

# June 4, 2013 EcoTeam Celebration Report

## Overview

There was a celebration for the 13 EcoTeams on June 4, 2013 at the Leon County Extension Office. Neighborhood, faith-based, student and workplace EcoTeams learned about and took actions to reduce water, energy, solid waste, vehicle miles and more. The money and carbon saved and the improved quality of community life was well worth celebrating.

This report includes some examples of EcoTeam successes, a list of possible sustainability project ideas, strategies developed for the top ideas and some concluding comments. The appendices have the celebration agenda, list of participants and input from the Suggestions Forms.

## Celebration of EcoTeam Successes

Some Favorite sustainable ideas and actions

1. More gardens in the neighborhood.
2. I am aware that I am biking more.
3. I learned where people bought local eggs and many other things we want to buy.
4. I learned about why different people buy different things.
5. We considered what could make the university and other communities better.
6. Some members are going to start their own EcoTeams.
7. We challenged each other to compost and bring bags to the grocery; we shamed each other into being more sustainable.
8. The initiative brought us closer together. Getting to know each other better has been great.
9. We challenged each other to compost and even use human manure.
10. I use water from the sink to water the garden.
11. One member was foraging from their yard and got a code violation. We need to work on the ordinances.
12. Much of our domestic greens have had the nutrition bred out. Dandelions have 14 times the nutritional value of lettuce.

## Sustainability Project Challenge – Project ideas

Everyone was asked to identify a project that could be implemented by an EcoTeam or communitywide. The ideas were listed on the screen and participants were given 3 votes for the ones they liked the best. Small groups were formed to develop strategies for the top ideas (in **bold**). After presentations by each group the full group selected Sue Hansen's "cloth bag" project as the winner of the \$100 Sustainability Project Challenge.

## **Project Ideas that had strategies developed**

1. Take Out Green - Get restaurants to use biodegradable containers, advocate for commercial composting, and advocate for sustainable Greek and other food festivals.
2. Ride bikes and buses - Hold community bus rides – fun visible events. Have bus buddies to help get more people to ride. Target college students. Expand bus and biking options
3. Make cloth bags for shopping and general use- Reduce paper and plastic by using cloth bags.
4. Profit from pet waste - Find a way to reuse pet waste.
5. Neighborhood solar PV systems. Share the cost and the energy.

## **Other Project Ideas**

6. Provide incentives for 100% recycling or 0 waste.
7. Dharma rides – promote car-pooling to Buddhist events.
8. Create a program for solar hot water systems.
9. Create a “turn-out-the-lights program” using sensors, etc.
10. Create a local glass recycling program.
11. Provide a program to create rain garden designs for specific situations.
12. Change zoning to allow the use of grey water.
13. Create local pet food using meat scraps collected locally.
14. Find more places for large community gardens.
15. Discourage clear-cutting for new development.
16. Have a way to bring city compost back to the community.
17. Require permeable surfaces for commercial development.
18. Sponsor a sustainable film festival.
19. Hold a community “How low can you go” day to reduce energy use across the board – publicize it.

### **1. Take Out Green**

#### **Project Idea**

- Program to recognize and promote restaurants to switch to biodegradable takeout containers.

#### **Project Strategies**

- Approach the Greek festival
- Research cost effective materials
- Identify model restaurants like Andy Reiss and Panera
- Reach out to the restaurant association
- Find out what the obstacles and barriers are

## **2. Ride Bikes and Buses**

### **Project Idea**

- Promote more bike and bus ridership

### **Project Objectives/Benefits**

- Analyze transportation flows and usage
- Encourage exercise and reduce obesity
- Reduce traffic
- Reduce the use of fossil fuel
- Reduce stress
- Increase income
- Community building (bikers and riders)

### **Project Strategies**

- Work with citizen advisory committees and non-profits
- Improve bike parking
- Encourage bike sharing, possibly among EcoTeam members
- Teach and have places for bike maintenance
- Increase the number of trails
- Create a buddy program to get people to try bike commuting and/or riding the bus
- Offer free bus passes
- Provide incentives for bus drivers to encourage riders to spread the word

### **Project First Steps**

- Approach Star Metro and other groups
- Have citizen sponsored stakeholder meetings
- Seek sponsorships from sporting goods and bike stores

## **3. Make Cloth Bags**

### **Project Idea**

- Provide beautiful cloth bags for groceries and more

### **Project Objectives/Benefits**

- No more paper and plastic or at least a lot less
- Reduce the 86% of ocean debris that is plastic; waste buildup in the North Pacific Ocean is twice the size of Texas!
- Everyone tells their grocery store that you'd like them to stop offering paper and plastic
- Make it easy for everyone to use and reuse a cloth bag

## **Strategies and Next Steps**

- Go to sewing circles, create “Bag Brigades”
- Make pamphlets and hand them out
- Hand out free cloth bags in stores
- Petition grocery stores, government officials to ban plastic and paper
- Call Sue and she will make you one! 386-7929

## **4. Profit from Pet Waste**

### **Project Idea**

- Create a business that specializes in recycling pet waste in an environmentally-friendly manner using native dung beetles.

