

**Bemidji State University  
Strategic Plan for Sustainability  
Academic Years 2008 - 2013**



**BEMIDJI**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

**October 2009**

Strategic Plan for Sustainability

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## Strategic Plan for Sustainability

*Students, through the sum of their educational experience at Bemidji State, will have multiple opportunities to learn about, experience, and reflect on the university's Signature Themes. The themes represent core values that guide curriculum and services. Not tightly defined, they invite interpretation and discovery.*

- *International/multicultural understanding*
- *Civic engagement*
- *Environmental stewardship*

*Bemidji State University has made a commitment to become a more sustainable campus. The Strategic Plan for the Sustainability Office will create a framework to support the signature themes of environmental stewardship and civic engagement.*

*The Students for the Environment, Sustainability Coordinator, Environmental Advisory Committee and many other dedicated faculty, staff, and students continue to explore options for a more sustainable campus. Technology and incentives are constantly changing, requiring a strong network of knowledge and support. Annual reviews of this strategic plan will provide the necessary feedback to allow for appropriate adjustments in direction.*

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### **Sustainability Office Vision, Mission, Strategy, and Values**

Our vision is to **promote awareness and instill passion for the Earth through research, projects, and leadership.**

Our mission is to **exemplify and create a culture that can exist indefinitely while in harmony with nature.**

In order to fulfill our vision and mission, we must accomplish the following:

- Create an environmentally literate campus community.
- Establish baseline data to gauge direction and monitor improvement.
- Emphasize long-term thinking and full-cost pricing.

Our planning strategy is as follows:

**Review:** Review and evaluate all facets of resource use.

**Identify:** Identify immediate, short-term, mid-term, and long-term needs.

**Plan:** Begin the planning process and prioritize immediate needs.

**Communicate:** Communicate with all constituencies.

**Implement:** Address immediate needs, and begin implementation of other identified needs.

**Evaluate:** Assess progress and re-prioritize needs.

Our *Strategic Plan for Sustainability* will provide a flexible blueprint for the future of sustainability at Bemidji State University.

The vision, mission, and strategy comprise the required ingredients for determining goals, initiatives, and priorities.

## Strategic Plan for Sustainability

### Overview of the Strategic Plan for Sustainability:

The *Strategic Plan for Sustainability* addresses three key areas: carbon footprint, water and land resources, and education.

Sustainability impacts all university functions. “Strategy A” is to “Reduce our Carbon Footprint”. “Strategy B” is to “Model Stewardship of Land and Water,” while “Strategy C” is to ultimately inform behavior by “Motivate, Educate, and Outreach on Sustainability Issues.” Goals and initiatives will be identified for each strategy.

### Planning Participants

#### ***Environmental Advisory Committee, BSU***

*Dave Bahr, Associate Professor of Physics*

*Erika Bailey-Johnson, Sustainability Coordinator*

*Carol Bennett, Assistant Professor of Psychology*

*Ryan Hilmer, Assistant Director, Residential Life*

*Hannah Hutchins, Student*

*Asher Kingery, Student*

*Mark Lawrence, Associate Professor of Geography and Political Science*

*Rich Marsolek, Environmental Health, Security, & Safety Coordinator*

*Crystal Middendorf, Student*

*Chinwuba Okafor, Interim Associate Director, Hobson Memorial Union*

*Amy Piekarski, Student*

*Jeff Sande, Physical Plant Manager*

*Dave Souba, Director, BSU Dining Services*

*Andrew Spaeth, Student*

*Jon Utley, Grounds and Roads Maintenance Coordinator*

*Vince Vohnout, Associate Professor of Technological Studies*

*Derek Webb, Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science*

#### ***Students for the Environment, BSU***

*Seamus Glewwe*

*Alyson Holland*

*Hannah Hutchins*

*Asher Kingery*

*Crystal Middendorf*

*Amy Piekarski*

*Emily Seely*

*Andrew Spaeth*

#### ***Student Senate, BSU***

*Spaeth, Andrew Dale*

*Clark, Leo John III*

*Cuthrell, Arlene*

*McDougall, Ashma*

*Livers, Matthew John*

*Joshi, Prativa*

*Moellering, Kyle Thomas*

*Ragavan, Ashvin Nambiar*

*Meehlhause, Michael Scott*

*Kufuna, Hannah Jewel*

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*McDougall, Ashma*  
*Cuthrell, Arlen*  
*Palmer, Leah Marie*  
*Bjorge, Dana*  
*Brown, Amy*  
*Marshall, Richard*  
*Nelson, Nicholas*  
*Joe Moubry*  
*Jonathan Lembrick*  
*Ben Lundeen*  
*Michael Meehlhause*  
*Talesha Roehler*  
*Geoffrey McIvers*  
*Hise, Andrew*  
*Kingery, Asher*  
*White, Corey*  
*David Andrade*  
*Gabe Wakonabo*  
*Peter Nelson*

