

The logo for the Institute for Senior Professionals (ISP) features the letters 'ISP' in a bold, stylized font. The 'I' and 'S' are white with a red outline, while the 'P' is solid red. The background is black.

**ISP**

Institute for Senior Professionals

The title 'STUDY OF SUSTAINABLE OKALOOSA COMMITTEE' is written in a large, red, serif font with a black outline and a drop shadow. The word 'STUDY' is smaller and positioned above 'OF'. The background is a light gray with a pattern of faint, overlapping gears.

**STUDY OF  
SUSTAINABLE  
OKALOOSA COMMITTEE**

The year '2010' is displayed in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. It is positioned to the right of a thick black horizontal bar.

**2010**

The logo for Northwest Florida State College features the text 'NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE' in a white, sans-serif font. Below the text is a red, stylized wave graphic.

**NORTHWEST  
FLORIDA  
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100 College Boulevard  
Niceville, FL 32578  
[www.nwfsc.edu/ISP](http://www.nwfsc.edu/ISP)

## PREFACE

The Institute for Senior Professionals (ISP) of Northwest Florida State College is an organization of mostly retired and semi-retired senior men and women who have enjoyed careers as executives and professionals in many and varied fields of endeavor. ISP is a service organization committed to providing meaningful contributions in support of the community and the college's programs and activities through participation in problem solving and strategic planning.

In a September 8, 2009, letter, Mr. Donald L. Turner, Chairman of Okaloosa County's Sustainable Okaloosa Committee (SOC), requested that ISP conduct a study of the "mission, structure, programs, and general utility" of the SOC, analyze its functions and make suggestions for improvements (See Attachment No.1). In that letter, Mr. Turner explained that the SOC was founded approximately two years ago by a "small group of interested county employees with the purpose of researching and recommending ways of 'Greening Up' Okaloosa County." He further explained that the committee has no dedicated funding available to it and that its activities are currently limited to "gathering and disseminating sustainable tips and information to the Board of County Commissioners, county staff, and citizens."

The stated mission of the SOC is "to promote conservation and stewardship through education and demonstration among all departments of the county and within our communities." In furtherance of that mission, the SOC has focused its attention on four program areas: fuel conservation, utilities conservation, recycling and information dissemination.

Mr. Turner's request was considered and approved by the ISP membership at its September 15, 2009, monthly meeting. The project was directed to ISP's Citizen Involvement Committee, which undertook an examination of the SOC's mission, structure, functions and programs. In aid of that effort, Mr. Turner made those responsible for the SOC's efforts in each of the substantive areas available to ISP members conducting this study.

Without the SOC's willing assistance, and without the guidance and support provided by County Commissioner Mr. John Jannazo to the SOC, the work accomplished thus far and this study examining it would not have been possible.

For ease of presentation and understanding, the following acronyms are used throughout this report:

ISP—Institute for Senior Professionals at Northwest Florida State College

SOC—Sustainable Okaloosa Committee

BCC—Board of County Commissioners

NaCO—National Association of Counties

EPA—United States Environmental Protection Agency

ICLEI—International Council for Local Environmental Initiative

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sustainable Okaloosa Committee represents a noble effort by dedicated county employees to conserve not only the earth's valuable and diminishing resources but to do so in a manner that recognizes and is consistent with fiscal realities. This effort is laudable and every step should be taken to encourage the continuation and further development of the SOC's activities.

Unfortunately, the SOC is handicapped by the method in which it was initiated and under which it continues to operate. Rather than beginning life as a creation of the county's governing body, it "self-initiated" as the brainchild of a number of Okaloosa County employees. The necessary result of this is an initial and a continuing lack of official support, funds, people and material with which to pursue a true resource conservation program that could provide significant benefits for the county and its citizens.

More specifically, ISP found that:

- There exists no declaration or resolution (Eg., Sarasota County BCC Resolution 02-119, Attachment No. 4) promulgated by the Board of County Commissioners directing the county on a course of action leading to sustainability.
- Okaloosa County is not pursuing any known policy, plan or roadmap toward eventual sustainability (Eg., Sarasota County Roadmap to Sustainability, Attachment No. 5).
- There exists no office within the county management structure that has primary responsibility for the oversight, coordination and management of sustainability programs.
- The SOC, as a voluntary organization, has no management authority or assigned personnel, and operates without a budget or other resources.
- Pursuing the goal of a "Sustainable Okaloosa" will require action by the highest levels of county government to define "sustainability," craft a meaningful sustainability mission, establish a structure to manage the county's sustainability efforts and provide that organization with the resources necessary for the accomplishment of its mission.