### **Project Objectives/Benefits**

- Reduce water pollution from pet waste
- Reduce the amount of pet waste in landfills
- Create compost from the pet waste to be used in local gardens
- Build a rainbow scarab (*Phanaeus vindex*) beetle breeding facility at which the pet waste is composted naturally by the beetles and beetles can be sold or given to homeowners and farmers to compost the animal waste in their yards, naturally
- Create jobs
- Form partnerships with local universities for biological research, and partnerships with local animal shelters as a source of pet waste.

### **Project Strategies**

- Research the market for the compost
- Develop a business plan and partners
- Locate an appropriate facility to house the pet waste processing/beetle breeding facility.
- Partner with local community gardens and animal shelters.
- Find interested entomology students from local universities to assist in beetle rearing.
- Set up the facility with appropriate containment bins for the beetles.

## 5. Neighborhood Solar PV Systems

### Project Idea

- Develop neighborhood solar PV systems that are located where there is continuous sun exposure and scale efficiencies.

### Project Strategies

- Identify regulatory blocks and develop strategies to work around or change.
- Identify one or more pilot locations
- Determine the most cost efficient design
- Obtain necessary permits and arrangements with local utilities
- Prepare a model multi-user contract
- Solicit bids and/or cooperative construction agreements.
- Obtain needed financing

## Concluding Comments

1. Sustainable Tallahassee had a retreat last weekend and one of our key purposes is education. EcoTeams are great vehicle to achieve this. We will continue to support EcoTeams.
2. We want to build a bank of sustainability ideas. Please share what you do and what works with others.
3. I was impressed with the evening.
4. We can go beyond the EcoTeams to the community. It can become a groundswell. The legislature has banned bans on bags. We can still take action on this and more.
5. It is beautiful to come together and talk about ideas. It is great to see what people are doing.
6. There is an energy innovator award being given by Rethink Energy FI. Have your EcoTeams apply.
7. This has been a great evening. I want to talk to the pet waste group and the group on restaurant waste.
8. I would like to have a resource list [There are lists on the Tallahassee, Leon County and Sustainable Tallahassee websites].

Appendix A

## EcoTeam Celebration Agenda

- 5:30** Tour of the Extension facilities
- 6:00** Community Dinner and Presentations
- 6:45** Celebration of EcoTeam Successes
- 7:15** Sustainability Project Challenge
- 8:00** Closing
- 8:10** Adjourn

Appendix B

## EcoTeam Celebration Participants

### Name

Cynthia Barber (City of Tallahassee)  
Barry Boerner  
Jim Crews (Los Robles)  
Ed Deaton (Miccosukee Coop)  
Anthony Gaudio (Grassroots Community) (Sustainable Tallahassee Board)  
Lindsay Gilday (Grassroots potential new team)  
Djawa Hall (new team leader TBD)  
Sue Hansen (team leader Betton Hills/member Betton Hills, Lafayette Park)  
Laurie Jones (UU team leader)  
Brian Lee (St. Johns Team Facilitator)  
Kyle Lusk (FSU Wesley team member)  
Elizabeth Markovich  
Rosa Morgan (Sustainable Tallahassee Board)  
Peter Nimkoff (UU team member)  
Ruth Marie Subramanian (Tallahassee Buddhist potential new team)  
Kim Ross (open facilitator)  
Alexis Simoneau (FSU Wesley team member)  
Kim Simpkins and son (team member St. Johns/new team leader TBD)  
Fran Sullivan-Fahs  
Katya Taylor (Woodland Drives team host)  
Kara Tyler and husband (Quincy team leader)  
Steve Urse (UU team host)  
John Van Giesen (Sustainable Tallahassee Board)

### EcoTeam Committee

Kathryn Ziewitz  
Will Sheftall  
John Baker  
Tom Taylor (Myers Park team leader)  
Daniel Parker (Lafayette Park, FL DOH, FSU Wesley Team leader)  
Stew Parsons (Gadsden Extension leader)  
Becky Parsons  
Lisa Galocy (City of Tallahassee, EPER leader)

## Appendix C

# Suggestions Form Input

These are comments from a few people who provided comments on the suggestion form in the celebration handout.

### **Improving EcoTeams** (Sessions, resources, topics, activities, projects, etc.)

- Add a unit on food! Support gardening, avoid excess packaging and provide information comparing energy and water use for producing meat and poultry vs. vegetables.
- Can we get the idea list from tonight's meeting to share with our EcoTeams? I would love some input from other group members and facilitators.

### **Starting more EcoTeams** (Groups/contacts, ways to promote, etc.)

- I'm going to reach out to all the college campuses and "sustainable" campus organizations to recruit new members. Hopefully this will get more young people involved.
- Announce at Betton Hills and similar events.

### **Engaging more people in individual and group sustainability activities**

- I am going to start a community garden and hopefully get more people involved in growing and buying local organic healthier food?
- Put the Edible Gardening Club on the Tallahassee, Leon County and Sustainable Tallahassee lists of resources.

### **Other comments**

- This was a great event.