### ***Meet and Confer***

### ***President's Leadership Council***

### **Planning Activities**

Planning activities included the following:

- Creation of "Strategies for 2008 to 2013" by the Sustainability Coordinator, Fall 2008.
- Creation of a Preliminary Outline of a Strategic Plan by the Sustainability Coordinator and Chief Information Officer, Spring and Summer 2009.
- Creation of a rough draft by the Sustainability Coordinator, Fall 2009.
- Request for feedback from Vice President of Finance and Administration, Fall 2009
- Distribution of the rough draft to task forces defined in the Planning Participants part of this document, Fall 2009.
- Requests for review of the rough draft and feedback from the above task forces, Fall 2009.
- Meetings with each of the task forces to discuss changes and additions, Fall 2009 and Spring 2010.

### **Definitions**

***Status*** = *what stage is this initiative in?*

- *Complete* = *planning and implementation are finished*
- *In progress* = *currently working on implementing this initiative*
- *Planning* = *currently developing this initiative*
- *Discussion* = *have had preliminary conversations about this initiative*
- *Ongoing* = *the initiative does not have a concrete start/end date*

***Review*** = *when will this initiative be evaluated?*

- *Annually* = *once per year*
- *Semi-annually* = *two times per year*

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- *Ongoing = continuously as necessary*

**Timeline** = when will this project be a priority?

- *Short-term = within the next year*
- *Mid-term = within the next 2 to 3 years*
- *Long-term = within the next 4 to 5 years*

### Strategy A: Reduce our carbon footprint

The University President signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) in November 2008, pledging to develop a plan to become a carbon neutral institution. Fortunately, the campus community understands that the burning of fossil fuels is impacting climate in unprecedented ways, that fossil fuels are a nonrenewable resource, and that we must develop a long-term approach to responsible climate behavior.

The first step in reducing carbon emissions is to calculate our carbon footprint. Once a carbon footprint is established, a Climate Action Plan can be developed to present a blueprint for future energy-saving initiatives. Action can be taken to systematically reduce the use of fossil fuels by various strategies such as energy competitions, educational campaigns, and technological advances in heating and cooling systems.

Best practices indicate the initial steps to reduce carbon emissions should be to focus on energy conservation and efficiency by promoting such measures as green building design, lighting retrofits, and Energy Star Purchasing Policies. Once the “low-hanging fruit” is harvested, larger capital investments can be made in a renewable energy infrastructure such as solar photovoltaic panels or a wind turbine. However, if opportunity arises (which often occurs in this field), we should consider taking advantage of incentives and in making investments in renewable energy.

The identified goals and initiatives for advancement of carbon neutrality are below.

#### **Goal 1: Increase energy conservation and efficiency**

Initiative	Status	Review	Timeline
1.1 Calculate BSU’s campus carbon footprint (ACUPCC).	Ongoing	Annually	January of each year
1.2 Develop a Climate Action Plan (ACUPCC).	Complete	Annually	Jan. 2011
1.3 Challenge students to reduce energy consumption via the “Do It In The Dark” contest.	Ongoing	Annually	November or February of each year
1.4 Establish an Energy Star Purchasing Policy (ACUPCC).	In progress	N/A	Short-term
1.5 Contract outside specialists to perform building audits, identifying potential areas for improvement in heating, cooling, insulation, and lighting.	Complete	Annually	March 2009
1.6 Review hybrids, plug-in hybrids, and fully electric vehicles for BSU fleet replacement over time.	In progress	Annually	Short-term
1.7 Encourage high-efficiency lighting upgrades throughout campus.	Ongoing	Semi-annually	Short-term
1.8 Participate in the Minnesota Campus Energy Challenge to encourage campus-wide energy conservation.	Ongoing	Annually	February of each year
1.9 Promote green building design, construction, and destruction; encourage LEED certification or similar standard (Laurel House as MN Greenstar Certified).	In progress	N/A	Mid-term
1.10 Investigate options for less energy-intensive equipment.	Ongoing	N/A	Mid-term
1.11 Promote the use of local foods.	Ongoing	Annually	N/A

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**Goal 2: Reduce waste and increase recycling**