To address the issues noted above, ISP recommends:

- The Okaloosa County Board of Commissioners (BCC) formally declares support for sustainability programs in the areas of construction, fuel conservation, utility conservation, recycling and information dissemination.
- The BCC adopt a specific roadmap leading to a sustainable Okaloosa County, including specific milestones and objectives in each substantive area.
- The BCC create an Okaloosa County Sustainability Program Office (SPO) directly under the County Administrator, and provide direction and support for that office.
- The BCC provide for the selection of an SPO manager and the staff and funds commensurate with the direction provided by the Board.
- The BCC adopt a practical definition of "Sustainability" and an SPO "Mission Statement."
- The BCC direct that the management and coordination of all Okaloosa County sustainability efforts is the responsibility of the SPO.

## RESEARCH

This project was conceived initially in an informal meeting with County Commissioner John Jannazo, who suggested a review of the SOC structure and function would be useful to the BCC in considering sustainability initiatives. Contact was made with Mr. Don Turner, the SOC Chairman, and a request was made to him for a brief SOC history, mission statement and current projects (Attachment No. 2).

Additionally, a request was made for meeting agendas, summary of meeting minutes, copies of newsletter, local/regional conference meetings and any information that would be important to understanding the workings of the SOC. After the pertinent information was forwarded to the CI Focus Group, Mr. Turner made a formal request for ISP to undertake this study project.

ISP approved the study project request and a project work committee was created to study, review and research the SOC mission and programs and to offer suggestions on improvements. In order to accomplish this goal, a base-line for comparison purposes was established as a means by which to judge the current work of SOC. Thus, many sources of sustainability throughout the State of Florida and the nation were studied before determining this base-line.

Nationally, many sources of excellent material exist. EPA's Energy Star program and the NaCO programs for energy conservation were reviewed for relevance to this project. Further, ICLEI's (Attachment No. 8) website has a wealth of information on "Local Governments for Sustainability in the USA". This website is replete with templates, guidelines and resource material for any size government wanting to create policies and programs for sustainability. Many local governments have used this resource for developing objectives on a path of sustainability.

In the ICLEI website each state has a listing of local governments that are participating in active/current sustainability programs. Some of those local governments have even attached testimonials for their respective programs. This work committee's goal was to find one or more counties or cities in Florida of similar size to Okaloosa County that has established programs for sustainability.

That list yielded three counties of similar size in the State of Florida with established programs--Alachua, Leon and Sarasota. The BCCs in these counties have made formal commitments toward sustainability by adopting policies and plans for creating and supporting development and implementation of specific sustainability goals and objectives.

Utilizing the internet, search was undertaken to obtain as much material regarding sustainability from each of the three counties referenced above. Additionally, each county was contacted to determine the identity of a specific person responsible for the administration of sustainability programs. Leon County and Sarasota County each have a specific employee who is responsible for county sustainability programs.

Sarasota County appears to have the most complete comprehensive sustainability program in the state. The county maintains a dedicated website for sustainability, and all information on it is directly downloadable and links are provided for anyone wishing to research specific documents (Attachment No. 3).

Sarasota's Sustainability website also gave a complete history, statement of mission and current programs approved and monitored by the BCC. Further, monthly workshops are conducted by the Sarasota Office of Sustainability for proposes of disseminating information to individuals, groups and companies within Sarasota County. This ISP study has used a great deal of this material in establishing a base-line in this project.

Leon County and Alachua County have a significantly lesser degree of research material available on their websites. Leon County does have a specific dedicated Sustainable Coordinator; this person provided ISP with several very good resource materials that have been referenced in this report (Attachment No. 9).

Alachua County has undertaken a very large study program called "Energy Conservation Strategies Commission in 2008," and the Alachua County BCC approved a Declaration for a Resource-efficient and Resilient County, though no other formal programs have been undertaken by Alachua County.

