

# OLA Quarterly



## Going Green: Libraries and Sustainability

Institutionalizing Sustainability:  
An Emerging Trend

A How-To:  
Conduct an Environmental Audit in Your Library

Going for the Gold:  
Building a Sustainable LEED™ Library

Getting There is Half the Fun:  
Alternative Transportation and Oregon Library Employees

From Worthless to Worthy:  
Turning Media Trash into Recycling Treasure

Green Reading:  
Resources for the Sustainability-Minded

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## Going Green: Libraries and Sustainability

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**Spring 2008**

*Libraries and  
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# Going Green: Libraries and Sustainability

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Many of us in the Oregon library community have an interest in, or even a passion for, the environment. In my case, that interest guided my undergraduate studies. I attended the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources (SNR) in the 1980s. It was the Reagan era, the environmental movement was becoming marginalized, and most students just wanted good paying jobs after they graduated. The SNR students were nicknamed "crunchy granolas" by others on campus and the school was almost eliminated due to low enrollment. Fortunately, the school survived that period and now offers a graduate degree in Sustainable Systems, among many others. Consideration of the environment is mainstream again, and this time there are stable careers and decent-paying jobs to be had. Even though my career path eventually led me into the library world, I have been fortunate to maintain my connection as an Environmental Studies subject specialist. Having the chance to guest edit an issue of the *Quarterly* provided a great opportunity to take that interest further and discover how the library community has been "going green."

Sustainable, sustainability, sustainably: the usage of these words is on the rise in many sectors of our society. The terminology sounds vague, but it

captures the idea that humans are taking conscious actions to minimize their impact on the environment. According to the online Oxford English Dictionary (OED), it wasn't until 1980 that an ecology-oriented meaning of sustainable emerged. A 2001 draft addition to the OED defines sustainable as: "Of, relating to, or designating forms of human economic activity and culture that do not lead to environmental degradation, esp. avoiding the long-term depletion of natural resources."

Though relatively new, this definition of sustainable is affecting the decision-making and planning activities of individuals and institutions. Not surprisingly, the library community in Oregon is already a part of this trend—translating the meaning of sustainability into a variety of actions. In fact, as this issue developed, it seemed timely to propose a way that the Oregon Library Association could put sustainability into practice. Happily, at its October meeting, the OLA Board voted in favor of switching the *OLA Quarterly* to recycled paper. The ink was already vegetable-based, but now the paper is Green Seal® certified and contains 30 percent recycled post-consumer fiber.

The articles in this issue illustrate the many ways that sustainability concepts can be applied in the library

realm. At the macro-level, Connie Bennett discusses institutionalizing sustainability and where the Eugene Public Library fits into that trend. Judith Norton educates us about different types of environmental audits and how libraries might incorporate them into their planning. June Mikkelsen provides a close-up view of what was involved in creating a green library building and how that building is performing today. Jey Wann taps into the wisdom of Oregon library employees with her survey of alternative transportation commuting methods. Maureen Cole offers an on-the-ground look at implementing a sustainable recycling process within a library's workflow. Last, Annie Zeidman-Karpinski and I provide a bibliography of resources for further guidance and inspiration.

Libraries are respected institutions and often take on a leadership role in their communities. My hope is that these articles will educate and empower us, and our libraries, to incorporate sustainability into our practices, our collections, our services—in other words, to keep leading by example.

*Guest editor*

Diane Sotak  
University of Portland

OLAQ

# Institutionalizing Sustainability:

## An Emerging Trend

by **Connie J. Bennett**  
Director,  
Eugene Public Library

1  
**Forget about the environment.  
It will go away.**

**Old-growth forests:  
where size really does matter.**

**Treehugging dirt worshiper.**

**More trees—less Bush.**

**Leave no billionaire behind.**

**Ignorance and arrogance  
is bad foreign policy.**

**W**hen I moved to Eugene six years ago to become Director of the Eugene Public Library I knew that it was a place where environmentalism and sustainability, not to mention freedom of speech, were community values. I could tell by the bumper stickers. I could also tell by the curbside recycling, the ubiquitous recycling bins, and the efforts to meet most LEED standards in the construction of our new downtown library building.

Since then, the City of Eugene has become the major purchaser of the wind power produced by Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB). In 2006, Eugene was rated the #1 Green City in the nation by National Geographic's Green Guide<sup>2</sup>—the only city reviewed that scored over 9 on a 10 point scale. The community has moved to the amazing convenience of commingled curbside recycling.<sup>3</sup> Our Lane County Master Recycler program (like those in Linn-Benton, Marion, Klamath Falls, and the Portland Metro region) trains volunteers who contribute thousands of hours to further recycling efforts in our schools, workplaces and communities.<sup>4</sup> My husband and I own two of the many gas-electric hybrids, sharing Eugene roads with bicyclists and the Emerald Express (EmX) rapid transit buses.<sup>5</sup> The city recently completed an inventory of community-wide greenhouse gas emissions, which is the first step in developing a comprehensive climate action plan. We are a community that takes “reduce, reuse, recycle” seriously.

“Dick Cheney once scoffed that energy conservation can be a ‘personal virtue’ but is not basis for an energy policy,” according to Nicholas Kristof in his August 20, 2007 *New York Times* column, but “growing evidence suggests he had it exactly wrong.” Kristof laments that “the low-hanging fruit on the energy front is curbing demand—meaning more energy conservation. And it’s appalling that our government isn’t leading us on that.”

While our federal government may be lagging behind other nations in energy policy, state and local governments have begun taking action on sustainability issues. Fueled by growing citizen concern, sustainability is gradually moving from its grassroots origins towards a coordinated policy approach. In other words, it’s becoming institutionalized—and not only in Eugene.

On the state level, Oregon has moved way beyond its first-in-the-nation bottle bill (1971). Major action was taken on sustainability by Oregon’s 71st legislature, which passed the Oregon Sustainability Act.<sup>6</sup> Governor Kulongoski issued another executive order on sustainability last year.<sup>7</sup> Resources from the state include the Sustainable Oregon Toolkit, the State of Oregon Sustainability Awards, workshops on such topics as solar energy, and state agency sustainability plans.

Major cities in Oregon have also made strides in sustainability, notably the Portland/Multnomah County Sustainable Development Commission<sup>8</sup> and the City of Corvallis,<sup>9</sup> as well as the City of Eugene.



Am I liberal or just well-educated?

Perfect world: if schools had enough money and the military had to hold bake sales.

If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.

In Eugene, both the University of Oregon (UO) and Lane Community College (LCC) have emerged as national leaders in the higher education sustainability scene. In an article from the January 3, 2006 *Register-Guard*, reporter Greg Bolt points out that “perhaps the most robust survivor of the era of environmental activism in the 1960s and ‘70s, recycling has grown and morphed into a much broader range of efforts that now march under the banner of ‘sustainability,’ or the notion that we should meet our needs today in a way that doesn’t harm the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”

According to Marie Matsen, vice president for operations at Lane Community College, “We’re not spending time and money on this just because it feels good. It’s because it really has a tangible impact on us as a college and on the community we serve.”<sup>10</sup> LCC recently became the first community college and only the second college of any type in Oregon to sign the Talloires Declaration, which was created by a group of university leaders, and seeks to “set an example of environmental responsibility by establishing institutional ecology policies and practices of resource conservation, recycling, waste reduction, and environmentally sound operations.”<sup>11</sup>

In 2005, the UO received national recognition for its recycling program with a Partner of the Year Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, one of many honors for their program.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps

more noticeable for dorm residents is the national RecycleMania competition,<sup>13</sup> in which students compete annually to see who recycles the most material. The UO has excellent Web resources for sustainability<sup>14</sup> and for environmental policy.<sup>15</sup> The UO Institute for a Sustainable Environment worked closely with the City of Eugene on the Mayor’s Sustainable Business Initiative,<sup>16</sup> the recommendations of which were unveiled at the Mayor’s January 2007 State of the City address.<sup>17</sup>

But the complete meaning of sustainability goes beyond recycling, the environment, and even business. “The universal goal of higher education is to create knowledgeable, good citizens of the world that are going to go out and contribute and be members of this community,” according to Karyn Kaplan, recycling program manager at UO. “It’s not just the natural environment or resources; it’s people, too.”

