

FINAL DOCUMENTATION—CONTRACT # 00-G550-20 NATURAL STEP EDUCATION

Introduction

This report will document how the ideas contained in The Natural Step (TNS) framework for sustainability were shared with the citizens of Winneshiek County primarily and, to a lesser extent, the rest of our comprehensive planning area. An overview of the various presentations (see Appendix A, attached) and the more detailed, two-evening seminar and audience reactions will be given. Copies of promotional materials and follow-up publicity are included.

A pictorial history and narrative has been requested for the project, however, by its very nature, there simply were no situations where this sort of documentation made sense. Where it was feasible and non-obstructive, photographs were taken of audiences at various presentations, but really there is nothing to see! In a follow-up survey, seminar participants were asked to share photos of implementation projects, but none had any to share.

As for a case study, most of the respondents to the post-seminar follow-up survey reported not so much on actual business implementation projects, but, rather, changes they were making or intended to make in their personal lives. Copies of some of the more thorough responses from homeowners and two businesses are included for examination.

Promotional Strategies

Promotion of the Natural Step Education project actually began in August of 1999, immediately after I heard Terry Gips of the Alliance for Sustainability speak at the Midwest Environmental Education Conference in Stillwater, Minnesota. He gave a 1.5 hour introductory session on the Natural Step to an audience of about 25 to 30 adults and 20 minutes into it I was hooked. I was impressed by what had been done in Sweden to educate the entire country, using the same information, about the conditions which must be met to build sustainable communities. My mind was wild with the possibilities. What if our whole town could adopt The Natural Step as a framework for decision making, especially at a time when everyone was arguing about how to proceed on various development questions, numbers of new residents in the area were growing and recycling verve had seemed to reach a plateau?! I began making a list of all the people I could think of who would donate funds to pay for such an undertaking—to bring Terry here, to publicize, to drum up interest...After sharing my enthusiasm with my boss

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the integrity of the financial system and for ensuring that all parties involved are kept informed of the current status of the account.

2. The second part of the document outlines the specific procedures for recording transactions. It details the steps that must be followed to ensure that all information is captured accurately and that the records are easy to access and understand. This includes instructions on how to handle receipts, invoices, and other documents that may be relevant to the account.

3. The third part of the document provides a summary of the key points discussed in the previous sections. It reiterates the importance of accurate record-keeping and provides a clear overview of the procedures that must be followed to ensure that all transactions are properly recorded and documented.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of regular audits and reviews. It explains that these are necessary to ensure that the records are accurate and that the system is working properly. It also provides instructions on how to conduct these audits and reviews, including the steps that must be followed to ensure that all relevant information is reviewed and that any discrepancies are identified and corrected.

5. The fifth part of the document provides a summary of the key points discussed in the previous sections. It reiterates the importance of accurate record-keeping and provides a clear overview of the procedures that must be followed to ensure that all transactions are properly recorded and documented.

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DATE STAMP

DEPT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES
2000 AUG 28 P 1:08

and a few like-minded friends, I realized I needed to think a little smaller; The whole town was too big an undertaking. And I needed some legitimacy to sway the skeptics. So I began working on a SWAP grant and sources for matching funds. My first inquiry into funding from Luther College brought me to a professor, Dale Nimrod, in the Science Dept., who had visited the Natural Step headquarters in Sweden and was very excited about my plan. Before long I had financial commitments from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America's Chicago Division of Church and Community, Izaak Walton League, Winneshiek Co. Board of Supervisors (Solid Waste Education Funds), and a local business. In kind contributions came from Luther College (facilities and equipment use and printing), Oneota Coop (food catering), Waving Grains Bakery (food donations) and volunteer help from 3 individuals. In every case, to enlist sponsorship and support, I called or visited prospective helpers and supplied them with background information on TNS, plus a copy of a seminar overview which had taken place previously in Minnesota. Things were looking good and Terry was set to come.

****A note about educators:** One of my first ideas was to make this project simply a seminar for educators and to provide continuing education credits for attending. But research into this plan showed that a minimum of 15 hrs. contact time were required for credit and the budget would have to be increased significantly to cover related expenses. Also, business and community leaders needed to hear this too. So a decision was made to entice teachers by scheduling the seminar on two evenings rather than a precious weekend, provide dinner and offer a \$50 stipend to the first 10 educators to register. It worked—several from the college and high school level attended.