The most impressive aspect of Sarasota's and Leon's efforts toward sustainability is their "Annual Audits" and reports to their respective BCCs on implementation for approved sustainability programs/policies. This, in the opinion of our work committee, is the most important part of any sustainability plan for a county government to incorporate. This annual report provides independently verifiable data to the BCC on the status of sustainability. An example of this "Annual Audit Report" is attached to this report (Attachment No. 6).

The volumes of research material collected during the study have produced a wealth of examples in how a county government should establish, resolve and maintain a viable program for sustainability. Okaloosa County does not need to "re-invent" its sustainability program, just follow the steps provided in this report.

The ISP-SOC work committee would like to acknowledge the time and effort given to us by Ms. Maggie Theriot, Leon County Sustainability Coordinator, and Ms. Lee Hayes Byron, Sarasota County Manager of Sustainability, during our research phase of this study project. The information and research material each provided has been invaluable in establishing the base-line of this study.

## DISCUSSION

In responding to the SOC request, ISP concentrated its efforts in two specific areas:

- A. The SOC:
  - 1. Mission
  - 2. Authority
  - 3. Structure
  
- B. The specific programs pursued by the SOC:
  - 1. Fuel conservation
  - 2. Utility conservation
  - 3. Recycling
  - 4. Information dissemination

### **The SOC's Mission, Authority and Structure**

#### **Mission**

An examination of the current SOC mission statement reveals its extremely limited scope: "To promote conservation and stewardship through education and demonstration among all departments of the county and within our communities." In furtherance of this mission, the SOC meets once a month via conference call to discuss new information and developments relevant to its specific areas of interest. Information about items the committee deems worthy of action is disseminated to the county leadership, department staffs and the citizenry by way of sustainability "tips" or recommendations. Measuring the SOC's actions against current mission statement, ISP concludes the mission is being accomplished.

Responding to Chairman Turner's request for suggestions on how the work of his committee might be improved, however, ISP believes changes to the mission statement are in order. First, it seems prudent to establish a workable definition of the term "sustainability," for that concept is the motivation behind this entire effort. ISP further believes that any such definition must be practical and workable, rather than a simple statement of ideals, and that it must be capable of application in Okaloosa County. ISP suggests:

Sustainable Okaloosa means common sense conservation and stewardship of all our resources in such a way that we can meet today's community needs for a quality life style, while at the same time bequeathing to future generations a generous and uncompromised resource base.

Similarly, a somewhat broader mission statement is essential if sustainability efforts in Okaloosa County are to progress beyond the level of a discussion group. To support initiatives beyond the level of discussion and suggestion, ISP believes a commitment to some level of action must be injected into the mission statement. We suggest the following:

Sustainable Okaloosa is responsible to not only respond to the community but to provide leadership. To this end, it is our mission to aggressively inform ourselves of current best conservation practices, techniques and technologies, and to develop practicable plans to adapt them for and to implement them within Okaloosa County. We will also persuasively communicate these practices and plans to the Board of County Commissioners, county staff and the public.

### **Authority**

There is no official Okaloosa County policy supporting the SOC or any sustainability program. Indeed, it appears no such support has ever been requested of the Board of County Commissioners. The SOC does not have any assigned employees and there is no dedicated budget allocation for the committee's use. The SOC operates solely as an employee-initiated volunteer group with the commendable goal of fostering the concept of sustainability within the county.

In the event SOC members agree on the advisability of a particular sustainability initiative, it is taken by the chairman to the assistant county administrator, then the county administrator and the Board for any necessary approvals. Since its inception, the SOC has recommended a number of initiatives for approval by the county. Of those, eight have been accepted (Attachment No. 7), though the great majority of these approvals are for events simply seeking support for sustainability programs or the gathering and exchange of information about such programs.

Without an institutional "buy-in" to the concept of sustainability on the part of the highest political and management levels of county government, the activities of the SOC are unlikely to provide any greater benefit to the county and its citizens in the future than they do now. An example of a county government that has "bought in" to the concept of sustainability can be found in Sarasota County. There, the Board of County Commissioners has passed resolutions dealing with specific targets for fossil-fuel reductions, and has developed a comprehensive plan and a roadmap to sustainability that can function as models for other county governments, including Okaloosa County.



