



Community Environmental Restoration

Tamarack’s goal with these guides is to find and highlight examples of community engagement. In this guide, we explore how Community Environmental Restoration can be made more effective by using community engagement principles. Those principles include: grassroots citizen action; collaboration between actors; clear visions and goals; and public decision-making.

Our original intent with this research was to educate ourselves about how others were putting these principles to work in the real world, but the examples we found were too good to keep to ourselves. By sharing these resources, how-to guides, and inspiring stories, we hope to encourage others to put these principles to work in their own communities.

Not all the resources we’ve included discuss “community engagement” explicitly, but we feel their work engages community nonetheless. If you know of a helpful resource or a great story we should include, please let us know so we can add it soon—we’re always looking to revise and improve this guide. We hope this guide is a helpful start for anyone interested in engaging their communities around Community Environmental Restoration.

Sincerely,
Paul and Everyone at Tamarack

Is this your first time using one of our Tamarack Guides? Turn to Page 2 to see *How to Use This Guide*

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Definitions which might be useful:

Community Engagement: involving citizens in inspired action and learning as they work together on behalf of their communities to create and realize bold visions for the future.

Community Environmental Restoration: the process of lessening human impact on the environment by fostering strong, responsible communities which live in harmony with nature.

Sustainable Community: a community which can exist indefinitely because of its strong sense of community and its environmental responsibility.

Smart Growth: Urban Planning which promotes environmental health, economic improvement, and social equity. Communities making use of Smart Growth principles often use the term “Livable Communities” as well.

Signature Documents: Two Resources We Couldn’t Do Without

The US Environmental Protection Agency: [*Framework for Community-Based Environmental Protection*](#) (pdf; 1.1 mb)



We found the EPA’s Framework one of the most helpful documents in the guide. It lays out everything you need to know: core principles, philosophies, and strategies to bring the community together. And the EPA website

(www.epa.gov) has much more to offer, although not all of it is available online. This is one of the best documents we can recommend to introduce you to the subject of Community Environmental Restoration.

Smart Growth BC: [*Smart Growth Primer*](#) (pdf; 10.2 mb)

This primer, published by the environmental organization Smart Growth BC, is an excellent introduction to the concept of smart growth, and includes many real-life examples of ways that British Columbia Communities are embracing smart growth principles. The Smart Growth BC website



(www.smartgrowth.bc.ca) features many other useful resources, including publications, presentations the group has made, and a listserv so you can keep up to date. This Smart Growth Primer shows how the environment and communities are being brought together in Canada.

How to Use This Guide

We've divided the guide into 6 sections:

- Great Stories
- Resources
- Effectiveness
- Innovative Ideas
- Different Perspectives
- Connections

We divided the guide into these categories in order to help people like you who want to make positive changes in your community—Stories to inspire, Resources, Effectiveness, and Innovative Ideas to help you get started, and Connections, so there's always more information to find if you need it, and people to call on if you need help.

As you read through the guide, you'll see text that's been highlighted blue. If you're reading this on your computer, (and we'd encourage you to do so) simply click on the link to be taken to the document you've just been reading about. That way, if something catches your eye, or you'd like something clarified, the information is available right away.

You'll also notice some "Must-See" boxes in the margin that point you towards related information. Just click on those links to find even more.

It's that simple. And remember, if you know of something that should be included in here, please send us an email at

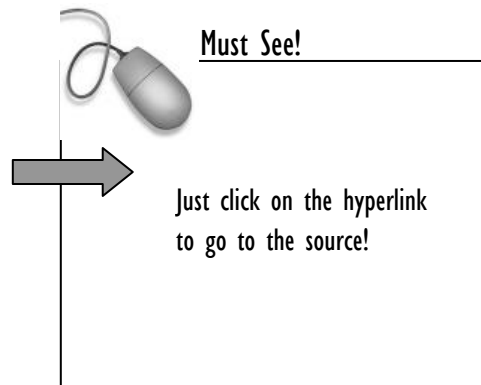
louise@tamarackcommunity.ca

and we can be sure to include it soon. There's new information all the time, and we'd love to have it. So if you hear about a resource or a website, just write us. It'll only take a minute, we promise.

