



**2010 Regional Roundtable Discussion  
Durango  
August 19, 2010  
Meeting Notes**

**Summary**

Alliance for Sustainable Colorado, Governor's Energy Office, Sustainability Alliance of Southwest Colorado, Fort Lewis College Environmental Center, and Four Corners Office for Resource Efficiency co-hosted a 4-hour sustainability roundtable meeting at the Durango Public Library on August 19, 2010. Fifty-three community leaders from non-profit, government, business, and education participated. The goals of the meeting were to share information about promising sustainability activities and resources; identify the top local issue(s) /opportunities and identify leadership to move the issue(s) forward; and encourage collaboration on statewide sustainability campaigns.

**Sustainability Issues: Economy, Energy, Local Food, Transportation, Water**

Participants were distributed among seven tables and were asked to discuss the following questions:

1. What can we do address the issue?
2. What is the next step(s) to implementing a solution?
3. Who is willing to work on this solution?
4. What other local resources exist (or are needed) to aid in the solution?

**Roundtable Discussions**

**Table 1: Transportation**

**Roundtable participants:** Robert Overfield, Douglas Pierce, Jim Schrack, Rebecca Schild

**Note Taker:** Chris Paulson

**Priority Solutions and Action Items:**

- Build a gondola from the mesa and Fort Lewis College to downtown Durango and connect it to a bike share program.
- Enact a policy that freshmen at Fort Lewis College cannot have cars on campus.

**Leaders/Owners:** Rebecca Schild from Fort Lewis College Environmental Center will continue to collaborate with students on campus with these initiatives. Other owners could include City Council and Commissioners, Fort Lewis College, City of Durango, state of Colorado, city parks.

**Resources:** Incorporate into land use code, money, education, motivation, locals need to lobby state officials, advertising, volunteers, and programs.

**Other ideas discussed include:**

- Implement concept of "complete streets".
- Re-examine how money is spent at the state level.

- Clean up trails in and around Fort Lewis College.
- Connect Durango, Bayfield, Ignacio, and Farmington.
  - Upgrade county roads to become arterials.
  - Develop light rail.

**Leaders/Owners:** perhaps the Chamber of Commerce
- Employee incentives.
  - Employers help promote a culture shift to using public transportation.
- Use of compressed natural gas vehicles.
  - Need to develop stations to distribute the fuel.
  - Develop service centers in local communities.

**Leaders/owners:** local officials/distributors  
**Resources:** money, leader motivation

## **Table 2: Energy**

**Roundtable Participants:** Mark Williams, Melinda Markin, Eric Sirois, Teresa Steely, Bruce Basil

**Note Taker:** Ashley Moody

### **Priority Solutions and Action Items:**

- Install solar gardens on BP or contaminated gas pad sites. These areas are already connected to the energy grid or are transporting energy.
  - Pitch the idea to BP.
  - Look at the logistics of which well sites are available, how much space is available, etc.
  - Conduct feasibility studies.

**Leaders/owners:** La Plata Electric Association (LPEA), BP  
**Resources:** (per Dick White) This is already in the Energy and Climate Action Plan. Need to engage BP and local utilities for this information.
- Pass higher energy codes for buildings –need to survey builders and find out the obstacles.
  - Grassroots movement of the community voicing that this is what they want.
  - Educating the customer at the same time as the builders about what these guidelines are.
  - Solving economic and environmental advantages on large scale.
  - Survey to builders.
  - Develop tax incentives for rental landlords.

**Leaders/Owners:** The building community and city building department. Eric Sirois will administer a survey to builders. Teresa Steely will help with code training. Need to contact TNCC about their experience with changing codes.  
**Resources:** Built Green Colorado, LEED, college students to create and distribute survey, GEO energy star code education.

**Other ideas discussed include:**

- Instilling solar gardens for a homeowner co-op in La Plata County.
  - Talk to La Plata County Electric Association (LPEA)/Mark Schwantes about the logistics of getting the energy from a solar garden or a solar panel on another's home to a co-op buyer.
  - Find willing buyers and land to use, as well as people to invest (homeowners, businesses, etc).