## **Structure**

As currently structured, the SOC is headed by Mr. Don Turner, who has principal duties as the Director of the Okaloosa County Facility Maintenance Department. Interested employees from many, though by no means all, of the county's departments are volunteer SOC members. The committee maintains no office and, as stated, has no dedicated employees or budget. Committee meetings are generally held by telephone conference call on a once-a-month basis.

ISP believes that, to be effective as an advocate for a meaningful county sustainability program, it is necessary to infuse resources into the SOC. As it stands, SOC is "manned" by volunteers who have other jobs and functions which absorb most, if not all, of their available time. If the SOC is to pursue a mission that involves management and advocacy for sustainability issues, as suggested above, then it will require the services of a dedicated manager; such a manager should have some level of administrative support to assist in coordinating and managing the various sustainability initiatives in each of the county's multiple departments. Only in such a way can the "best practices" ever hope to be researched, pursued, captured and channeled properly. This manager should be responsible to the BCC through the county administrator and the assistant county administrator, and should be allocated a budget commensurate with the tasks assigned by the Board and the administrator.

Again using Sarasota County as an example, there a full-time office staffed by a small number of county employees is maintained. A budget allocation sufficient to cover the necessary salaries and program initiatives is made available each fiscal year. This office is also responsible for seeking grant funds from all sources for use in the county's sustainability efforts.

## **SOC PROGRAM AREAS**

### **Fuel Conservation**

One of the programs sponsored by the Sustain Okaloosa County Committee is fuel conservation. While eventually expandable to incorporate a variety of additional aspects, the initial focus has been on three areas: (1) discouraging unnecessary engine idling by county vehicles, (2) encouraging county employees to apply common sense conservation measures to their official driving practices, and (3) reducing the time devoted to gas and diesel generator test runs.

The first two of the above goals are recognized by SOC to be largely exhortatory. Neither county ordinance nor administrative policy yet exists which either forbids engine idling or rewards fuel conservation. Furthermore, there exist no effective metrics to measure achievement toward either goal. The third goal, reducing generator test runs, is different in that achievement is measurable.

Minimization of vehicle engine idling: An unexpected and costly surge in the price of unleaded gas and diesel fuel in early to mid-2008 caused the county to review fuel consumption by all vehicles owned and operated by those departments under the supervision of the Board of County Commissioners. Many steps were taken to economize on fuel. One of them was a series of official reminders – both written and verbal – of the need to cut back on unnecessary engine idling. While the impetus was cost saving, the reduction of idling times would also intuitively reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

However, since county vehicles – with rare exceptions – are not fitted with fleet GPS's or engine monitoring equipment; there is no effective way to assure that individual drivers are observing the county-wide exhortation. Nor is there any credible way to isolate idling from other fuel economizing initiatives and measure its net effect. Furthermore, shutting the engine off for short periods of time may work against another greenhouse gas control measure to an as-yet unknown degree: catalytic converters depend upon high temperatures for their effectiveness. It is not known what length of engine shut-down will foil the purpose of the converter.

As the price of fuel has dropped back to more modest levels, the urgency and importance of the no-idle initiative has diminished. Repeated personal observation of county employee practices indicates that vehicle idling is once again largely the norm. While speculative, employees may in any case view the idling program of relatively marginal impact compared to more significant economy measures. Our overall assessment is that this program is unenforceable, and likely to be effective only when employees feel personally spurred by high fuel prices.

Conservative driving practices: Again, motivated by the 2008 run-up in the price of vehicle fuel, the National Association of Counties (NaCO), sponsored a so-called "Driving Challenge", the objective of which was to publicize the use of those practices which would logically achieve the best mileage from any vehicle. The practices were based upon common sense, and included such venerable common sense measures as proper tire inflation, removal of unnecessary cargo, periodic

engine tune-ups. The Challenge was issued on a private basis, with individual county employees formally “pledging” to observe driving practices identified in a list furnished by NaCO. Inducements included a nationwide county competition and the award of small cash prizes.

