

# **A Timeline of Sustainable Development Initiatives at Western Washington University & Whatcom County**

*1962*

## **Institute for Freshwater Studies & Institute for Watershed Studies (1982)**

An institute devoted to a wide variety of watershed-related projects is started. The institute uses staff, faculty, & students to perform research or environmental education projects, & has been a vital resource to test & study the state of local waters.

*1969*

## **Huxley College of the Environment**

WWU starts Huxley College, one of the first & oldest colleges in the nation devoted exclusively to the study of the environment. Since its establishment, Huxley has added several programs & departments, including the combined majors of Environmental Studies/Journalism (1987) & Environmental Studies/Economics (1991).

*1970*

## **Huxley Environmental Reference Bureau (HERB) & AS Environmental Center (1979)**

HERB begins as a college-sponsored, student-run group dedicated to organizing events, & making resource materials & staff available for involvement with environmental topics.

## **Huxley Humus Newsletter & The Planet Magazine (1979)**

The Huxley Humus, a student-run & written newsletter publication, is started as the voice of HERB. Later, the Planet magazine continues the tradition of “being dedicated to environmental advocacy & awareness.”

*1972*

## **Department of Engineering Technology, Vehicle Research Institute**

The Department of Engineering Technology develops the Vehicle Research Institute to provide sustainable vehicle design, prototype construction, & consultation for government & private industry. VRI has produced dozens of innovative, fuel-efficient cars that have won many awards & captured the attention of automobile manufacturers.

## **Outback Farm & Outdoor Experiential Learning Site (1999)**

In coordination with Fairhaven College, a five-acre student-run site is initiated to teach, develop & implement sustainable growing & land use methods in order to enrich student learning, university, & community.

## **HERB Recycle Center & AS Recycle Center (1979)**

WWU becomes one of the first universities in the U.S. to have a campus-recycling program. Beginning as an HERB program, the AS continues the program. Years later, several other programs & organizations in Whatcom County are modeled & inspired by the program.

1982

**Bellingham Community Recycling (BCR), Environmental Resource Services (1989), & RE Sources (1993)**

Using WWU as an inspiration & model, BCR researches, organizes, & lobbies the local government to offer curbside recycling to all city residents. With their success, they transition into being an advocate for sustainable communities as RE Sources & expand this message by creating a business called Re Store in 1993.

1983

**Fairhaven Students Develop Organic Gardening Course & Applied Human Ecology: Sustainable Systems Course (1996)**

Building upon the Outback Farm, Fairhaven students develop & begin teaching a course, offered every quarter, on organic gardening & sustainable living. The course becomes Applied Human Ecology: Sustainable Systems in 1996, & remains a popular student-led peer-education effort.

1989

**City of Bellingham contracts Sanitary Services Company (SSC) for Curbside Recycling**

Modeled off of WWU & motivated by the non-profit Bellingham Community Recycling, the City of Bellingham begins offering residents curbside recycling as a third party contract to SSC.

1991

**Whatcom County contracts Private Companies for Curbside Recycling**

Motivated by the City of Bellingham's actions, Whatcom County becomes the first county in Washington State to offer curbside recycling as a third party contract to private companies.

1992

**Residence Hall EcoReps Program**

The AS Recycle Center's Educator starts the EcoReps program in the resident halls. A hall council position educates & promotes more sustainable living to fellow residents.

1993

**Learning, Environment, Action, Discovery (LEAD)**

Student initiated & led, with sponsorship by Huxley College, LEAD creates a link between WWU, Whatcom County schools, environmental organizations, & government agencies to encourage community-based environmental restoration education & service learning for the benefit of the community.

1994

**Whatcom Human Rights Task Force**

The task force is established to protect & promote human rights through marches & vigils, community workshops, & other educational events.

1995

**Transportation Management Program & Sustainable Transportation Office (2007)**

As a major part of WWU's commitment in the Institutional Master Plan, the university creates an office to encourage & respond to the needs for alternative transportation information & options for the WWU community, & fulfills the requirements of the Washington State Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Act.

*1996*

#### **Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities**

Developed to promote a healthy community by addressing issues such as safety, education, the environment, economy, healthier lifestyles, & access to health care. WWU helps to support & fund Coalition programs like Whatcom Counts.

*1998*

#### **Academic Custodial Services Department Environmental Preferable Practices**

Custodial Services wins recognition & awards by using green cleaning products & practices, increased staff training, & continually developing better environmentally preferable strategies.

#### **Whatcom County EnviroStars Program**

Motivated by RE Sources & begun as a non-profit in King County, EnviroStars expands to Whatcom County. The program uses a rating system to help businesses communicate their commitment of environmental protection to their customers.

#### **Whatcom Watershed Pledge Program**

Motivated by RE Sources in collaboration with City of Bellingham & Department of Ecology, the Pledge Program provides citizens & businesses with information & services about how they can protect & improve rivers, lakes, streams & groundwater.

*1999*

#### **Institutional Master Plan (IMP)**

WWU revises its IMP in accordance with the mandated Washington Growth Management Act. Huxley's Campus Planning Studio course participates in the revision process, helping to ensure general sustainability language & specific provisions in the final IMP.

*2000*

#### **Student Recreation Fee for LEED Certified Recreation Center**

An overwhelming vote by the student body to assess themselves a fee provides the university with the funding to construct the nation's first Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) certified recreation center with a pool. The Wade King Student Recreation Center was completed in 2003 & received LEED "Silver" rating in 2007.