Initiative	Status	Review	Timeline
2.1 Perform a waste audit of Hagg-Sauer Hall.	Ongoing	Annually	October of each year
2.2 Monitor and implement strategies to increase recycling.	Ongoing	Annually	N/A
2.3 Investigate options to reduce cost for waste and recycling.	Planning	N/A	Short-term
2.4 Salvage food grade oil (Dan Houg).	Ongoing	Annually	N/A
2.5 Investigate options for composting to decrease food and yard waste and provide a valuable (perhaps profitable) commodity.	Ongoing	Annually	Short-term
2.6 Implement a reusable take-out container program.	Complete	Annually	August 2009
2.7 Implement a bottled water policy to reduce plastic waste and encourage the use of tap water.	In progress	N/A	Short-term
2.8 Implement a paper policy to reduce paper waste.	In progress	N/A	Short-term
2.9 Encourage the reuse of water bottles and coffee mugs.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
2.10 Encourage efficient hand-driers to reduce paper towel waste.	Ongoing	Annually	N/A
2.11 Communicate with General Maintenance Workers, Waste Management, faculty, staff, and students regarding waste and recycling opportunities for improvement.	Ongoing	Semi-annually	N/A
2.12 Implement a FreeStore.	Complete	Weekly	Short-term
2.13 Encourage the purchase of recycled products and more sustainable products in general (paper, office furniture, cleaning supplies, etc.).	Ongoing	N/A	Short-term
2.14 Establish a Sustainable Procurement Policy	Complete	N/A	Short-term
2.15 Establish a tobacco-free campus policy	Complete	N/A	Short-term

**Goal 3: Encourage alternative modes of transportation**

Initiative	Status	Review	Timeline
3.1 Co-host a Bike Bemidji event to encourage bicycling and bike safety.	Ongoing	Semi-annually	September and May of each year
3.2 Promote and increase ridership on Paul Bunyan Transit (ACUPCC).	Ongoing	Annually	N/A
3.3 Investigate biodiesel production and use.	Discussion	N/A	Long-term
3.4 Communicate with those involved in biking/walking trails.	Ongoing	N/A	Short-term
3.5 Initiate a bike lease program (Bucky's Bikes).	Complete	Annually	Mid-term
3.6 Investigate a bike rental/buy program.	Planning	N/A	Short-term
3.7 Establish a ride-share program online to reduce commuter miles and encourage carpooling.	Planning	N/A	Mid-term

**Goal 4: Promote renewable energy**

Initiative	Status	Review	Timeline
4.1 Investigate options for solar energy on campus; implement where appropriate and feasible.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Short-term

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4.2 Continue to purchase Ottertail Tailwinds.	Ongoing	Annually	N/A
4.3 Investigate options for wind energy on campus and in the community; implement where appropriate and feasible.	Planning	N/A	Mid-term
4.4 Begin conversations about a sustainable living laboratory on the old high school property.	Discussion	N/A	Long-term
4.5 Continue to investigate alternatives for electricity and heating; implement when feasible.	Ongoing	N/A	Mid-term
4.6 Be aware and involved in local renewable energy projects.	Ongoing	N/A	Short-term
4.7 Investigate Life Cycle Analysis of renewable energy options.	Ongoing	N/LA	Mid-term

**Strategy B: Model stewardship of land and water**

Bemidji State University is located along the bank of beautiful Lake Bemidji, one of the first few lakes to begin the journey of the Mississippi River. A great responsibility exists to preserve and protect water quality. When one does his or her part in reducing runoff of harmful chemicals, it improves the lake and river for all. Many of the harmful chemicals come from the land, so by taking care of the land we will also be better stewards of the water. Reducing runoff by utilizing rain gardens and encouraging buffer zones along the water’s edge are just some of the mitigating strategies to lessen our impact on Lake Bemidji. By planting native vegetation, little to no water, chemicals, or mowing is required which would lessen our use of resources. Native perennials also create habitat for a broad range of native insects and birds.

Living in the “Land of 10,000 Lakes”, it is easy to forget we must conserve water. Water is a renewable resource, yet many are concerned about the quantity and quality of drinking water. Water treatment and delivery both require consumption of resources. The University pays a price for this distribution of drinking and waste water, so conserving water has an economic benefit as well.

The identified goals and initiatives for modeling stewardship of land and water are below.

