

# planit green

Winter Issue—2014

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF  
ISC  AUDUBON



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## Editors Note:

It is amazing how fast time seems to fly. It seems that just a few weeks ago we were putting the last issue of *Plant Green* out into cyber space and here we are again. I must admit, however that we were not able to actually get this issue distributed by the time that we had originally envisioned. While it seems that putting out a magazine that is digital in form would be much easier and faster than producing a publication the “old fashioned” way, that often doesn’t feel the way that it is. Computer technology is a wonderful thing and there are certainly environmental and economic benefits associated with going digital, there are entirely new and different topics that must be dealt with when publishing via the internet.

Be that as it may, we appreciate all of the comments and feedback that we have received concerning our previous issue and we hope you enjoy this issue of *Plant Green*. This is really your publication and we urge you to communicate with us about anything that you think would make the publication more useful to you. If you really enjoyed an article, let us know that. If you disagreed with something that you read in an issue, let us know that too. Our goal is not to just produce another magazine that might look nice, but doesn’t provide in really useable information about sustainable living and lifestyles. Our goal is to include articles that showcase efforts that real people have done and to write them in such a manner as to be at least a bit motivational, so that readers might think, “Hey...I can do that!”

In the end, however it is the goal of ISC-Audubon and therefore *Plant Green’s* to share information, and showcase people who are walking the walk of conservation and sustainability. This is because our ultimate goal is to foster sustainable living and lifestyles; one person, one place at a time. So, this is not another “doom and gloom” publication. Yes, we are continuing to loose wildlife and habitat at alarming rates. Yes, many of the issues connected with the state of our environment and the concepts associated with sustainability might seem overwhelming. But...*Plant Green* aims to focus on “simple, but significant steps” that every one of us can take in our lives, where we live, work and play that will make a difference. If we all did these things it will make a world of difference.



# planit green

A digital publication to share entertaining and useful information about Conservation in Action, Green Living and Lifestyles, and ways to Discover Nature at home, work and play. Each issue will feature helpful tips that will save money and help the environment. Showcases of new conservation oriented products, technologies and services will keep readers up to date and informed of new and exciting ways to make a difference to the quality of the environment, while saving money at the same time.

*“The natural world’s benefits to our condition and health will be irrelevant if we continue to destroy the nature around us. But that destruction is assured without a human reconnection to nature.”*

*- Richard Louv*

PLANIT GREEN SECTIONS

## Conservation in Action.....pages 6-13

The term conservation came into use in the late 19th century and referred to the management, mainly for economic reasons, of such natural resources as timber, fish, game, topsoil, pastureland, and minerals. In addition it referred to the preservation of forests (forestry), wildlife (wildlife refuge), parkland, wilderness, and watersheds. Since 2000, however, the concept of landscape scale conservation has risen to prominence, with less emphasis being given to single-species or even single-habitat focused actions. Instead an ecosystem approach is advocated by most mainstream conservationists. Protecting ecosystems and fostering sustainable relationships between humans, habitats and species is vital to protecting global biodiversity for good.

## Green Living & Lifestyles ..... pages 14-26

Those who choose green living and lifestyles choices attempt to reduce both their and society's use of the Earth's natural resources and personal resources. Practitioners of green living often attempt to reduce their carbon footprint by altering methods of transportation, energy consumption, and diet. Proponents of this type of lifestyle aim to conduct their lives in ways that are consistent with sustainability, in natural balance and respectful of humanity's symbiotic relationship with the Earth's natural ecology and cycles. The practice and general philosophy of green living is highly interrelated with the overall principles of sustainability.

## Discovering Nature ..... pages 27-32

Throughout human history, we have lived with a close connection to the land. It has only in the recent centuries that we've barricaded ourselves in high rises and giant track homes doing our best to keep nature out as if it wasn't an inherent part of who we really are. We lose something when we do this—a piece of ourselves that needs to connect with the natural world.

We must make sure the next generation has the opportunity and motivation to have meaningful encounters with nature, because they cannot grow to love nature if they do not experience it. If children lose their love of nature, who will be the environmental stewards of the future?



## This Issue of Planit Green

### John James Audubon Bird Sanctuary Network .....

ISC-Audubon is engaged in keeping the spirit of bird conservation alive in the name of the **John James Audubon Bird Sanctuary Network**. Through a variety of programs for communities, businesses and home owners that are all a part of the organization's Conservation Landscapes for America initiative.

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### Bundoran Farm – A Working Landscape, Home to a Conservation Community.....

Comprised of 2,300 acres of rolling Albemarle County, Virginia countryside, Bundoran Farm is a location of a new kind of rural community; one that presents a unique concept of farmland, forest preservation and outdoor recreational activities combined with extremely limited residential development.

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### There Is A Place For Dreams In Golf .....

Involving, in one way or the other, the State of New York, the Town of Bethlehem, the Open Space Institute, ISC – Audubon, a course manager who is also a PGA pro, and interested residents—this team has joined together under the banner of the Colonial Acres Golf and Community Center to make positives contributions to their local “community”.

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### A Day in the Life of an ISC-Audubon Member .....

I thought it might be interesting to describe a typical day in the life of an average guy who is attempting run an average small business in Upstate New York. The day I chose to write about occurred yesterday, January 22, 2014. I could have chosen any day...but yesterday seems most easy for me to recall the details.

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### Crossing Fresh Snow.....

“It’s winter in the Northeast as a lonely whitetail treads her way through the deep snow. In her wandering she has come to cross a vast expanse of land in the hope of finding something to eat. Little does she know that underneath that cold blanket there is a dormant golf course waiting for spring and renewed life. I came across this scene in one of my outings.

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### Yes. You. Can! .....

I starting canning 15 years ago. At first I started because it sounded interesting. I love to cook and canning was just an extension of cooking. Then it was because my garden was doing really well and I couldn’t bear to see anything go to waste. And I love knowing exactly what is in the jar. Here are a few tips to get started on your own canning adventure.

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### The Complexities of the Trending Hippy Agenda - Being *More Sustainable*.....

The words “sustainability” and “sustainable” are tricky, complicated and mostly misunderstood words. What do they really mean? If each one of us take that first step considered sustainable that we didn’t do before, then we are moving in the right direction as a society. If we take two steps, or three, or more, then better. But that is how we become *more* sustainable.

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### Planting the Seeds for Garden Education & Community Connections .....

These two initiatives—Community Garden Connections (CGC) and the C&S Wholesale Grocers Workplace Organic Gardens—are replicable environmental education projects that enlist unique partnerships, which serve as models to other communities.

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## John James Audubon Bird Sanctuary Network

ISC-Audubon is engaged in keeping the spirit of bird conservation alive in the name of the **John James Audubon Bird Sanctuary Network**. Through a variety of programs for communities, businesses and home owners that are all a part of the organization's Conservation Landscapes for America initiative.

In these tough economic times people might wonder: "Why should we care about birds?" In short, while the United States is blessed with diverse landscapes, a wealth of natural resources, and spectacular wildlife, we are also blessed with more than 800 different bird species, and we share these birds with people from around the world, as billions of migratory birds follow the seasons across oceans and continents. Birds have become a part of our national heritage. As Americans, our passion for nature is growing ever more evident, as wildlife watching generates \$122 billion in economic output annually, and one in every four American adults considers themselves to be a "bird watcher."

John James Audubon was born on April 26, 1785. He grew to become a famous American ornithologist, naturalist, hunter, and painter. He painted, catalogued, and described the birds of North America in the early nineteenth century, and published *Birds of America*, a massive book containing 435 hand-colored plates of 1,065 individual birds. Audubon became the chosen name and symbol for a movement coined "The Audubon Movement" that began in the late 1890s to stop the unrestricted slaughter of birds. Early Audubon members pledged to shun the fashion of the day of wearing hats and coats adorned with bird feathers and

wings, and to hunt birds for consumption only, rather than sport or trade. Early members also studied birds, improved their habitats, and fought for bird protection. Their activism fledged a broader conservation movement and eventually led to passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in 1918. The Act ended trade in migratory birds, and was among the first federal protections ever afforded to wildlife.

