

Going beyond Green



Spring 2009 Edition

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www.clackamas.us/sustainability



Rules of Thumb for Sustainable Living

How do you use the concept of sustainability in your daily life?

Sustainability means using and protecting resources in a way that allows future generations to meet their needs. This is a broad and challenging concept to apply at home. Numerous guides and frameworks are available to help you translate the concept into more sustainable decisions.

Using a framework

One framework, developed by the non-profit organization *The Natural Step Network*, includes four basic principles for a sustainable community. Clackamas County likes to frame these principles as four questions.

Four Questions:

- Can nature replace what I **TAKE**?
- Are things we **MAKE** building up in and harming nature?
- Do we **PROTECT** natural systems from degradation?
- Do we **RESPECT** and meet each others' basic needs?

You can use these as rules of thumb, and apply them to a variety of decisions you might make, including when you purchase goods and services. One way to remember them is with four key words: **TAKE, MAKE, PROTECT, and RESPECT.**

These questions are explained in more detail on page S3.

Local governments lead the way



Clackamas County and its cities are setting goals and measuring actions against sustainability principles. As we move forward, we will track our

progress and share results. Below are a few current projects.

Clackamas County

- Adopted an *Action Plan for a Sustainable Clackamas County*, with long-term goals (Year 2050) and short-term tasks.
- The employee Sustainability Team is developing Best Management Practices for county operations, to include technology services, events and meetings, chemical use in buildings and grounds, employee education, energy use, and purchasing.
- Toweling and toilet tissue used in most county buildings is produced by the Blue Heron Paper Company mill in Oregon City and is made from the paper we recycle at home and at work.

Milwaukie

- Adopted a Sustainable City Plan in February 2009.
- Passed a Business Recycling Requirement ordinance in March 2009.
- Installed an electric vehicle (EV) charging station in March 2009.
- Formed a Sustainability Team made up of representatives of all city buildings and most departments.

Lake Oswego

May 2009 is Sustainability Action Month

Lake Oswego's first Sustainability Action Month (SAM) is a month of events dedicated to education, communication, and action for a better future.

SAM events are intended to educate and build a sense of community—and to be fun as well as informative. There are events specifically for young people, adult residents, and owners of local businesses. All are free and open to the public. Visit the City's website for more information, including the full SAM Event Calendar: www.ci.oswego.or.us.

Don't miss the Saturday May 23 - Energy and Water Expo at the Lake Oswego Farmers' Market.



Image courtesy of Deep Green Films

Community Corrections Residential Center finds the "triple bottom line"

Clackamas County Community Corrections Substance Abuse Program (CSAP) is a residential treatment program for felony offenders. Staff have implemented changes that benefit the environment, the economy, and the social parts of sustainability.

Lighting in the halls has been cut 1/3 overnight to save energy. CSAP is keeping files electronically, reducing client files from a binder to six or seven sheets of paper. Staff has worked with the Office of Sustainability to reduce the number of chemicals it uses inside and outside.

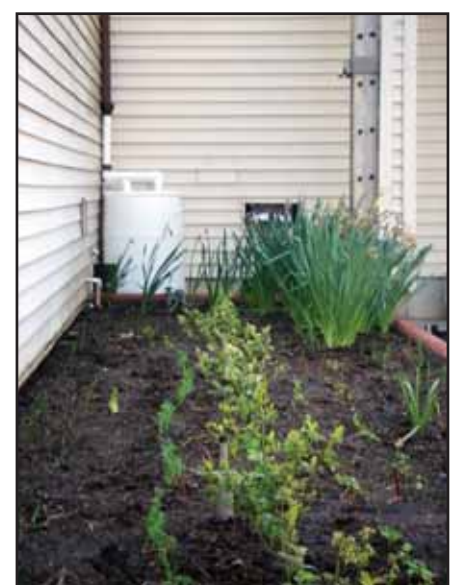
Part of client treatment includes looking at the damage caused by criminal behavior and giving back to the community.

A Corrections Officer came up with a unique way for CSAP residents to give back to the community - planting a garden and offering the produce to local non-profit organizations.

The garden project has expanded to triple its original size. With the help of the Office of Sustainability, CSAP has composted throughout the past year and it recently acquired rain barrels to capture rain water for the summer months. Most of the supplies used in the garden have been donated or are recovered materials reconfigured for fencing and other uses.

