

Sustainability Policy

Introduction

This policy was written with the collective knowledge of the Cope Environmental Center staff and after review and evaluation of existing sustainability policies from the public, private and government sectors. This document was reviewed by a third party (Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Minneapolis) and adopted in full on April 4, 2005.

Mission

Cope Environmental Center promotes the sustainable use of the earth's resources through education, demonstration, and research. We inspire and challenge individuals and communities to achieve ecologically sustainable lifestyles to secure a sustainable future for all life on earth. Our mission guides all of our decisions regarding the management of our office, property and procurement.

Our Commitment to Sustainability

Each Cope Environmental Center employee and board member is strongly encouraged to practice an individual commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility in their personal lives as well as public/CEC life. We are committed to working for sustainability by expressing our values and serving as agents for change in our communities.

Our Core Values

Our mission is intended to teach and inspire others to lead sustainable lifestyles. We strive to lead by example, and support values that cultivate a sustainable economy and culture.

Principles of Action

Cope Environmental Center is committed to:

1. Manage our organization with a long-term vision so that it meets the needs of the present, without compromising the abilities of future generations to meet their own needs.
2. Adopt the highest available environmental & social standards on our property, and for all CEC sponsored programs and activities, to the greatest extent practicable.
3. Adopt a life cycle assessment approach to evaluating our environmental impact.
4. Assess on a continuous basis the environmental & social impact of all our operations and be efficient with all materials, supplies and energy.

5. Wherever possible we will re-use or use renewable or recyclable materials and components.
6. Minimize waste produced in all parts of our organization, and aim for “zero waste” processes.
7. Monitor and manage our energy and water use in the same way as our other materials.
8. Expect similar environmental standard to our own from all third parties involved with our organization to the greatest extent practicable - suppliers, retailers or contractors.
9. Aim to reduce the impact of our vehicles (staff travel & CEC vehicles) for the benefits to human and environmental health.
10. Encourage employees to be involved with other environmental organizations and projects.
11. Interact on a regular basis with the local community and encourage staff to become actively involved in community programs.
12. Set forth a specific investment policy that screens our investment decisions for environmental and social considerations.

Purchasing

When purchasing materials, equipment and any other products for use on the CEC property or for any CEC sponsored activity, we will evaluate alternatives and strive to purchase only those products with the least environmental impact. We will consider factors such as local availability and production, organic or other third-party environmental certification, and durability, in addition to quality and performance, and will strive to avoid synthetic, artificial or unnatural products, such as chemicals or those containing known toxins. When purchasing products and equipment we will consider waste generation, energy, resource and water consumption, and transportation during production as well as use. CEC is committed to using the Precautionary Principle to guide all of our purchasing decision. First and foremost, we will consider what we currently have, and strive to always reuse those materials before purchasing new ones.

Cope Environmental Center will seek to utilize to the fullest extent possible environmentally preferable products. The following principles will guide all of CEC's purchases.

Wherever possible goods should be:

- Manufactured from sustainable sources
- Manufactured from raw materials obtained in an environmentally sound, sustainable manner by companies with good environmental track records
- Reusable or recyclable
- Biodegradable
- Durable or repairable

- High performing
- Designed to minimize waste
- Energy efficient in production and use
- Less polluting during use than its competitors
- Free from hazardous or toxic materials whether special disposal is required or not
- Free from resources harvested from environmentally sensitive areas
- Manufactured from recycled materials, with a high post-consumer recycled content
- Free from restricted or banned substances (e.g., CFCs, VOCs, Arsenic or Benzene)
- Produced locally or regionally

Goods should not:

- Contain any hazardous chemicals
- Contain VOCs, CFCs or chlorinated compounds
- Result in harmful by-products, either in use or disposal

Suppliers should be selected where:

- A commitment to cleaner production has been demonstrated
- The supplier operates an Environmental Management System (EMS)
- The supplier is ISO 14 001 accredited

Products should be chosen with packaging that is:

- Minimal
- Designed to minimize waste
- Reusable by the end user
- Recyclable locally
- Manufactured from recycled materials and with a high post-consumer recycled content
- Accepted by the supplier for reuse or recycling (Extended Producer Responsibility)

Office equipment: CEC will purchase energy efficient equipment and equipment that minimizes the consumption of resources and waste generation. We will properly dispose of all office equipment and attempt to reuse and recycle any equipment or parts before disposal.

Office products: When purchasing office supplies, CEC employees will practice the four R's of resource consumption: refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle. We will limit our consumption of unnecessary materials by only buying what we need, avoiding excess packaging and buying in bulk. We will reuse materials and take care in using those we

have to make them last. To as great an extent possible, we will purchase post-consumer recycled products, and those with limited processing and use of synthetics.

