

## **STUDY CIRCLE GUIDE**

Developed by Sustain Dane (Wisconsin),  
Adapted by the Piscataqua Sustainability  
Initiative (PSI)

### **THE NATURAL STEP FOR COMMUNITIES: HOW CITIES AND TOWNS CAN CHANGE TO SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES**

A Book by Sarah James & Torbjorn Lahti

*(April 2007: edits in process – please excuse the typos, etc.)*

***“Perhaps the most important factor to why they were successful in becoming an eco-municipality were study circles...It’s a question of taking control over their own situation and their own future.” - Torbjorn Lahti  
Project Leader Swedish Eco-Municipality movement***

## **Background**

The Natural Step for Communities study circle is a program developed by Sustain Dane. The inspiration for this study circle came from the experience of Swedish eco-municipalities, communities that have successfully offered similar study circles as a tool for beginning education and community conversation related to sustainability community topics. Another inspiration for this program comes from the Northwest Earth Institute, a Portland, Oregon based non-profit organization that has been offering discussion courses locally and nationally through affiliate organizations for the past 13 years. Since 1993, over 75, 000 individuals have participated in one of the the discussion courses offered by the Northwest Earth Institute.

## **Study Circle Overview**

Sustainability may seem like one more buzzword, and cities and towns like the last places to change, but *The Natural Step for Communities* provides inspiring examples of communities that have made dramatic changes toward sustainability, and explains how others can emulate their success.

The objectives of this study circle are:

- To build a network or community of people conversant in the area of sustainability
- To become familiar with The Natural Step framework and have examples for a base of communication with others
- To have an opportunity to learn about our community so that we can lay a foundation for future action
- To be motivated to engage in actions personally and with others to move toward a sustainable future

A study circle format allows you to better understand the different perspectives about and approaches to the complexity of sustainability. In addition, this study circle is intended to be a supportive learning experience, so please ask questions of clarification and share insights with one another. Whether you agree or disagree, you will have an opportunity to talk about an important subject with others who share your concerns, and hopefully have fun along the way!

The book used for this study circle first clarifies the concept of sustainability, offering guiding principles –The Natural Step framework - that help identify sustainable action in any area. It then introduces the sixty-plus eco-municipalities of Sweden that have adopted changes to sustainable practices throughout municipal policies and operations. The third section explains how they did it, and outlines how other communities in North America and elsewhere can do the same. Key to success is a democratic “bottom-up” change process, and clear guiding sustainability principles such as the Natural Step framework.

## **Guidelines**

This section contains a list of suggested guidelines to help ensure a successful, positive study circle experience for every participant. Please review them before the first discussion session.

- Read the study circle materials and review questions before each session. A better prepared group will have a better discussion.
- Begin and end each session on time. Your session will go by very quickly. To make the most of each session, make sure to begin and end on time.
- Self-monitor your own time. All participants want a chance to enter the discussion.
- If you know a fair amount about the discussion topic, try using this opportunity to listen to what others know about this issue. You can then use this knowledge to help you clearly state your perspective on the issue in future conversations with other community members and leaders.
- Please keep the discussion positive. At times, the issues and challenges we face can seem overwhelming, especially in the context of sustainability.
- If you are unclear of a term being used, seek clarification right away.
- Don't get stuck on the authors' writing style or the format of the book. The book was not intended for a study circle.
- Don't spend too much time or detail on problem-solving. If possible, note ideas for potential solutions or actions and move on to the next discussion question. It is best to revisit these potential solutions or actions at the study circle celebration.
- Please reserve comments on others participant's responses to the circle question.
- A response is not mandatory for each question. If you do not have a response for a particular question, simply say "I pass."
- If you have concerns about your discussion course experience, please discuss these issues immediately with your facilitator or contact Sustain Dane at 608.819.0689.

## **Facilitator**

Each session of the Natural Step for Communities study circle is facilitated by a volunteer. The facilitator is not the “teacher,” but is there to assure the process below is followed in the study circle.