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—HORTON THE ELEPHANT

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One of the first formal attempts to address the broadening concept of sustainability was by a United Nations commission convened in 1983. The U.N. General Assembly's recognition of the global nature of environmental problems and concern "about the accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development" led to frequently cited definition and policy recommendations.<sup>18</sup> A great resource for current policy and projects at the international level is the U.N.'s Commission on Sustainable Development.<sup>19</sup>

During Mayor Kitty Piercy's campaign for office in 2004, her economic platform was the "triple bottom line"—that both business and government must pay attention to the economic, environmental, and social effects of policy choices in order to thrive not just in the next quarter, but in the next generation.<sup>20</sup>

These initiatives and new programs build on a solid base, including a Green Team initiated by concerned city staffers. In fact, according to Lynne Eichner-Kelley, Sustainable Operations Analyst for the City of Eugene, the city has a legacy of sustainability work dating back to the 1980s. More detail about some of those efforts can be found on the city's Web site.<sup>21</sup> Recent actions related to the Sustainability Initiative include, the City Council's resolutions on "a sustainable buildings policy for buildings owned and occupied by the City" and "publicly committing the City of Eugene to sustainable practices and to businesses that produce sustainable products and services."

Under Mayor Piercy's leadership, Eugene's long history of working towards public social responsibility has broadened to actively partner with the business community. Two lo-

cal business leaders, Rusty Rexius and David Funk, were tapped by the Mayor to co-chair her Sustainable Business Initiative (SBI). The Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce developed the Emerald Awards program "to honor businesses in the Eugene and Springfield area that contribute to our community's vitality and quality of life by implementing sustainable business practices" and demonstrating "the important connection between the success of local businesses and the quality of life in Eugene/Springfield."<sup>22</sup>

In February 2007, the Eugene City Council added "Sustainability" as one of its ten major initiatives (others address issues such as "Race," "Homelessness," and "Arts and the Outdoors").<sup>23</sup> A cross-departmental team was established to craft the city's Sustainability Initiative Action Plan, which I was asked to chair, with the following charge: "Develop Office of Sustainability and Sustainability Commission that supports broad sustainable practices and create a tool chest of things needed to support businesses that produce sustainable products or provides or utilizes sustainable practices." Since then, the city has established an Office of Sustainability, hired a manager, Felicity Fahy, and is currently interviewing applicants for the Sustainability Commission.

If you can read this you might enjoy the library.

And how does Eugene Public Library (EPL) fit into the picture?

From the broader organizational perspective, the Library is one of the divisions of the City. As such, it participates in and contributes to all the citywide initiatives and programs. For example, EPL's new energy-efficient Downtown Library won an EWEB Energy Edge Award.<sup>24</sup> Now, after nearly five years of occupancy, the city has embarked on a building "recommissioning" process for the



lighting and HVAC systems. In recommissioning, these systems are analyzed and reprogrammed for improved efficiencies based on several years of building occupancy data.

The city supports alternative transportation, including providing Lane Transit District bus passes to all employees, which is supported by an Emergency Ride Home system. A high number of library employees regularly bike, bus, walk, or carpool to work. The city also administers Transportation Reimbursement Accounts (TRA) that allow for use of pre-tax dollars to pay for certain dependent care, health care, and transportation expenses that employees would normally pay for with after-tax dollars. And when EPL staff attends meetings and conferences, we carpool in a city-owned Prius.


Recently a citywide analysis of paper use led to policies about using recycled paper, reducing the number of printers, and an organizational standard of duplex printing. The library is next for another analysis going on citywide—a solid waste content audit (AKA “dumpster dives”)—to estimate how much solid waste we, as an organization, are producing, and what it’s composed of as the first step in expanding our internal recycling program.

Over the past five years, EPL’s extensive investment in its virtual and digital resources has in part been for social equity and sustainability reasons. In addition to reducing paper and solid waste, this expands availability of information to a broader audience, reduces dependence on the transportation system to access reliable information, and extends resources within our buildings across the digital divide. Our recently installed Internet/print management system has significantly reduced paper and printer cartridge use, as well as equitably assigning Internet resources while freeing staff from manually managing the queue. Maureen Cole describes another EPL effort, expanding recycling beyond the basics, in another

article in this *Quarterly* issue.

EPL’s system of ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for all, based on consistent and equitable compliance with our “Patron Code of Conduct,” is based entirely on expectations around patron behavior. By focusing the handling of incidents strictly on behavior we can be sure that we are not succumbing to unconscious bias in how we encourage the use of the public resource by the entire community, regardless of class, creed, color, age, gender or any other factor.

EPL, along with the entire Library, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department (LRCS), is taking the lead on the social equity part of sustainability for the City of Eugene. The LRCS Mission Statement speaks directly to this: “The Library, Recreation and Cultural Services Department’s mission is to enrich the lives of Eugene citizens through diverse opportunities where discovery, creativity, personal and community growth can flourish; where people can experience the open exchange of ideas; where individuals, families and neighborhoods can feel connected to their community; and where all citizens have full and equitable access to lifelong learning, recreational and cultural experiences.”

“Eugene has worked for years—and continues to work hard—on environmental stewardship because we know it is the right thing to do for the future, and because it is a strongly held value in our community,” says Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy. 

**You Can't Not Think.**

**Think Globally, Act Locally.**

**I Change Myself,  
I Change The World.**

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>A note about the bumper sticker quotations—all are actual bumper stickers seen in Eugene.

<sup>2</sup>Eugene rated the #1 Green City by Green Guide: <http://www.thegreenguide.com/doc/113/top10cities>.

<sup>3</sup>An example is Sanipac's commingled curbside recycling program: <http://www.sanipac.com/residential/residential-recycling/>.

<sup>4</sup>Oregon Master Recycler Program: <http://www.masterrecycler.org/becoming-master-recycler.php>.

<sup>5</sup>Lane Transit District's EmX rapid transit buses: <http://www.ltd.org/search/showresult.html?versionthread=d38519362672c662c61a9300c1dd78be>.

<sup>6</sup>Oregon Sustainability Act: [http://www.sustainableoregon.net/sust\\_act/HB3948.cfm](http://www.sustainableoregon.net/sust_act/HB3948.cfm).

<sup>7</sup>Governor Kulongoski's executive order on sustainability: [governor.oregon.gov/Gov/pdf/eo0602.pdf](http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/pdf/eo0602.pdf).

<sup>8</sup>Portland/Multnomah County sustainability program: <http://www.portlandonline.com/osd>.

<sup>9</sup>City of Corvallis sustainability program: [http://www.ci.corvallis.or.us/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1825&Itemid=2099](http://www.ci.corvallis.or.us/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1825&Itemid=2099).

<sup>10</sup>Lane Community College's sustainability program: <http://www.lanecollege.edu/sustainability/>.

<sup>11</sup>The Talloires Declaration: <http://www.tufts.edu/talloiresnetwork/downloads/TalloiresDeclaration2005.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup>University of Oregon program awards: [http://www.uoregon.edu/~recycle/about\\_us\\_awards\\_text.htm](http://www.uoregon.edu/~recycle/about_us_awards_text.htm).

<sup>13</sup>RecycleMania competition: <http://www.recyclemaniacs.org>.

<sup>14</sup>University of Oregon's sustainability program: [darkwing.uoregon.edu/~recycle/site\\_map.htm](http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~recycle/site_map.htm).

<sup>15</sup>University of Oregon's environmental policies: <http://www.uoregon.edu/~eic/>.

<sup>16</sup>University of Oregon's Institute for a Sustainable Environment and Eugene Mayor's Sustainable Business Initiative: <http://www.uoregon.edu/~cwch/programs/SBJD/SBI.html>.

<sup>17</sup>Mayor Piercy's 2007 State of the City Address: <http://www.eugene-or.gov/>, select City Hall> Mayor and Council> Link to Reports and Documents> 2007 State of the City Speech.

<sup>18</sup>See Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development at <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/42/ares42-187.htm>.

<sup>19</sup>U.N.'s Commission on Sustainable Development: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/index.html>.

<sup>20</sup>Mayor Piercy talks about the triple bottom line: <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Seeking+sustainability-a0136860729>.

<sup>21</sup>City of Eugene's sustainability program: <http://www.eugene-or.gov/sustainability>.

