



Warren Wilson College Sustainable Practices Guide

Sustainability is woven into the fabric of Warren Wilson. It is grounded in our rich history of place and purpose, embedded by generations of community members who have modeled our fundamental commitment to connect values to action. The practice of sustainability flows from the College's mission, which serves as our compass for responsible citizenship, and from our unique liberal arts model of engaged learning - the Triad of academics, work and service. We are committed to adopting best practices campus-wide that demonstrate the College's sustainability commitment—our framework for responsible decision-making. The Sustainable Practices Guide recommends actions that support Warren Wilson's core values and formal pledges.

We acknowledge that a complex web of economic, social, cultural, spiritual and environmental factors determine the well-being of our community.

We recognize our power as individuals, and in community, to influence these complex, interdependent relationships.

We strive to make responsible decisions that take into account the multiple dimensions of sustainability in order to ensure quality of life now and for the generations to come.

The campus community is encouraged to amend this living document with additional best practices. Email your suggestions to mflood@warren-wilson.edu.

Make a Commitment

Warren Wilson's formal sustainability commitments provide the framework for campus practices. Draw from these pledges to develop your own commitment and deepen your connection to community and place. As an individual, an office, a residence hall or floor, a department or crew, develop a commitment that describes how you/your group will support the principles of sustainability. Articulate specific actions your group will take.

Adopt Sustainable Practices

Help Warren Wilson live into its sustainability pledges and become a more environmentally responsible, socially just, and economically viable institution. Start small and build upon success. Even simple acts can dramatically contribute to a more sustainable community.

Appliances

- Purchase ENERGY STAR appliances and electronics when possible. New, energy-efficient models may cost more initially, but they have a lower operating cost over their lifetime. The ENERGY STAR label identifies products that use 20-40% less energy.
- Share appliances. Refrigerators, coffeepots and microwaves use a lot of energy, so consider using communal refrigerators instead of multiple small fridges and other appliances. Use the smallest appliance you need for the job.

Cleaning and Maintenance

- Improve indoor air quality by reducing the use of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and other harmful or toxic chemicals found in cleaning supplies, paints, etc.
- Encourage that chemicals used in the cleaning of your office are Green.

Computers, Printers, and Copiers

- Talk to Computing Services to be sure your computers are set for optimum performance and efficiency. The monitor is the single most energy-consuming component of your computer system. If you are going to be away from your computer for thirty minutes or more, enable the "sleep mode" feature on your computer. This will configure your computer to "hibernate" automatically after about 30 minutes of inactivity and turn the computer off in a way that doesn't require you to reload everything when you switch it back on. Allowing your computer to hibernate saves energy and is more time-efficient than shutting down and restarting your computer from scratch.
- Whenever possible, replace your old desktop with an energy efficient laptop computer.
- Access network printers to use as few as possible. Prefer recyclable toner cartridges.

- Shut down printers and copiers for extended periods of inactivity.

Events

Advertising/Printed Material

- Go paperless whenever possible. Invite participants, receive rsvp's, post event information, provide downloadable versions of programs, handouts, and itineraries at a website created for your event.
- Announce in your materials that you are holding a green event. Publish your guidelines.
- Ensure that program guides, handouts, and other written materials are limited and, when needed, printed on 100% post consumer, FSC certified paper, double-sided, with a vegetable-based ink.
- Produce banners on recyclable materials.
- Encourage your participants to be "sustainability" attendees, to support your commitment here on campus, and adopt it in their own lives.
- If there are conference attendees who will be staying on campus, recommend good practices to them—turn off lights when they leave the room, conserve water, carpool, etc. Accomplish this with signage.
- For reoccurring or annual events, avoid printing dates and slogans on signs, posters, and banners so that they may be easily reused.