To access many of these online resources, you'll need the Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. The software is free and available at www.adobe.com

We hope you find this guide informative and easy to use. Happy clicking!

Tamarack



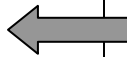
Great Stories

We think the best way to learn is by example. The resources in this section tell great stories about Community Environmental Restoration to inspire you to make positive changes in your own community. Just click to read about them!



Must See!

For more background on the FCM and Sustainable Communities, click on [What is a Sustainable Community?](#) and [Case Studies](#)



VISION 2020 (Hamilton, Ontario)

www.vision2020.hamilton-went.on.ca

The city of Hamilton adopted its ambitious VISION 2020 with the goal of making Hamilton a healthier, sustainable community by the year 2020. The [award-winning](#) project's website tells the story of how the community Vision came about and how it's being put into action. Try clicking on "What is VISION 2020" and take a look at the Project Overview for more information.

Municipal Governments and Sustainable Communities: A Best Practices Guide (Canada)

www.fcm.ca/scep/awards/awards_pdfs/bp2001.pdf

The [Federation of Canadian Municipalities](#) awards communities that are working towards sustainability. This [Best Practices Guide](#) tells the stories of those communities. It explains what they're doing, and how it's making a difference. There's also contact information so you can talk with them directly. Check out the projects from St. John's to reduce energy use, and from Waterloo to improve public transit.

Fraser Basin Council: A Snapshot of Sustainability—A State of the Fraser Basin Report (Canada)

http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/documents/2003%20Sust%20Indicators%20RPT/FBCSustainabilityRpt_PC.zip (link will download a .zip file containing a PDF)

The Fraser Basin Council [annual report](#) describes the various steps being taken in this region of British Columbia to achieve sustainability. The council studied indicators ranging from water quality to agriculture, to health, to community engagement. Each section briefly describes why the indicator is important, where it currently stands, and what measures are being used to improve or maintain it. The [Fraser Basin Council](#) offers many more publications for download from their website.

Oujé Bougoumou Cree Sustainable Village (Canada)

www.ouje.ca

This [award-winning](#) village is working to preserve the environment through modern methods while keeping its traditional values. The [website](#) includes explanations of the village's environmental [innovations](#), and their plan to rebuild a strong aboriginal community.

EcoAction: Success (Canada)

www.ec.gc.ca/ecoaction/success_e.html

These are the [success stories](#) of environmental projects that received funding from [Environment Canada](#). Some of them incorporate community-engagement but not all. These are some inspiring stories, but unfortunately, no contact information is included.

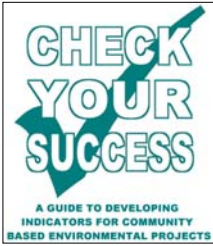


Effectiveness

How successful have other people's Community Environmental Restoration projects been? How did they measure their success? These resources explain how other people have evaluated themselves, and how you can use these tools yourself. Just click to read!

Check Your Success: A Guide to Developing Indicators for Community-Based Environmental Projects (United States)

<http://www.uap.vt.edu/checkyoursuccess/>



This is a [complete guide](#) to evaluating community environmental restoration projects for community groups. It uses real examples to clearly explain how groups should choose indicators, how to measure them, and how to act on them.



Must See!

You can download the entire **Check Your Success** Manual by clicking on [Downloads](#) on the website

City of Hamilton Sustainability Indicators Background Report 1999 (Hamilton, Ontario)

<http://www.vision2020.hamilton-went.on.ca/downloads/99-Working-Report.pdf>

VISION 2020 has worked hard to evaluate itself, as this [report card](#) demonstrates. The report explains how progress was measured in each project area, and what sort of results they've seen. If you're looking for a real-world example of how community environmental restoration projects are evaluated, this is a great example.

Environment Canada: Community Environmental Projects (Canada)

<http://www.atl.ec.gc.ca/community/pdf/comguide.pdf>

Environment Canada's [manual](#) for carrying out Environmental Restoration projects describes the step-by-step process for communities, from needs assessment to evaluation. It also includes dozens of examples to help you along the way. Its particular emphasis on measuring results puts it in the "effectiveness" category.



Environment
Canada

Environnement
Canada

Ring a Bell? Write Us!