<sup>22</sup>Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce's Emerald Awards: <http://www.eugenechamber.com/emerald.htm>.

<sup>23</sup>Eugene City Council Goals: <http://www.eugene-or.gov/citycouncil>, select City Council Goals.

<sup>24</sup>Eugene Public Library's Energy Edge Award: <http://www.eweb.org/business/energy/energysmart/ebd/0311/library.htm>.



# A How-To:

## Conduct an Environmental Audit in Your Library

by **Judith Norton**  
Document Delivery Manager,  
Oregon Health & Science  
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2007 Graduate of the Executive  
MLIS program,  
San Jose State University

I was fourteen when the first Earth Day was held in 1970. Fired with adolescent zeal, I started scouting for opportunities to put my passions to good effect. My first experience was pounding the pavement in my hometown, Seattle—you could still call Seattle a “hometown” back then. I knocked on doors in many neighborhoods, urging voters to pass a mass transit bill. Alas, the bill went down to defeat, and the matching federal funds went to San Francisco for their proposed project: BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit). My ardor was not dampened however, and ever since, environmental action has been a constant in my life. In the past year or so, I have been mulling over requesting permission from the library managers at OHSU to conduct an environmental audit of our buildings and practices. So, when asked if I would write an article for this issue, I jumped at the chance to get serious about the idea and to delve deeper into the logistics of an audit.

What I found boggled my mind. There are so many approaches and issues to consider, from small audits focused on specific topics to full-scale audits that consider every aspect from a systems point of view. The variety of audits can be overwhelming, but there is likely at least one type of audit that will fit your library.

### What is an Environmental Audit?

An environmental audit is a diagnostic tool that provides a systematic, documented, and objective review of an organization’s business practices that affect the environment. Environmental audits uncover deficiencies, identify corrective actions, and ensure compliance with environmental regulations. Increasingly, both for-profit and non-profit organizations are implementing environmental audits in order to address such

critical issues as global warming, depletion of natural resources, and population growth.

### Why Conduct an Environmental Audit?

Many of us work in the public sector. Taxpayers expect that we will provide services that benefit society, while using public monies wisely. Environmental audits can identify areas where greater efficiencies can be realized, saving money and benefiting the environment at the same time. For those of us who work for private academic institutions or corporate libraries, the arguments of efficiency and beneficial outcomes are as valid as for public institutions. Audits also support the deeper value of wanting to provide a healthy future for our children and other species of our planet.

### A Word About Change

One of the assumed outcomes of an environmental audit is change. While an in-depth overview of change management is beyond the scope of this article, here are some reminders about the dynamics of strategic change.

- It is easier to create a desired future if you have a good handle on the present situation.
- It is easier to sustain change if you can see evidence of progress.
- Change efforts are more likely to be successful if staff members at all levels of the organization are involved.

The role of an environmental audit in the change process is to provide a realistic assessment of current practices and to identify actions that will lead to change. As with any change initiative, it helps to write a thoughtful mission statement. Listing goals and objectives will make it easier to set priorities.



### Types of Environmental Audits

Audits come in all shapes and sizes, depending on the needs and resources of the organization. Some libraries may begin by focusing on one area, such as energy use. If enough staff members are interested, a broader assessment may be feasible. Academic libraries can collaborate with students and faculty in engineering or science departments in developing audit projects. Other libraries with more resources may choose to contract with an outside company that will conduct much more complex and deep evaluations. What is most important is to start with what you can do now. As you create success, you can always broaden the scope and size of your audits later.

### The Audit Process

An audit has three phases: preparation, the actual audit, and post-audit activities. During the preparation stage, an audit team is formed. The audit team establishes goals, defines the scope of the audit, selects the sites to assess, and develops a plan. The actual audit gathers data, conducts SWOT analyses (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), and evaluates current practices. Once the audit is finished, the team writes up a report with recommendations for follow-up. Recommendations should establish a policy of periodic reviews of the initial audit.

Type of Audit (Scope)	Purpose
Comprehensive	Approach is both broad and deep; aims to assess all aspects
Preliminary	Basic information concerning the library; history of building; facility permits; etc.
Single Purpose	Focuses on one particular aspect
Type of Audit (Focus)	Purpose
“Carbon Footprint”	How much carbon is emitted into the atmosphere as a result of your library’s business practices?
Compliance with environmental regulations	Do you know which regulations affect your library (federal; state; local)? Does your governing organization have additional environmental policies?
Energy	How much energy does your library use for lighting? Heating and cooling? Transportation?
Source Management	Where do your library’s resources come from? Do you order from companies committed to sustainable practices?
Waste Management	Does your library have recycling policies in place? Are there efforts to reduce waste volume?



## Starting Small

For many libraries, finding the time and money to conduct a comprehensive audit is daunting. Choosing a small, specific goal is a perfectly valid approach with many benefits:

- You enhance the chances of success by keeping the goal focused and realistic.
- You are less likely to become overwhelmed if the project is small.
- You may attract more interested participants if they see that their time commitment will not be substantial.
- A single, simple goal is easier to fold into current policies and procedures than many, complex goals.

For example, perhaps your library would like to reduce electricity use by 10 percent. A straightforward audit technique would be to collect the electrical bills for the past year and graph the data. Obtaining this information may be easier in some library systems than others. TriMet, the public transportation provider for the greater Portland area, posted graphs of their electrical use in staff elevators and saw a 20 percent drop in their monthly bill without taking any other action!

Another simple audit might be to assess the greenhouse gases produced by your library's energy use, commonly referred to as a "carbon footprint." Typically, heating, lighting and transportation uses are measured. Some calculators include paper use as well. A link to help estimate your library's carbon footprint is listed in the Resources section.

## Building Momentum

Library staff can easily conduct more detailed audits if time permits. A Source Management audit investigates which vendors use environmentally friendly processes or materials. Some of this information can be found at the vendor's Web site. Sales representatives are another source. Purchasing decisions can be prioritized based

on the data. For example, the most recent Harry Potter book, published by Scholastic, was printed on paper with high recycled content. Although there are a number of audit software programs available, this type of research can be tracked using a spreadsheet program.

Conducting an Energy Audit can be as simple as walking through your library and answering the questions on the worksheet that follows. Since energy use varies by time of day and season, the audit should be conducted a number of times in order to capture the variance. The worksheet can be used to establish priorities and perhaps trigger a Single Purpose Audit.

## Bringing in the Pros

While library staff can effectively conduct many types of audits, there are a number of reasons why a library might want to hire a professional company to assess the organization. Professionals are familiar with the current legal environment and are more experienced in making sure regulations are being met. They have access to tools and experience that can provide more accurate estimates of savings and costs. They are aware of standards, such as ISO 14000, an international standard for environmental management systems, which establish benchmarks for assessment.

A professional audit will review all of the factors listed above, such as energy, source, and waste management. The auditors will also assess the building shell, air emissions, water systems, the HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) system, and any materials in the building that might be toxic, like carpets, paint, old plumbing, etc. A good professional audit team will make sure that factors are not analyzed in isolation, but as a system. They will work with library staff in developing recommendations, procedures and performance measures.



## Basic Energy Audit Worksheet

<b>Heating</b>	
What kind of fuel is used for heating?	
What is the temperature?	
Has the HVAC system been serviced in the past year?	
How hot is the hot water?	
Do all areas need to be fully heated?	
Is there a room thermostat? Is it set to the correct temperature?	
Are there any obstructions in front of radiators or vents?	
Are there any draughts coming in from windows or doors?	
<b>Lighting</b>	
Are lights switched off where necessary?	
Are incandescent or large diameter fluorescent lights used?	
Are lamps, fitting and roof lights clean?	
Are light switches easy to find? Are they labeled with reminders to turn off?	
Are exterior lights turned off when not needed?	
<b>Office</b>	
Do computers have built-in energy saving features? Are they activated?	
Are computers left on overnight?	
Are monitors switched off when not in use?	
Are photocopiers energy efficient?	
Are printers and photocopiers left on overnight / weekends?	
Are water coolers left on permanently?	
<b>Transportation</b>	
Does your library use bookmobiles? If so, what type of fuel do they use? What mileage per gallon do they get?	
What kind of transportation do staff use to get to work?	
What kind of transportation do staff use to attend conferences and workshops?	



