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*Sustainability Communicator* is a quarterly publication about population, consumption, and conservation issues. Its purpose is to promote dialogue and action among League members and others interested in building a sustainable future.

# SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATOR

*Izaak Walton League of America Sustainability Education Program News*

Fall 2007

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## What Sustainability Means to You

The Izaak Walton League's definition of sustainability includes such things as preserving our natural resource heritage, reducing the impact of human numbers and consumption patterns, and promoting communities that provide for both current and future needs. In August, we sent an electronic request to all subscribers for whom we have an e-mail address asking what sustainability means to them. (If this didn't include you and you would like to be plugged in to future electronic communications, just send your name and e-mail address to [sep@iwla.org](mailto:sep@iwla.org).)

We asked, "What you are doing in your community, workplace, chapter, or home to live a more sustainable lifestyle? For instance, have you:

- Held or participated in a local farmer's market that features sustainably grown produce?
- Conducted an energy audit of your chapter's facilities?
- Restored wildlife habitat at your home, business, or chapter?
- Participated in a land-use planning group to help save local greenspace?"

This issue of *Sustainability Communicator* is the first of two special issues that will highlight the responses we received. Our readers are involved in a wide variety of projects all across the United States. We hope you find the responses as interesting as we did and that they give you new ideas on how to live a more sustainable lifestyle.

We are still looking for new, original submissions. Your submission can be just a sentence or two, but please limit your response to 500 words. Include your full name and address, a phone number, and an e-mail address so we can contact you if your submission is picked.

Unfortunately, we cannot return submitted items and are not offering compensation for articles.

Depending on the response, we may make this a regular feature of the newsletter. We would really like to hear from you, so please take a minute to e-mail or write.

### **Please send to:**

Sustainability Communicator  
Izaak Walton League of America  
707 Conservation Lane  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
E-mail: [sep@iwla.org](mailto:sep@iwla.org)

## Sustainability in Our Homes and Communities ...

We practice sustainability in small ways, in daily life. We have a garden, buy locally, and support Community Supported Agriculture farms. Recycle everything. Because we're "older," we remember "rationing" from WWII and still practice it. Save on energy, i.e., lights, heat, paper, gasoline, etc.

### **Katherine Baird**

*Welch, Minn.*

I'm a big fan of reducing the speed limit. I have found that by going to work five minutes earlier, and reducing my speed from 65-70 mph on highways to 55-60 mph has improved my mileage from about 30 mpg to about 34

mpg. My gas tank is 10 gallons, so that saves me about 40 miles for every tank of gas. I've also noticed that speeding doesn't seem to save that much time. How many times have you seen someone speed by, only to be behind their vehicle at the next stoplight?

Purchase produce locally, or grow your own vegetables and preserve them yourself. I've found that freezing produce is a very easy way to preserve. I use a vacuum packer to seal the foods, and they last two to three years. Canning is another option but is much more labor intensive. It can also be very fun. This way you use locally produced foods and you can use them through the winter. No long transit distance for

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# Sustainability in Our Homes and Communities ...

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the foods. You know where they came from and that they are free of chemicals. Frozen vegetables are not as nice as fresh, but they are still healthy for you. I'd rather eat local frozen vegetables than get them all the way from California.

**Debbie Jahnke**  
*Hastings, Minn.*

This spring when we began to shop for a new clothes dryer, we looked at Energy Star dryers as one way to reduce the amount of energy consumed in drying clothing. We discovered that Energy Star does not rate dryers because most consume similar amounts of energy. Instead, they recommend a variety of methods to conserve energy in the drying process. We chose a dryer that shuts off the machine automatically when the clothes are dry. The dryer has a moisture-sensor that does the job. Good news from Energy Star.