Energy Use

- Check to make sure your light fixtures have either CFL or LED lights.
- Calculate the carbon footprint of the event travel for the speakers and purchase carbon offsets via a reliable source to offset their CO₂ emissions; suggest to attendees that they, too, purchase offsets for their travel.
- If you encourage participants to offset their carbon footprint for the event, include this information at the event website. Recommend a site for offsets.
- Encourage the use of alternative transportation while on campus. Use signage on campus to facilitate foot, electric car or bike travel from one location to another. Provide information about public transportation in the area including bus routes and schedules. Encourage carpooling to the event.
- Develop an audio/video tape of your event and post it at your website so that people who choose not to travel may view the speakers afterwards.

Food

- Provide locally grown/produced foods whenever possible.
- Select fair trade coffees and teas.
- Serve foods that are not individually packaged.
- Serve drinks, including water, in pitchers or other containers, not cans and bottles. If sodas are to be served, opt for large bottles whenever possible.

- Use washable dishes, cutlery, and glasses/cups. If this is not possible, use biodegradable dishes, cutlery and glassware.
- Use cloth tablecloths and napkins if possible. If not, use paper products made from recycled paper.
- Avoid individually wrapped condiments (eg sugar/sugar alternative packets, salt/pepper packets, individual creamers).
- Omit plastic coffee stirrers and straws. Try pasta instead!
- Use sustainable centerpieces - such as potted plants, local/pesticide-free flowers, seasonal, cut tree branches, beeswax candles, or fruits that guests can take home.
- Avoid using disposable, non-biodegradable packaging, such as plastic wrap. Aluminum foil is preferred as it can be washed and recycled.
- If food provided is locally sourced, whenever possible place small cards in front of the food indicating the source.
- Work with local caterers, like Sodexo, who know how to select green event foods.
- Educate your public. Make an announcement at the meal about the commitment to green practices and the sources for the food.
- Send all your food waste to the campus composting center.

Gifts/Handouts

- Be sure your gifts or favors reflect your sustainability ethic. Provide locally made gifts of sustainable materials. Herbal soaps and salves, books from local presses with local authors, photos that communicate sense of local place are good options. If using all cotton t-shirts or other manufactured favors, purchase them from sources using verifiable fair labor practices.
- Use Warren Wilson-made products when appropriate.

Waste

- Have appropriate recycling receptacles in place (cans/bottles/mixed paper/trash/compost). Ensure that catering staff or vendors comply with your efforts to make it a sustainable event by using the appropriate trash/recycling receptacles.
- Collect and reuse plastic name tag holders.
- Compost food waste.
- Provide biodegradable containers for participants to take left-over food with them.

General Office Practices

- Set an example for sustainable practices and be a positive force for change.
- Celebrate progress.
- Keep the workplace healthy: wash your hands; stay away if contagious.
- Eliminate toxins or allergens from the air from scented products, air fresheners, etc.
- Reduce or eliminate paper use for hand drying (bring your own bandana!).

HVAC

- Set heating and cooling temperatures correctly to keep the space comfortable and energy efficient. If temperatures are not comfortable, call FMTS. Opening windows when heating and cooling systems are running creates a significant increase in energy usage.
- Dress for the indoor temperature.

Lighting and Electronic Devices

- Contact the Electric Crew and ask to switch office light bulbs to CFLs or LED's.
- Turn off the lights. Switch off lights when you're not using them. Most building electricity use is from lighting.
- Use power strips. Group electronics together and plug them into power strips so that only the power strips are plugged directly into the wall. At the end of the day, simply turn the power strip off to avoid **phantom loads**. Phantom load refers to the energy that is consumed by products left plugged into the wall when not in use. Almost all electronic devices (including battery chargers for cell phones, laptops, MP3 players, etc) use nearly 75% of their total kw consumption when they are off but left plugged into the wall! The EPA estimates that 6% of US electricity demand is from these phantom loads.
- Make use of the sun. Sunlight is the cheapest and most energy efficient light and heat source. Open those blinds and work by daylight when possible.
 - During warmer months use blinds to focus sunlight onto the ceiling where it will provide light without adding excess heat.
 - During colder months, let the sunshine in. Even on a cold winter day, sun streaming into a room can raise the temperature several degrees and provide ample light.
 - Arrange your workstation close to a window to maximize available daylight.