This year's produce is lined up to go to the Milwaukie Center. CSAP also has been in contact with other community groups to determine the types of produce that would be most beneficial to them in the future.

The residents in treatment do most of the garden work, which allows them to learn healthy new leisure activities as well as develop responsibility.



Raised garden bed with rain barrel in the background

Becoming more sustainable

Your lifestyle impacts the earth in terms of the resources taken, the waste made, and the effect on the economy and people, both locally and across the globe. Below is part of an exercise that can help you measure your level of sustainability and guide your next steps. Page one of Trash Talk addressed Personal Habits. Here are examples of Household, Yard Care and Work habits.



Circle the practice that is closest to what you currently do. Next, choose one or two activities that will move you toward the Best Practices column.

Household Activity	Best practices	Good work	Could be improved	Hard on the earth
Square footage: Divide the living space in your house (in square feet) by the number in your household. Is the square feet per person...	Less than 500	500 – 1,000	1,000 – 1,500	Over 1,500
Appliances: How many of your appliances are energy and water efficient? (refrigerator, washing machine, dish washer, furnace, etc.)	All	75%	50%	25% or less
Energy: Where does your energy come from? Do you...	Buy 100% green power and/or generate power from solar or other renewable systems	Buy at least 50% green power and use passive solar heating/cooling	Buy less than 50% green power but use energy wisely	Buy no green power and leave appliances and lights on most of the time

Yard Care Activity	Best Practices	Good Work	Could be Improved	Hard on the Earth
Landscaping: When you landscape your yard, Do you...	Choose all native plants and minimize lawn	Choose plants that attract wildlife (not all native plants)	Have a lot of lawn; most shrubs and trees are non-native	Have mostly lawn and some invasive non-native plants (e.g. English ivy)
Yard maintenance: Do you...	Never use synthetic pesticides or herbicides	Rarely use pesticides or herbicides	Sometimes use pesticides or herbicides	Frequently use pesticides or herbicides
Watering: Do you...	Never water lawn; plant drought-resistant plants; use rainwater collection system	Water shrubs and flowers only after a long dry spell	Water shrubs and flowers regularly	Water lawn regularly

Work Habits	Best practices	Good work	Could be improved	Hard on the earth
Lunches: When you eat at work do you...	Pack your lunch in reusable containers	Use a reusable lunch bag but still dispose of some packaging	Eat packaged, microwavable food	Eat take-out or fast food with a large amount of disposable packaging
Computer use: At work do you...	Shut down your system when you will be away for more than a 1/2 hour	Turn off your monitor when gone for more than 10 minutes	Only turn your monitor and computer off when you leave for the day	Leave your computer and monitor on most of the time
Planning Meetings and Events: When you plan events do you...	Provide reusable plates and cups or bring-your-own; eliminate extra paper; provide healthy local food	Minimize paper copies—use whiteboard, slides, or e-communication	Share agendas, print double-sided, reduce use of disposable dishware	Frequently print materials, print single-sided and use disposable single-use dishware

Partially taken from EcoFootprint by AXIS Performance Advisors, Inc. Copyright 2002 Portland, OR

The full exercise is available on the County's Sustainability webpages: www.clackamas.us/sustainability or by calling 503-557-6363.

If Americans drove our cars 20 fewer miles each week, we could reduce our CO₂ emissions by **107 million tons** each year, a 9 percent decrease.*

Clackamas County has the largest number of organic farms in Oregon. Supporting them **grows the local economy and provides you with healthy food.**

If we converted half of all lightbulbs to compact fluorescents, we would reduce CO₂ from lighting by 42.4 million tons a year, or **36 percent**.*

Buildings, not cars, produce the most CO₂ in the U.S. The average new house is **45 percent bigger** than it was 30 years ago.*

* National Geographic, March 2009

Of all the water in the world, only 3% is fresh. Less than one third of 1% of this fresh water is available for human use.

Have you been greenwashed lately?

The terms “green” and “sustainable” are not interchangeable. “Green” as a product claim is being used broadly as companies scramble to improve sales. Unfortunately, it is easy to “greenwash” an otherwise ordinary, unnecessary, or even an unsustainable product by using false and misleading claims.



What can a consumer do to find sustainable products? According to TerraChoice, an environmental marketing firm, people should examine green claims closely and avoid what they call “**The Seven Sins of Greenwashing.**”

TerraChoice, which has been studying greenwashing for several years, recently added number seven: The Sin of Worshipping False Labels, which is “committed by a product that, through either words or images, gives the impression of a third-party endorsement where no such endorsement actually exists.”