- The facilitator’s principal role is to stimulate and moderate the discussion by asking questions identifying key points, and managing the group process. The facilitator is not an expert, does not have the answers or may even not be the most knowledgeable person about the topic for the week.
- The facilitator will keep the discussion focused on the sessions’ topic.
- Some questions are designed to be answered as a group, others by each individual participant. The facilitator will look for and acknowledge questions to be answered by the group as a whole.
- A primary goal is for everyone to participate in each session. The facilitator will try to draw out quiet participants by creating an opportunity for each person to contribute.
- On the other hand, an important role of the facilitator is to restrain a domineering participant. The facilitator will make opportunities for others to join the discussion.
- The facilitator will start each session by calling on the designated participant volunteer(s) to do the Opening before the start of the discussion.
- The facilitator will follow the opening with the Circle Question.
- Evaluations of the readings and discussions should be completed each week. The facilitator should remind each participant to fill out their weekly evaluation form at the end of each session.

## **Opening**

Many U.S. communities are now implementing some form of sustainable development, for example climate change initiatives, green building programs, brownfields redevelopment, open space preservation, and affordable housing. These are largely occurring on a project-by-project or issue-oriented approach – sometimes called the “silo approach” to sustainable development.

At the study circle introductory session, participants should volunteer to identify\* a sustainable development project or initiative in your community or region that relates to a specific session. At the beginning of sessions two thru six, the Opening volunteer(s) for that sessions’ topic should explain,\*\* **in no more than five minutes**, a sustainable project or initiative that they have researched . The presentation should cover what the project or initiative is, who is involved, where is it happening, when it started and how it is intended to benefit the community. The facilitator will demonstrate an opening in the first session.

\*If you are not familiar with a project or initiative in your community that relates to the particular session topic, ask the facilitator for some suggestions.

\*\*If time permits, the opening volunteer(s) are encouraged to research the project or initiative by conducting an interview, visiting the site or obtaining related documents.

## **Circle Question**

After the Opening, the facilitator will ask the Circle Question, “The book introduces several examples of the session themes. What personal reactions or new insights did you have to what you read in this section of the book?” Each participant should provide an answer without comments or questions from others.

## Session 1: Introducing Natural Step Framework And Sustainability (Chapter 1, 2 & 3)

Can you think of a principle (ecological, ethical, etc.) that helps guide you in making decisions? What is the principle? How is it helpful?

Can you identify and describe an experience you have had defining or explaining the concept of sustainability to people for the first time? Or, what have been your own challenges in understanding the concept? How might the sustainability objectives of The Natural Step help address these challenges?

The authors talk about the importance of using an upstream approach to dealing with problems. Think of some of your community's or region's approaches in dealing with community or regional problems such as traffic congestion, challenges in education, homelessness, unemployment, or high health care costs. As a group, determine **three** examples of "downstream approaches" and **three** examples of "upstream approaches" to these problems?

The authors in the book note that "communities are complex systems...this complexity often results in actions or policies that can work cross-purposes or compete with each other." Have you experienced a similar situation in community? Explain

From what you have learned thus far about the Natural Step framework and what you know about your community already, to which issues in your community could the framework be applied to; immediately and easily? With the most significant impact?

Did reading this section make you want to do something differently or to take some action in your life? If so, explain.

### **Sustainable Practices Blue Ribbon Committee**

The Committee on **Sustainable Practices** was established by the Mayor and City Council to help them lead the City toward increased sustainability, a goal of the City's 2005 10 Year Master Plan. The Committee's work focuses on three main areas:

1. Increasing awareness of the importance and value of sustainable practices among Portsmouth residents, business owners, non-resident employees of Portsmouth businesses, visitors to the City, municipal staff, and other stakeholders;
2. Advising the City Manager and City Council on improving the sustainability of City operations including such aspects as the energy efficiency of City buildings and vehicles, purchasing guidelines, and alternative fuels; and,
3. Advising the City Council on a sustainable approach to the future growth and redevelopment of Portsmouth. (7 members)

For further information please contact Deputy City Manager Cindy Hayden at 610-7218.

