

Sustainable Sarasota **ECCO** update

Environmental Challenges and Opportunities

SPRING 2003

Sustainable Sarasota : Saving the Earth By Starting at Home

Sustainable Sarasota is a new initiative to teach and promote sustainability in Sarasota County.



Sustainability became county policy in May, 2002 when the Board of County Commissioners passed Resolution No. 02-199 "...to establish and implement policies, guidelines, goals, and strategic actions to promote sustainability."

Sustainable Sarasota works to incorporate environmental policy into local government, business, and communities.

Local movements for sustainability are taking place in many progressive cities throughout the country, such as Seattle, WA, Santa Monica, CA, and Palo Alto, CA.

Sarasota is emerging as a leader in environmental stewardship. Our county was recently chosen by the Florida Solar Energy Center as a "Model Green Community"—a title shared by only two other counties in the state.

However, we still have a long way to go on the path to sustainability. Sustainable Sarasota is an important step in the right direction.



Sustainability...What's That?

Sustainability is a new term for a classic concept. The United Nations definition of sustainability is: "To meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." In short, sustainability is about maintaining and enhancing our quality of life for long-term prosperity. This means taking good care of our planet for the future of our society.



The "3 E's" of Sustainability:

- **Environment**
- **Economics**
- **Social Equity**



Sustainable Sarasota balances the interrelated areas of **Environment, Economics, and Social Equity**. Our projects not only focus on preserving our natural resources, such as air, water, and wildlife habitat. They also promote human health, financial prosperity, community development, and social justice. All of these values are interrelated.

Sustainable Sarasota leads programs in:

- Waste Reduction
- Low-Toxic Products
- Water Conservation
- Energy-Efficiency
- Alternative Transportation
- Green Business

While we are working to develop these initiatives on a community-wide level, we also want to serve as a public resource on sustainability. Contact us for more information on how to practice sustainability in your own home and community.

Sarasota County is Working to Reduce Our Ecological Footprint

At Sustainable Sarasota, we are learning about sustainability from the inside out. Our county government is developing projects to reduce our environmental impact in nearly every department. Here are some examples:

- **Green Building:** Our newest office building at Twin Lakes Park will be a GOLD certified green building. It will possess state-of-the-art energy-saving technology, harvest rainwater to flush our toilets, and use solar energy to provide electricity.
- **Alternative Fuel Vehicles:** Sarasota County owns two hybrid gas-electric vehicles, which save us gas and money. We are working to convert our entire diesel truck fleet and the SCAT bus system to biodiesel, a fuel made from soybeans that reduces toxic diesel emissions.



- **“Green” and Low-Toxic Products:** County offices are incorporating environmental awareness into daily activities. We’re testing low-toxic

janitorial products, printing on recycled-content paper, increasing the efficiency of our computer equipment, and reducing our waste stream.

- **Environmental Landscaping:** County buildings are surrounded by native plants and habitats and are maintained using low-toxic, natural products. We employ “Integrated Pest Management” to care for our landscapes and eliminate many dangerous pesticides.

- **Eco-Footprint:** Sustainable Sarasota is collecting data to calculate our countywide eco-footprint, and analyze our community’s impact on the earth. We can use these indicators to make better recommendations for local sustainability.

These are just a few of the programs that are supported by Sustainable Sarasota. Sarasota County has also taken great strides in providing a number of other environmental services, including: recycling, composting, water conservation, environmentally-sensitive land acquisition, wildlife habitat preservation, and sustainable development. Together, we all make a difference.

Did you know...

If every person on earth lived like an American, we would need
4 MORE PLANETS!



Americans consume much more than any other nation. Our average “Ecological Footprint” is **10 acres!** Those are some pretty big shoes! An **Ecological Footprint** calculates our impact on the environment according to the amount of energy we use and the pollution we produce.



How Big is Your Ecological Footprint?

Take this quiz to find out, and learn how to reduce your print on the planet!

earthday.net/footprint/index.asp

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 24** **Green World Café**
9:30AM-1PM Fruitville Library, Sarasota
- June 2** **Sustainable Sarasota Monthly Meeting Presentation on Permaculture**
1:30-3:30PM Florida House, Sarasota
- June 5** **Reusable Resources and Education Conf.**
8:30AM-2:30PM rft@recyclefloridatoday.org
- June 28** **Green World Café**
9:30AM-1PM Fruitville Library, Sarasota
- July 7** **Sustainable Sarasota Monthly Meeting Presentation on Hazardous Waste**
1:30-3:30PM EnviroCenter at High Pint Park, 8350 Bee Ridge Road

Join Us at Our Monthly Meetings!

Learn about sustainability, network with others, and get involved in local activities.



Contact Us For More Information
Join Us as an Partner, Intern, or Volunteer
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