The U.S. human population has skyrocketed from about 8 million to 300 million since that time, and as we have harvested energy and food, grown industries, and built cities, we have often failed to consider the consequences to nature. During our history, we have lost a part of our natural heritage—and degraded and depleted the resources upon which our quality of life depends. We have lost more than

half of our nation's original wetlands, 98% of our tallgrass prairie, and virtually all virgin forests east of the Rockies. Since the birth of our nation, four American bird species have gone extinct, including the Passenger Pigeon, once the world's most abundant bird. At least 10 more species are possibly extinct.

Birds are bellwethers of our natural and cultural health as a nation—they are indicators of the integrity of the environments that provide us with clean air and water, fertile soils, abundant wildlife, and the natural resources on which our economic development depends. In the past 40 years, major public, private, and government initiatives have made strides for conservation. Has it been enough? How

are birds faring?

ISC-Audubon Chairman, Ronald G. Dodson, who is a long-time advocate of conservation and the creator of numerous award winning conservation education programs is spearheading the Conservation Landscapes for America and Bird Sanctuary Network project. In speaking about the project, Dodson said, "It was recently reported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that over the past 50 years, most of what we think of as our common birds, have seen an 80% decline in population. That means in less than my



lifetime, a huge number of bird species that were very common when I was a kid, are now, not so common! If we don't make some significant changes in the ways we manage our landscapes, my grand-kids might not ever be able to see or hear those birds that were once so common. This is a main reason for my involvement in this project."

We ask you to [join us](#) in continuing to reverse the damage to our nation's habitats and protect our remaining natural landscapes—the foundation upon which our precious resources, our wildlife, and the lives of our children depend. Conservation efforts among the government, conservation organizations, and ordinary citizens—private landowners, hunters, and bird watchers—really can make a difference.

The various programs that comprise the John James Audubon Bird Sanctuary Network provide direction, technical assistance, public attention, and national recognition for municipalities, communities, businesses, homeowner associations and others throughout the

United States who have embraced the importance of birds as part of our American Heritage, and who include "bird friendly" landscapes in the way their properties are being managed. This includes landscapes with a focus on the needs of birds during their nesting, migratory and winter seasons. The Bird Sanctuary Programs are intended to be fun, educational, increase community and civic pride, and encourage public participation.

Portions of this story have been excerpted from the "State of the Birds" and can be found at [www.stateofthebirds.org](http://www.stateofthebirds.org)

For conservation landscape and bird sanctuary management information:



**Please consider joining us in this effort by registering your landscape into the John James Audubon Bird Sanctuary Network.**

**To learn more, visit us online at: [www.isc-audubon.org](http://www.isc-audubon.org)**

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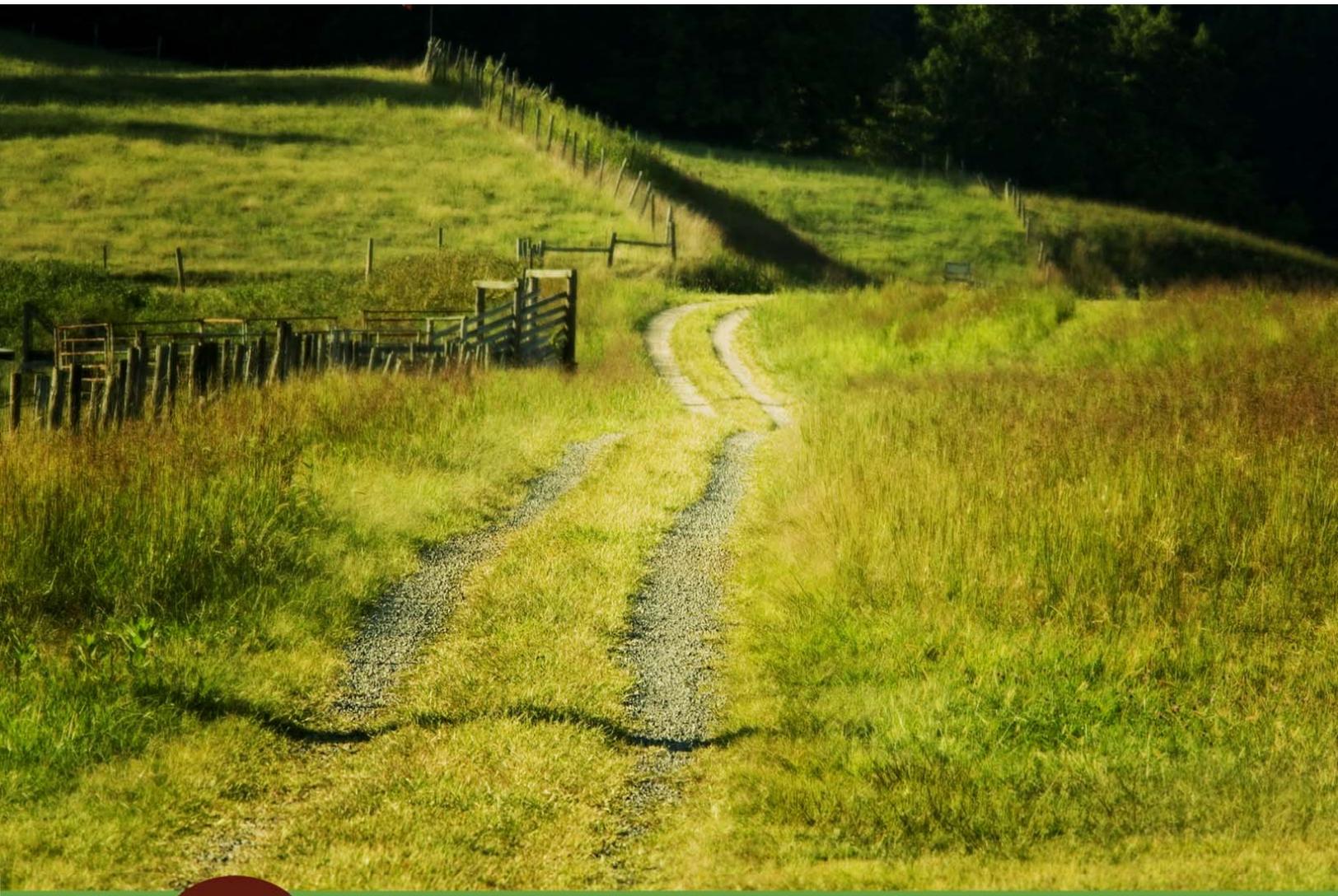
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## Bundoran Farm – A Working Landscape, Home to a Conservation Community

Comprised of 2,300 acres of rolling Albemarle County, Virginia countryside, Bundoran Farm is located twenty minutes from Charlottesville and the renowned University of Virginia. The stewardship mindful of the use of this land over the years has resulted in a place that would not be unfamiliar to a visitor from the time of Thomas Jefferson. Heavy stands of orchard grass and fescue cover a landscape of rolling pastures and

secluded valleys and hollows. A fifteen-mile network of riding trails, sprinkled with benches and gazebos, leads residents and guests through a dazzling variety of mature Piedmont forest species, through and along the streams that tumble down through each valley. Two ponds provide a place for quiet reflection or fishing; and farm buildings and cottages dot the landscape, framing views that typify the slower pace and natural beauty of the Albemarle County lifestyle.

Bundoran Farm is also the location of a new kind of rural community; one that presents a unique concept of farmland, forest preservation and outdoor recreational activities combined with extremely limited residential development.



McKee Carson, the land planning arm of Field Sport Concepts ([www.fieldsport.com](http://www.fieldsport.com)), was retained by Qroe Preservation Development to assist in developing a master plan and site designs for Bundoran Farm and that established both an overall design vision and planning recommendations for future use. The proposed recommendations are programmed to function for the enhancement and preservation of rural agriculture and recreation pursuits while allowing for residential development. Interweaving the programmatic elements with the dynamic patterns of the site’s ecological processes recognizes Bundoran Farm as a unique, meaningful, multi-functional agricultural-based conservation community.