### Further Resources & Readings:

Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human impact on the Earth, by Mathis Wackernagel (1996)

The Urban Open Space Foundation is dedicated to making open space systems recognized as essential to a healthy life-style for cities.  
<http://www.uosf.org/>

City of Portsmouth Master Plan  
<http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/masterplan/index.html>

Whistler, Canada's award winning comprehensive sustainability plan that is strongly influenced by the Natural Step can be found at  
[www.whistler.ca/Sustainability/Whistler2020/](http://www.whistler.ca/Sustainability/Whistler2020/)

The Rocky Mountain Institute website features information for businesses, communities and government about how to create wealth without harming the environment. For more info visit  
[www.rmi.org](http://www.rmi.org)

The Natural step website features information for government, business, academia, media and general interest visitors including case studies, articles and event listings. Visit  
[www.NaturalStep.org](http://www.NaturalStep.org)

## Session 2: Changing to Renewable Energy Resources and Alternative Transportation (Chapter 5 & 6)

As explained in the book, different Swedish communities use different sources of energy. From what energy sources is your local power company producing energy? From what you now know about the types of renewable energy available and your communities access to these energy resources (i.e. solar, wind, biomass), what combination of renewable energy sources do you think might work well in your community? Explain.

Are green energy pricing programs offered in your area? If so describe them. Have you chosen to participate in these programs?

Besides decreasing emissions, can you identify other benefits to the development of a less fossil-fueled dependent transportation system?

Describe the physical, social and economic barriers in your community that may prevent people from getting to places other than by car.

Are there alternative transportation options in your community, and how are they working? How do people without cars in your community get around?

How does your household heat and cool your home? Can you think of ways to reduce or change your fossil fuel use for heat and power? Are there bike trails and/or street bike corridors in your community/region? Do people use these for getting to work?

How might your household cut down on car trips?

Did reading this section make you want to do something differently or to take some action in your life? If so, explain.

### **Portsmouth Public Works**

*Biodiesel conversion for recycling and trash truck project:*

The city of Portsmouth has begun a project to convert some of their fleet of recycling and trash vehicles to run on a percentage biofuel. Due to the age of the vehicles and the desire for this project to succeed the city will first be using a B5 or 5% biofuel mixed with petroleum diesel then B10 and finally B20 to ensure that this vegetable oil fuel mix will function well and not cause problems with engine performance. Due to the need to comply with safety regulations for the fuel holding tank that will contain the mixed fuels for vehicle fill ups an updated spill plan is needed and is the current stumbling block for this project.

The fuel for this project will be recycled fryer grease which will be processed into biodiesel by Randy Bean owner of Bean Commercial Grease of Waterville, Maine.

Though this project is in it first stages it is a good example of little changes that can help our municipality reduce it's reliance on nonrenewable fossil fuels.

### Further Resources & Readings:

Transit links to area public transit websites.  
[webster.state.nh.us/dot/nhrideshare/links.htm](http://webster.state.nh.us/dot/nhrideshare/links.htm)

SABR Seacoast Area Bicycle Routes:  
[www.seacoastbikes.com](http://www.seacoastbikes.com)

UNH Biodiesel group  
[www.unh.edu/p2/biodiesel](http://www.unh.edu/p2/biodiesel)

PSNH, Northern Wood Power Project.  
[www.psnh.com/Energy/EnergyProject/NWP/P/print-faqs.html](http://www.psnh.com/Energy/EnergyProject/NWP/P/print-faqs.html)

Powering our Future. an Energy Sourcebook for Sustainable Living. by Kimberly K. Smith

New Hampshire Sustainable Energy Association  
<http://www.nhsea.org/index.html>

New England Wood Pellet, LLC provide the highest quality product, made from a locally grown, recycled product.  
<http://www.pelletheat.com>

Native Energy LLC  
A simple and effective renewable energy option that fights global warming  
[www.nativeenergy.com](http://www.nativeenergy.com)

Solar Components Corp Manchester N.H.  
Supply source for active and passive solar systems  
[www.solarcomponents.com](http://www.solarcomponents.com)