As with engine idling, however, the program depended upon moral suasion and exhortation. The initiative also depended upon private individuals taking personal responsibility for public property which was shared with others. Cargo criteria, aggressive driving and even tire pressures are subjective. In addition, there was no effective way of measuring vehicle, much less, driver achievement. Ultimately those few prizes that were awarded by NaCo were probably bestowed more for sincerity than actual accomplishment.

While individual county employees enquired and probably participated in the challenge, it is not known how many followed up, much less what their individual savings achievement was.

Reduction of generator test runs: The county operates two major types of electrical generators: Natural gas and diesel-fueled (there is one propane generator). In reality nearly all the generators are natural gas-fueled. SOC’s test reduction goal applies only to those generators operated by the Facilities Maintenance Department, which includes nearly half of the county’s approximately 60 generators (most of the others are operated by the Water and Sewer Department – an enterprise fund).

In order to maintain reliability, generators are normally switched on and run on a regular schedule –under load if possible. Test schedules vary by type of generator. The generators are not tested under load – instead, they are permitted to idle. Since the initiation of this goal, the length of time such generators have been run has been reduced by 50%, that is, from 30 minutes to 15 minutes. (In all cases, the manufacturer or distributor was contacted first to assure that this testing period would be sufficient.) Facilities maintenance estimates that up to 1,000 gallons of fuel equivalent are being saved per year.

While the conservation of fuel is always commendable - and certainly advances the cost savings goals of the county – the greenhouse gas emissions effect is considered relatively minor, as most of the generators are fueled by minimally polluting natural gas.

The first two fuel conservation goals identified above – reduction of engine idling and conservative driving practices – were intended largely to raise consciousness among county employees. While this may have succeeded when fuel prices were elevated in mid-2008, they appear to be observed only in the breach at present. Both of these goals would in any case provide only marginal relief in terms of greenhouse gas emissions or cost savings.

There are other, more significant measures that could be implemented, and which will both save operating funds and cut back on greenhouse gas emissions. On the whole, however, it is felt that many of these measures can be taken only in the medium term (three to five years), and will involve the net expenditure of capital funds to achieve.

Among the measures worthy of consideration are the following: (1) reducing the overall number of fleet vehicles; (2) reducing the size of vehicles to that necessary to do the job (“right-sizing”); (3) carpooling to the job site instead of taking multiple vehicles; (4) restricting the number of vehicles taken home by county employees; (5) installing computer/GPS transmitters in county vehicles to monitor routing and gas consumption; (6) identifying inefficient vehicles on a regular basis; (7) investing in technology to identify greenhouse gas generators; (8) disposing of inefficient and polluting vehicles as early as practical; (9) replacing vehicles with more efficient technologies; (10) considering alternative fuels, such as natural gas; (11) mandating and enforcing no-idle policies among county employees.

These and other measures have been discussed not only in the ISP document Review of Okaloosa County Vehicle Fuel Usage, dated May 2009, but in a plenitude of sustainability studies produced nationwide, and exemplified in Florida by Alachua, Leon and Sarasota Counties (see excerpts at Appendix).

If the Okaloosa BCC is seriously interested in joining other counties across the US in introducing “sustainable” concepts and policies among its vehicle fleet, it is recommended that a high level cross-department planning group be appointed to review strategies and measures contemplated or being implemented nationwide and see which are appropriate for our own circumstances. Suitability studies should evaluate both the yield of the measures (impact on fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions), and the cost and time horizon of implementation.

### **Utilities Conservation**

Responding to an ISP request for information regarding Okaloosa County efforts at utilities conservation, the SOC provided a significant list of projects undertaken. As would be expected, these efforts ranged between ones in the planning stages to those already underway. A listing of these projects within the county includes the following:

- Retrofitting existing T-12 light fixtures with more energy efficient T-8 kits, and reducing the overall lumen output to industry standard for the various types of work spaces
- Installing water heaters (WH) with capacities appropriate for the task (i.e., a 40-gallon heater for a 40-gallon task); reducing gas WH thermostats to a 120 degree maximum; installing circuit timers on electric WH power supplies to limit reheat cycles; installing insulation blankets on all WH
- Replacing existing old technology HVAC systems with highest affordable SEER rated units consistent with current budget limitations
- Replacing inefficient windows and doors with energy efficient versions
- Replacing dark roofing materials with light colored materials
- Examining and perfecting the insulation envelope in each county facility