An offshoot of the Audubon Society of New York, doing business as Audubon International (AI) was key to the design of this project. AI has worked for years with developers to assist in the design of systems that work with, rather than against, the environment. Best known for their work in the certification of sustainable golf courses, AI sought to use Bundoran Farm as a model for the application of their “Signature Sanctuary” program (Bundoran was designated a Certified Gold Audubon International Signature Sanctuary). Supplying knowledgeable and experienced freshwater ecologists, environmental toxicologists, wildlife biologists, and other experts, AI worked with McKee Carson and Qroe to help shape both the overall development plan, and many specific elements of the design, from stream crossing strategies to design of interior forest preserves and watercourse buffers.

Not to be confused with ISC-Audubon, AI is not, and never has been affiliated with ISC-Audubon, and they remain separate conservation and sustainability focused organizations.

The Ecological Design and Stewardship Plans for the community are implemented at Bundoran Farm by an in house Natural Resource Manager. This work consists of both mediation between farm operations and the environment, and long-term ecological restoration and preservation projects on the property, as well as education and outreach to help

property owners and the community make responsible choices. Most forested areas of the property are under conservation easement, which commits the managers to maintain the forest under a professionally-developed plan for timber stand and wildlife preservation.

“A Subtractive Process”

The design of the Bundoran Farm community has embodied the notion of a bottom-up approach. The design team came to the land with a great deal of combined experience in land-planning, conservation, and community development, but with no preconceptions.

The design process at Bundoran Farm began with the land itself. An exhaustive, iterative process was applied, involving numerous professionals from the fields of landscape architecture, engineering, farming, forestry, wildlife management and real estate development. In the case of the 2,300 acres comprising Bundoran Farm, this process took the team over a year to complete and reflects a philosophy of “let the land tell you what to do.”

The first step was to catalog and evaluate areas of the farm under cultivation or pasture, with the goal of identifying the most productive, economically viable, and sustainable agricultural land. The key was to protect large, contiguous, accessible areas with good soils, shade, and water. At Bundoran Farm, this analysis extended to the identification and protection of important stands of timber and forest environments.

Next, the design team overlaid a viewshed analysis, documenting areas of the farm that are visible from public and private roads, homesites, and adjacent properties during different seasons. This helped determine areas that should be preserved to maintain the scenic and rural character of the property.

On top of these, the design team then mapped critical natural

resources, including forest and meadow habitats; water resources such as streams, wetlands, and ponds; and many individual areas particularly threatened by development or farming activity, such as steep slopes, micro-habitats, and wildlife corridors. This analysis extended to improvements and common area amenities such as trails, recreation areas and scenic views.

Finally, the selection of homesite locations and the design of the final homesite is the result of the culmination of this rigorous analysis and assessment process, coupled with considerable time spent on the ground.

Using this subtractive approach, McKee Carson allowed the existing landscape to dictate the location of the developable areas. By mapping the areas containing critical natural resources of all kinds, the team was able to determine those areas of the landscape with the highest cultural and ecological value, and those that were suitable for further analysis and refinement for the creation of homesites.

The master plan and comprehensive report may be reviewed at [Bundoran Farm](#)



Photos by Robert Llewellyn



## There Is A Place For Dreams In Golf

*“There are those who look at things the way they are and ask why ... I dream of things that never were, and ask why not.”*

Robert F. Kennedy’s powerful quote resonates with us even today. And this willingness to question the status quo, and hope, can have great impact on matters large and small.

That is what we believe is happening in Bethlehem New York at the Colonial Acres Golf Course. As this pretty little course approaches its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, circumstances, teamwork and a dream are guiding the course toward an innovative and successful future for golf in Bethlehem, and much more.

The circumstances are that this course, the recipient of nearly every environmental and certification award (including from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the U.S. EPA as well as Audubon) was owned

and managed for many years by 18 residents of the Colonial Acres Homeowner’s Association. In 2007, the association, desiring to discontinue its ownership and managerial responsibilities of the course, considered various options to selling the 27 plus acre piece of property. In all likelihood a bidding process would have resulted in the sale of the property to the highest bidder, and that probably would have been to a builder of single-family homes. But an interesting thing happened. The owners of Colonial Acres Golf Course felt strongly about keeping this pristine land maintained as open space, and a golf course, if possible. And, fortunately, the Town of Bethlehem and other organizations had that same interest. So, in 2007, with grant funds coming from the State of New York and an equal amount from the Open Space Institute (OSI), a New York State



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conservation organization, OSI was able to purchase the course, thus ensuring preservation of both the open space and recreational opportunities. OSI then leased the course to the Town to operate the golf course. In so doing, the land was preserved for public use as a golf course, with other passive recreational uses (snow shoeing, walking, etc.) in the off-season. Katie Petronis, OSI's Northern Program Director said "OSI saw this as an excellent opportunity to showcase how effective working community public/private partnerships can be. Protection and management of Colonial Acres in the way envisioned by the partners will benefit the local economy, provide important public recreational opportunities, and protect the landscapes critical open space and ecological resources." The next and last circumstance having impact is that in 2013 the Town of Bethlehem discontinued its management of the course and, after a competitive bidding process, selected Dale Ezyk Golf, LLC to be the leasee and manager of the course.

The teamwork continues to unfold. As a PGA professional and new manager of Colonial Acres Golf Course, Dale has a real interest in making the course successful, from a business and golfing perspective. Frankly, it has limped along for its entire 49-year history, from just doing a little better than breaking even, to operating at a loss. I have an interest in Colonial Acres Golf course not only as a golfer who really enjoys this beautiful and challenging little course. More important, as a former Town of Bethlehem Supervisor, I have a keen interest in seeing businesses succeed, and honesty hate to see, any business, go out of business, because that always means the end to someone's – that word again, dreams.

Well, enter Ron Dodson, Chairman of the not-for-profit, International Sustainability Council & Audubon Lifestyles (ISC-Audubon). I've known Ron since 2007 when the Town of Bethlehem assumed responsibility to manage the course. For his entire professional life, Ron has been an advocate for golf, and the advancement of sustainability, which means to him, economic, environmental, and societal. I introduced Ron and Dale about five months ago, because they share many of the same values and hopes about Colonial Acres Golf Course, the future of golf, and golf courses having the potential to be about

much more than the game of golf – they are both the types of people that "dream of things that never were and ask why not".

So this team if you will, now involves, in one way or the other, the State of New York, the Town of Bethlehem, the Open Space Institute, ISC – Audubon, a course manager who is also a PGA pro and interested residents like me and others that are joining in our quest. A fine example is Bill Matuszek, principal architect of Keystone Architectural Services. Bill has been lending a hand in designing the new golf and community center building. Bill became involved because "I am excited about the positive impact this project could have on Bethlehem and beyond that, and it gives me a chance to use green and environmental concepts in a really beautiful setting".

Our purpose in describing the circumstances and the evolving team is not primarily to tell readers of Planit Green about Colonial Acres Golf, and where it is going – and that would be the Colonial Acres Golf and Community Center. It's to tell you that, in your community, no doubt with somewhat different circumstances and different team members that will come together in a common cause, you can do it too. Every course's situation will be a bit different in terms of ownership, operational issues, financial matters and the like. But, there will be a lot of similarities too! And, that is why we believe that the dream we share for the future of Colonial Acres Golf Course, to become Colonial Acres Golf and Community Center, can be realized by other 9 hole golf courses.

The dream can be yours to achieve too, and here is what it will take:

The Vision – Colonial Acres Golf Course will become Colonial Acres Golf and Community Center, an economically viable golf facility, which provides benefits to the local economy, environment and society in general. The vision is achievable by realizing and building upon the concept of sustainability. Golf courses are not only businesses that provide recreationally oriented open space, they also provide other positive attributes, including wildlife habitat, water quality management, carbon sequestration and the like. And people, golfers and non-golfers (some of whom will become golfers) will be drawn to recreational and learning experiences of

various types integrated into this broader world of a sustainable community center.

The Team – Engaged and committed organizations and people can make things happen. In our case, two not-for-profits (Open Space Institute, and ISC Audubon), governments (the Town of Bethlehem and New York State), the private sector (Dale Ezyk Golf LLC) and other interested persons, have come together to advance principles they are committed to, such as public and private organizations working together, the benefit of sustainable living, and the very meaningful place that 9 hole Golf and Community Centers can have in our communities. The question for Planit Green readers is, who are the people and organizations in your community that would become engaged in an initiative like this?