## Session 3: Eco-Housing and Green Building/Businesses Chapter 7 & 8

1. See what your local government's master or comprehensive plan recommends for future housing policy for your community or region. Does it call for increasing the supply of affordable housing? Does it encourage green building? Does it call for combined approaches?
2. How might an existing single-family (or multi-family) dwelling be altered to make it more sustainable? (Hint: Use the four sustainability objectives as a renovation guide).
3. Are there examples of green businesses or green buildings in your area? What are their green features? Consider visiting these. Are they being showcased as good examples? How do they meet (or not meet) the four sustainability objectives?
4. Does your local government's planning & development department have a green building program? Have they ever thought of this? If not consider giving them some information and web links about the various municipal green building programs underway in other communities (for eg. Austin, TX, Santa Monica, CA, Scottsdale, AZ).
5. Taking either an actual or hypothetical non-residential green building as an example, consider this building in light of the fourth sustainability objective. Whose human needs are associated with a building? What are some of these? Are human needs elsewhere on the planet involved, and if so, how? What are some of these needs?
6. See what your local government's master plan calls for in terms of business and/or economic development. What types of tools are proposed to encourage desired economic development? Does the plan call for any type of green or sustainable business development? Does your local government have community development or economic development staff? Do they offer any green business programs or incentives for greening business? Are they familiar with the concept of green businesses or green buildings? If not, consider providing them with some examples.

**Portsmouth Public Library:** The new Portsmouth Library which opened in Jan. 2007, is the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) municipal building in the state of NH and the first newly constructed LEED building in New England. The library will feature an energy efficient heating design with a super envelop of insulation to save energy. It has double paned glass windows that will not allow heat or cold in. All offices have at least one window and there are many windowed public spaces. The furnishings were made with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified wood. The library features a glassed in porch and an open courtyard. Waste from the Armory, the previous building on the site, was sorted into separate categories and most of the material recycled. Slate from the Armory was used on the roof of the top tower. A favorite feature for the employees is a bathroom with a shower so they can bike to work.

### Further Resources & Readings:

**A Pattern Language** by Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa and Murray Silverstein (1977)

**The Natural Step for Business: Wealth, Ecology and the Evolutionary Corporation**, by Brian Nattrass and Mary Altomare (1999)

**NH Sustainable Energy Association** helps us to incorporate renewable energy and sustainable technologies into our lives. It sponsors solar home tours featuring houses or businesses in NH. [www.nhsea.org](http://www.nhsea.org).

**Northeast Sustainable Energy Association** educates consumers to adopt sustainable energy and green building practices. [www.nesea.org](http://www.nesea.org).

**Safe Climate for Business** helps businesses understand and take action on climate change. You can calculate your organization's emissions and learn how to reduce your climate impact. [www.safeclimate.net](http://www.safeclimate.net).

**US Green Building Council** works to transform the way buildings and communities are designed. **LEED** (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a nationwide consensus-based rating system used to develop or renovate sustainable homes, neighborhoods and commercial buildings. [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)

**NH Office of Energy and Planning**  
<http://nh.gov/oep/index.htm>

## Session 4: Eco-Economic Development and Ecological Schools/Education (Chapter 9 & 10)

1. What are the basic needs of a community (a city or town) and the people who live in it, regardless of its size?
2. Starting with the most basic needs, what can happen if and when each of these basic needs cannot be met inside the community?
3. The terms “social equity”, “social capital”, and “environmental justice” are frequently-used expressions used to describe the relationship of people to the concept of sustainability. Examine how the fourth sustainability objective – meeting human needs fairly and efficiently – includes, or relates to these concepts.
4. Are there examples of community or neighborhood eco-economic development and community-building going on in your region? Describe these, and how they relate to the four sustainability objectives.

### Ecological Schools; Ecological Education

1. Explore how the school(s) in your community are or are not meeting each of the four sustainability objectives.
2. How might a school building and property such as the one(s) in your area be redesigned so as to go in the direction of the four sustainability objectives?
3. Do any of the schools in your community teach environmental education? What is included in this education? Are there nature centers or organizations in your community that offer environmental education?
4. Are there any schools in your community that have “green” features? Are these being showcased?