**Leaders/Owners:** LPEA

**Resources:** BODO project would have to fund money to give to LPEA to upgrade lines.

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**Table 3: Energy**

**Roundtable Participants:** Jim Ketter, Jodi Foran, Nancy Andrews, Jim Foster, Lissa Ray, Rebecca Levy

**Note Taker:** Tom Campbell

**Priority Solutions and Action Items:**

- Provide incentives and make it easier to make investments in local clean energy production.
  - Need energy economies education.
  - Increase cost of electricity, natural gas, and water to more accurately reflect cost of production and to incentivize conservation and local renewable energy production.
  - Tax incentive: exploration of establishing enterprise zone to improve economics for local financing of energy investment.
  - Clean energy enterprise zones.
  - Power purchase agreements.
  - Feed-in tariffs (FIT): financing mechanism policy to guarantee the price of production.

**Note:** September 15<sup>th</sup> presentation by Paul Gipe on FIT at Green Business Roundtable

- Create smart consumers, smart energy, smart grid.
  - Improve metrics:
    - Better education for consumers.
    - Install more smart meters (which La Plata has started) and collect better data on actual energy used.

**Resources:** SASCO's Smart Energy Committee is already working on some of these issues.

**Other ideas discussed include:**

- Dedicate severance tax on oil, gas, and minerals to renewable energy production.

### **Table 4: Economy/Jobs**

**Roundtable Participants:** Dick White, Pat Senecal, Rebecca Koeppen, Jeff Valentine, Holly Fulbright, Erick Aune

**Note Taker:** Kelly Landau

#### **Priority Solutions and Action Items:**

- Make it easier for businesses to move to the area, design incentives.
- Harness the waste stream.
  - City of Durango is seeking funds to expand recycling center and create a Resource Recovery Park.
  - Need feasibility study, visibility, funding, policy, central site and satellite site to make it more regional.

**Leaders/Owners:** Region 9 could take the lead on this because it is embarking on a large economic development strategy. Also the new SW Council of Governments, 4CORE, and public and private sector partners can help out.

**Resources:** Three Springs could be the site, have to engage Tribe. Regional collaboration across counties is needed. Chris Kapwell, who specializes in biochar, and Gary Lis, a zero waste consultant, may be able to help out. Need champions like bankers and local venture capital groups. Green America has a program to solicit 1% investment portfolio into sustainability initiatives.

#### **Other ideas discussed include:**

- Expanding curbside recycling.
- Construction recycling.
- Manufacturing plant for renewable energy components.

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### **Table 5: Economy/Jobs. *How do we strengthen the local economy and make it more sustainable?***

**Roundtable Participants:** Aileen Tracy, Joe Keck, Kris Holstrom, Tim Wheeler, Heather Erb, Donna Graves, LeeAnn Vallejos

**Note Taker:** Madalene Andoe

#### **Priority Solutions and Action Items:**

- There is a need for information and education for citizens about why it is important to support the local economy.
  - Gather information from existing and new studies about problems and opportunities for businesses about value of dollar when spent locally vs. at a chain. Creating a support system for local entrepreneurship.

**Leaders/owners:** Business students for market research projects, Local First

**Resources:** There have been a number of studies done, including BID, Region 9, which could be built upon. Look for gaps in industries needed in the region, leaks where business is leaving the community. Review existing studies and do another

survey using Fort Lewis students (estimated initial cost of \$20,000). SBOC and Region 9 are planning do an economic gardening study. That information will be useful to local business efforts. Efforts need to be fun and interactive like the Local First campaign.

**Other ideas discussed include:**

- Looking beyond uranium, oil and gas as big providers.
- Push for development of local food.
- Establish a 350 club in Durango.
- Shop locally campaign could educate local consumers about the benefits of shopping locally and stimulating their own economy.
- Investigate further how to strengthen and develop businesses.