Mailing list

Once I had received word that my grant application had been accepted, I took my activist husband's advice and began building a mailing list. Of course I had plans for publicity, but direct invitations, I was assured, are more powerful. Here's who got included in the Winneshiek Co. area:

- ~ anybody who's a "mover and a shaker" in the community
- ~ Luther College professors
- ~ Winneshiek Co. High school superintendents and teachers in biology, environmental science, government, home economics, and business ed and economics
- ~ All county supervisors (who had, after all, contributed \$1400 to the project)
- ~ Mayors of all the towns
- ~ members of the County Conservation Board & the naturalist at Lake Meyer Nature Center
- ~ president of the Luther College environmental concerns group

- ~ head of Facilities Mgmt. at Luther
- ~ Presidents of Luther & Northeast Iowa Community Colleges and their administrative teams
- ~ Winneshiek Co. Extension Service
- ~ Editor of Decorah Newspapers
- ~ Administrator of the county hospital
- ~ local physicians and health care institutions
- ~ business leaders, city council members and heads of industry
- ~ Decorah's Chamber of Commerce Board
- ~ Upper Explorerland Regional planning commission
- ~ contractors, manufacturers, bankers, non-profits and utilities offices.

Because incorporating sustainability principles into day to day operations and decision-making processes has the potential to significantly reduce waste (indeed it promotes "zero waste" thinking), I felt it would be reasonable to invite key people from the other parts of our comprehensive planning area. Knowing, however, that TNS may sound like something a bit too esoteric to some, I knew that with limited time and money, it probably would not be worth an all-out advertising effort. Few would be likely to make the effort two evenings in a row travel to Decorah to attend the seminar, much less to hear one of the other, shorter, community presentations. Better to inspire a few likely-to-be-interested folks to come and then for them to organize a seminar in their own area. The other parts of our planning area—Howard, Clayton and Fillmore Counties and the city of Postville—had the potential to be involved through invitations to:

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ~ mayors of each county seat | ~ recycling program coordinators |
| ~ county naturalists | ~ county development offices |
| ~ Chambers of commerce | ~ county extension offices |

A sample of the invitation sent to all of the above is enclosed. All registrants received a confirmation postcard.

Publicity

As the date for the programs drew near, it became apparent just how effective the individual invitations were. Several people called to register for the seminar having heard about it from a friend or colleague. After the original 150 invitations were printed, I made 3 return trips to the copy shop for 50 or so more.

Other publicity efforts included (samples enclosed):

- ~ paid advertisements in the Fillmore Co. Journal, the Clayton Co. Register, the Cresco Times Plain Dealer (Howard Co.) and Decorah Newspapers (gives discounts to non-profits).

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. It also outlines the methodology used in the study and the results obtained. The second part of the paper discusses the implications of the study and the conclusions drawn from the research. The third part of the paper discusses the limitations of the study and the areas for future research.

The study was conducted in a laboratory setting and the results were compared with those obtained from field studies. The study found that the results of the laboratory studies were in good agreement with those obtained from field studies. The study also found that the results of the laboratory studies were in good agreement with those obtained from field studies. The study also found that the results of the laboratory studies were in good agreement with those obtained from field studies.

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- ~ Posters at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church where our first event was held.
- ~ An article in the Good Shepherd Church newsletters
- ~ An article in the March Issue of *I! Recycle!* and in the 4 R's teacher newsletter
- ~ Two articles in our local Co-op newsletter (one before the events; one after)
- ~ An article and an ad in the Decorah Chamber newsletter
- ~ Two press releases in the Decorah newspaper
- ~ Posters up at Northeast Iowa Community College
- ~ A flyer passed out at a well-attended Earthyear 2000 meeting

Coordinating the seminar & other community presentations

Included with the enclosed copy of the seminar invitation is an itinerary for the 2+ days Terry Gips was in Decorah for presentations. Organizing and setting up all of these presentations took a great deal of time on the phone for initial contact and set up, calls to confirm and remind and so on. For the seminar, there were many more details and arrangements, not the least of which was getting the college to provide meeting space free, as well as use of their dishes for 80 people; finding a professor who would sponsor a substantial printing job at the college printshop; arranging for extra seating, slide projectors, screens and VCR; deciding on a menu of all organic and/or locally-produced foods and assembling materials for a resource table. I had substantial assistance from my husband, Steve McCargar, and Erik Erikson, a sustainability enthusiast from Fillmore Co., Minnesota. My children helped by stuffing and stamping envelopes and being virtually self-sufficient for 3 days.

And then of course there was Terry Gips, who is a man of incredible, positive energy. He is also immensely capable of handling himself in new and diverse groups of people. I never felt I had to "take care of him"—he simply began walking around in a new group of people introducing himself, before I'd had a chance to. This took a great deal of pressure off of me.

Workshop Agenda and Details

See sample invitation.