Asked to provide information regarding the energy or cost savings involved in each of the above project areas, the SOC provided impressive numbers with respect to the steps taken and the expected cost savings involved in the light fixture project. ISP believes the process followed within the Okaloosa County Facilities Maintenance Department in this one area is instructive:

- The FM staff chose a representative office area, metered the lighting circuit and measured the energy consumed by the existing T-12 lamps over several consecutive 24-hour periods.
- The T-12 lamps and ballasts in the circuit were replaced with the same number of T-8 retrofit kits. The new fixtures only require one ballast (as opposed to two on the original) and the one ballast can operate from one to four light tubes in the fixture depending on the amount of light needed.
- Following the fixture replacement, the FM staff again metered the lighting circuit and measured the foot-candles of light provided, adjusting the number of lamps needed to published standards. This resulted in a net reduction of lamps operating, thus reducing attendant maintenance costs in the future.
- The energy consumption figures of the two tests were then compared, showing consumption in the new configuration to be less than one-half of that of the old fixtures. Including the \$17 cost of the T-8 fixture, in an office that keeps normal business hours, the savings were estimated to be \$12-13 per fixture per year. The annual expected savings resulting from the installation of over 1700 of the T-8 kits thus far (out of the county's 4800 fixtures) is over \$21,000.

Unfortunately, of the several energy conservation efforts described above, none, other than the one involving light fixture replacement, has reached the stage where real savings, both in terms of budget resources and the conservation of resources, can be achieved and measured. Efforts to further plan and actually take steps to obtain beneficial results in the areas involving hot water heaters, HVAC systems, doors and windows, roofing material and insulation, are handicapped by the fact that all of these efforts are being pursued within the constraints of the current budget. Said differently, any new initiative undertaken to further energy conservation must come out of current appropriations and must, by definition, be taken from monies already allocated.

ISP concludes it is unlikely that significant success in energy conservation can be achieved unless the effort is actively pursued throughout every department in county government, and directed and supported at the highest executive levels. While this has not occurred as yet in Okaloosa County, there is evidence that just such a commitment by county government is possible. The Sarasota County Commission, for example, has defined that county's sustainability goals, devised action plans and begun implementation. It has passed resolutions mandating building standards that require fossil fuel reduction on a defined timeline, and has implemented policies supportive of clean, renewable energy sources. While some—or none, or all—of the initiatives followed by Sarasota County may work in and for Okaloosa County, ISP believes the important point is that, to have any chance for a reasonable measure of success in sustainability issues, the effort must begin at the top.

## Recycling

Okaloosa County recycling initiatives, including “single-stream” recycling, “green building,” hazardous wastes, household product health and safety information, and end-of-life electronics are presented on the county’s recycling web site, which does an excellent job of summarizing activities and presenting information to the public. This site, however, is an *ad hoc* effort not tied to an over all sustainability program or reporting format. More significant, the recycling effort in Okaloosa County is currently limited to spreading information and encouraging voluntary efforts by businesses and residents.

The challenge for the future is to support and coordinate SOC initiatives throughout the county and with other counties. A successful Recycling function will require an Office of Sustainability supported by the county commissioners. Such an office could coordinate with key counties like Leon and Sarasota which have dedicated resources to Sustainability, thus taking advantage of the synergy involved in common goals and efforts.

A coordinated effort toward Sustainability within the county must also include a dedicated effort to seek and obtain grants of federal and state monies available for the development of sustainability programs. In fact, any future sustainability structure and budget will likely depend on such funds. There is currently no dedicated resource through which to pursue potential monies that may be available through the Stimulus Bill and other federal and state programs. Such monies are available for Environmental Education and Training, for program support, including solid waste and hazardous waste, for water programs, and for other energy conservation programs.

Leon County, for example, tracks these federal stimulus funding opportunities. The process for obtaining such funding is extremely bureaucratic and cumbersome; without resources dedicated to pursuing the available funds, they will go to jurisdictions that are willing to dedicate the necessary resources to pursue them.