#### **Green Landscaping Practices**

WWU outdoor maintenance begins practices to end the use of all insecticides, use of alternative weed reduction techniques, composting of debris & lawn mulching, use of organic fertilizers, & continually expanding methods to reduce their environmental impact.

*2001*

### **Energy Conservation Taskforce, Watt Watchers Program**

WWU president, in coordination with faculty, staff, & students, creates a taskforce to evaluate energy consumption & look for ways to conserve energy.

2002

### **City of Bellingham Endorsed the Earth Charter Resolution**

Bellingham endorses Earth Charter Resolution, a framework for sustainable development with guidelines for achieving it. Drafted by thousands throughout the world, the resolution aims to assure a healthy future for the community & the Earth.

### **Sustainable Connections**

A non-profit collaboration of Whatcom businesses owner's forms a network with a vision to create a sustainable local economy through various programs serving locally owned businesses. The organization has various program areas: green building; food & farming; sustainable business development; think local campaigning; & energy. Western is a charter member & provides education & professional support of many of their initiatives.

2004

### **Sustainable Design Minor**

Huxley & Fairhaven College & the College of Engineering Technology offers a minor in Sustainable Design, emphasizing planning & design that promotes long-term economic, social, & ecological values & equity. The program enables students to gain complementary skills in environmental studies, urban planning, & design in order to pursue sustainable design careers.

2005

### **WWU 100% Renewable Energy Fee**

The AS club Students for Renewable Energy (SRE) receives an overwhelming vote in support of the Green Power Initiative. With the Board of Trustee support, facilities management & SRE negotiates a contract to purchase Green Tags, offsetting the campus electricity by 100%.

### **Sustainability Committee**

WWU convenes a committee to promote the collaboration of students, staff, & administration to increase sustainability. Through this collaboration, the committee creates the Office of Sustainability & organizes sustainability-oriented actions in coordination with the office.

### **City of Bellingham Participation in the Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) Initiative**

As a participant, the city pledges to take a leadership role in promoting public awareness about the causes & impacts of climate change. Action is taken through the five milestones of the CCP.

### **City of Bellingham Construction & Renovation of Public Buildings Using LEED Standards**

Where feasible, the city commits to meet the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) “Silver” rating for the construction of all new & renovated city buildings over 5,000 square feet where the City provides the majority of funding. This resolution also aims to promote these practices in the private sector.

2006

#### **Woodring College of Education, Teaching for a Positive Future**

Premised on the belief that K-12 teachers will be instrumental in helping to bring about the social, political, economic, & environmental conditions necessary to create a positive & just future. The program aims to have all teachers become “sustainability literate.”

#### **WWU Office of Sustainability**

WWU establishes an office to help it achieve its strategic goal of sustainability & to promote & coordinate with campus sustainability initiatives. The office becomes a resource & outlet for organizations, projects, & the ideals of having sustainable practices. The office develops the Campus Sustainability Report, Resident Resource Awareness Program (ResRAP), building assessment studies, & other projects.

#### **Whatcom Smart Trips**

Precursor to Smart Trips, the smart commuter program fulfills the Commute Trip Reduction Act of Washington. This web-based program encourages people in the county to use alternative forms of transportation with the incentive of discounts & prizes. WWU’s universal bus pass contract paves the way for buying bulk-discounted bus passes for city & county workers, & private businesses.

2007

#### **Signing of WWU President’s Climate Commitment**

President Morse commits the campus to a path toward climate-neutrality. As a part of this commitment, a greenhouse gas inventory is implemented & the university begins development of a climate-neutral action plan

#### **Alternative Transportation Fee**

An overwhelming vote by the student body in favor of the fee, puts a quarterly Viking Xpress Bus Pass in the hands of every student with more than six credits, creates the Western Student Transportation office, & provided for a WWU Late Night Shuttle Service.

#### **City of Bellingham Environmental Preferable Purchasing Program**

A resolution passes to promote the purchase of recycled, PBT free & other environmentally preferable products.

#### **Growing Whatcom Community Supported Agriculture Project**

Growing Washington & a dozen Whatcom County farmers join together to form a multiple-farm Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) system. Through this program, people in Whatcom County invest in a share of the harvests from over a dozen local small farms.

### **100% Renewable Energy For All City & County Operations**

Motivated by WWU's commitment to 100% renewable energy, both the City of Bellingham & Whatcom County begin using 100% green energy for city operations. A push by Sustainable Connections gets over 50 businesses & 1,000 residents to purchase renewable energy as well.

2008

### **Go For The Green Residence Hall Energy Program**

The Office of Sustainability establishes a program to promote action & awareness at campus resident halls, by challenging them to reduce their consumption of energy, water, & waste.

### **Sustainability Academy**

Faculty & staff convene to voluntarily affiliate in order to foster sustainability education at WWU. The academy develops an inventory of existing sustainability classes; consolidates WWU's library resources on the topic; host's bi-monthly brownbag discussions; & designs curriculum proposals towards expanded interdisciplinary studies in sustainability.

### **Woodring College of Education Prioritizes Sustainability Literacy**

Sustainability identified for education as a priority in long term planning & fund development. Teacher education courses begin to include sustainability literacy as a learning outcome. The college establishes the University's first college level sustainability committee: Woodring Initiative for Sustainability Education (WISE). A number of faculty establish sustainability related research programs.