If your library is planning any substantial renovations, the time could be ripe for a professional review. Oregon is fortunate to have many fine environmental audit firms. You will find many listed on the Sustainable Oregon Web site (see the Resources section).

### One Step at a Time

Environmental audits can be as focused or as broad, as simple or as complex as you want to make them. At OHSU Library this winter, we hope to work with our Disaster Recovery Team as they conduct their biannual facilities assessments. We'll probably use the Basic Energy Audit worksheet to start. But whether you start small, or leap into a full-scale audit, the important thing is to take the first step. Libraries have always been stewards of our cultures. Here is an opportunity to become stewards of our planet. 🌿

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- Natrass, B. F., & Altomare, M. (1999). *The natural step for business*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

### Resources

- Greener World Media. GreenBiz.  
<http://www.greenbiz.com>  
 This site has a wide variety of articles, tips and recommendations for implementing sustainable business practices.

The Natural Step International.  
 The Natural Step.  
<http://www.naturalstep.org>  
 The Natural Step is a systems-oriented approach to sustainability based on scientific principles that promote environmentally responsible business practices.

Oregon Economic and Community Development Department. Sustainable Oregon.  
<http://www.sustainableoregon.net>  
 Sustainable Oregon is a collaborative site established by the Governor's office and a variety of for-profit and non-profit organizations to promote environmental sustainability. The site contains articles, toolkits, links and other resources.

Planktos, Inc.  
 Planktos Carbon Footprint Calculator  
<http://www.planktos.com/carbonstore/CarbonFootprintCalculator.html>  
 Choose the business calculator which uses square footage, energy and heating use, and air travel to determine your library's carbon footprint. The site also has a calculator for events.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency—  
 U.S. Department of Energy. Energy Star.  
<http://www.EnergyStar.gov>  
 Energy Star is a federal program that promotes energy efficiency for both private citizens and businesses.

The University of Wisconsin—Madison  
 SLIS Working Group. Libraries, Information and Sustainability.  
<http://uw-slis-sustainability.blogspot.com/>



# Going for the Gold:

## Building a Sustainable LEED™ Library

by **June Mikkelsen**  
Executive Assistant to the Director,  
Multnomah County Library

**B**uilding construction projects can deplete natural resources and be a major cause of air and water pollution, deforestation, toxic wastes, health hazards, global warming, and other negative environmental consequences. In 2001, the Multnomah County Commission adopted a Local Action Plan on Global Warming to “develop and adopt energy- and resource-efficient building standards for all County new construction and major renovation.” As a result, planning for many of the new and renovated libraries in Multnomah County incorporated high performance, green building practices.

As we prepared to build our newest building, the Hillsdale Library, Multnomah County officials established the goal of achieving Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) Silver

certification in all new building projects. The Hillsdale Library was the first new Multnomah County building project after this goal was established.

LEED is a national rating system and accreditation tool used to develop high performance, sustainable buildings. The LEED program was designed by the U.S. Green Building Council to encourage and facilitate the development of more sustainable buildings. Buildings are awarded points and achieve a certain level of certification based on project procedures and design elements that are indicators of a “green building.” In November 2004, Multnomah County Library’s Hillsdale Library, which opened in March 2004, was awarded LEED Gold certification, becoming the first county-owned building to receive LEED certification.

To achieve LEED Gold certification, the 12,000-square-foot library incorporates a number of environmental design elements that significantly reduce the building’s negative impact on the environment, while providing an inviting, friendly and comfortable place for library users of all ages.


### Planning a Sustainable Site

Planning for our LEED-certified building began with establishing a team early in the design process. Because we knew at the outset that we would be attempting LEED certification, we identified team members with the necessary expertise, and involved them throughout the process. Our LEED planning team included Nathan Hamilton, Thomas Hacker Architects, Inc.; Stephanie Coyle, Hoffman Construction Company; Elaine Aye and Ralph DiNola, Portland General Electric’s Green Building Services; Amy Joslin, Multnomah County’s Sustainability Manager; Steve Barney, Environmental & Engineering Services, Inc.; Mike Har-

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rington, Multnomah County's Construction Manager for the Hillsdale Library project; and me, who was at that time Multnomah County Library's Renovation Manager.

Our earliest work began during the siting process. A top consideration in site selection and in determining the building's location on the site was reducing the building's environmental impact. Finding a site with good public transportation was critical. The library is served by seven bus lines within one quarter mile of the branch, has bicycle parking, and a space and charging station for an electric car in the parking garage. Use of alternative transportation methods reduces pollution and land development impacts from automobile use. Underground parking eliminates large, paved surfaces exposed to sunlight. In addition, the building's Energy Star™ roof reflects sunlight. These design elements reduce "heat islands," which contribute to higher summer temperatures and smog.

As part of a stormwater management plan, three large planters on one side of the building and a "bioswale" (a low-gradient channel filled with plants) at the back of the building hold and filter rainwater runoff from the roof, keeping it from overburdening the sewer system. The use of pervious materials such as pavers and planting soil also reduces runoff.

### Water Conservation

The plants and trees surrounding the library were chosen because they lend themselves to water conservation and a reduced need for pest control and maintenance. More than 50 percent of the site's open area has been restored as habitat areas with native or adaptive vegetation. The open area will be conserved for the life of the building.

### Energy Efficiency and Building Atmosphere

Hillsdale Library is designed to be 21 percent more efficient than a similar building built to just meet the local energy code. This is accomplished through the use of energy-efficient, high performance windows with low-energy glass that is insulated and tinted to filter heat from the sun; insulated, translucent skylights; and a daylighting system that lessens the need for artificial light on sunny days. Only green power, or renewable energy, is used in the building.

### Conservation of Materials and Resources

Beginning with demolition of the previous building on the site, the architects and contractors paid a great deal of attention to conserving resources. Construction elements from the earlier building, including windows, doors, and other building materials were taken to the ReBuilding Center, where materials that would otherwise have been discarded into landfills are reused in other construction projects. During construction of the new building, 75 percent of construction waste was salvaged or recycled.

More than 50 percent of building materials in the new library contain significant recycled content, including the carpet, wood flooring, restroom tile, acoustical ceiling and wall panels, drywall, concrete, and the structural steel. More than 50 percent of new wood in the ceiling and walls is certified to originate from sustainable forests. At least 20 percent of the building's materials were manufactured locally.

### Going for the Gold: Building a Sustainable LEED™ Library

#### *Tips for Libraries Beginning the Process*

1

Be sure you have buy-in from your governing body.

2

Determine what level of LEED certification you want, and try to get several points more than you need (you probably won't get everything you're aiming for).

3

Identify and involve the right team members from the start.

4

If possible, hire an architect and contractor with LEED experience.

5

Recognize that getting certification will cost more money—most of which will be recovered in energy savings during the life of the building.

6

**Have fun!**



### Enhanced Indoor Environmental Quality

All paint on the walls and steel structure, as well as all adhesives and sealants, are low VOC (volatile organic compounds), containing little or none of the dangerous chemicals commonly found in these materials.

Filters within the mechanical system were used during construction to prevent contamination from the construction process. The building was “flushed” prior to opening to the public, a process involving running the mechanical system for two weeks following the completion of construction, and bringing 100 percent fresh air into the building. All filters were then replaced to remove construction-related contaminants from the system.

Windows, clerestory and skylights enhance the connection between indoor and outdoor environments, providing natural outdoor light and offering library visitors great views of the neighborhood. In addition, a manual shading system allows control over direct sunlight and helps reduce heat gain.

Temperature is controlled and monitored with the use of sensors throughout the building. The building is monitored for carbon dioxide levels and is designed to maintain levels that will sustain long-term occupant health and comfort. Fresh air is mixed into the mechanical system to support the health, safety, and comfort of people in the building.

### Public Education Efforts

As part of the certification process, we determined early on that we would attempt to get the LEED point in the Green Demonstration area of the Innovation & Design Process section. Since we are in the business of providing information, our efforts focused on educating library users—children as well as adults—about the benefits of

sustainable building practices.

We designed signage and brochures highlighting the green building features. Two special “Bucket of Books” collections were assembled with books and other materials on sustainability and green buildings. The two collections, one for kindergarten through third grade and one for grades four through seven, contain 25–30 curriculum-related titles and a teacher’s guide, and can be checked out by educators. In addition, Multnomah County Library’s “Homework Center” on the Web included a section on green buildings, and the Hillsdale Library Web site included information about the branch’s sustainability features.