## **Information Dissemination**

The information function of the Sustainable Okaloosa Committee is performing satisfactorily when one considers the position in which it is placed. Since this is an unfunded Committee, information is distributed using current technology and publishing techniques. The Committee is therefore at the mercy of other organizations, many non-governmental, to spread the word on ideas and activities.

The Okaloosa County web site provides an easy-to-use way for citizens to find information and interact with county government. It also provides links to other organizations, thus reducing driving time and citizen's time in providing and obtaining certain services within the county. However, there is no sustainable information link, so good ideas were not consolidated.

Key elements being used to disseminate information on sustainability programs are web-based technology systems and printed papers and magazines. Each SOC member, in conjunction with the county's information and public relations personnel, takes personal responsibility to spread the word on sustainability. The ability to do large-scale projects with the communities, however, is limited by the fact that all work on behalf of the SOC is, to its members, a voluntary adjunct to their full-time jobs.

The government information dissemination activity is working, but the piece that seems to be missing is the community side. The SOC and other groups are supporting activities that help the sustainability issue; these efforts include examples such as beach clean-up, road clean-up and recycling issues. Private groups often have very specific goals and some even have literature supporting their agendas. Because the SOC is unfunded and not centrally supported or managed, the information and the "message" disseminated by specific interest groups may not be entirely consistent with that of the SOC. For instance, the SOC has adopted an excellent motto: "Go green when going green makes good sense." Funding the SOC's information efforts might provide county employees with the wherewithal to support, and thus influence, the efforts of others for the benefit of all the county's residents.

## **Recommendations**

- The Okaloosa County Board of Commissioners (BCC) formally declares support for sustainability programs in the areas of construction, energy conservation, utility conservation, recycling, and information dissemination.
- The BCC adopt a specific roadmap leading to a sustainable Okaloosa County, including specific milestones and objectives in each substantive area.
- The BCC create an Okaloosa County Sustainability Program Office (SPO) directly under the County Administrator, and provide direction and support for the efforts of the office.
- The BCC provide for the selection of an SPO Director and the staff and funds commensurate with the direction provided by the Board.
- The BCC adopt a practical definition of “Sustainability” and an SPO Mission Statement.
- The BCC direct that the management and coordination of all Okaloosa County sustainability efforts is the responsibility of the SPO.



## **Attachments**



## Board of County Commissioners

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September 8, 2009

State of Florida

Mr. Karl E. Welhart, Director – ISP  
Chairman – CI Focus Group  
Northwest Florida State College  
Niceville, FL 32578

Dear Mr. Welhart,

Thank you for discussing with me recently about the possibility of the ISP conducting another study for the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners. The ISP has provided extremely valuable assistance to the Board in the past in analyzing various aspects of county operations.

Once again, we are calling on the ISP for your assistance. This time we would like the ISP to review/study the mission, structure, programs, and general utility of our Sustainable Okaloosa Committee, analyze how it functions, and make suggestions on how it may be improved.

The Sustainable Okaloosa Committee was founded a little over 1 ½ years ago by a small group of interested county employees with the purpose of researching and recommending ways of "Greening Up" Okaloosa County. The committee has no dedicated funding for training, event hosting/participation, promotional or informational items, or "green" upgrades to county assets. Currently, the committee's activities are limited to gathering and disseminating sustainable tips and information to the Board of County Commissioners, county staff, and citizens. While we feel that some progress has been made on the sustainable front, we feel that it's time to have an objective third-party review of our committee's organization and processes.

Thank you and the ISP for considering this project.

Sincerest Regards,

Donald L. Turner, Chairman  
Sustainable Okaloosa Committee

Cc: James D. Curry, County Administrator  
Cc: Donna Miller, Assistant County Administrator

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SUSTAINABLE OKALOOSA COMMITTEE – History and Summary