Paper: CEC is committed to implementing changes in our paper use and purchasing practices to help prevent water pollution, limit the depletion of forests and loss of habitat, protect vulnerable plants and animals, and decrease the stress on our landfills. By using recycled materials, we can help save water and energy in the production system while reducing air, water, and land pollution. CEC will strive to reduce paper consumption, buy paper with the highest post-consumer recycled content available, buy paper products that are made from sustainably managed forests or alternative fibers, and buy process Chlorine-free or totally Chlorine-free paper to the greatest extent possible.

Building materials: When building or construction materials are needed for improvements to the physical facilities or property belonging to CEC, we will strive to utilize reused or recycled materials from the property or local sources. Building materials must be non-toxic, durable and meet all applicable safety standards and building codes. When possible, materials will be purchased that are energy efficient in production and use and that require minimal maintenance, repair or replacement. After their intended purpose, all materials will be reused and/or recycled, or disposed of in a manner that is compliant with all applicable laws and regulations.

Cleaning supplies: We will not buy or use cleaning supplies with a known adverse effect on human health or those that are known to potentially cause future adverse health or environmental effects. CEC will not buy any cleaning products that are toxic, or contains any substances that are carcinogenic, mutagenic, or known to cause reproductive toxicity. Neither will CEC purchase any cleaning products that are toxic to aquatic life and ecosystems or damaging to land ecosystems and their inhabitants. Organic ingredients in cleaning products must exhibit so-called “ready ultimate biodegradability under aerobic conditions” as defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Furthermore, CEC will not purchase cleaning products containing phosphates or phosphonates, volatile organic compounds, or any of the following elements: Arsenic, Lead, Cadmium, Chromium, Mercury, Selenium, or Nickel. Due to the technical expertise and the time required in exercising this section of the policy, we will purchase cleaning supplies according to these guidelines or seek out products that are labeled for safety and environmental performance by credible third-party organizations. Standards set by the EPA, Green Seal, ISO or similar organization will constitute acceptable substitutes for this policy. CEC staff is encouraged to limit their use of commercial cleaning product and when practicable use alternative materials and methods. We will avoid excess packaging whenever possible.

Food: By purchasing locally grown and produced food, CEC will support a local food system that limits transportation, pollution and waste. We will strive to establish personal relationships with as many of those who produce our food as we possibly can to ensure that the food we provide our staff, board, visitors, volunteers and the children participating in our programs is of the highest quality and nutrition. Whenever available, we will buy food that is labeled certified organic or certified naturally grown

because these practices reflect the values that we believe in, and promote to our community. We are committed to buying organic and promoting the use of organic and sustainable farming practices by working with local farmers, outside the realm of organic certification as well. CEC also commits to ensure that the food we provide the children participating in our programs is high-quality, nutritious, not overly processed, and does not include unnecessary artificial ingredients, preservatives, coloring or high-fructose corn syrup to a practicable extent.

Clothing: CEC promotes the production and use of sustainable or alternative fibers for clothing and other textiles. Whenever possible, we will buy organic fibers and favor natural fibers over synthetic fibers. We will take care in choosing textiles that are minimally processed, and processed without chemicals or under safe conditions with proper handling of dyes and other chemicals. We strive to purchase locally or hand-made clothing of high-quality and durability.

Chemicals and unnatural materials: CEC will minimize its use of chemicals and unnatural materials and will exercise good care and judgment in taking proper precautions for handling and storage to minimize risks, exposure and potential damage to the environment. CEC staff will comply with all laws and regulations in handling any and all hazardous materials on CEC property and elsewhere.

Resource consumption and waste

CEC employees, board members, volunteers, interns and visitors will follow the 4 R's of resource consumption while on CEC property or when acting on behalf of CEC, and are encouraged to actively practice and promote those same principles at all times. Some examples include: printing on both sides of paper or use scrap paper in printers and copiers, use donated/used office furniture, minimize packaging or not buy heavily packaged products, use a water cooler instead of bottled water, use recycled material in buildings, and conserve resources by caring for things we have instead of buying new.