For younger children, we put together an “It’s in the Bag” preschool collection of books and materials titled *Earth*. The “It’s in the Bag” theme bags each contain three to five picture books, a related activity, toy, puzzle or flannel story and a curriculum guide that help increase children’s awareness of the concept. The *Earth* “It’s in the Bag” collection helps parents, childcare providers and preschool teachers teach their children about how we can all work together to protect our environment. The *Earth* collections are circulated at Hillsdale Library and five additional Multnomah County Library neighborhood libraries.

The week before the library opened, we hosted tours for classes to visit the new building, giving children plastic hard hats and encouraging them to walk around the building with a “punchlist” of green building features to find and check off. We also hosted a number of tours for architectural students and professionals who were interested in the sustainability features of the building.

After the building opened, we continued our efforts to publicize the use of green building strategies and environmentally friendly practices. We are still distributing



the two brochures on the library's green building features, and continue to offer tours to students and other interested people. We are still circulating the *Earth* "It's in the Bag" and the two "Bucket of Books" collections. We also developed and presented talking points for "Going Green without Going Broke" presentations at the 2002 and 2004 American Library Association Annual Conferences.

The final LEED project review awarded us the Green Demonstration point, noting, "The project has provided a significant quantity of materials to demonstrate the development of promotional materials and an outreach plan which will reach a diverse group of audiences."

### LEED Construction Cost Implications

Mike Harrington, the Library's construction manager for the Hillsdale Library project, estimates that incorporating LEED features added four percent to the construction cost of the building (about \$140,000). Although the Board of County Commissioners had mandated that we incorporate those features, we were interested in calculating the estimated energy cost savings we could expect.

Bouillon Engineering was retained to evaluate the designed building's compliance to the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program. It was evaluated in two ways: a baseline model, reflecting the approximate energy cost of a building designed and constructed just to meet code requirements; and a design model, with the model incorporating LEED features reflecting the approximate energy cost of the LEED building. In the engineers' evaluations of the Hillsdale Library design, the baseline model estimated that the building would use 333,302 Kwh/yr, costing \$31,049. The design model estimated that the building with LEED features would use 308,309



Hillsdale Library (photo by Timothy Hursley, Thomas Hacker Architects).



Hillsdale Library (photo by Timothy Hursley, Thomas Hacker Architects).

Kwh/yr, costing \$24,419—a savings of 24,993 Kwh/yr, or \$6,630. In summary, we could expect annual energy cost savings of approximately 21% for the design model over the baseline model.

### Post Occupancy Evaluation

In 2005, the Cascadia Region Green Building Council commissioned a study to evaluate the performance of LEED buildings that had been occupied for at least a year. Of the 31 LEED buildings (business and residential) eligible for participation in the study, 11 owners of the eligible buildings were willing and able to provide the needed data during the limited study timeframe. The Hillsdale Library was one of the buildings evaluated.

Six of the 11 buildings were shown to be using less total energy than suggested by their initial design models (the modeled usage from the LEED Design Energy Cost, reflecting the efficiency features in the building's design). The Hillsdale Library had the highest Design Energy Use Intensity of all of the buildings. This, according to the Cascadia study, was due to the site constraints and design requirements that affect its energy use (seven day/week occupancy, high wall-to-floor ratio, two sides of floor-to-ceiling windows, and a floor exposed to ambient air because of the parking garage under the building). Although the library had the highest Design Energy Use Intensity, its energy use in relation to the initial modeling showed the largest savings of any building in the study.

Since the Cascadia study, we have continued to monitor Hillsdale Library's energy usage. The energy analysis that had been done during the design phase showed that we could expect annual energy cost savings of about 21 percent, due to the conservation features we had incorporated into the building's design. Actual usage

and cost for Hillsdale Library in the 2005 and 2006 calendar years was substantially less: 189,200 Kwh costing \$17,384 in 2005 and 193,120 Kwh costing \$15,930 in 2006. This is nearly a 29 percent savings in 2005 over the estimated cost of the design model of the building incorporating LEED features, and nearly 35 percent savings in 2006. There is no question that incorporating the LEED energy conservation measures is resulting in energy cost savings for the Hillsdale Library.

### Conclusion

Although we have incorporated green building features in several previous Multnomah County Library buildings, Hillsdale Library was the first Multnomah County building to pursue and achieve LEED certification. Although there were costs associated with constructing a LEED project, we have realized ongoing savings in energy costs. Perhaps even more important has been the environmental impacts of the building, both now and well into the future. During the schematic phase of design, there was considerable community concern about a much-loved, historic red-leaf maple tree that was at the back of the site. We received dozens of telephone calls, letters and e-mails, encouraging us to do whatever needed to be done to save the tree. I received literally hundreds of petitions from school children, including my favorite, the message painstakingly printed by a kindergartener, complete with her colorful drawing of the tree. It's still on my bulletin board:

*Dear June Mikkelsen:  
Please save this tree. If you cut down the  
tree God will be mad at you.*

—Love Katherine A.



Well, we did save the tree. In fact, we significantly modified the library's design to do so, at a cost of about \$30,000. Since it's near the end of its life cycle, there's no saying how long the tree will be around. It *is* likely, however, that the other measures we took to minimize the impact of the Hillsdale Library on the environment will make a positive difference for many years to come. 🌿

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# Getting there is Half the Fun:

## Alternative Transportation and Oregon Library Employees

by Jey Wann  
Documents and Acquisitions  
Coordinator,  
Oregon State Library

When we think about sustainability and Oregon libraries, we may initially think about green buildings or recycling programs. There is another aspect though: How do employees of Oregon libraries get to work? This article examines that question informally and anecdotally.

An informal poll of my co-workers at the Oregon State Library, asking how they most often commute to work, revealed:

Drive alone: 11  
Bus: 9  
Walk: 5  
Carpool: 3  
Vanpool: 1  
Bicycle: 1  
Multi-modal: 2

While I suspect driving alone may be underreported—for fear that I would try to convince them to bicycle—I was glad to see that driving alone is not the most popular commute method.

Several factors may contribute to this. The State Library is located on the Capital Mall in Salem, where parking is expensive and can be scarce, especially when the legislature is in session. The State of Oregon has a Smart Commuter Program that offers employees who work on the Mall incentives to use alternate transportation. I pay \$10 a year for a safe room to lock my bicycle in during the day. For a one-time fee of \$8, I can receive an annual pass for unlimited bus rides. Those who use alternate transportation are eligible for two free parking passes per month and also receive a coupon book with good deals on restaurants, museums, etc.

I solicited information on the libs-or and OLA Support Staff Division discussion lists about Oregon library employees who use alternative transportation. While I had relatively few responses, those I received were full of interesting tidbits and valuable tips.

### The Journey of a Thousand Miles Begins With a Single Step

Walking is the most basic form of human transportation. So basic, in fact, that we may not even consider it transportation. After all, is it transportation when we walk to the refrigerator? Yet walking is the preferred commuting option for some.

Jules Filipski (Southern Oregon University Library) walks to work for a number of reasons: “I walk in order to live more simply and sustainably. I walk for health reasons. I walk for financial reasons. As a library technician, I don’t make much money; my salary is definitely lower than a living wage for Ashland.”

Tiffany Thornton (University of Oregon) appreciates the time for observation and contemplation her walk to work provides. Initially, recovering from a torn ligament “gave me a new appreciation for the bipedal locomotion that our species is famous for.” While she acknowledges that walking definitely exposes her to the elements, there are compensations: “During a particularly brutal walk home on a scorching day, I passed a woman watering her garden, and requested to be hosed down. She obliged, and I felt much better.”

Because walking doesn’t involve any kind of vehicle at all, pedestrian commuters may have unique personal safety issues. Here are Tiffany’s tips for walking to work:

- Pay careful attention when crossing streets, especially if there are no stop signs or crosswalks, and be aware that cars parked at the curb can hide oncoming traffic from view.
- Be aware of cyclists and fellow pedestrians sharing space with you on sidewalks or road shoulders.
- Make sure that if you feel uncomfortable walking for whatever reason, you have a backup plan. If there are people you can call for a lift, store their numbers in your



cell phone. Familiarize yourself with the schedules and stops for buses that run near your home and workplace.