The Problem Being Solved, The Need Being Met – No entity excels for long without a real problem being solved or a need met. We see that happening in two important areas:

1) Growing the Game of Golf: The golf industry has been saying for many years that it is important to grow the game. But, in fact the game has not been growing. More regulation courses are closing than opening and the number of rounds played are way down. The stated and recognized reasons for this lack of growth include: golf takes too long to play; golf is too expensive; and golf is too hard for beginners to take up the game. We believe that Colonial Acres Golf Course is exactly the type of golf facility that addresses all three of those concerns. As a 9-hole, par three golf course, Colonial Acres 1) doesn't take too long to play (a round can be completed in less than an hour, 2) it is designed and managed to be open and accessible to beginners, women, families and anyone else who wants to become involved in golf, and 3) it is very affordable to play the course. Also important, and recognized but not publicized nearly enough, is the fact that

the majority of the game on any course occurs within 100 yards or so of the hole and in order to score well a player must be proficient from those distances.

2) Serving Purposes Beyond Golf: This gets us back to sustainability. To achieve our vision, Colonial Acres will need to be an economically viable golf facility. The important thing is, that this vision will not be achieved by looking at growing the game of golf in the same old, and we believe, tired ways that have been used in the past. Our model calls for Colonial Acres to provide benefits to the local economy, the environment and society in general. For years, Ron Dodson, and others have urged the golf industry to think and act beyond golf and to develop business plans that are aimed at providing top-notch golf and other community-wide benefits. Again, these benefits include being a living example of sustainability and environmental land use and water quality management and all phases of green initiatives that have

important lessons and consequences for golf, and life beyond golf too. And then backing these living examples up with on-the-ground practical experiences for recreation and learning, such as nature and fitness trails, and mini-seminars on such subjects as the ethics of golf, enviro-friendly vegetation and grass usage for golf courses and commercial and home environments, bird watching, fly fishing, etc., - all in addition to the traditional golf lessons.

We believe that the future of Colonial Acres Golf and Community Center is going to be exciting and positive for golf and the Town of Bethlehem, and we think that is the starting point. We are confident that, as it is said: "If we build it, they will come." We also believe that the model we have described will work, no doubt with variations, for other 9-hole golf courses – perhaps in your community. The question is: Do you "dream of things that never were, and ask why not?" If so, what can you do to achieve that dream?



## A Day in the Life of an ISC-Audubon Member

By: Kelly Dodson

I thought it might be of interest to hear about a typical day of an average guy, who is trying to run his own landscape management business in the cold Northwood's of New York State. My business, Audubon Landscape Services is also a Platinum Member of ISC-Audubon. And, this is not just because I am also a "Dodson" and MUST be a member. I've been a bird watcher since I was a little kid and I do care about the environment.

When I say "Average Guy" I mean that I live a simple lifestyle in a small place that is old and in need of constant repair and upkeep. No, actually it needs to be torn down and something new built in its place...but that is for another day. But, my business is an average, small business and I'm just trying to do a good job for my customers, pay my bills and have a bit left over for "life." So, for me "sustainability" means, being able to pay my utility bill, fuel oil bill, insurance and all the other expenses related to life and my business. My intent is to do this in the most efficient and environmentally friendly way, but economic sustainability comes first for me...and I suspect most other "average" people on the Planet too.

So...I thought it might be interesting to describe a typical day in the life of an average guy who is attempting run an average small business in Upstate New York. The day I chose to write about occurred yesterday, January 22, 2014. I could have chosen any day...but yesterday seems most easy for me to recall the details.

Being in the landscape management business in Albany, Coun-

ty, New York means that I take care of plants (turfgrass, trees, shrubs, flowers, etc.) in the summer months and take care of snow and ice in the winter months. So, being the winter time, I must focus on preventive maintenance of various pieces of equipment. Yesterday I was focused on my salt spreader. Yes, I realize that there are some environmental issues associated with spreading salt, sand, etc., but in this location it is simply necessary. So, it is important to make sure that a spreader is in good working condition and that it is only spreading materials where materials need to be spread and in the amounts needed. Anything else results in my having to purchase more materials than I need, which drives up my cost of doing business as well as could create environmental issues. So...I took



my spreader, which is very large and mounted on the back of a large dump truck to the business where I purchased the spreader just 2 years ago for a check-up and adjustment. In addition the automatic on/off switch had stopped working which meant that I would need to get out of the cab, walk to the back of the truck and manually turn on the

spreader before conducting my work and do the same when I finished a job. Since we are between storms at present, this was a perfect time to do this repair work. So... all of this was actually day before yesterday started out with my picking up my spreader and writing a \$1,200 check to the repair shop for work that they had completed.

After I arrived back at my own shop I decided to load up the spreader and give it a small test run on my own driveway. As you might guess...it didn't work!! \$1,200 and it didn't work. So...I called the repair shop and reported this to the mechanic in a very nice, sweet, calm voice (NOT!) So...I had to return to the repair shop yesterday morning and after spending an additional \$725 dollars on an electrical switch, my typical day was

off to a roaring start.

The rest of my work day was typical paper work, phone conversations and day to day business things. But my next round of “fun” started late at night, when I started to feel like I might freeze to death in my house. That is when I discovered that my fuel oil fired furnace had stopped working. Although I use a huge amount of wood in the winter, though a wood fired insert, when it is below zero for days at a stretch, I really go through the fuel oil. And, this winter it seems like I’ve been going through fuel oil much faster than I have ever gone through it. When fuel oil is near \$4.00 per gallon, I notice these things! But, I have worked on my furnace many times, so I thought “no big deal, I can handle this.” So, I quickly opened the front of the furnace and decided that I simply needed to clean or change the burner nozzle. After I did that (which I have done many times before) I fired the furnace back up. Fired is a really appropriate word, because fire shot out the front of the furnace and immediately caught the wall on fire!! Flames were shooting all the way to the ceiling. Needless to say, this was a bit of a shock. For a moment when things like this happen a person almost freezes like a deer looking at headlights...but with the wall burning, staying in a wide-eyed frozen state for very long was not an option. I quickly looked around for a container to fill with water in the bathroom sink to douse the fire. SURPRISE....no water!! My water pipes were frozen solid!! The next nearest room was my laundry room. So, I grabbed a handful of dirty clothes and started swatting the fire like I was trying to kill an insect that was crawling up the wall. After a breath taking few seconds (it seemed like a half hour) I managed to put out the fire and once again return to my deer in the headlights look as I contemplated the fact that “now I don’t have a furnace or water!”