Do you know about a resource we should have here? Let us know! [Click here to send us an email](#). It'll only take a minute.

Resources

We think these resources will be helpful tools for Community Environmental Restoration projects. They lay out the whole process for you, step-by-step. But don't feel trapped by them! They make suggestions and point the way, but please, adapt them to the needs of *your* community.

Must See!



The Environmental Protection Agency's [EcoCommunities](#) website features a [directory](#) of community-based environmental projects from all over the USA. Also, click on Tools to see other useful resources such as the [Greenkit](#).

EPA: Community-Based Environmental Protection—A Resource Book for Protecting Ecosystems and Communities (United States)

<http://www.epa.gov/ecocommunity/book.zip> (link will download a .zip file containing several PDFs.)

This is the EPA's complete [guide](#) to designing and carrying out environmental restoration at the community level. It describes how to start a project, how to assess community needs, strategies for action, and tips on evaluating the whole project. Chapter 4, "Strategies to consider for ecosystem protection," is helpful if you're starting to think about things your community might want to do.



Funders' Network: Livable Communities@Work #1—Community Organizing (United States)

http://www.fundersnetwork.org/info-url_nocat2778/info-url_nocat_show.htm?doc_id=140996

This first [paper](#) in the Funders' Network series "[Communities@Work](#)" is about practical ways to find common environmental goals for community groups. The [Funders' Network](#) offers a huge online library of [resources](#), including profiles of their own projects, [publications](#) from other organizations, and [speeches and transcripts](#). This is an invaluable resource, and there's more where it came from.



Evergreen Canada: No Plot is Too Small—A Community's Guide to Restoring Public Landscapes (Canada)

<http://www.evergreen.ca/en/cg/toolshed/noplot/index.html>

Evergreen Canada's mandate is to "bring communities and nature together for the benefit of both." This [guide](#) to restoring public environments provides a beginning-to-end outline of how to involve the community, where to find help, how to build alliances, and how to secure funding. Evergreen offers many other resources, including some targeted at schools, in order to incorporate the environment and citizenship into the curriculum.



UNCHS: The Councillor as Guardian of the Environment (Handbook A) (International)

<http://www.unhabitat.org/en/publication.asp?id=39> (Click on MS Word icon at the bottom of the screen to download.)

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme published this [training manual](#) for local and municipal elected officials. Its focus is not specifically on community-engagement, but community groups may find this manual useful when working with local elected representatives.

Innovative Ideas

The materials in this section are ones that we thought took a fresh approach to Community Environmental Restoration. They don't all approach "community" the same way, but their solutions are original and inspiring.

Opportunities for Smarter Growth: Social Equity and the Smart Growth Movement (United States)

http://www.lcinitiative.org/pdf/translation_1.pdf

The Livable Communities Initiative has gathered momentum in the US, built on three integrated [principles](#): Environment, Economy, and Equity. "Smart Growth" is a strategy to make growing cities friendlier to the environment and to the people who live there. This [article](#) is a helpful introduction to Smart Growth and Livable Communities.



Nova Scotia, Georgia Allies in Toxics Fight (Sydney, Nova Scotia; Fort Valley, Georgia)

<http://www.sierraclub.ca/stp/planet-199803-toxics.html>

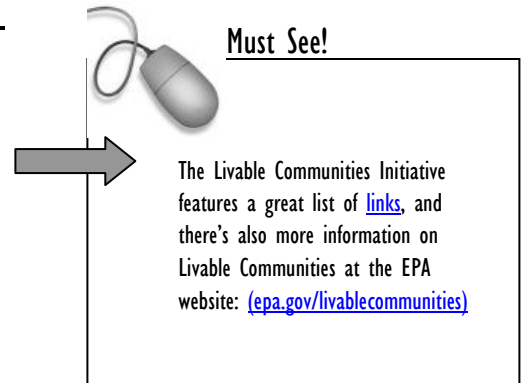


These two polluted communities are thousands of miles apart, but they are working together to solve similar problems. This [article](#) describes how Sydney and Fort Valley are exchanging ideas and expertise to make positive changes to their polluted environments.