The nicest thing about walking to work is its simplicity. Joel Henderson (Oregon State Library) sums it up nicely: “My feet are two of the most reliable modes of transportation out there. They’re on time and on call 24/7. I’m a big fan.”

### Another One Rides the Bus (or the Train, or ...)

Riding the bus is perhaps the least glamorous of alternative transportation options. While many of my co-workers ride the bus to work, few public transit riders responded to my post on *libs-or*. The ones who did, however, turned out to be mega-commuters.

Michael Thommen (Oregon State Library) rides the bus most days from his home in Dallas to his job in Salem. He calls the CARTS bus he rides “a much-overlooked opportunity for people living in the ‘bedroom communities’ of Salem.” Even though CARTS costs \$3 per day, Michael still comes out ahead: “Figuring in wear and tear, parking, and the occasional traffic ticket, three bucks is a very good deal.”

Judith Norton (OHSU Library) uses three kinds of public transit to commute to her job on “Pill Hill”: “My morning routine is to WALK to the bus stop; take the BUS to downtown; transfer to the STREETCAR; and then take the TRAM to OHSU. It takes a little bit longer than transferring to another bus downtown, but much more enjoyable, as I can pretend I am in Europe somewhere.”

Barbara Yasson (Washington County Cooperative Library Service) spends four hours a day commuting to and from her home in Vancouver, Washington, to her job in Hillsboro. She drives to the Expo Center Park & Ride and takes the MAX train from there. While many would find her commute daunting, Barbara makes good use of her



Barbara Yasson with MAX.

time—from studying for a class in SQL to reading Harry Potter. For reading on public transportation, Barbara suggests books that aren’t too large and that are in good condition. See the sidebar for her suggested MAX reads.

### I Want to Ride My Bicycle

The majority of those who responded to my *libs-or* message were bicycle commuters. Are bicycle commuters just naturally more vocal? As a bicycle commuter myself, I’m not in a position to judge. Perhaps there are just more of us: bicycling combines the independence of driving a car with the exercise and environmental benefits of walking, so perhaps more library folks choose it. Whatever the reason, Oregon library bicycle commuters had a variety of experiences to share.

Dave Pauli (Hillsboro Public Library) bicycles several times a week from his home in Forest Grove, sometimes combining bicycling with the MAX train when he doesn’t want to cycle the whole seven miles. He recommends that anyone interested in commuting by bicycle “make it a part of your life and build it into your commute expectations. Once you have made that transition, there are many benefits.”

Cathy Flynn (University of Oregon) is not currently a bicycle commuter. However, for 12 years, she not only commuted by bicycle, but also used a bicycle trailer to drop off and pick up her daughter at day care. She’s currently driving the middle school car

### Barbara Yasson’s list of good MAX reads

#### Young Adult:

Philip Pullman’s  
His Dark Materials Series  
& Sally Lockhart Trilogy

Carl Hiaasen’s *Hoot and Flush*

Any Harry Potter or  
Star Wars title.

#### Biographies:

*Personal History*  
by Katharine Graham

*The Roosevelt Women*  
by Betty Boyd Caroli

*Women of Mystery: The Lives  
and Works of Notable Women  
Crime Novelists*

by Martha Hailey Dubose

#### Mysteries & Spy Novels:

*Lord Peter Wimsey*, along with  
any of a dozen others,  
by Dorothy L. Sayers

Anything by Agatha Christie or  
Arthur Conan Doyle

John Le Carre’s  
George Smiley Adventures

Most mysteries, spy novels and  
science fiction read well on MAX.

#### Nonfiction:

*The Code Book: The Evolution of  
Secrecy From Mary, Queen of Scots  
to Quantum Cryptography*  
by Simon Singh

*Looking for Alaska*  
by Peter Jenkins

Robert L. Wolke’s scientific miscel-  
lany *What Einstein Told His Barber*  
& *What Einstein Told His Cook*

*The Powers That Be*  
by David Halberstam



Melissa Hartley's panniers.



Kyle Banerjee in his Tadpole Trike.

pool, but hopes to be back to biking soon.

Erin O'Meara (University of Oregon) enjoys her 1.5 mile commute on one of Eugene's many bike paths. Although secure bicycle parking is a concern, Erin enjoys the camaraderie of the bike rack: "It's like our water cooler. People from different departments have a moment to chat and catch up, when otherwise they might not see each other that often."

Will Harmon (University of Oregon) rides to get aerobic exercise, save on gas, and observe wildlife. He says, "I most especially like the bike path running west from 15th Street, following the Amazon slough towards Fern Ridge: ducks, herons, fish, turtles, an occasional eagle, nutria (for what they're worth), raccoons, snakes, and a beaver dam on the small stream running along West Roosevelt."

Sustainability isn't just about alternative transportation, as Melissa Hartley (Oregon State University) proves. Melissa commutes by bicycle and appreciates the efforts of OSU's Alternative Transportation Advisory Committee in supporting alternative transportation. Melissa finds that driving to work actually takes her longer than bicycling, since parking at OSU is scarce. Melissa is an all-weather bicyclist and has made a pair of

rainproof panniers from OCLC WorldCat backpacks that she picked up at ALA.

The mega-commuter of the Oregon library biking community is Kyle Banerjee (Orbis Cascade Alliance). Kyle bicycles from his home in Monmouth to his office in Corvallis; prior to joining Orbis, Kyle bicycled from Monmouth to his job at the State Library in Salem. Like some other bicycle commuters, Kyle finds that bicycling doesn't add much to his commute time, especially when factoring in parking time.

Unlike other alternative transportation options, bicycling can require special clothing, and this can cause occasional minor mishaps. Dave Pauli once arrived at work wearing bicycling shorts, then realized he'd forgotten to bring pants to change into. And I once spent several hours wondering why my pants were so tight before discovering that I'd absent-mindedly put them on over my bike shorts after arriving at work.

Here are some of tips from Cathy Flynn and Kyle Banerjee for a safe and enjoyable bicycle commute:

- Act like a slow moving vehicle and obey traffic laws.
- Wear highly visible clothing and use good lights at night.



- Wear a helmet.
- Use mirrors.
- Pay attention to traffic.
- Buy equipment that fits you correctly.
- Build a relationship with a local bike shop that will give you continuing support.

If you feel guilty about spending a lot of money, think about how much you're saving on gas, parking, and gym fees!

### What's the Alternative?

No one responding to my libs-or message said "I'd really rather drive, but ..." about their decision to use alternative transportation. Walking, biking, or taking public transit lessens our impact on the environment. Walking and biking give us an opportunity to exercise without going to the gym. Public transportation gives us time to read, listen to music or books, text our friends, or just sit, without having to worry about traffic at all. Sure, pedestrians and bicyclists encounter the occasional aggressive driver or scary dog. Public transportation riders may have to tolerate crowded buses or fellow passengers they'd rather avoid. But Oregon library alternative transportation users enjoy their commutes. For them, it's not alternative transportation, it's just the way they get to work. Kyle Banerjee puts it this way: "Because bikes are very practical on many levels, I've never been a fan of considering them as an alternative form of transportation. To me, the very word 'alternative' implies a non-preferred solution. The reality is that for many people, bicycles are a fun, healthy, fast, and cheap way to get around."

What can Oregon libraries do to encourage their staff and patrons to try alternative transportation? Here are some ideas:

- Provide low-cost or free bus passes.
- Ensure that staff and patrons have information about public transit routes that stop near the library.

- Provide bicycle storage, such as lockers or a room, to keep bikes safe from damage and theft.
- Provide lockers, room for staff to change clothes, and maybe even a shower!
- Consider other incentives for employees who use public transportation.

Whether it's because of high gas prices, concerns about global warming, wanting more exercise, or just to try something different, getting to work by an "alternative" method is definitely worth a try. You may find it's more fun than driving! 🌿

### Resources

Bicycle Transportation Alliance.  
<http://www.bta4bikes.org>

National Center for Bicycling and Walking.  
<http://www.bikewalk.org>

Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program. Transportation Choices.  
<http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM/GettingAround.shtml>



Jey Wann reading the rules of the road.