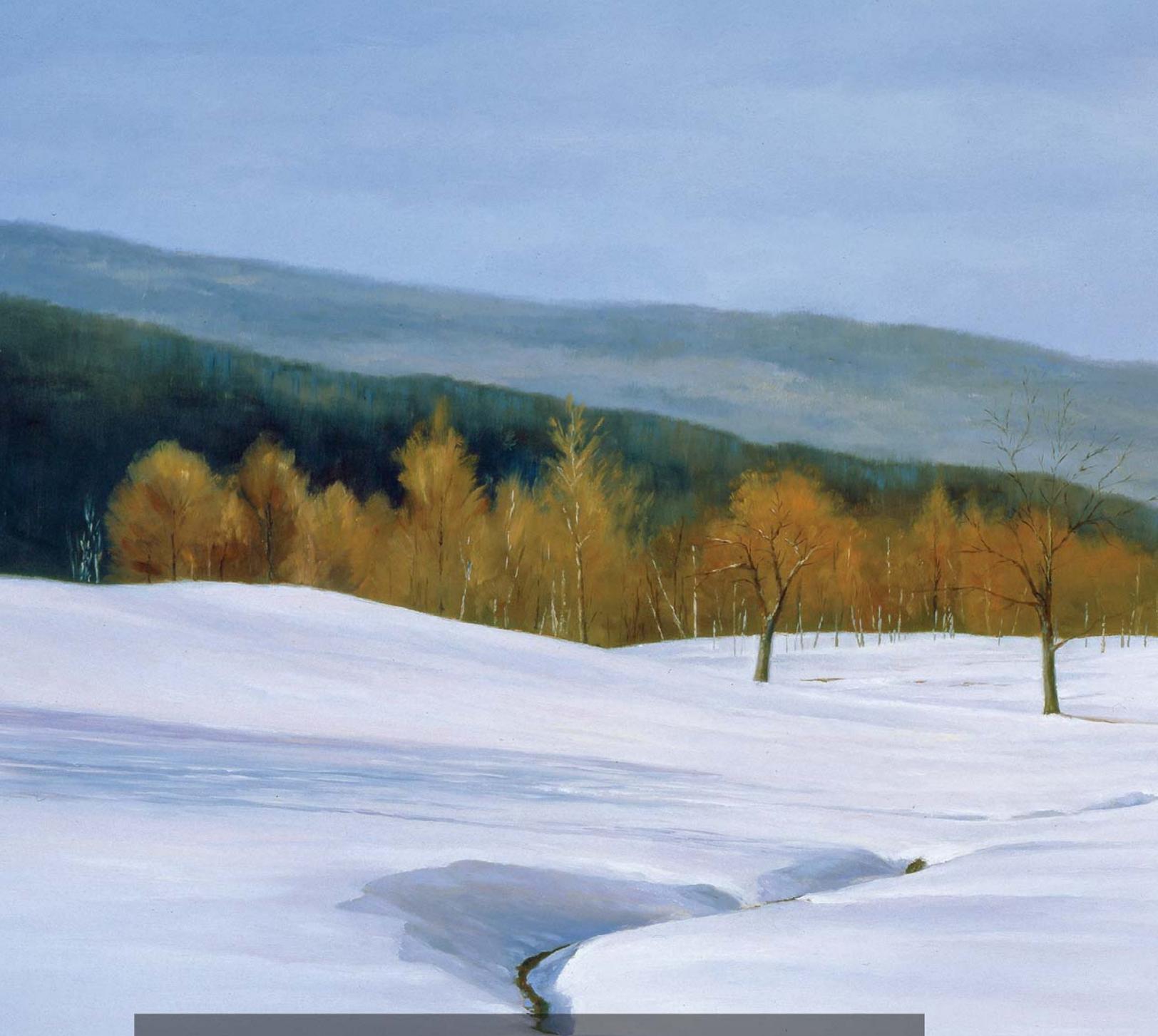
So, my next bit of work was to get someone who knows more than I do about furnaces to give me some advice. The advice was, “You need a new furnace...this one is totally shot!” That is how I ended up spending another \$1,400 for a new fur-

nace, which is now installed and running.

So, I figured now that my furnace was running again and I had the wood fire cranked, it would be just a matter of time before I had water again. So...I left the bathroom sink faucet open so that I would know when the pipes were clear again. I retreated to my office to work on a few things. Sure enough in just about an hour I heard a “whoosh” sound coming from the bathroom and thought, “Cool...I’ve got water!” So I strolled back to turn off the faucet. But...wrong...no water was coming out of the faucet, the noise was coming from my laundry room. BUSTED PIPE!!! Water was spewing everywhere and the entire floor looked like an indoor pool. So, outside I ran to turn off the water to the entire house. After another few dollars, the broken pipe was fixed and the “indoor pool” was vacuumed away with my shop vac.

I’m not sure that this should have been titled “The Day in the Life of an ISC-Audubon Member” or “The Day in the Life of a Dodson.” But, the point is, after spending a little over \$3,300 in a day, nearly burning down my house, creating an indoor flood and nearly causing myself to have a heart attack, I finished a typical day in the life of a landscape business owner. I’m not sure that I would call yesterday sustainable! I hope my spreader works... there is an ice storm predicted!!





**“Crossing Fresh Snow” - 24” x 36” Oil on Panel by Adriano Manocchia**

“It’s winter in the Northeast as a lonely whitetail treads her way through the deep snow. In her wandering she has come to cross a vast expanse of land in the hope of finding something to eat. Little does she know that underneath that cold blanket there is a dormant golf course waiting for spring and renewed life. I came across this scene in one of my outings. I had seen this same golf course just a few months before lusciously green and busy with golfing activity. Imagining the deer reclaiming her natural territory reinforced my belief that golf courses with wise management can make exceptional wildlife sanctuaries as was made evident that cold January day.”

Earlier this month Adriano Manocchia was named ISC-Audubon Official Conservation Artist.



*Adriano Manocchia*





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## Yes. You. Can!

I've noticed that canning is getting a bunch of press this year. The canning supply section in the grocery store is larger. It must be getting popular, again. I guess that I've been in the popular group for a while.

I started canning 15 years ago. At first I started because it sounded interesting. I love to cook and canning was just an extension of cooking. Then it was because my garden was doing really well and I couldn't bear to see anything go to waste. And I love knowing exactly what is in the jar. Here are a few tips to get started on your own canning adventure.

There are literally thousands of recipes on the internet and in good old books. I won't tell you what recipes to use, there are so many excellent ones out there. Do start with some basic ones and be sure to follow the recipe closely. The USDA has an excellent website, the Complete Guide to Home Canning. Seriously follow the directions, we are talking about food you are going to eat. Why wouldn't you be safe? And the safer you are the longer shelf life you get out of your work.

The basics. Have your kitchen clean to get started. I mean

really clean and clear. You will need some room to work. You can MAKE canning expensive. You can buy all the best gadgets and professional canners and it can get expensive quickly. I bought one pressure canner at a thrift store for \$20 and one big pot and I'm still using it. Most of what I can is a process called "water bath" canning. I use the pressure canner for water bath and pressure canning.

Take note of what you currently eat. When you start canning you will be seduced into making many jars at once of a recipe that tastes wonderful. All those jars lined up are testament to your hard work after all. Take it from my experience, how many jars of salsa do you REALLY eat in a year. I made 40 jars the first year I started canning. Everybody got a jar for Christmas. Heck you got a jar if you came by for a visit!

I learned that it was easier for me to can tomatoes and then make whatever from the canned tomatoes. Instead of having multiple jars of pasta sauce I just use the canned tomatoes and make the pasta sauce, marinara, pizza sauce or whatever. If you prefer a thicker sauce to work with just keep it basic and you can dress it up for whatever you are cooking. This year I made 9 jars of rustic basil tomato sauce and I've almost used all of it and its only January. I keep a log of what I make to get



a gauge of what I use. Make sure to make notes on if it aged well, if your family liked it and when you ran out. It will help you plan your canning the next season.

Small batch canning is a wonderful thing! Just because you don't have enough for a full batch don't let that stop you. You can use your regular canner for small batches, just have empty jars full of water in the pot. Don't let your refrigerator produce drawer become your compost bin. You can take a full recipe and cut it to match what you have on hand. Just make sure you keep the recipe correct. Pickled recipes are great to do this with. You can make up a batch of vinegar and water in right proportions and just fill the jars with the veges and the spices that you want. You can process several jars at once in the canner. If you are making small batches don't forget refrigerator pickles. You don't have to process them in the canner. I prefer my jars to be sterile by boiling them and then you use a hot brine and they go right in the fridge. I made little pickled cherry tomatoes, dill slices, dill spears, pickled squash and pickled okra. Just a couple of jars each and they were wonderful.



Now years later I've canned quite a few things. You should start with something simple. Jam is the easiest and everybody loves it. From there you can branch out as you get the hang of it. Basic tomatoes, tomato sauce, tomato soup, salsas, pickled everything possible from okra to cherry tomatoes to dill pickles, blackberry syrups and raspberry sauces, tons of jams and jellies, apple sauce, apple butter, fig jam, turkey stock, venison vegetable soup, regular ole green beans. Definitely date and label the jars. You will end up loving canning and then years later look at a jar and wonder when you made that.

Incidentally, all these jars of yumminess make great gifts. There was a point that it became common place to me and I

didn't give my sister any for her birthday. She made a request on her Christmas list. My Mom can't visit for the summer and asked if I had any of "those peaches" left from last year. I went to several girlfriends get-togethers just before Christmas and gave a variety of jams and jellies. After Christmas I had so many compliments, the hot pepper jam was the most popular. Several people told me they used it at their parties and requested more. So don't forget to can with gift baskets in mind.

