
Sustainability Plan



February 2022

1.0 Introduction

The Development Authority of the North Country's (Authority's) Sustainability Plan shall be used as a guide for planning and implementing initiatives that further the ideals of sustainability Authority-wide.

2.0 Environmental Policy Statement

The Authority's environmental policy commits the organization and employees to act as responsible stewards of the environment and to find ways to improve the environment and quality of life of the citizens in Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties through planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operation of its regional infrastructure. The primary environmental goal is to maintain excellence in environmental protection throughout the Authority's service area. The key elements of the Authority's environmental policy are to:

- Meet or exceed all environmental regulations applicable to the Authority's activities.
- Integrate environmental protection and enhancement into planning, design, procurement, construction, and operations.
- Minimize the environmental footprint of the Authority by incorporating the three Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle).
- Support advancement in environmental protection and sustainability through the use of innovative technologies.
- Leverage the Authority's existing partnerships to impact regional environmental improvements.

4.0 Environmental Case Statement

Operating the Authority as a sustainable organization not only benefits the environment, it also benefits the Authority's customers. The Authority acknowledges our corporate social responsibility to operate as a sustainable organization and sets the example for our partnering counties, municipalities, and communities as a whole. The following case statements indicate some of the ways those benefits can be achieved:

- **Community Benefits**
 - As a regional organization, the Authority's activities have wide-ranging environmental, health, and safety impacts on the residents of Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties. It is the Authority's obligation to ensure that the organization is operating in a sustainable manner that benefits the communities served now and into the future.
 - Developing infrastructure that incorporates environmental improvements is beneficial to the communities served and to the Authority. These projects create a positive image of the Authority as a regional organization and improve the quality of life of the residents in the communities served (i.e., the Kanik Nature Trail, Murray Trail, Glasier Trail and Education Center).
- **Saving Taxpayer Dollars**

- Reducing energy losses and improving operational efficiencies lowers operating costs and saves Authority customers money.
- Retrofitting and upgrading aging infrastructure with more modern and efficient technology saves operating dollars in the years to come.
- Finding other uses for scrap equipment, and increasing recycling throughout our organization reduces operating costs.
- **Improving Employee Health**
 - Utilizing green cleaning products and reducing the toxicity and number of chemicals in inventory will reduce exposure, improve indoor air quality by reducing airborne dust and chemical gases, and promote a healthier environment, thereby, lowering sick days and absenteeism.
- **Saving Natural Resources**
 - Purchasing recycled paper reduce greenhouse gas emissions that can contribute to climate change, extends the fiber supply and contributes to carbon sequestration, saves considerable landfill space, reduces energy and water consumption, and decreases the need for disposal.
 - Developing an innovative use for waste heat at the landfill will positively impact the carbon footprint of the North Country.
 - Utilizing Authority owned acreage to develop potential use for solar energy advancements.
 - Reducing the amount of leachate generated at the Authority landfill by implementing operating practices to clean shed more of the stormwater that falls directly on the waste mass is expected to create options for less expensive leachate treatment at the facility.

5.0 Sustainable Initiatives

Improving the Authority’s commitment to sustainability requires planning, implementation and evaluating progress towards specific goals. The following initiatives have been identified as ways to improve the Authority’s sustainability program:

- Create a shared understanding of sustainability;
- Minimize waste at the source and encourage reuse;
- Reduce the use of toxic chemicals;
- Recycling and composting;
- Encourage reductions in energy use; and
- Conserve natural resources.

5.1 Sustainability Education

To move the Authority toward a more sustainable organization it is important, that all levels of the organization understand the principles of sustainability, why it is important and what role employees play in achieving sustainability goals. To this end, the Authority has developed a sustainability training program to educate employees about the initiatives in place and the importance of why they exist.

5.2 Minimize Waste at the Source and Encourage Reuse

Several practices have been implemented at Authority facilities to minimize waste including: utilizing electronic documents to minimize paper use, purchasing recycled paper, double-sided printing, and implementing power savings measures.

5.3 Reduce the Use of Toxic Chemicals

The Authority utilizes an online service as for compliance with 29 CFR 1910.1200 (Hazard Communication standard) and to help manage the Authority's chemical inventory. On an annual basis the inventory is reviewed to determine if chemicals can be consolidated, and to identify potentially less hazard substitutes.

5.4 Recycling and Composting

The Authority utilizes single-stream recycling programs as detailed in the Authority's Recycling Guidance & Procedure and has established composting programs at the Water Quality and Materials Management facilities.

5.5 Encourage Reductions in Energy Use

Energy reduction is encouraged. Measures taken to reduce energy use include the use of motion detected lighting in offices, using programmable thermostats during off hours to reduce heating and air conditioning requirements when buildings are not occupied, and shutting off computers and monitors when not in use.

5.6 Conservation of Natural Resources

Preplanning for projects should include sustainable practices, to include opportunities for water quality protection such as porous asphalt, sustainable landscaping, use of organic fertilizers, low flow plumbing fixtures, gray water collection, rainwater collection and use of non-potable water.

6.0 Record of Revision

Revision Number	Date	Description of Updates
Rev. 0	10/2008	Document Created.

Rev. 1	1/2020	EO4 tracking requirements and detailed sustainability initiatives added.
Rev. 2	2/2022	Removed references to EO4, removed references to Sustainability Committee, and removed specific procedural details under Section 5.