

Energy Conservation

Goal: Huron County will maximize energy conservation.

Strategy: Exhibit Municipal Leadership in Energy Awareness and Use (ENCO2)

PRIORITY PROJECT: Develop Municipal Energy Plans

Description

The County and nine municipalities will develop municipal energy plans focused on energy conservation and best practices. This action will serve to decrease energy consumption in County and municipal buildings and operations, contributing to a reduction of Huron County's carbon emissions and saving money through improved efficiencies in operations. It will also raise awareness regarding energy conservation among industries, businesses, and the general public. The results of this action will support strategies under the following themes:

- Natural Environment (Environmental Integrity Pillar)
- Economy (Economic Pillar)

Activities will include

- Creating a working group with the County and 9 municipalities represented;
- Conducting baseline and comparison energy audits on municipal buildings and operations, linking with existing energy audit programs;
- Setting targets for energy reduction;
- Developing a pilot program for energy conservation plans;
- Implementing the energy conservation pilot through education programs and campaigns;
- Sharing lessons learned with local businesses and institutions as well as through public outreach.

Lead and Coordination

- Huron County
- Municipalities within Huron County

Measures of Success

- Creation of baseline data
- Attaining energy reduction targets

Timeline

The first generation municipal energy plans will be completed by the end of 2013.

The Schoolyard Planting Project strengthened the connections that students and teachers have with nature, fostering awareness of the importance of respecting and preserving the web of life.

Sustainability in Action

The Schoolyard Planting Project

This project created naturalized outdoor classrooms at three of Huron's elementary schools. This project will improve the quality of existing natural areas, providing shade and wind protection, fostering natural environment and ecological awareness, providing erosion control, and engaging youth to create meaningful change. Developed in partnership with the Maitland Valley and Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authorities, this pilot project by Huron County helps to showcase sustainability in action by engaging youth in the plan.



The Schoolyard Planting project was well received by the school community, with many enthusiastic applications from Huron County schools and proposals from professional landscape designers interested to participate in the initiative. Three Grade Six classes from Seaforth Public School, Brookside Public School and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School were selected to collaborate with selected landscape designer Jane Eligh-Feryn.

The project began with in-class workshops, teaching students about naturalized and local landscapes, the tree planting process, and the benefits of taking action for ecological sustainability in their schoolyard. *"This interactive process will allow the students to become the designers of their own environment. They will understand that they are designing places that the school community will use, but that they will share with birds, pollinating insects and small mammals. This is a wonderful opportunity for young people to learn first-hand, what it means to create and protect habitat."* said Jane Eligh-Feryn, of Eligh-Feryn Landscape Planning and Design.

This project will be expanded across Huron County and act as an example for future initiatives.