One of my favorites that I've made lots of is tomatillo sauce. This is one that broke my rule of only make what you currently eat. I loved the description of tomatillos in the seed catalogs so I grew them. They were very happy in my garden and produced lots so I found a recipe for the sauce. At first I used it as a dip for chips. Then when I was trying to eat more on the healthy side I found that you can use it as a sauce for tilapia or as a quick dressing on a

sandwich. I also use it in shrimp or chicken fajitas. Just this past weekend I found a recipe for Tomatillo chicken. 1 jar of sauce, 2 cans of black beans, 1 sliced onion and 4 chicken thighs in a crock pot. The result is good on eggs, in tortillas, and on quinoa with a little feta. Jackpot! Multiple meals all week and it freezes well too!

There are weeks that I feel like I'm a midwife getting ready to birth a child I have so many pans of boiling water going to sterilize jars and blanch vegetables. I can't because my canned tomatoes taste like vine ripened I grew them myself tomatoes. My blackberry jam tastes like that wonderful hot summer sun, fingers stained purple from eating so many blackberries. I feel a wonderful sense of accomplishment in the winter when I open the jars. It does take time and effort but it is so worth it. I don't can because I think that the end of the world is coming and I need to stock up. But I guess I'm ready for that as well!



## The Complexities of the Trending Hippy Agenda - Being *More Sustainable*

The words “sustainability” and “sustainable” are tricky, complicated and mostly misunderstood words. What do they really mean?

Many individuals have tried to tackle the multiple and complex equations to depict our carbon footprints, our water footprints, our impacts on society, our impact on natural resources and the lists go on and on and on. It is a valiant undertaking to do so, and will undoubtedly help us to further understand the complexities of being sustainable and further the cause of society to direct our efforts that are aimed at tough topics such as climate change, energy conservation, and water quality issues. But in my estimation we will never fully come to an understanding of all the variables, values and calculations needed to pinpoint exactly what it takes to sustain a planet, a nation, a state, a community, a neighborhood, or even a single human life.

I believe that first and foremost, in order to understand what the word sustainability means, it must be agreed that what the word means, in its strictest sense is not truly how the word is often used today.

For an example, let tell you story about a time that I visited a friend and asked for a glass of milk. She said to me “sure, we have whole milk.” I responded to her in an off-hand remark that I usually only drink 2% milk. At that point, unknowingly to me, she took it upon herself to fill a glass with roughly two percent full of whole milk, and then proceeded to fill the ninety-eight remaining percent with water. In her mind she had now created 2% milk. I could immediately tell when she handed me the glass of cloudy water that it wasn’t milk, and could hardly control my laughter as she handed me the glass.



Much like 2% milk does not mean that a gallon of milk only contains a 2% quantity of milk, sustainability does not mean that in order to be sustainable that an individual or an entity is required to be 100% self-sustained. Such a definition by default is an impossibility, as even the smallest of organisms like an amoeba, bacteria, mitochondria and the like all depend on something to survive no matter how small or inconsequential. Nothing in this universe both produces and consumes exactly what it needs to survive.

And by and large, the greater the size and the more complex the organism or system, the more that entity will require and depend upon external resources in order to sustain itself. The objective in trying to achieve sustainability is to replace, replenish, or compensate for the resources consumed with an equivalent amount of resources. And that’s the tricky part – the question is can human beings, being the greatest consumer on the planet of resources, ever really replace, replenish, or compensate for all the resources consumed with an equivalent amount of resources?

On a global scale, I would be hard pressed to ever see a time when humanity as a society will ever get to this point. On a national level it still remains a real impossibility, but as you scale down to the regional, local, community, family and eventually individual scale I believe that becoming more sustainable is easier to wrap one’s head around. But will any individual ever truly come close to being sustainable in its strictest sense?

To answer that question I’d like to describe a time when I had the opportunity to travel with my Dad to Alaska. It was a wondrous experience as we traversed the great last frontier of America and witnessed the many natural wonders that Alaska has to offer. The Northern Lights, moose the size of pickup trucks, Mount McKinley towering high above the clouds, and the list goes on and on. But one experience that I will remember for a lifetime is our visit with an Inuit tribe. It was truly an experience to see how they lived.

The traditional Inuit way of life is influenced by the harsh climate and stark landscapes of the Arctic tundra – from beliefs inspired by stories of the aurora to practicalities like shelters made of snow. Inuit invented tools, gear, and methods to help them

survive in this environment. Because the Inuit live in places where most plants cannot grow, the traditional diet consisted of almost entirely meat. Inuit fished and hunted to get their food. Whales, walruses, seals, fish were staples of their diet. From the animals hunted they would create clothing made from animal skins and fur.

It was explained to us that the Inuit even as recently as a century ago lived very differently than the Inuit today. As the planet becomes more crowded as population grows, it provides less opportunity for isolated communities such as the Inuit to live as they traditionally had in the past. They are forced to adhere to certain changes in the way that they lived, because the modern world forced themselves upon the Inuit to do so. But, although Inuit life has changed significantly over the past century, many traditions continue. Family and community remain important. A sense of living off the land, and a closeness with the natural world remain prevalent.

I remember at the time wondering that if the Inuit people and similar cultures like Aborigine, and the many other indigenous tribes from around the globe are the closest that any human civilization will ever get to represent what it means to achieve sustainability from the self sufficiency point of view. And if so, is it a realistic goal to ask the rest of the global population to revert back to and adhere to the simplistic and “more sustainable” lifestyles that I was witness to as I observed the Inuit culture. And lastly, the next question that I asked myself was more personal in nature – In my personal quest to be sustainable could and would I take it upon myself on an individual level to live that simplistic lifestyle, and remove from myself the many luxuries that are afforded to me? It took less than a second for me to come to a resounding and unquestioned... “Hell no!” to both questions.

So is all lost? If I can't even bring it upon myself to be sustainable how can I ask it upon others? Should I hang up the figurative sustainability towel and become a resource glutton, and in jaded response replace my previously replaced compact florescent lighting back with their incandescent light

bulb ancestor again, and seek out the first Chilean Sea Bass dinner to be found?

No.

But this is exactly where we find ourselves as a modern civilization, and where we must begin the discussion about what sustainability means in the 21st century. And it starts with the basic realization that we are never going to live that simplistic lifestyle that may have been the norm even as recently as one hundred or two hundred years ago. We live in an age of Twitter, and Facebook, and iPhones, and McDonalds, and Starbucks. What we need to do is to define what sustainability means today.

I often visit the online website “Urban Dictionary”; sometimes just for a laugh, and sometimes to try and get the street definition of a word or phrase. When you look up the word “Sustainable” on the Urban Dictionary the following is listed:

1. *Sustainable*

*adj. Concerned with trendy, liberal, or faddish causes, especially alarmist environmentalism and anti-capitalism. An activity or product is described as sustainable if it promotes a hippy agenda, regardless of whether the activity in question has any particular ability to be sustained over a long time period or not.*

*Example Sentence: Fair trade coffee is a sustainable brand.*

The definition itself is laughable, but at the same time has merit in another context. Not because of the definition itself, but more so for what the definition represents, and the hurdles that it presents to those of us advocating sustainable living and lifestyles to the “every-man.”

I admit that even I, someone whose chosen profession is advocating sustainability, can get overwhelmed with it all. There are days when I really can't stand the idea of reading one more report about the current state of climate change, some new green product announcement, another statement about how awful for the planet it is to do (insert whatever you happen to like to do). I completely understand how headache-



inducing it can all be.

What it all adds up to however is a recipe for disillusionment and – eventually – disengagement. Psychologically, we're primed to walk away from problems that are too complex to understand and too difficult to solve. And green campaigners who think a deluge of apocalyptic information will cut through our cynicism are mistaken.

A new field, eco-psychology, has even arisen to help people cope with their mounting "eco-anxiety"—worries not just about the planet's health, but also about their own environmental inadequacies. There isn't a diagnostic label for what most now refer to as "green fatigue" or "eco-anxiety", but at some point there may be.

A decade ago the word sustainability was not nearly as common place as it is today. Now has become so much a common place word that I notice that even I cringe just a bit whenever the word comes up in conversation, or if I hear it in a radio or television ad, or in a magazine article.