In other words, the label cannot be taken at face value. Unscrupulous companies point to their own in-house environmental programs as “proof” of certification. Others use labels that sound good, such as “eco-safe,” but have no scientific standing. Furthermore, the process of legitimate product certification must be transparent.

“Natural” is a common product claim. Consumers may assume it to mean safe, good or green – but that could be misleading. Take a look at “The Seven Sins of Greenwashing.”

Legitimate Eco-labels – and there are now a good many of them — must meet stringent standards. For sampling of legitimate product labels and a thorough explanation of the “Seven Sins,” go to www.sinsofgreenwashing.org. Or, call 503-557-6363 for a copy.

GoodGuide provides iPhone download

Goodguide, incorporated as a “for benefit” organization, rates products on their impacts on health, the environment, and society. On GoodGuide, consumers can search or browse over 70,000 food, toys, personal care and household products.



Go to www.goodguide.com to do research on products and download GoodGuide’s iPhone application.

(Rules of Thumb, continued from page S1)

Take, Make, Protect, Respect

Consider the questions below as you make decisions on your purchases and actions.

Can nature replace what I TAKE?

You may not be drawing upon natural resources directly, but as a citizen and consumer, you use energy and materials drawn from the earth’s crust and its natural places. This includes oil, coal, minerals, water, and lumber. We are not sustainable when we use resources that do not replenish or when we use resources faster than they can be renewed.

Are things we MAKE building up in and harming nature?

Oddly, we consume many products designed to be thrown away that are made with materials designed to last forever. A good example of the consequences is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch—a morass of floating plastic occupying a huge area in the Pacific Ocean. Many of the things we produce or their byproducts, such as pollutants, chemicals, and greenhouse gases, do not break down, but instead build up and disrupt human health and natural systems.

Do we PROTECT natural systems from degradation?

Natural systems, including soils, forests, rivers, wetlands and oceans all provide us with vital services that we take for granted. For our communities to be sustainable, these systems, upon which we and our economy ultimately depend, must be protected to function in a healthy way.

Do we RESPECT and meet each others’ basic needs?

Sustainability also has a crucial social element. Unless we seek to meet others’ basic needs, we cannot be sustainable. We should be concerned about persistent inequities and inefficiencies that endanger the health of our communities. Fortunately, it is growing easier to ask whether the products and services we buy meet not just our needs, but the needs of the communities in which they are made, and the people who provide them.

Sustainable practices that will save you money

Use a dishwasher instead of handwashing and **don’t pre-rinse** (scraping dishes instead can save 20 gallons of water per load). Run dishwasher only when full.

Rinse fruits and vegetables in a bowl instead of letting the water run.

Use a refillable water bottle and fill it with tap water. Tap water usually meets higher water quality standards than bottled water. Bottled water costs more than gasoline.

Avoid the use of an air conditioner by installing a ceiling fan.

Dry your clothes on a clothesline or drying rack.

Unplug your appliances and electronics when not in use. Many of them, including phone chargers, use electricity even when not being used.

Avoid Idling. Idling gets 0 mpg! EPA states that idling for more than 10 seconds actually uses more fuel than restarting your engine.

Decrease your speed. Every five miles per hour over 60 mph is the equivalent of paying an additional 20 cents per gallon for gas.

Try the “No Poo” method of washing hair: Use 1 tbsp. baking soda in one cup of water. For conditioner, use 1 tsp. cider vinegar to 1 cup water - It works!

For more ideas, go to www.clackamas.us/sustainability

The UnShopping Card

Do I really need this?

Is it made of recycled or renewable materials?

Is it recyclable or biodegradable?

Could I borrow, rent or buy it used?

Is it worth the time I worked to pay for it?

Oregon State UNIVERSITY **OSU** Extension Service

viviane.simon-brown@oregonstate.edu
<http://www.cof.orst.edu/extended/sustain/>

The UnShopping Card

Do I really need this?

Is it overpackaged?

How long will it last?

If it breaks, can it be fixed?

How will I dispose of it?

What is its environmental cost?

Is it a fair trade product?

Oregon State UNIVERSITY **OSU** Extension Service

541-737-3197
<http://www.cof.orst.edu/extended/sustain/>

Local Events and Workshops

Clackamas County Transportation Fair June 23, 2009 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Clackamas County Red Soils Campus Plaza
Beavercreek and Kaen Rds, Oregon City

Learn how to commute by bike, tune-up your bike, set up a successful carpool, and spend less on gas.