# From Worthless to Worthy:

## Turning Media Trash into Recycling Treasure

by **Maureen Cole**  
Technical Services Manager,  
Eugene Public Library

The looming question is how did I get involved in this recycling project in the first place? Here's what I remember: at some point someone came up to me and said, "We really should try to do a better job of recycling." She said it with such force, passion, and charm that I actually stopped what I was doing and said, "What? Is there a problem? But we recycle."

Silly me. As we all know, there is always more that can be done. This is my story about recycling media by-products at the Eugene Public Library (EPL), the second largest public library in the state.

### Project Scope

I am the Technical Services Manager at EPL. Almost every item that comes into the library which is headed for a shelf comes in through my department and almost every item that is weeded and leaves the shelf, goes out through my department. We have, therefore, a very close relationship with trash and recycling bins, and the wonderful custodians who move them. We have a good process for books which are weeded from our system. Many of the books go straight to the Friends of the Eugene Public Library. Many titles are sold at a gigantic Friends Book Sale, and the money earned comes back to the library via the Friends. Books that the Friends don't think will sell are recycled. Although it is unfortunate that these titles won't go to other readers, because of the quantity, recycling is a good option.

So that takes care of books. But at EPL, as with all libraries, we have other materials, including DVDs, CDs, audiobooks, cassettes, and other forms of media that are weeded out of the collection. I discovered that in addition to books, our waste collector could take book covers, inserts in DVD cases, DVD cases, and CD

sleeves if they have a recycle label. But, I also found out that most of the media by-products could not be recycled through our waste collector. These include:

- CD cases
- Audiobooks (cd or cassette, big black or white plastic cases)
- Video cases (there are two kinds, neither is recyclable)
- Audiocassettes
- Videocassettes

Concurrently, we discovered that the city department housed upstairs from us, the Information Services Department (ISD), had started recycling disks and asked if they could take ours. This included CDs (disks only), DVDs (disks only), and CD-Roms (disks only). We also heard that they might be using NextStep Recycling, a local business that had recently expanded to include all electronics and related materials.

A few other developments came to the forefront. First, there was a steep increase in the volume of weeding that was brought to our department. Next, Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy made sustainability a major focus. She also challenged members of the Eugene community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We believed, as people employed by the City of Eugene, that we owed a special duty to make sure that we responded to this challenge by reducing waste and greenhouse emissions as much as possible. Therefore, this recycling effort, although it was not necessarily planned for this year, became a very timely project.

### Finding Answers

I charged one of my staff with contacting Lorraine Kerwood, the Executive Director of NextStep Recycling, for answers to the following questions:



Is there a charge for picking up materials from the library? If so, how much?

Can materials remain whole or must they be broken down and separated?

Will they accept items with RFID tags?

How much can they accept and how often?

Do they really accept the kinds of materials we have?

At Lorraine's suggestion she visited the library and met with staff to see and discuss the materials we had. She told us that NextStep could indeed recycle all of our items, but she was unsure about the RFID tags that are on every single item deleted from the system.

If we delivered the materials to NextStep, there would be no fee. However, if we choose to have NextStep come to us, the estimated fee would be \$80 per month. If we were really organized, though, this fee could cover the entire building which consists of four floors and two departments in addition to the library: the previously mentioned ISD and the administrative offices for the Library, Recreation and Cultural Services Division.

We also learned from their Web site <http://www.nextsteprecycling.org> that NextStep is a non-profit organization that finds a vendor for each type of material received. They also donate refurbished computers and other materials to people who can really use them. Plus, NextStep has a ReUse Store and offers job skills training through a network of partnerships in Lane County. This non-profit organization is really changing our community in meaningful ways!

After our meeting with Lorraine, there was no doubt in my mind that I wanted to work with NextStep. However, there were still some pieces to put into place and more questions to be answered:

What about the RFID tags? What if they had to be removed before materials could go to NextStep? Could our staff handle this extra work? Could this task be worked into the tasks of our EPL volunteers?

If ISD was already recycling disks, and they were recycling disks through NextStep, could we somehow coordinate this effort?

Could we manage the bins? We have a limited amount of space. Would we be able to have another bin at each location that would need one? Could we find some space in the delivery area to place one large container for all the materials?

Should we get the City of Eugene involved in supporting these efforts in any way?

So much to find out! It takes time and energy to include all necessary people, and things were changing on the ground in Eugene. For example, the Mayor's sustainability effort had resulted in the hiring of Eugene's first Sustainability Manager in June 2007.

My supervisor also wanted me to check into what ISD was doing with disks and NextStep, so that we wouldn't duplicate efforts. Also, there might be other people in the city who could help. It appeared that this could turn into a citywide effort with the library at the leading edge. Who was I to slow down progress? But wait, I did have that two-week vacation coming up.

Three weeks and many e-mails later, I learned two very important things:

1. NextStep Recycling won a very prestigious National Recycling Award while I was away; and



2. My supervisors determined that my department should pursue this recycling relationship with NextStep on our own. Once we are set up, we will do outreach to other city departments about our project, and we will modify our plan as needed.

Can I just take a small moment and say “Hallelujah!” to both developments?

I quickly put in a call to the award-winning NextStep to schedule yet another meeting to review materials wanting recycling and questions wanting answers. But this time the end result will have my department recycling materials that were once thrown into the trash bin. One significant answer I received is that the RFID tags can be recycled! The tags still need removal from the materials, but my staff found it easy to add that activity into the withdrawal process. I can see the accomplishment of our goal on the next horizon; just a collective sigh away. Success will be sweet!

## Conclusion

Many worthwhile projects take on their own life and for me, recycling, one of the most worthy, became more complicated than I initially expected. Much of this reflects the size of my institution and the novelty of recycling some of these materials. It is good thing to report that we are so accustomed to recycling in the Eugene area that we want, and expect, to be able to do more and more of it. It is a good thing to report that there are people who work for the city who are passionate about the environment and willing to work hard to further this project. It is a good thing to report that we live and work in an area which supports this kind of recycling business. And finally, it is a good thing to report that we are right on the cusp of implementing this project! May you someday enjoy as much success with your recycling project as I know we will enjoy with ours! 🌿

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# Green Reading:

## Resources for the Sustainability-Minded

by **Diane Sotak**  
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Are you still trying to figure out what it means to be “green”? Do you want your library to be more environmentally friendly but wonder how to do it and what it will cost? Your questions and confusion about the answers are to be expected. For many years the literature focused on making the case that humans were harming the environment: the most recent messenger being Al Gore with his *An Inconvenient Truth*. Now, a flood of sources offers strategies to help alleviate the environmental impact of living in a high consumption society. Yet, we are still in the infancy of a movement that is just gaining traction with these complicated problems. Some of us even feel that the future of life as we know it depends on answering these questions correctly and as soon as possible.

What resources might a library want to offer to support efforts to take action at the individual level or to help guide efforts at the institutional level? Below is a selection of books, articles, and Web sites to help us understand how we, and our organizations, can approach the concept of “being green.” As you peruse them, keep in mind that some may offer solutions easily done with little start-up costs, such as using paper with more recycled content in the printer, to bigger

projects like completely redoing existing landscaping. In addition to budget, there are also vastly different scales to consider: from bikes instead of cars to entire new buildings. Be sure to update this subject area in your collections regularly, as the field is growing rapidly.

Last, before diving into the bibliography portion, remember that “sustainability” subsumes a wide range of topics, so it can be a challenge to find consistent terminology to use in searching for sources. For example, some Library of Congress Subject Headings addressing climate change and energy use solutions are:

- Global environmental change
- Greenhouse gas mitigation
- Carbon dioxide mitigation
- Biomass energy (UF biofuels)
- Alternative fuel vehicles
- Renewable energy sources

In the Web 2.0 sphere, descriptive tags applied by users of social networking sites, like del.icio.us or Flickr, reveal another way to describe and find Web resources on this topic. The “tag cloud” below illustrates end-user terminology for solutions to climate change. The larger the font, the more frequently a tag has been used.

recycling auto **green** footprint **carbon** biodegradable **energy** bioenergy smartgrowth  
future climatechange **climate** automobile calculator biofuel biodiesel activism  
globalwarming environment organic **sustainability** howto sustainable co2



### **Buildings and Landscapes**

Cascadia Region Green Building Council. (2006-2007). Retrieved October 15, 2007, from <http://www.cascadiagbc.org/>

Has links to the national site, which developed the LEED rating system used for the "... design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings." The regional site for the Pacific Northwest is chock full of information and links to other useful resources.