The problem quite frankly is that nobody, no entity, no organization, and no government has successfully been able to define sustainability in a way that is understandable, achievable, and desirable. To most, it has just been a regurgitation of the same old environmental messaging from the sixties and seventies wrapped up in a new word.

But it's not, and it shouldn't be. Sustainability is important. Being sustainable is important. Working towards being more sustainable is achievable, and it should be viewed as desirable.

What we must do first as individuals is to cut through the noise. If anyone states that by using their product or services that you will somehow become sustainable... don't believe them. It doesn't work that way. And sustainability, to a great degree, is a very subjective word.

What may be sustainable for me and my family may not be the same things that may make, for example, the super wealthy sustainable. It's easy to beat up on the super wealthy when it comes to talking about waste, and unsustainable practices, but the simple fact of the matter is that the world needs people like the Warren Buffets, and the Bill Gates, and the Michael Bloomberg's, and the Donald Trump's. The economy could not

operate without them, and in fact the economy would become unsustainable if we all had the same net worth, the same expenses, and the same incomes. There would be nothing to aspire to - nothing to gain, and nothing to lose. The economy depends upon a hierarchy of wealth. We need people to work for, and we need people to work for us. It's just the natural order of things.

Is it unsustainable that a wealthy individual flies on a private jet? Honestly, I don't know the answer to that, but what I do know is that there are ways of travel that are more economical, can reduce their impact on the planet's natural resources, and provide less of a burden on society. So does that mean that I would be an advocate of Warren Buffet to start traveling exclusively by means of public transportation so that he can aspire to be sustainable? No it does not. Some people should fly in private jets. As a society we need certain people to be at that level, because flying on a private plane (just as an example) provides jobs. Jobs in manufacturing, service jobs, private sector, and public sector jobs, etc. But, and here is the big "BUT," not only should there be a desire among the rich and famous to be sustainable because they have the economic means to do so, but they should do so because it is in their economic best interest to do so, and it makes environmental and societal sense as well.

I am by no means close to being considered wealthy. Far from it. But for those of us with the means to, it becomes our burden and responsibility to those who may not have the economic means to dictate their own situation in life to advocate sustainability. By that I mean it is the responsibility of each and every one of us to make purchasing decisions in life whether it's when we decide to buy or fly on a private jet, or purchase an automobile, or buying a hamburger at McDonalds to not only be aware of all that went into building that jet, that car, or that burger, but then to apply that knowledge by making purchasing decisions on what may be the more sustainable alternative to that product or whether the product should be purchased at all.

When we apply that knowledge in the purchasing decisions that we make, and ultimately in how we operate and manage ourselves, in the end we become more sustainable. For example, I could make a "feel-good decision" to purchase a compact florescent light (CFL) bulb from Walmart, but if it was manufactured in a plant in China with known health risks to

workers and then to traveled by land, sea and air to get to your local Walmart, could it not be argued that it would be more sustainable to buy an energy “inefficient” incandescent light bulb made in Virginia in a safer manufacturing plant with a much shorter distance to travel to get into your hands? If you look only at one aspect of sustainability (in this example economic), you’re missing the objective of sustainability. Yes, it may save you money in the long run to use CFL light bulbs, but at what human cost, and at what environmental cost?

Don’t get me wrong, I’m not trying to discourage anyone from buying CFL light bulbs. In fact I have all but eliminated incandescent lighting from my home and use CFL lighting almost exclusively, but what I have also done is look on the product packaging to see where it was manufactured. I have made a personal decision to purchase items produced as close to home as possible.

What we must remember is that everything we purchase obviously has an economic cost (both short and long term). But what we also have to remember is that everything we purchase also has an environmental and societal cost. And no two items cost the same. Even two seemingly identical packages of CFL light bulbs on the same shelf in the same store could have drastically different sustainability values.

I believe that we are at a tipping point in modern society related to sustainability, and whether or not individuals will want to get behind it or cast it aside as a passing fad. I personally don’t think it is a fad, but I also think that it is a mistake for those of us who have a tendency to overthink what sustainability is, to try and get the every-man to try to think the way that we do. It is a daunting and overwhelming task to ask everyone to think about all the sustainability variables every time you need to buy light bulbs, or paper plates, or fertilizer, or laundry detergent, or a package of chicken at the grocery store. If we overwhelm people with too many variables the natural human response is too simply throw our hands up into the air, give up, shut down, and tune out. We can’t afford to do that. The advancement of the concepts of sustainability have come too far for us to allow that to happen.

What we need to do is make sustainability understandable, achievable, and desirable. And that’s a hard thing to do, but not

impossible.

I once had the opportunity to serve on the board of directors for a green building certification organization, and one of my most valued memory comes after a two long days of debating the multitude of green building values for their certification program.

One point for recycled carpeting. Two points for overhangs greater than two feet to provide shading. Six points for a certain type of widow. A single point for low VOC paints. Two points for a rain barrel. Three points for pervious pavers used in the driveway. Eight points for passive solar heating... and on and on and on and on the list went. You get the point.

At the end of two long and grueling days of debating green building values I had the pleasure of being invited to dinner at the home of one of the other board members who happen to be a PhD professor for the state university. After dinner that night, he said something to me that has had a profound impact on how I view how we should be advocating a topic such as sustainability.

He said to me that night, “That was exhausting. Overwhelming. It was quite frankly too much. The problem that we have in trying to promote green buildings is that we always seem destined to come up with a long list of things that contain everything under the sun that we should do in order to have a green and energy efficient home or building. Then we assign values to each aspect of a green home, and create this long list of items that people can do and can’t do or should do or should consider. And do you know what happens in the end? Do you know what we accomplish? We overwhelm people with so much information with a long list of things that simply cost too much for people to do in the end, and then that’s exactly what they do, do. Nothing.”

He went on to tell me the single most important thing that I think I’ve come to realize about advocating a topic such as sustainability. He held is hand up in the air, and spread out his fingers, and told me that if we could just get people to do five things we could capture 95% of the energy efficiency related items that make up a green home. He pointed to each one of his fingers one at a time as he went down the list; the HVAC System,

proper attic insulation, the hot water tank, the windows and doors, and home appliances.

Just five things and that would capture 95% of what we are trying to achieve in a green home, but we just spent two days debating about the values associated with the remaining 5% of topics related to a green home. But what did we really accomplish if we drove people away from doing anything? Is it better to get ten people to do one thousand things in their home or is it better to get one thousand people to do ten things in their home – especially if those ten things are the most substantial?

What he conveyed to me that evening really made an impact. And has shaped how I think we should be advocating sustainability. It was under this premise that all of the ISC-Audubon Certification programs were developed. They were created by design to be understandable, achievable, and desirable, but also more importantly simple but substantial. And I personally believe that that is the key to reengaging a green-fatigued society and that that is the key upon which we can begin to bring them back into the discussion and ultimately the solution.

The one final item I'm going to discuss is something that I have pondered for nearly a decade. It began one afternoon as I sat across the desk of my former supervisor who was reviewing an ad placed in a magazine by a partner of the organization that we worked for. The partner who placed the ad was a third party consulting firm who assisted in the process of obtaining certification for the organization that I worked for. My supervisor was someone at the time that I regarded as insightful, and intelligent, but what he said as he laughed at the advertisement perplexed me a bit. He pointed at the ad and specifically pointed out two words as he read the advertisement. "We assisted the development project in their efforts to become more sustainable." He chuckled, and then repeated the last two words of the sentence again, "more sustainable".

I asked him what was funny about being "more sustainable". His response was something that I thought about at the time, and have thought about since. If he had a soap box he would have pulled it out. Thankfully he didn't, but he proceeded as if he did

and went on to educate me about the simple fact that you cannot be "more" sustainable. You are either sustainable or you are not, he pontificated. He went on to use an example that was even more perplexing: he said it was like trying to be "more" Caucasian or more African American. He laughed and found an odd humor in it all. I'm sure it stemmed from a feeling of superiority over all of us who just didn't understand sustainability because it's was just too damned complex for us unedjuncated folk, and that you needed to be an "intellectual" to fully understand and grasp the concepts of sustainability.

