

Unitarian Universalist Church
of
Reading Massachusetts

Green Sanctuary Action Plan
Last Revised August 28, 2007

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Introduction

“Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” Our 7th UU principle has become a guide for many congregations in the face of modern environmental problems such as global climate change brought on by human activity. The UU Ministry for Earth has developed the Green Sanctuary program to give guidance and organization to those interested churches. As a candidate congregation, UUCR is working towards UUMFE Green Sanctuary certification.

Like Welcoming Congregation, being a Green Sanctuary touches the whole congregation. As such, this committee is somewhat unique in both its purpose and obligation within the church. In general, we do not have specific responsibilities for worship, education, landscaping, building usage or social action. Our goal is to raise the awareness of the wonderful gift of the Earth that surrounds and sustains us, and explore what we can all do to celebrate and take care of it. If we're doing our job, you will see small changes in almost all parts of church life, including your own way of thinking. We are here not as a standalone green team, but as a resource and a partner to other committees and the congregation at large.

The Global Warming sub-committee formed during Building Our Future to keep a green eye on construction. Upon discovery of the Green Sanctuary program, that group disbanded and re-formed in the summer of 2006 under this new title. In the past year, we have hosted (with Reverend Tim and Worship Arts) four worship services, completed our first congregational survey, and begun developing our church's Action Plan. We will finalize that plan in the coming months, execute it in the following couple of years, and hopefully become a certified Green Sanctuary by 2009.

Based largely on committee brainstorming sessions and information from our congregational survey, we have created a list of 15 candidate projects that will eventually comprise our 12-item action plan. The 15 candidates in 4 required areas are briefly summarized below. See the more detailed listing on our website: www.uureading.org/gs/gshome.htm.

We welcome any and all feedback and involvement from our church community. There are many ways to participate and to find out more about our activities. Please join us for meetings on the first and third Monday of every month. Check us out online or visit our blog: uureading.org/cblog. Drop by our coffee hour table on Sunday morning or just say hello to one of our members. We look forward to taking this journey together.

UUCR Green Sanctuary Committee Mission Statement:

The UUCR Green Sanctuary Committee seeks to put our 7th Principle (Respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are all a part) into action by inspiring UUCR members and friends to do the same and by setting an example as a sustainable sanctuary for the Reading community.

The Green Sanctuary Committee.

Co-chairs: Tracy Sopchak and Ben Oyer

Members: Eileen Barrett, Linda King, Dodie Marshall, Jamie Maughan, Ann Mottl, Chris Richey, Gina Snyder, Walt Tuvell, Chris West, Rick Wetzler

Green Sanctuary Requirements

2	Environmental Justice	<i>At least one project involving a long term partnership with an organization outside of UUCR</i>
2	Religious Education	
4	Sustainability	<i>At least one project pertaining to energy efficiency.</i>
2	Worship & Celebration	
<u>2</u>	<u>Any of the above</u>	
12	Total action items	

Communication Strategy

Green Sanctuary Communication Tools

- Webpage Provides introduction to Green Sanctuary, contact information and status. Updated by UUCR webmaster.
- Blog Provides a more dynamic content update of recent news. Updated by Green Sanctuary.
- Coffee Hour Table Staffed by Green Sanctuary. Provides an opportunity for personal contact and a place to display recent messages and receive feedback. Provides an opportunity for display of materials, etc.
- Worship Service Chalk Board At the entry to the sanctuary. Provides an inspirational earth based quote

UUCR Communication Tools

- Bi-weekly newsletter – For short messages and links to the blog for further details.
- nuuws email listserv - news blast to many congregants regarding events or official business
- amonguus email listserv
- Worship Order of Service – For short messages, reminders, and notices of events.

Town of Reading

- Town Papers, Weekly Advocate & Daily Chronicle
- Reading Public Cable Access Station

Please note: the "UCR coordinators" listed are suggested, not final. Some of these people have not been contacted and may not agree to these responsibilities.

Environmental Justice

Additional project ideas:

- Woburn Superfund Site Education, Other local efforts: Gretchen Latowski
- BU Lab, Emily Kaplan from Youth SAC Con.
- Reading Compost to Communities with no access to good compost.
- Compile a resource list of organizations that UUCR friends and members are involved with for others to reference with questions.

1) Local Charity Energy Efficiency Support

Time Frame	Ongoing
Outreach	Local Charitable organization
Expense to UUCR	Fundraising
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Green Sanctuary Committee</i>

- Use any extra funds or fundraising money to purchase conservation materials, such as CFL bulbs, for local charitable groups such as the Mission of Deeds or Reading Food Pantry. Other recipients may include the UU Urban Ministry, the Roxbury UU church or the Renewal House. Provide a sheet to accompany each bulb with information about the environmental and financial benefits of a CFL bulb as well as the proper usage and disposal of bulbs, town disposal locations and clean-up instructions in case of a breakage.

Existing Efforts

a) **Canvas Shopping Bag - CFL Fund Drive**

In the spring of 2007, we sold canvas shopping bags that the RE kids had decorated in their classes to the congregation for a small profit. We educated the congregation about the environmental benefits of using canvas bags over paper or plastic bags during a Sunday worship service, at coffee hour and through our website. We purchases CFL bulbs with the profit from these sales and donated the bulbs to the Reading Food Pantry. We included an information sheet to accompany the bulbs with the information specified above.