Office Supplies

- Use manual pencil sharpeners.
- Avoid disposable pens and pencils: seek refillables.
- Avoid toxic permanent markers.
- Purchase local or USA made products whenever possible to reduce transportation footprint and ensure fair labor practices.
- Seek products with minimal packaging.

Paper

By using less paper, increasing the recycled content of purchased paper, and reusing and recycling used paper, precious resources such as trees, water and electricity are conserved, money is saved, and solid waste is decreased.

Reduce paper use

- Use email or your Google drive to circulate internal documents.

- Print less: don't print more copies than you need.
- Adjust margin settings in word processing programs so that margins are smaller, and more words fit on one page thus reducing the amount of paper needed.
- Work and comment on drafts electronically.
- Reduce amount of periodical subscriptions that your office receives by mail; check and see if the Library is a subscriber and seek access to their copy.
- Reduce the amount of unwanted mail your office receives.
- Buy in bulk and large quantities whenever possible to avoid excess packaging and reduce delivery trips.

Reuse

- Have a labeled and conveniently located tray next to the printer where one-sided paper can be collected and the other side can be printed on for drafts, informal documents, or used for note-taking.
- If possible, designate a paper drawer in the printer to use this one sided paper.
- Print double-sided pages.
- Reuse oversized envelopes and cardboard boxes.

Recycle

Always recycle paper products - doing so saves trees and energy (it is less resource and energy intensive for paper manufacturers to make paper from paper than from trees).

Paper Purchasing

- Buy paper with the highest percentage of post consumer recycled content as possible – aim for 100%, don't settle for less than 30%. Whenever possible use FSC certified, 100% "post-consumer recycled" (PCR) content paper "processed chlorine free" (PCF). The chlorine bleaching process releases dioxins into the environment which are extremely dangerous to all life forms.
- Once you succeed in reducing the amount of overall paper consumed by your office, buying 100% post consumer recycled content paper may not cost anymore than your current paper costs.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Waste is energy, water and landfill - intensive. Responsible waste stream management starts with curbing the consumption appetite and then being a discriminating purchaser. All products are not made equally: some are designed to be effectively reused or recycled while others are designed for the landfill. Warren Wilson has one of the nation's most effective recycling centers so if you're not sure what to do, ask!

- Learn what can and cannot be recycled at Warren Wilson. Post guidelines near recycling bins as reminders for the community and for visitors.
- Distribute clearly labeled recycling bins to workstations and beside printers to encourage recycling.
- When buying products, choose the option with the least packaging. Almost 1/3 of waste generated in the US is packaging. If packaging can be reused (peanuts, envelopes, boxes) re-use or recycle them.
- Recycle old computers and electronics (cell phones, TV's, printers, PDA's).

Transportation

- If you live close enough, walking or biking is the best option for travel to campus.
- Carpool to campus.
- Contact the Sustainable Transportation Crew to coordinate rides off campus.
- Track your office transportation footprint. How many miles does your unit travel by car or plane; how much gas do you use; how often do you drive around campus when you could walk. What are the total miles for car or plane, and the total cost?
- Travel wisely: Whenever possible choose lodging that honors sustainable practices; use public transportation whenever possible; if you must rent a car, team up with others whenever possible; choose local, sustainable meals as you can.

Water

As the regional and the global human population swells, the demand on our water systems is increasing. Conserving water, keeping it clean at the source, and using it efficiently are essential.

- Ask that decision makers eliminate bottled water from all campus vending machines, Campus Store, and campus events.
- Make sure that office or residence hall water fixtures are low-flow (contact FMTS if you are unsure).
- If there is a leaky faucet, report it right away. A dripping faucet can waste up to two gallons of water per hour.
- Keep items like ceramic mugs, plates, and real silverware on hand for gatherings. Washing your own reusables uses much less water and energy than used in the production of disposables.
- Eliminate use of bottled jug water.
- Buy local drinks and food for your office (local means within 100 miles). When local is not possible, purchase fair-trade certified items that ensure social justice and economic equity for food producers.
- Use water from rain catchment systems on campus first, where they exist.