There are a few things that I learned from that experience. First of all I learned that there are some people in this world that are compelled to justify their existence by over complicating things so much so that they become the only ones that understand the topic. Or at least that is what they would lead you to believe. This has happened in the world of sustainability one-thousand times over, and it's a problem. I also realized and came to the conclusion that my former supervisor was complete and utter egomaniacal moron.

The simple fact of the matter is there are most definitely shades of sustainability just as there are shades of grey. There are those of us who may actually be more sustainable than others. Some of us may have the means to actually develop a new sustainable community like the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership did when they created the Brightwalk at Historic Double Oaks neighborhood. Some of us may decide to take alternative means of travel to get to and from work. Some of us may look to replace our lighting with more energy efficient lighting. Some of us may take it a step further by looking at the location where that lighting was manufactured. Some of us may choose to participate and get certified in an ISC-Audubon Program. Some of us may choose to do five things in our home to be more energy efficient. While some of us may choose to do one thousand.

The point is, that if each one of us take that first step considered sustainable that we didn't do before, then we are moving in the right direction as a society. If we take two steps, or three, or more, then better. But that is how we become *more* sustainable.

## Planting the Seeds for Garden Education & Community Connections

Authors: Christa Daniels, Libby McCann

Even though America is considered the ‘breadbasket’ of the world, 1 out of every 5 children experiences the uncertainty of not knowing where they will find their next meal. While most U.S. households have consistent dependable access to enough food for active healthy living, approximately 49 million fall into what is known as food insecurity . Food insecurity is defined by the USDA as limited access to adequate food due to lack of money and other resources. Antioch University New England (AUNE), located in Keene, New Hampshire, is a leading institution in creating place-based educational opportunities to address social, economic and environmental justice issues like food insecurity. Through various community garden initiatives, Antioch is providing learner-centered education that empowers program participants with knowledge and skills to cultivate food security within our region. Antioch initiated two innovative community gardening projects with the goals of increasing local capacity to grow food and foster community resiliency. As one local social service agency staff member stated:

*“... [We] appreciate this opportunity and the way in which it has positively impacted [our agency] by providing our members with fresh food and a connection to the earth. This is especially vital because the demographic [we serve] does not always have access to free, fresh food and it was also wonderful to be able to make food with the produce we harvested.”*



These two initiatives—Community Garden Connections (CGC) and the C&S Wholesale Grocers Workplace Organic Gardens—are replicable environmental education projects that enlist unique partnerships, which serve as models to other communities.

**Two Unique Initiatives:** Community Garden Connections (CGC) and C&S Wholesale Grocers Workplace Organic Gardens

Inspired by an Antioch graduate project just a few years ago, Community Garden Connections (CGC), has quickly made an impact in the surrounding community. With the help of a private donation from the Rashti Foundation, CGC supports the installation and cooperative maintenance of raised gardens in partnership with local social service agencies, students and community members. Now in it’s third year, CGC has established gardens and partnerships at 11 different locations in the Monadnock Region of southwestern New Hampshire.

This past season, CGC also partnered with Cheshire County to manage a 1-acre garden plot on county property in Westmoreland, NH. This community garden resulted in over 1,000 pounds of produce harvested and donated to a local hunger relief agency, the Keene Community Kitchen. Since 2011, CGC has conservatively reached 500 community members; involved 25 community non-profits and social service agency partners; engaged 50 graduate and undergraduate students; established 50+ raised garden beds throughout Keene; and developed research and evaluation protocols to track programmatic impact.

Based on the CGC model, Antioch University partnered with C&S Wholesale Grocers in 2012 to expand and strengthen their workplace garden program. As a unique partnership between this family-owned business and higher education institution, the C&S Workplace Organic Gardens project

reflects best practices to develop, implement, and evaluate this multi-state workplace gardening initiative. C&S benefits from high-quality environmental education and evaluation based on best practices, and Antioch students gain opportunities to become stronger environmental leaders and



apply their knowledge in a corporate context. Over two growing seasons (2012-2013), a conservative estimate of 150 garden plots and 175 gardeners have planted, tended and harvested over 1000 lbs. of produce for food banks in

five states where C&S workplaces are located. Additionally, six AUNE graduate students completed professional internships, contributing over 1,500 hours to this initiative over two growing seasons.

The C&S Workplace Organic Gardens initiative complements this company’s wellness programming and counters national trends related to outdoor activity. On average, children and adults in America spend 90% or more of their lives indoors and have less access to the natural world than ever before. A growing body of evidence suggests connecting with the natural world positively impacts emotional, physical, psychological and communal well-being . Through the C&S initiative, employees have opportunities to enrich their quality of life through gardening, enhance social connectedness and give back to the broader community. As one of this year’s gardeners stated, “I like having easy access to my fresh vegetables at work to supplement my lunch, or just for a quick snack.” A 2012 workplace gardener reflected upon these positive impacts as well: “Everyone enjoys the fact that they are doing something good for themselves and doing something good for the community by donating to the food bank.”

### Tips to Create Community Gardens in Your Neighborhood

#### Collaborate!

The success of these two food security projects relies on the numerous partnerships developed and fostered with Antioch University New England. On-going partnerships were created with local businesses, hunger relief agencies, municipal and county government, along with various non-profits and health institutions such as the local hospital. Consider teaming up with a local school or university to help you replicate and administer your project.

Consider “win-win” partnerships that benefit multiple stakeholders in meaningful ways. The C&S initiative is a unique business-university partnership, which addresses identified community needs, tackles issues of hunger, and enhances employee well-being through workplace gardens. Simultaneously, we offer graduate students an opportunity to deepen their academic work, gain an appreciation of community-based education, and enhance their sense of civic responsibility. Creatively consider leveraging the strengths and interests unique to your community.

#### Integrate!

Integration with other community goals and initiatives is imperative for creating successful community gardens. In our region of southwestern NH, the goals of these community garden initiatives align with the City of Keene New Hampshire Master Plan, Keene Climate Adaptation Plan, and Healthy Monadnock 2020. Healthy Monadnock’s goal is to be the healthiest community in the nation by the year 2020. In sum, the CGC and C&S Workplace Organic Gardens initiatives established multiple community garden sites with over 100 individual



garden beds, to the Monadnock Region. In doing so, we have helped the City of Keene achieve goals that are essential to the broader community.

**Evaluate!**

Evaluation should be part and parcel of any quality program design and implementation. Evaluation can help educational providers make informed decisions, gain insights into the merit of a given educational initiative and better ensure continual program improvement. Consider creating a logic model before you start your project so that you have clear, measurable objectives in order to create a community garden. Logic models illustrate specific activities and tasks to be completed that will achieve your goals. You can embed evaluation questions to your logic model to ensure you are headed in the right direction.

Community gardens have numerous benefits that address issues of sustainability. These gardens can improve public health, address food security, increase our resilience to climate change, and improve quality of life. If you are interested in learning how to start a community garden in your neighborhood, Antioch has created a manual that provides



Antioch students and community members' harvest from Community Garden Connections Westmoreland, NH site benefits the local food bank.

step-by-step guidance for future garden leaders: [www.antiochne.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/CGC-Education-Manual-Final.pdf](http://www.antiochne.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/CGC-Education-Manual-Final.pdf)

**About Antioch University New England (AUNE)**

Antioch University New England offers highly respected doctoral, masters, and certificate programs in education, environmental studies, management and psychology. Located in Keene, New Hampshire, this unique institution serves approximately one thousand students each year. Founded in 1964, Antioch University New England is the oldest of Antioch University's graduate



campuses. Inspired by the work of pioneering educator Horace Mann, Antioch University, a private, non-profit, 501(c) 3 institution, provides learner-centered education to empower students with the knowledge and skills to lead meaningful lives and to advance social, economic, and environmental justice. Learn more at: [www.antiochne.edu](http://www.antiochne.edu)



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/key-statistics-graphics.aspx#.Ut3xztOI1u>  
*The Inside Story: A Guide to Indoor Air Quality*. U.S. EPA/Office of Air and Radiation. Office of Radiation and Indoor Air (6609J) Cosponsored with the Consumer Product Safety Commission, EPA 402-K-93-007.  
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