- I. History
  - a. A couple of years ago, the Facilities Maintenance began a “Utilities Conservation Program” with a goal of reducing all utility consumption in all county facilities.
  - b. Not long after, Mr. Curry contacted me and asked me to start a “Green Committee”.
  - c. I put out a call to all county departments for volunteers and the group met for the first time in January of 2008.
  - d. Literally starting from scratch, the group created a name for itself, a mission statement, and began to define how the committee would serve the county.
    - i. We could be an Information Distributor
      1. Large global issues: Global Warming, global energy consumption reduction, alternative fuels, and so forth.
      2. Local issues: how to change negative local environmental impacts, reducing fuel consumption, utilities conservation, saving money, recycling, and so forth.
      3. Sponsor and participate in “Green” conferences and events.
        - a. Green Government.
        - b. Power-Up.
        - c. Earth Day.
    - ii. We could implement programs that make actual changes that would have a positive impact on our county organization and citizens
      1. NaCo Energy Star Challenge.
      2. NaCo Driving Challenge.
      3. Utilities Conservation Program in county buildings.
      4. Fleet No-Idle Policy
  - e. To reduce the time and expenses associated with attending meetings, the Committee began holding most of its meeting by teleconference.
- II. Mission: The mission of the Sustainable Okaloosa Committee is to promote conservation and stewardship through education and demonstration among all departments of the county and within our communities.
  - a. We provide information to the citizens of Okaloosa County and the county departments that help them save money through conservation.
  - b. As quickly as possible, we are making all changes that conserve county resources and are sustainable in nature.
  - c. We participate in events where with can gather information from and share information with other sustainable organizations.

- III. Accomplishments
  - a. Information:
    - i. Green Tips – PIO Brief
    - ii. County Web Site
    - iii. Area Sustainability events
  - b. Utilities Conservation Program: saving over \$30,000 per year due to the changes made so far.
    - i. Changes to be made over the next five years should bring the total amount being saved to over \$120,000 per year
  - c. Fuel Conservation:
    - i. No-Idle Policy
    - ii. Emergency Power Generator – run-test time reduced
  - d. Recycling:
    - i. Single-Stream recycling
    - ii. FM recovers building materials in remodeling projects and incorporates them into new projects
  - e. Waste-to-Energy Gasification Process (in research & planning)

Sarasota County Website on Sustainability

[www.scgov.net/sustainability](http://www.scgov.net/sustainability)

Sarasota County Resolution #02-119

<http://www.scgov.net/sustainability/documents/SustainabilityRes02119.pdf>

Sarasota County "Roadmap to Sustainability"

<http://www.scgov.net/sustainability/documents/SustainabilityRoadmap.pdf>

Sarasota County “Annual Report and Audit on Sustainability”

<http://www.scgov.net/sustainability/documents/2008SustainabilityReport.pdf>



SOC Initiatives

ISP – Study of Sustainable Okaloosa Committee  
SOC Work Committee Questionnaire – 9 October 2009

1. Since the inception of SOC, please list the sustainability initiatives the committee has recommended for adoption.
  - a. Hosting the 2008 Green Government Conference.
  - b. Providing a sustainability program presentation at the 2009 Okaloosa County Management Retreat.
  - c. Participation in the Energy Star Challenge and the Driving Challenge.
  - d. Participation in the 2008 Power-Up Conference.
  - e. Participation in the 2009 Earth Day event.
  - f. Utilities Conservation Program.
  - g. Vehicle No-Idle program.
  - h. LEED Certification of new Courthouse Annex Extension.
  - i. Video-Conference format for most county meetings.
  - j. WTE process investigation & implementation.
  
2. Of these, please list those initiatives that have been adopted?
  - a. Hosting the 2008 Green Government Conference.
  - b. Providing a sustainability program presentation at the 2009 Okaloosa County Management Retreat.
  - c. Participation in the Energy Star Challenge and the Driving Challenge.
  - d. Participation in the 2008 Power-Up Conference.
  - e. Participation in the 2009 Earth Day event.
  - f. Utilities Conservation Program. (limited funding)
  - g. Vehicle No-Idle program. (no monitoring or enforcement)
  - h. Video-Conference format for most county meetings. (recent approval – not implemented – BCC meetings NIC)

ICLEI – USA Sustainability Website

<http://www.icleiusa.org/programs/sustainability>

Leon County "Climate Action Plan and Strategies"

<http://www.leoncountyfl.gov/GrowingGreen/old/pdfs/plan.pdf>  
<http://www.leoncountyfl.gov/GrowingGreen/old/pdfs/strategies.pdf>