Audiences and Reactions

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PRESENTATION & SLIDE SHOW

This was our first event and was well-attended. The goal here was to provide an overview that would serve a diverse audience of people would not necessarily be attending the seminar. The group included only 2 from out of

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The study was conducted in a laboratory setting and involved the use of a series of tests to measure the performance of the system. The results of the tests were compared to the results of previous studies and the findings were discussed in detail. The study also involved the use of a series of simulations to test the system under different conditions. The results of the simulations were compared to the results of the tests and the findings were discussed in detail. The study also involved the use of a series of interviews with experts in the field to gather additional information and insights. The results of the interviews were compared to the results of the tests and simulations and the findings were discussed in detail.

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town. The rest were Decorah area people and Luther College students. 15 of the 21 attendees came to all or part of the seminar.

EARLY MORNING CHAMBER SEMINAR, APRIL 10, 7:30 AM

This was an idea recommended to me by the Chamber director and although publicity went out to all chamber members, only 6 attended. It was awfully early, but we had some lively discussions and 3 attended the seminar.

LUTHER DAILY CHAPEL

This presentation had to be cancelled as Luther faculty and student speakers are given preference.

DECORAH CHAMBER LUNCHEON

A very diverse and mainstream group—bankers, small business owners, lawyers, city council members, county supervisors, Wal Mart employees, a few Luther staff, county workers. Attendance was good and the audience seemed intrigued by what was said. It was not convenient to have a sign-in sheet here, but my recollection was that several of the folks at this presentation attended one or both nights of the seminar. Perhaps the most interesting moment was Terry's post presentation chat with a bitter Wal Mart employee concerning the still-ongoing battle about the establishment of a Wal Mart Supercenter on the floodplain of the Upper Iowa River. This woman and her boss, the head of our present (smaller) Wal Mart store's "Green Team", both attended the seminar, which I'd wager was attended by an overwhelming majority of anti- Wal Mart citizens. She told me she enjoyed the presentation and was looking forward to the seminar.

NORTHEAST IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESENTATION

This was open all staff and students. I had the Dean send an inter-office memo to all the staff giving them permission to attend and posters were put up in all student areas. Terry shared a portion of an exciting video about the University of Texas at Houston's Health Sciences center, which had adopted TNS as a guiding framework at the beginning of the construction of the building and continues to use it as an operational strategy. There were some slightly tense discussions about the role of pesticides and GMO's in a sustainable future and one woman came precisely to find out how to get officials in her small town to stop spraying herbicides in a public park. I estimate the audience was split half and half, staff and students. I am not aware any that attended the seminar.

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APPLIED ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

This was a Luther College class of about 23 students. Presentation was very informal, with lots of questions. Students responded well to Terry's sharing a bit of his own evolution as an environmental activist and proponent of sustainability. He gave them specific ideas about work they could do in their community here and the kinds of skills and commitments that are needed from them upon graduation. Several students attended the seminar for one or both sessions.

DECORAH ROTARY

This was by far Terry's favorite presentation. He had urged me to set it up assuring me that the Rotarians are usually a great group committed to doing good things in their communities. As in most communities, this group was composed mainly of men who work in business or industry or banking. Some were retired professionals or lawyers or city officials. Their response to some of Terry's "thinking out of the box" solutions to resource efficiency questions were very popular and the group as a whole was very intrigued with the idea that businesses who made good environmental choices most often profited. Several came up to Terry afterward to discuss some points further and ask for advice. Several did come to seminar as well,

SENIOR SEMINAR IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

This was a small (six students) class who had done some previous reading and discussion about TNS, especially The Natural Step for Business, by Brian Nattrass and Mary Altomare. It was their professor who had been to the TNS headquarters in Sweden, so he was especially well-equipped to lead the students into an exploration of the ideas. Three of the students in the class came to one or both sessions of the seminar.

TWO PART SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY SEMINAR

This was of course the highlight of the project where as many as 72 (some could only attend one session) area citizens got a thorough background in the history, rationale and benefits of sustainable and systems thinking. For those who had attended the Good Shepherd Church presentation, there was some overlap, which was a negative for some. The first evening included a lot of background and technical information—a lot to absorb and perhaps more than was necessary for "the already converted," but everyone left with enthusiastic and appreciative remarks. With the meal and questions, it was difficult to end on time.

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Almost without exception, the highlight of the seminar was the small group exercise at the end, where participants chose an area of community life and examined:

- *How the present situation violates the four system conditions for sustainability
- *What would the "view from the mountaintop" look like? What would our transportation system look like if we were following the 4 system conditions?
- *What are the steps necessary to get us there? What would be "the low hanging fruit," that is, initiatives which are most likely to be successful or profitable, and which would set the stage for subsequent improvements?

Each group reported on their deliberations. Energy and enthusiasm to "get out there and do it" was high, and this was the note the evening ended on. Those who remained at the very end were profuse in their thanks to Spectrum for bringing this to the community and to Terry for his time and energy. Copies of all of the evaluations and the small group work summaries are enclosed.

FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS & SURVEYS

Many seminar participants expressed interest in a continued discussion of how to incorporate sustainability into our lives and our community. The intention was that all seminar participants would undertake some sort of implementation project in their own spheres of influence. In early May 2000 all were sent a letter describing my hopes for their efforts; a survey for their responses about their projects; dates and agenda for the follow-up meeting and subsequent events*; a copy of Chapter 9 from The Natural Step for Business and copies of the small group summaries that several had requested. A complete copy of this mailing is included here.

*These included a video showing and discussion about natural capitalism and a two-part discussion group about the book Natural Capitalism, by Paul Hawken and Amory and Hunter Lovins.

15 attended the June 13, 2000 follow-up meeting and at that time, only a few had undertaken a project, but many expressed plans to make changes in their personal lives or interest in working on a group project in the future. 14 seminar participants returned surveys, even after a volunteer helped me call everyone to remind them! I learned that some were a bit intimidated by the detail of it, and others felt that it didn't exactly apply to them because they did not undertake an actual *project* but had developed a new awareness about the importance of thinking sustainably and made

plans to change some specific things in their own lives. A copy of a summary of the survey responses was sent to the Department on August 1, 2000.

14 attended the Paul Hawken video about natural capitalism, which was not bad, considering it was summertime. But it became clear that summer is not such a good time for book discussions—only 6 came to those sessions and some were not able to read the material completely, but came anyway because they were interested in finding out about the ideas. I have plans to try this again in the winter.

OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT & FUTURE PLANS

I am generally very pleased with the outcome of the project. There is now a good sized group of Decorah area residents who know what TNS is and are convinced that we must begin thinking in new ways that include the future as if it really mattered. There is a small, but dedicated group who want to see the adoption of TNS as a framework in this community, if not by name, then by various deeds. We simply need to get organized around some specific projects and keep educational events happening, keep the words and ideas alive. In spite of the fact that actual PROJECTS did not get completed, I am convinced that a new or heightened consciousness is here, and it will work on people and grow if nurtured by example.

I am disappointed that not one of our county supervisors attended the seminar. Only one city official came and then only to one evening. These people are making very important decisions about the way this community will develop and change over the next years. I had hoped to reach some folks in industry too and some of the larger businesses. But the president of a major bank in our town is one of the most enthusiastic of the seminar participants, and he's traded his SUV for a hybrid electric vehicle, is hoping to put solar panels on the top of the bank, has switched to non-toxic cleaning products in his building and is searching for more way to reduce, reuse and rethink his business, from investment strategies to loan preferences. That's something to feel good about.

In September I've planned a special meeting to discuss "where do we go from here" and work with the suggestions that came out of our first follow-up meeting last June. I have some exciting ideas about how to incorporate TNS into my school recycling education programs and am very thrilled to see sustainability awareness growing in all sorts of places.

Thank you for helping start something very good here!

Respectfully submitted by Heidi Swets, Spectrum Industries' Recycling Education Coordinator

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the President's annual message to Congress, which is a key part of the executive branch's communication with the legislative branch.

2. The second part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 10, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the Secretary's annual report to the President, which is a key part of the executive branch's communication with the President.

3. The third part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 15, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the Secretary's annual report to the President, which is a key part of the executive branch's communication with the President.

4. The fourth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 20, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the Secretary's annual report to the President, which is a key part of the executive branch's communication with the President.

5. The fifth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 25, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the Secretary's annual report to the President, which is a key part of the executive branch's communication with the President.

6. The sixth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the State, dated January 30, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the Secretary's annual report to the President, which is a key part of the executive branch's communication with the President.

7. The seventh part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated February 5, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the Secretary's annual report to the President, which is a key part of the executive branch's communication with the President.

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Appendix A, Final Reporting Form

Contract Number: 00-G550-20

Date: August 25, 2000

Total People Served: 281

Participants	
Workshop or Presentation	Number of People Attending
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church 4/9/00	27
- Chamber Seminar 4/10/00	6
- Decorah Chamber Commerce Luncheon 4/10/00	46
- Northeast Iowa Community College 4/10/00	28
- Applied Environmental Philosophy 4/11/00 (Luther College class)	23
- Decorah Rotary Luncheon 4/11/00	38
- Senior Seminar in Environmental Studies 4/11/00 (Luther College class)	6
- Two-Part Sustainable Business & Community Seminar April 10 & 11, 2000	72
- Follow up meeting July 13, 2000	15
- Natural Capitalism video & discussion 6/28/00	14
- Book Discussion Group July 5 & 18, 2000	6