***Goal 5: Improve water quality and increase water conservation***

Initiative	Status	Review	Timeline
5.1 Implement a trayless policy to conserve water and reduce waste.	Complete	Annually	January 2009
5.2 Perform a water audit to determine where water-saving measures can be cost-effective.	Complete	N/A	August 2009
5.3 Implement recommendations of water audit such as low-flow shower heads and low flush toilets.	Complete	N/A	Short-term
5.4 Discourage parking on Lake Bemidji.	Ongoing	Annually	N/A
5.5 Implement runoff mitigation strategies.	Ongoing	Annually	Short-term
5.6 Investigate options for irrigation systems.	Discussion	N/A	Mid-term
5.7 Consider green roofs and permeable parking lot material for future building projects.	Discussion	N/A	Mid-term
5.8 Review current use of pesticides and herbicides.	Discussion	N/A	Short-term

***Goal 6: Increase native vegetation***

Initiative	Status	Review	Timeline
6.1 Continue to replace annual bed and lawn space with	Ongoing	Annually	February of



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native perennials.			each year
6.2 Continue to educate regarding the benefits of native perennials by creating signs, giving presentations, etc.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
6.3 Investigate options for office/department adoptions of the native plant beds to assist in maintenance.	Ongoing	N/A	Mid-term
6.4 Investigate options for various types of native plant beds.	Ongoing	N/A	Mid-term
6.5 Encourage the planting of native trees.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
6.6 Review the Master Facility Plan to ensure that sustainability of the land is incorporated.	In progress	N/A	Short-term
6.7 Continue to monitor the use of Hobson Forest.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A

**Strategy C: Motivate, educate, and outreach on sustainability issues**

The key to promoting many of the above environmental behaviors is to educate the campus community on environmental, economic, and social benefits. The campus is a large part of the greater Bemidji area, and, thus, high regard should be given to model appropriate environmental behaviors and encourage area community members to participate in educational endeavors.

Sustainability is not a single department or office objective if successful. The entire campus community must be engaged and involved in considering environmental, social, and economic impacts in all facets of campus life. “Sustainability” should be a part of every Strategic Plan. Therefore, a primary strategy of the Sustainability Office will be to coordinate events, give presentations, and provide incentives to educate staff, faculty, and students to live and work more sustainably.

The identified goals and initiatives for motivating and educating on sustainability issues are outlined below.

***Goal 7: Disseminate sustainability information***

Initiative	Status	Review	Timeline
7.1 Create a Sustainability Website.	Complete	Annually	Short-term
7.2 Send “Go Green” tips weekly to staff and faculty.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
7.3 Send “Go Green” tips weekly to Marketing and Communications to integrate into the Northern Student newspaper.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
7.4 Investigate integrating sustainability into the curriculum (ACUPCC).	In progress	N/A	Mid-term
7.5 Investigate the creation of an “Environmental Literacy Certificate”.	Discussion	N/A	Long-term
7.6 Investigate the creation of a Green Beaver booklet to showcase campus projects and goals.	Discussion	N/A	Mid-term
7.7 Continue to promote and improve People and the Environment as a liberal education requirement.	Ongoing	Annually	N/A
7.8 Continue to act as a resource for students, faculty, staff and the community on issues related to sustainability.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
7.9 Host, organize, and/or assist in conferences and presentations related to sustainable topics such as local foods (Home Grown Economy Conference).	Ongoing	Annually	N/A
7.10 Coordinate the Traditional Skills Workshops to teach sustainable life skills.	Ongoing	Annually	Monthly
7.11 Continue to be involved in first-year student and residential assistant orientation programs.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A

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7.12 Continue to coordinate with NTC regarding green energy programs.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
7.13 Investigate utilizing an intern for summer employment.	Complete	N/A	Short-term
7.14 Share what campus departments and offices are doing to promote sustainability.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
7.15 Incorporate a Sustainability Tour during Orientation Weekend.	Discussion	N/A	Short-term
7.16 Create a list of sustainability projects for faculty departments and campus offices.	In progress	Semi-Annually	Short-term

***Goal 8: Provide leadership on and off campus***

Initiative	Status	Review	Timeline
8.1 Support the Environmental Advisory Committee.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
8.2 Promote Students for the Environment.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
8.3 Continue to coordinate the Nuts and Bolts Appreciation event.	Ongoing	Annually	Held in late April or early May of each year
8.4 Be involved and network with various sustainability-related organizations such as the: * Upper Midwest Association for Campus Sustainability; * Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (institutional member); * National Wildlife Federation Campus Ecology program (institutional member); * Environmental Protection Agency Green Power Partner program (institutional member).	Ongoing	Annually	N/A
8.5 Continue to participate in community events and initiatives.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A

***Goal 9: Provide incentives to change behaviors***

Initiative	Status	Review	Timeline
9.1 Manage and support the use of the Green Fee for student projects (Green Fee Mini-grants and Sustainability Employment).	Ongoing	Semi-annually	N/A
9.2 Encourage energy competitions to foster behavior changes (see initiatives 1.3 and 1.8).	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
9.3 Seek out funding to support sustainable initiatives.	Ongoing	N/A	N/A
9.4 Provide financial costs for current behaviors (ex. leaving the lights on, driving a car)	Ongoing	N/A	Short-term