Dunnett, N., & Hitchmough, J. (Eds.). (2004). *The dynamic landscape: design, ecology and management of naturalistic urban planting*. New York: Spon Press. (ISBN: 0415256208)

Extensively referenced with lovely photos, this is more about the theories and histories of landscaping than a step-by-step guide. Chapter 5, by the well-known Darrel Morrison, discusses the history of using native plants and how to use them ecologically. There are nice examples of how to put theory into practice, but the specifics aren't necessarily applicable for different regions—in fact his point is that each region should have plants best suited to that area.

Harvey, L. D. D. (2006). *A handbook on low-energy buildings and district-energy systems: fundamentals, techniques and examples*. Sterling, VA: Earthscan. (ISBN: 1844072436)

This book was highly recommended by Choice. Extensively researched, although not well indexed, it has wonderfully detailed chapter headings. It is especially useful for considering the specific aspects involved for either a new building or for retrofitting an existing building.

Melby, P., & Cathcart, T. (2002). *Regenerative design techniques: practical applications in landscape design*. New York: J. Wiley & Sons. (ISBN: 0471414727)

This book has a nice mix of detail and overview, with examples of specific projects. The chapter on rainwater harvesting discusses outdoor use versus indoor/outdoor use systems, provides formulas for calculating the volume of water that a catchment's system might use in a storm, explains different storage devices, and discusses filtration and maintenance – among other things. Although many of the examples are for single family homes, some are scalable for larger projects. Overall, the myriad details involved make a compelling case that hiring someone with extensive knowledge of how to design and install an environmentally sustainable landscape would be a wise investment for a library.

### **Alternative Fuels**

Jaeger, W. K., Cross, R., & Egelkraut, T. M. (2007). *Biofuel potential in Oregon: Background and evaluation of options* (Oregon State University Agricultural Experiment Station Special Report No. 1078). Retrieved October 15, 2007, from <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/sr/sr1078.pdf>

This report examines the use of corn ethanol, canola biodiesel and wood-based ethanol as fuel. The authors looked at cost, production and the contribution to greenhouse gases. They found that while these biofuels might reduce Oregon's fossil fuel use, they aren't as productive as raising taxes on gas or mandating higher fuel economy standards. This was true for all regions, not just the Pacific Northwest. They also recognize that this model is for large commercial productions and could change with new technology and/or costs of the current system.

The National Biodiesel Board. (2007). Biodiesel. Retrieved October 15, 2007, from <http://biodiesel.org/>

As the official Web site of the National Biodiesel Board, this provides a guide to



using biodiesel along with retailer maps, factsheets, reports, and news supporting biodiesel. However, the Craigslist Web site <http://www.craigslist.org> is one of the best sources for finding biodiesel cars and fuel, as well as other sustainable products—choose a region and then search for biodiesel.

### Equipment and Products

Center for the New American Dream. (n.d.). New American Dream. Retrieved October 15, 2007, from <http://www.new-dream.org/>

Under “buy wisely” it has a section for institutional purchasing. There are links to resources for buying environmentally friendly products, electronics and more. There are also a series of green purchasing guides you can order for a fee. Not particularly well organized, as you have to navigate from the cryptic headings on the left side of the Web page.

Hawken, P., Lovins, A., & Lovins, L. H. (1999). *Natural capitalism: creating the next industrial revolution*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. (ISBN: 0316353167)

This book is useful for understanding why we would want to make changes, but the content is not as applied. Chapters do have some practical suggestions (e.g., make cars hyperlight to save energy), lists and diagrams. Far reaching and well documented; this a compelling read.

Milling, H. (2007, May 15). Green Picks. *Library Journal*, 32, 16-23. Retrieved August 24, 2007, from the Academic Search Premier database.

Offers good ideas for reused and reusable furniture, upholstery, desk surfaces, floors and wall coverings from an interior designer who has worked on “more than a dozen libraries” of different sizes.

McDonough, W., & Braungart, M. (2002). *Cradle to cradle: remaking the way we make*

*things*. New York: North Point Press. (ISBN: 0865475873)

From leaders in the field, this helps to conceptualize why we bother with green building and manufacturing. The authors explain how products, such as shoes, and buildings, like a Ford Motor Company factory, pollute at each stage of their lifecycles. They maintain that all waste is simply a design flaw that can—and should—be fixed. Has examples from around the globe and from their work. No index and poorly edited, but still inspirational and fun to read.

Treehugger. (2007). *How to go green*. Retrieved October 15, 2007, from <http://www.treehugger.com/gogreen.php>

The “How to Go Green” section offers a set of “how-to” guides that will help you green your furniture, your lighting, your work, even your recycling! The rest of the site includes eco-centric gossip and other resources such as a job search function. There is even a post on ways to reuse your Swiffer without all the waste and chemicals. The site also has an RSS feed so you can keep up on this exciting stuff. A word of caution though, the site is a dot com, with somewhat annoying ads. Remember that even a green organization might have financial motives for suggesting some products over others.

### Mobility

Balish, C. (2006). *How to live well without owning a car: save money, breathe easier, and get more mileage out of life*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press. (ISBN: 1580087574)

This book will help you transition to living either “car-free” (although you can still catch rides, join car sharing programs, and rent cars), or “car-lite”: keep the car, but use it less. Sprinkled with inspirational testimonials from around the country, chapters also offer practical advice on utilizing alternative modes of transportation. The author suggests a trial, car-free week to start.



Hurst, R. J. (2004). *The art of urban cycling: lessons from the street*. Guilford, CT: Falcon. (ISBN: 0762727837)

Written by a veteran bike messenger, every urban bike commuter should read this book—especially new commuters! It opens with a fascinating and well-footnoted history of the bicycle. Turns out the early bicycle mechanics and manufacturers were major players in developing the automobile. If nothing else read Chapter 3, “In Traffic,” for insightful tips and strategies. Other chapters cover repairs and equipment.

### Living Green

Merkel, J. (2003). *Radical simplicity: small footprints on a finite earth*. Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers. (ISBN: 0865714738)

Assess your lifestyle impact and learn how to simplify using ecological footprinting and the YMOYL tool (based on the book *Your Money or Your Life*). Start by taking a quick online quiz to determine your footprint at <http://www.myfootprint.org/>. Appendices have various tables and worksheets that go along with these tools. Be ready though—simplifying isn’t necessarily simple!

A nice companion read that lays out the philosophical and spiritual aspects of simplicity is the classic: *Voluntary simplicity: toward a way of life that is outwardly simple, inwardly rich* (ISBN: 0688121195).

Oregon Environmental Council. (n.d.). *Living Green*. Retrieved October 15, 2007, from <http://www.oeconline.org/livinggreen>

The Web site for this non-profit, formed in 1968, offers unique content for Oregon citizens such as “An Oregon Roadside Guide to Eco-Healthy Eating” and “Eco-Healthy Home Tips.” They also track related legislation and events.

Trask, C. (2006). *It’s easy being green: a handbook for earth-friendly living*. Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith. (ISBN: 158685772X)

A fun read on integrating earth-friendly living into everyday life. The longest chapter, titled “Eco-tips for Living Greener,” provides concise, practical tips that will have you thinking, “Hey, I can do that!” Each tip has a series of check boxes for those who like to mark or rate their progress. The “Buying Green” chapter has a guide to eco-labels where you can learn things like Cage Free doesn’t mean those chickens are living outdoors.

For more in-depth discussion of why we should strive to live green, along with more extensive examples, try the forerunner of this emerging genre: *The consumer’s guide to effective environmental choices: practical advice from the Union of Concerned Scientists* (ISBN: 060980281X).

### Conclusion

We hope these resources help answer questions about how to make your library, your commute, your workday, and your world more environmentally sustainable. Ultimately, this is an annotated bibliography of hope. We hope that as we learn more about the impacts of how we build, landscape, stock and travel to our libraries, that the utility of these resources will change too. We expect that as we look back from the future on this bibliography, we’ll be pleased to see we were headed in the right direction. We also imagine that a few resources will look hopelessly naive and wrong-headed. But, mostly we hope these resources inspire you to make a difference and that you’ll share what does and doesn’t work with others as we learn to be better stewards of the earth. 