Religious Education

2) Adult Enrichment

Time Frame	Annual
Expense	Course Material Subsidies
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Adult Enrichment: Fran Sansalone</i>

- Provide at least one environmentally based Adult Enrichment course annually.

Topics could include:

- Organic Pesticides and Cleaners, where to buy and which to buy
- Green Gardening
- Use Northwest Institute's method and materials for an Eco-Circle course for such topics as Voluntary Simplicity and Sustainable Living.
- Chalice Circle Topic to include Green
- A Green Business Model
- Nature walks
- Earth Based Religion Worship, Wicca
- Movie Nights

Existing Efforts

a) An Inconvenient Truth

In the fall of 2006, UUCR hosted a free showing of *An Inconvenient Truth* and provided a hand-out on actions that individuals could take to reduce their carbon footprint.

b) Last Child in the Woods

In April 2007, the UUCR Fellowship committee hosted its first annual all-church read with the book, 'Last Child in the Woods. Saving our children from Nature Deficit Disorder'. Events surrounding the reading were a Dessert and Discussion social and a nature walk around Horn Pond in Woburn.

3) Child RE Curriculum

Time Frame	Annual
Expense	None
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Director of Religious Education: Aileen Dashurova</i>

Include at least one environmental topic in the RE curriculum annually.

Topics could include:

- Northampton to Boston climate walk. Organize a group of walkers and carpool sign-up to support this walk. Adults walked in 2007.
- Kids growing up in suburban or urban areas these days don't always have many opportunities to spend time playing in nature areas because of perceived safety or health dangers. Consequently kids don't develop a relationship with nature and may not value and protect natural areas when they become adults. A project idea is to offer periodic supervised outings to local nature areas such as the Town Forest, Harold Parker State Park, or Horn Pond.
- NSTAR free magic show "The Magic of Saving Power".

Existing Efforts

See Project 2a: [Last Child in the Woods](#)

See Project 1a: [Canvas Shopping Bag - CFL Fund Drive](#)

a) Boston Climate Walk

In March 2007, a small group from UUCR participated in the last day of the Northampton to Boston climate walk.

4) RE Pledge

Time Frame	Annual
Expense	None
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Director of Religious Education: Aileen Dashurova</i>

Use the survey questions to have each child pledge to do (or refrain from doing) a certain activity each week, such as pledging to turn the lights out when they leave a room. Have the child report back on their progress at the next class.

Existing Efforts

a) 2006 Child Survey

In the fall of 2006, the UUCR Green Sanctuary committee conducted an all-church survey to baseline our congregation. Part of the survey involved the children in the RE classroom, who pledged to environmental actions for a week. In class the next week, the children reported on their progress and were encouraged to share their thoughts and experiences.

5) Child's Garden

Time Frame	Ongoing
Expense	Some for plantings, soil, etc.
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Landscaping Committee</i>

Grow a garden on church grounds and involve the kids of the church. Show how food goes to compost and then can be used to grow more food.

Existing Efforts

See project 7a. [Composting](#)

Sustainability

6) Farmer's Markets Support

- There are farmer's markets in Reading and surrounding areas which sell locally grown and organic produce. We could assist their efforts by educating our congregation about the environmental benefits of buying locally grown and organic produce.

7) Landscaping & Grounds

Time Frame	Ongoing
Expense	Offset for organic pesticide. Cost saving with reduced water usage.
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Landscaping Committee Lauri Johnson</i>

- Reduce water usage for lawn watering. An alternative for watering is to examine ways to reduce the need for irrigation. Lawns planted with non-native species are unsustainable without watering and chemical treatment, although they have become a standard. If the church examined local flora that could harmonize better with the rain patterns known in the area, the need to water would be a non-issue.
- Hold a Planting Day. Provide a list of acceptable plantings to the congregation. People can pick their favorite plant from the list and everyone can plant them together on a designated day. The list could also be used to direct other plant gifts often given to the church from child dedications and other services.
- Use site compost material to improve the top soil around Loring house, which recently underwent expansion. The builders replaced the top soil with poor quality fill.
- Increase the number of rain barrels used to catch roof rain water. New ground design will recharge ground water through the use of underground catch basins.
- Use organic pesticides on the lawn instead of conventional ones to avoid related pollution.

Existing Efforts:

a) Composting

There are currently 2 compost piles maintained on the grounds and used for gardening.

b) Rain Barrels

There are currently 2 rain barrels used on site.

c) Landscaping Committee Involvement

Ann Mottl is our acting Landscaping Committee Liason. She attends their meetings, offers input and reports back to the Green Sanctuary committee.

8) UUCR Solid Waste Reduction & Recycling

Time Frame	Ongoing
Expense	Use paper income to pay for plastic recycling hauler
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Green Sanctuary Committee & Facilities</i>

Paper Reduction

- Reduce the junk mail received by the church by filling out a junk-mail reduction kit
- Reduce the size of the Sunday order of service (oos), the announcement page and the newsletter.