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**Table 6: Water**

**Roundtable Participants:** Matt Degraaf, Jessi Just, Wally White, Tom Bartels, Gabe Torres, Denise Rue-Pastin, Nicole Fabrey

**Note Taker:** Caryna Pourier

**Priority Solutions and Action Items:**

- Education: water is going to be the next oil. How do we try to increase awareness that it's a limited resource?
- Reform archaic water policies at local and state level.
- Accelerate the implementation efficiency –how do we change people's behaviors?

**Leaders/Owners:** La Plata is encouraging collaboration with local water boards, SW Water Conservation Districts, Irrigation districts, SW Council of Government.

**Resources:** Political will, water information program.

**Other ideas discussed include:**

- Promote conservation.

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**Table 7: Local Food. *How can we grow, process, distribute, and improve access to local food?***

**Roundtable Participants:** Zackoree Harrison, Ken Haynes, Bonnie Simons, Bruce Whitehead, Ken Francis, Joy O'Neil, Katherine Roser, Werner Heiber

**Note Taker:** Zach Owens

**Priority Solutions and Action Items:**

- Development of local facility/distribution center to process, store, and cook local food. Include educational and training aspects to teach the local community about local food.
  - Look at granges around the county. Can they be adapted as an infrastructure to promote sustainable agriculture distribution centers?

- Old Fort Lewis campus: 6300 acres has been converted to a center for sustainable agriculture.
  - Ken Francis scheduled two tours of the old Fort Lewis Property: Mon. Sept. 6, 1-4pm, and Wed. Sept. 8, 1-4pm.
  - Kitchen will become a commercial kitchen for processing food.
  - College needs to be utilized by as many as possible to make the project viable.
  - Agriculture minor on campus offers classes that support hands-on efforts at Center.

**Leaders/Owners:** Fort Lewis College (Ken Francis will schedule tours and engage community in Old Fort Lewis planning), SASCO, 4CORE

**Resources:** La Plata County Food Assessment report completed 4 years ago. CSU extension office has a report, *Farming: Now & Then*. Agriculture/Biology combined program at Fort Lewis College has the potential to expand.

**Other ideas discussed include:**

- Creating a market for local food and breaking peoples' current food purchasing habits.
  - Sustainable Food Systems degree needs to be developed to empower people to participate in local food.
  - On a statewide level, need to work with high schools to teach students more about agriculture.
  - Need to track how much food is consumed locally through feasibility studies.
  - Policy: redefining what qualifies as agriculture land—should be based on production of food rather than total acreage.
  - Develop incentives to keep food local.
  - Educate the public about the benefits of eating seasonally, and fruits/vegetables season availability.
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## Observations

- Collaboration was mentioned in almost every table's presentation. How is regional collaboration working?
  - Need a leader.
  - Local leaders do not have enough time to oversee all initiatives.
  - Need to get our own house in order before collaborating with others.
  - Need money/funding.
  - 4CORE is putting together a resource and energy action plan, with reps from every organization participating.
- The need to educate the community about the importance of supporting local businesses, and therefore stimulating the local economy, was mentioned at most tables.

## Next Steps

Aileen Tracy (4CORE): A 4CORE intern will map the roundtable action items to the action items recommended in the Climate Energy and Action Plan (CEAP). Those initiatives/action items that cannot be mapped to specific CEAP action items will be added to another section of the CEAP phase 2 document.

Hosting semi-annual or quarterly gatherings to discuss the action items status and keep everyone (roundtable and CEAP participants, some of whom are the same) connected would be very helpful. With the CEAP and roundtable items merged, 4CORE can track them, rearrange priorities and identify any new resources as policies and economic conditions change.

Werner Heiber (SASCO): To keep track of different initiatives and to keep participants involved, "initiatives coordinators" could provide a progress update on a quarterly or biannual basis. This would create an incentive to maintain focus for the leaders and keep the participants informed and connected. If there is real progress, there could even be a sustainability social reporting on progress and exchanging ideas.