time as possible in the community to get the lay of the land and identify obstacles like a flooded road. We spent time in ecovillages and got hands-on experience whenever possible.

**#7 – Set Target Dates.** Making goals timely by setting deadlines, even loose ones, makes it more likely that they will happen. Don't get discouraged if you don't meet your target dates; their purpose is to ensure you reach your goal someday, not necessarily today.

*Ripples* is a 100% solar-hosted website that includes a blog, newspaper column, resources and services for individuals and non-profit organizations. Read more on this topic and others at [www.RipplesBlog.org](http://www.RipplesBlog.org)