Paper Recycling

- Encourage the church to purchase paper made from recycled paper.
- Use a company like Abitibi to recycle church and member home paper. This company pays per pound of paper collected for recycling.

Plastic Recycling

- Team up with other churches in town to convince the town to provide curb-side recycling for churches.
- Request that the Cities for Climate Protection committee (ACCCP) propose an instructional motion to Town Meeting to provide this service.
- While we are waiting for this service to become available we can rent a toter from BFI to collect our recyclables and request Governing Board to add a budget item for curbside recycling.

9) Congregational Waste Reduction & Recycling Education

Time Frame	Ongoing
Expense	Use paper income to pay for plastic recycling hauler
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Green Sanctuary Committee</i>

Product Reduction

- Promote the cycle of product reduce, reuse, recycle within the congregation by educating people about the embodied energy of a product, encouraging people to reduce their unnecessary purchases, repair their existing items, and offer their used items that are still in good condition to others via donation to a community such as UU Urban Ministry, FreeCycle or a reuse store.

Paper Reduction

- Educate the congregation about ways to reduce the amount of junk mail they receive by offering a junk mail reduction kit.
- Provide a magazine swap program...a place where we can leave our magazines and others can take them home and enjoy them.

Paper and Plastic Recycling

- Educate the congregation about which items can be recycled.

CFL Bulb Drive

- Educate and motive congregants to replace incandescent bulbs in their homes with CFL bulbs.

10) Automobile Miles Driven Reduction Campaign

Time Frame	Ongoing/Annual
Expense	None
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Green Sanctuary Committee</i>

- Establish a carpool system for UUCR friends and members to attend Sunday service or for use during the week. Provide a display board at the Green Sanctuary station that people can log in their carpool use and associated CO2 avoidance. Set a goal and track over time.
- Educate congregation about measures they can take at home.
- Promote the use of Reading Green Transit, once it becomes available.

11) Town Recycling Center

Time Frame	Ongoing/Annual
Outreach	Town of Reading
Expense	None
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Green Sanctuary Committee: Linda King</i>

- Offer to be the receiving location for the Town of Reading Total Recycling center where residents can drop off Sneakers, Bikes, Books, Children's Items, electronics. Hold a church-wide-recycling day. Use CRT Recycling Inc. services. Re-start the Reading textile recycling program.

Existing Efforts:

- a) **Got Books**

Become the town of Reading's location for book recycling. Recycled books are used overseas to help people learning English. Advertise to Reading residents so they will contribute their used books. *Got Books?*

12) UUCR Resource Reduction Campaign

Time Frame	Ongoing
Expense	Money Savings
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Facilities: Frank Fardy, Bill Grace</i>

- The way in which the buildings are used adds to energy inefficiency. People aren't sure where light switches are, meetings are scheduled in a second building before the first is being fully used, people forget to turn lights out. Analyze current usage patterns and devise usage norms. Educate the congregation about these norms.
- Find ways to reduce our resource usage such as switching all incandescent to CFL, using occupancy monitors and reducing the water usage in the bathroom faucets. What weatherization can be done? Occupancy sensors, timed faucets. Use washable utensils, cups and plates instead of disposable. Have members bring in their own coffee mugs for coffee hour.

Worship & Celebration

13) Greening Sunday Morning Worship Service

Time Frame	Weekly
Expense	Coffee Hour Table Supplies
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Green Sanctuary Committee</i>

Find ways to be a small but constant presence around Sunday morning worship every week.

Ideas Include:

- Find a place for a Green Moment in the service perhaps on a monthly basis. This might take the form of a reading or chalice lighting.
- Write an inspiring earth based message on a chalk board as people enter the service. There is a book called the Ecological Calendar which offers short descriptions of what is happening in nature that week to keep us connected to Earth's cycles. We could use this information to help connect people to what's happening in the Earth or find an inspiring quote.
- Hold annual Green worship services such as Earth Day, dedicated to the Green Sanctuary to keep the topic in people's minds and give us an opportunity to restate our goals.

Existing Efforts

a) **Worship Services**

In the 2006-2007 year, the Green Sanctuary committee hosted and was involved in the preparation of 4 worship services including an Earth Day service.

14) Annual Earth Centered Celebrations

Time Frame	Annual
Expense	Small Amount for Decorations etc.
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Worship Arts Committee & Green Sanctuary Committee</i>

Provide an annual worship/celebration opportunity for the congregation based around some nature based event such as the solstice.

Existing Efforts:

- a) See project 13a: [Worship Services](#)

15) Annual Green Brunch

Time Frame	Annual
Expense to UUCR	None
Possible UUCR Coordinator	<i>Fellowship Committee, Beth Brauer</i>

- Organize an annual brunch where UUCR friends and members bring vegetarian and vegan dishes to share in a pot-luck fashion. Recipe cards are brought too and attendees assemble a recipe book based on their favorite dishes. Information about the environmental advantages of locally grown, organic and vegetarian ingredients provided as well as locations where these can be purchased such as Whole Foods, Atlantic or the Farmer's Market at the train station.