See electric bikes, scooters, electric and highly efficient vehicles.



Pick up walking and biking maps - plan routes to work, shopping, and family outings.



More information at www.clackamas.us/sustainability or call 503-557-6363.

Co-sponsored by City of Oregon City, O. C. Chamber of Commerce, and Clackamas Transportation Management Association

Metro Events and Workshops

Gardens of Natural Delights Tour: Oregon City

Sunday, June 28, 12 noon to 4 p.m.

See eye-popping flower beds, incredible edibles, naturoscapes and chickens in home gardens. Enjoy seminars and a tour at Clackamas Community College's Water-Wise Garden.

Free. Registration opens 8:30 a.m. Monday, May 18. Call Metro Recycling Information at 503-234-3000. Garden locations provided with registration.



Gardens of Natural Delights Tour: Lake Oswego

Sunday, July 19, 12 noon to 4 p.m. Don't miss the breathtaking artful gardens and naturoscapes. Take home secrets of their all-organic methods. Seminars, tours and free resources also offered at Oregon Tilth's Organic Education Center at historic Luscher Farm.

Free. Registration opens 8:30 a.m. Monday, June 8. Call Metro Recycling Information at 503-234-3000. Garden locations provided with registration.

Workshops at the Natural Techniques Garden

6800 SE 57th Ave., Portland, 503-234-3000

Free. No registration necessary.

Water less, save more

Saturday, June 13, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Water-wise tips for edible gardens and flower beds. Learn about mulching, rain gardening, installing drip and soaker-hose irrigation, choosing plants that need less water, and more.

Make way for winter veggies

Saturday, July 11, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Time to plant for winter-long harvests of organic carrots, kale and more. Learn what and how to plant.

Protect your garden from pests, without pesticides



Saturday, August 8, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

You've declared your yard a pesticide-free zone, so what next? Learn how nature can help you control pests, weeds and plant diseases.

Clackamas County Soil and Water Conservation District

Rainwater Harvesting and Rain Gardens!

These classes emphasize the use of rainwater in an urban setting and will cover collection, storage and distribution systems. Case studies will be reviewed with the pros and cons of each.



According to Clair Klock of Clackamas County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), an

average house in the Clackamas County area could produce as much as 45,000 gallons of water a year. Rain gardens are a great way to deal with excess rainwater and may also help decrease stormwater problems.

Rain Water Harvesting for Urban Areas

Saturday, May 30, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Atkinson Memorial Church, 710 6th St., Oregon City
Fundamentals of rain water collection and storage for later use. For more information, call 503-656-7296.



Water Harvesting and Rain Gardens Workshops

Fundamentals of harvesting rain water and designing a rain garden. For more information, see the calendar of events on the SWCD website at www.conservationdistrict.org or call 503-655-3144 ext. 119.

Wednesday, May 27, 6:15 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Happy Valley City Hall, 16000 SE Misty Dr., Happy Valley

Wednesday, June 24, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

West Linn High School, 5464 W. A St., West Linn

Mini-seminars on designing rain gardens

Sunday, June 28, noon to 4 p.m., in conjunction with Gardens of Natural Delights Tour, Water-Wise Garden at Clackamas Community College, 19600 Molalla Ave., Oregon City. A 30-minute seminar on designing rain gardens will be repeated four times throughout the day.

Golf Course Quality Lawns

Maximizing the beauty of your lawn, while minimizing your use of irrigation and lawn care products.



Wednesday, June 3
6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Happy Valley City Hall
16000 SE Misty Dr.
Happy Valley

Workshops co-sponsored by Water Environment Services and Regional Water Providers.



Clackamas Community College Sustainability Project 2009

The College's fourth annual Sustainability Project provides some of the most current information available," said Jeff McAlpine, coordinator. "The conservation, efficiency, and long-term planning associated with sustainability not only can save people money, but help them feel better about the world we're leaving our descendants."



This year's series focuses on the **Triple Bottom Line**, looking at the social, economic and environmental components of sustainability. Events began in April with daytime and evening speakers and conclude June 6, 7 and 8 with the Green Screen Film Festival. Events are free. For schedules: <http://www2.clackamas.edu/sustainability/> or call 503-657-6958, ext. 2307.