**Marileen Johnson**  
*Oceanside, Calif.*

We, now both retired, had two children. Both are married—one with two and one with three children. We recycle, and limit water and home energy use. We have restored and improved wildlife habitat along our lakeshore and on the 80 acres of woods and wetland we purchased over 25 years ago. We are also working with our lake association and state in improving the water quality of the lake we live on. Numerous letters-to-the-editor have been written to outdoor publications on the need for limiting our population and protecting our environment. By way of meetings and letters, I am trying to limit our state government and the ATV lobby from building more ATV trails and causing more damage to our public forests and wetlands.

**Charles and Nancy Huber**  
*Finlayson, Minn.*

The Peace and Justice Ministry Team in my local church worked with the owner of a hardware store in the area to promote the use of fluorescent light bulbs. Bob

brought samples of every available type of fluorescent bulb to our church on a Sunday morning. He plugged many of them into an electric outlet, answered questions, and took orders, delivering them the following Sunday. Many who didn't order bulbs that day purchased them later at the store.

**Ruth Saari**  
*Edina, Minn.*

I am a life member of York Chapter #67 in York, Pennsylvania. My wife and I own a small 13-acre lot, which includes our home and approximately 11 acres of hardwoods. The woods are located in a predominantly residential area.

In 2003, we were becoming concerned about the maturity and future of the woods and the lack of new undergrowth and seedlings. Not being sure what to do, I enlisted the aid of Jeff Gossert and Co. Forestry. Jeff, who is also a member of the York Chapter as well as a member of the York County Conservation District, met with me and my wife Janet several times to develop a plan for an improvement thinning and to protect residual trees. I told him our main concern was the health of the woodlot and not the monetary benefit that we may achieve.

**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” —Margaret Mead**

Jeff suggested that he survey the woods and select trees for cutting based on removing what he referred to as the “UGS,” or undesirable growth species. We would not choose trees by diameter, but would take an assortment with the goal of not disturbing large mast trees or any known den trees. A portion of the woods was relatively young and it was decided not to disturb this part at this time. Soon we had a contract signed, and his company went about selecting the trees to harvest. He then sent a description out to more than 20 lumber companies for competitive bids.

By July, a lumber company had been awarded the contract. In less than a week, 130 trees were harvested, under the super-



vision and guidance of the forester. The estimated harvest was 30,765 board feet. At first I was not sure that I made the right decision because the initial appearance was a little too much of a change. After the logging was complete, the access roads were graded and grass seed was planted to stabilize the trails. Swales were cut in to control runoff.

We enrolled the woodlot in the Pennsylvania forest initiative program and certified the area for inclusion in the National Wildlife Federation's Wildlife Habitat program. This states that the proper-

ty provides the four basic habitat elements needed for wildlife to thrive: food, water, cover, and places to raise young.

Today, only four short years later, the woods are thriving with new growth. The woods have become quite thick and have become a magnet for deer, fox, rabbits, and various birds of all kind. I even managed to capture a picture of some wild turkey with my trail cam. The only downside is that I constantly battle to remove mile-a-minute weed and Norway maple trees. Our hope is to pass the woods on and save it from development. Time will tell.

**Bill and Janet Frey**  
*York, Pa.*

# Sustainability: Looking Back ... and Forward

The term “sustainable development” was first used widely after a 1972 United Nations meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, about the human environment. In 1987, the U.N. World Commission on Environment and Development issued the first concise definition of sustainable development: development that “meets the needs of future generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The report that contained the definition, called the Brundtland report, provided a prescription for governments to meet the needs of an expanding world population. The report noted that the success of sustainable development depended on three key factors:

- A high value must be placed on natural resources, biological diversity, and the value produced by functioning ecosystems, such as cleaning water and air.
- People must discover and exchange information about new technologies that provide more jobs, improve the use of renewable natural resources, and increase food production.
- Equality and justice must be promoted among all people and between generations to alleviate poverty, reduce violence, and build better communities.

Definitions of sustainability have evolved since the first attempts to describe it. However, nearly all definitions of sustainability share the common elements of balance, ethics, inclusion, and looking to the future.

One of the most difficult aspects in defining sustainability has been that its success or failure can be judged with certainty only after the fact. It is often easier to identify unsustainable practices than those that will prove to be truly sustainable over the long haul.