Friends of Cruickston Park: Objectives (Cambridge, Ontario)

<http://cruickston.com/about.html#ccrr>

A fragile ecosystem in Cambridge, Ontario was saved from development through the hard work of two individuals who, with the help of the surrounding community, turned the area into a [charitable reserve](#) for community use. Future plans include an [interpretive centre](#) for public education and research. See also their [Management Framework](#) for Cruickston Park, which goes into more detail about their restoration activities. (Large PDF—please be patient.)



Different Perspectives

The links that appear in this section are meant to challenge our conventional thinking about Community Environmental Restoration. That means it could offer a different solution to environmental problems, or it could say our thinking is flat-out wrong. We just want to know about all the thinking in this field, not just from people who agree with our view.



The Key to Kyoto: Social Dimensions of Climate Change (Toronto, Ontario)

www.caledoninst.org/kyoto.pdf

The controversial Kyoto Protocol on air pollution is meant for international, governmental action. This [paper](#) from the Caledon Institute argues that it must also incorporate community action to succeed. It raises a good question: does environmental restoration work better at the national or community level? Caledon answers that they are complementary; both are important.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Introduction to Agenda 21 (International)

<http://www.unep.org/documents/default.asp?documentid=52&articleid=49>

[Agenda 21](#) is the UN's latest international agreement on the environment. Like the Kyoto Protocol, it's meant to be implemented at the national level. It's useful information to know, but Agenda 21 is a traditional, governmental response to environmental problems, with little emphasis on community engagement.

The Atlantic Monthly: Can Selfishness Save the Environment? (United States)

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/environ/selfish.htm>

This [article](#) examines how communities manage their environments. It argues that humans are naturally selfish and don't put common environmental goals ahead of their personal convenience. A provocative theory, but it suggests that this selfishness could actually help communities restore their environments. The traditional, nation-wide efforts to reduce pollution have been mixed at best; this article is important because it calls for a more local, personal response to environmental degradation.



The Increasing Sustainability of Cars, Trucks, and the Internal Combustion Engine and Whither Wilderness—How Much is Enough? (United States)

<http://www.heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=9435> and
<http://www.heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=9471>

The first [article](#) claims that cars are not polluting as badly as most people believe, and the [second](#) says that deforestation is not a serious problem. The Heartland Institute doesn't actually believe environmental degradation is a pressing problem. It's important to be conscious of this opinion, because many people remain skeptical about the actual consequences of damage to the environment.

Must See!



Take a look at the "[Opposing Environmental Views](#)" in the [Google Directory](#) to see more material by and about environmental skeptics.

Connections

If you're still looking for information, and we hope you are, these resources will tell you where to find it, or who you can talk to. The things we've tried to draw your attention to are just a start—these resources will help you along the way.

The Funders' Network

<http://www.fundersnetwork.org/directory2784/directory.htm>

Here environmental groups can search for organizations willing to fund environmental restoration, community engagement, and smart growth projects. The Funders' Network also has a large library of research available online.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT): Publications Catalogue

<http://www.unhabitat.org/en/publicationindex.asp>

Through this site you can search for documents published by UN-HABITAT by category, year, language, or medium. It also searches among databases, videos, CD-ROMs, and newsletters. Try using the searchwords "community," "environment," and "sustainable."

Evergreen Canada: Project Registry

<http://www.evergreen.ca/en/resources/registry.html>

Evergreen's Directory of over 200 community-based environmental restoration projects going on across Canada is a great resource. You can narrow your search to look at schools, provinces, or specific types of projects.

EPA: Information Sources

<http://www.epa.gov/epahome/resource.htm>

This is the central place to find all the EPA's publications and reports. Many are available online for download, but some must be ordered. Hotlines, staff directories, and databases are all available as well.

Environment Canada: Information and Publications

http://www.ec.gc.ca/pands_e.html

Environment Canada's website features many online documents, as well as databases, policy outlines, and educational resources. Browse or search for your resource, sorted by theme.

Sustainable Development Gateway Website

<http://www.sdgateway.net/>

This web portal contains more than 1200 documents related to sustainable development, and manages the [Sustainability Web Ring](#), a directory of websites dedicated to sustainable development and environmental issues.



Ring a Bell? Write Us!



Do you know about a resource we should have here? Let us know! [Click here to send us an email](#). It'll only take a minute.