The 4 R's of resource consumption will be implemented as follows:

- 1) Refuse. By not purchasing items that are heavily or excessively packaged or by choosing products with minimal use of virgin materials, we can encourage an economy based on stewardship and environmental responsibility rather than one that relies on exploiting nature and consumption of resources. This principle can also be applied to refusal of purchasing materials that are inherently unsustainable or toxic, such as Styrofoam.
- 2) Reduce. Reducing consumption of resources in general or those that are unsustainable means that we can avoid environmental impacts associated with their extraction, transportation, use, and disposal.
- 3) Reuse. By reusing existing products, we can reduce our reliance on virgin materials and the environmental impacts associated with them. Reusing also includes refurbishing, repairing and replacing parts of equipment, tools and products, or purchasing products that are refurbished, repaired or designed for easy assembly or replacement of parts, or those products that are more durable than competing products with equivalent functions.

- 4) Recycle. As a last resort, recycling becomes increasingly important when the use of a product has been exhausted. We will evaluate recycling options and facilities based on percentage of received materials actually recycled and breadth of materials accepted, and choose the options that is the most efficient, both environmentally and time effective. We practice a source-separating recycling system and compost our food waste and our biodegradable plastic ware.

Energy

Promoting and educating the public about alternative energy is an important part of Cope Environmental Center's mission. CEC utilizes multiple sources of alternative energy such as wind energy and solar power in the form of photovoltaic panels. We strive to use as many sources of alternative energy as we can to learn about them and to demonstrate their use to the public and the breadth of alternative energy sources available. CEC will continually research and utilize new forms of alternative energy and promote its use in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Our goal is to have 100% of our energy come from local, sustainable sources.

In addition, we recognize the importance of increasing energy efficiency as a means to reach sustainability and decrease the consumption of energy resources. We strive to minimize our use of energy by utilizing energy efficient appliances and office equipment and by decreasing our consumption of energy. We turn lights off when we leave a room, use energy efficient light bulbs and appliances, use a wood burning stove for heat, use energy efficient windows, our computer screens turn off automatically when unused, and minimize our use of copiers and other office equipment.

Transportation and fuel consumption

At CEC, we strive to minimize our transportation by carpooling, running collective errands and by occasionally telecommuting. We also encourage staff, board members, volunteers, and the public to utilize energy efficient or alternative fuel vehicles. CEC will purchase an alternative fuel or hybrid-electric vehicle for staff use when funding allows.

CEC will produce or purchase, and utilize bio-diesel in our vehicles and equipment to the greatest economical extent possible.

Water consumption

CEC will utilize on-demand water heaters and high-efficiency water purification systems to minimize fuel and water consumption. We will apply water conserving technologies and practices to the greatest economical extent possible.

CEC will implement sustainable sewage systems, such as infiltration beds, when current systems are updated or replaced, and to the greatest economical extent possible.

Bottled water consumption will be kept to a minimum in order to decrease resource consumption, transportation and waste, by not providing bottled water for staff or board meetings, or to volunteers or program participants.

Closing the loop

At Cope Environmental Center we believe that one of the most important contributions we can make to sustainability is purchasing the right kinds of products. We buy recycled products and look for high post-consumer recycled content, and also try to care for and reuse our existing resources to minimize the need for virgin materials, consumption of energy and the production of waste and pollution. CEC will strive to close to loop of resource consumption for the benefit of generations to come.

Continuous improvement

At Cope Environmental Center we recognize that continually improving technology, efficiency and conservation practices is integral to sustainability and that there is no end at which an organization is sustainable and no longer needs to improve. Therefore, we are committed to continually improving our practices and policies. Our Sustainability Policy will be reviewed annually and updated as we continue to understand what makes an organization truly sustainable. We have a sincere dedication to improvement and education to further progress towards sustainability.

Assessment and Reporting

Our mission commits us to environmental leadership, therefore, we will inform the public by publishing annual reports in which we share our goals, achievements, and vision for further improvement.

Cope Environmental Center Investment Policy

With the goal of applying the guiding principles of our mission to the various aspects of our operations, it is the desire of CEC to adopt an investment policy which fosters these same principles of ecological sustainability as well as considers the broader social impact of investments.

Further, the Board is aware of its stewardship responsibility over the finances of CEC and understands the limitations of the individual members in making appropriate investment decisions. To achieve these goals, CEC will invest in companies which are listed on the Domini 400 Social Index. Companies included in this index have been researched by the firm of KLD Research & Analytics, Inc. which applies the following screening process to the Domini Social Index Fund:

“The Fund includes companies with positive records in the following areas: the environment, diversity, community involvement, employee relations, product safety and usefulness. It avoids companies that manufacture alcohol, tobacco or

firearms, provide services to gambling operations, own or operate nuclear power plants, or earn significant revenues from weapons contracting.”

The CEC Board will monitor changes to the Domini 400 Social Index and review holdings accordingly.

Investment Policy Approved September 21, 2004