Another challenge is the scale at which sustainability is practiced. It can be easier to identify local projects or practices that are sustainable—buying locally grown produce at a farmer’s market, for example. However, when you look at the life and history of the many materials and products we use daily, it quickly becomes clear that our individual use of resources affects communities and environments all over the world (and vice versa). For example, purchasing a fuel-efficient vehicle involves



manufacturing and supply chains that can literally crisscross the entire globe.

If sustainable development principles are not encouraged and adopted worldwide, local efforts may ultimately be undermined. Fostering sustainability on a global scale will be a huge job. This illustrates the need to expand our thinking and actions to include both the local and the global.

Both critics and proponents of sustainability recognize that determining what constitutes sustainability is not an exact science. Our understanding and definition of sustainability will continue to evolve over time. However, sustainability remains one of the most promising concepts to help people live in balance with environmental limits.

## Definitions of “Sustainability”

We believe that the most important thing we humans can do to preserve our natural resource heritage and sustain our way of life is to have each couple bring into this world no more than two or three children. If we can’t or won’t stop our out-of-control population expansion, all the other “sustainability programs” will only be temporary fixes. Don’t get me wrong, anything is better than nothing. But, even with good programs (recycling, organic food, energy efficiency, carpooling, etc.), when we have twice as many people we will need more homes, cars (or seats in light rail), air conditioners, food, production of all kinds, landfills, roads, clean water, etc.

**Charles and Nancy Huber**  
*Finlayson, Minn.*

It means many different things, but one of the biggest and least talked about is it means a zero-growth economy. At some point, the total of all resources flowing through the human enterprise—

our bodies and our economy—has to stop growing (hopefully at a level that doesn’t eventually lead to ecosystem collapse).

**Cedron Jones**  
*Helena, Mont.*

A thriving population in a livable world.

**Population Action International**

Leave our grandchildren a world that allows them a quality of life at least as good as ours.

**Jon Roush**

Sustainable development ... meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Our Common Future, Brundtland Commission 1987**

# Population Workshops Prompt Action

The League joined with the National Wildlife Federation, National Audubon Society, and Sierra Club to sponsor five events in Florida last spring, including an advanced activist training workshop at the University of Miami and a panel discussion at Florida International University, and a workshop at the local Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

The workshops addressed how population growth relates to resource conservation and the need for sustainable development. Following the workshops, participants contacted their local representative, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, in support of the Global Poverty Act. The legislation rec-

ognizes the importance of poverty relief as part of long-term sustainable development that balances growth, health, and environmental protection. Not only did the act pass out of the House Foreign Affairs Committee by unanimous consent, but Rep. Ros-Lehtinen decided to cosponsor the legislation.

"It's a great example of how local action really can push national policy," says the League's Sustainability Education Program director Michelle Orzech, who helped organize and run the events. For more information on upcoming events or to find out how you can support the League's work on sustainability, e-mail [sep@iwla.org](mailto:sep@iwla.org).

## Our e-mail has changed!

You can now contact us at [sep@iwla.org](mailto:sep@iwla.org).

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*Founded in 1922, the Izaak Walton League of America is dedicated to common sense conservation that protects America's hunting, fishing, and outdoor heritage relying on solution-oriented conservation, education, and the promotion of outdoor recreation for the benefit of our citizens. The League has more than 40,000 members and supporters in 21 state divisions and more than 300 local chapters in 32 states.*

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Michelle Orzech  
*Sustainability Education  
Program*

Jason McGarvey  
*Editor*

Jay Clark  
*Creative Director*

For more information, contact the Izaak Walton League of America, 707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878-2983; call (301) 548-0150; E-mail [sep@iwla.org](mailto:sep@iwla.org); or visit our site on the World Wide Web at <http://www.iwla.org>.



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Izaak Walton League of America  
Sustainability Education Project  
707 Conservation Lane  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878-2983  
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