### Locally

While there are currently few businesses in the Portsmouth region that are working with a “green” business plan, there will be increasing opportunities to work with and support local businesses trying to improve the way they do business and serve our commercial demands. One way to begin thinking about greener business planning is to encourage local buying, asking for locally produced products and produce and encouraging vendors who pay attention to the details such as packaging and bagging. Our public schools required environmental education programs can be adapted to include the concepts of long term planning and sustainability. Currently the Portsmouth High School has an Environmental club that is interested in promoting the concepts of sustainability within the school department. They are pursuing issues of using alternatives to the current disposable lunchroom products.

### UNH Office of sustainability

In 1997, UNH began integrating sustainability into the University's identity, practices, and land grant mission - an unprecedented commitment to sustainability on UNH's part. To help UNH meet this commitment, the UNH Office of Sustainability (OS) was established with a generous gift from an anonymous alumnus to endow the program. OS is charged with collaborating with faculty, staff, administrators, and students to integrate the principles and practices of sustainability throughout UNH's "CORE" - curriculum, operations, research, and engagement with local, state, regional, national, and international partners. OS is the longest-standing endowed university sustainability program in the nation.

### Further Resources & Readings:

[Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution](#), by Paul Hawken. (1999)

[Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age](#), by Michael Shuman (1998)

<http://www.nofanh.org/>  
Northeast Organic Farming Association -- New Hampshire Chapter

<http://organicliving.com/index.html>  
A Better World: ORGANIC LIVING

<http://www.homepower.com/>  
Home Power Magazine - Small Scale Renewable Energy (RE) Source

[Greenbiz.com](http://www.greenbiz.com) is a website that features a toolbox of checklists, assessments, briefings and hands-on help for a variety of sustainable business issues.

GreenBlue is a nonprofit institute that stimulates the creative redesign of industry by focusing the expertise of professional communities to create practical solutions, resources, and opportunities for implementing sustainability. [www.greenblue.org/](http://www.greenblue.org/)

## Session 5: Sustainable Agriculture and Dealing with Waste (Chapter 11 & 12)

### Chapter 11 Sustainable Agriculture

1. Using the four sustainability objectives as a guide, discuss what sustainable agriculture and food production and provision means. What might these look like in your region?
2. Do you or have you ever had a vegetable garden? If so, describe the experience of growing and eating your own food.

### Chapter 12: Dealing with Waste

1. Identify and discuss some of the “take-make-waste” patterns in your community, your business, and your household. First, are any of these unnecessary – that is, can they be avoided in the first place, or at least reduced? Next, using the eco-cycling principle that sees waste as a resource, how could some of these patterns be changed?
2. A growing number of businesses around the world are engaging in *industrial ecology* – that is, using the by-products of other businesses as raw materials in their own processes, and vice versa. Are there any examples of businesses in your region that are doing this?
3. Discuss ways in which your communities waste systems (i.e. sewage treatment, land fills) conflict with the cycles of nature. Given the solutions you’ve read about in the *Waste* chapter, which solutions do you think your community could change most easily to make its waste systems better fit the natural cycles?
4. The authors in the book note that “dealing with waste also means changing patterns of consumption.” How might your community begin to encourage people to change their patterns of consumption? What are some steps you could take to change your patterns of consumption?

### Local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

CSA is a relationship of mutual support and commitment between local farmers and community members who pay the farmer an annual membership fee and receive a weekly share of the harvest during the growing season. The goals of CSA support a sustainable agriculture system which provides farmers with direct outlets for farm products and ensures fair compensation

### Seacoast CSA’s

- ❖ Apple Annie – Brentwood NH 603-778-8881
- ❖ Leeks & Bounds – N. Hampton NH 603-964-5969
- ❖ New Roots Farm – Newmarket NH, [www.newrootsfarm.com](http://www.newrootsfarm.com)

### Further Resources & Readings:

Seacoast Farmers Markets  
[www.seacoastgrowers.org](http://www.seacoastgrowers.org)  
603-778-6003 in season hotline

Kelly Brook Farm  
phone: 603-702-0342  
Organic Chicken & Pork

NH Farm Stand Directory  
[www.agriculture.nh.gov](http://www.agriculture.nh.gov)

Silke Psula at Portsmouth Solid Waste Dept, a great resource for all aspects of dealing with waste  
[spsula@pw.cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:spsula@pw.cityofportsmouth.com)  
Telephone# 603-427-1530

The Way We Eat – Why our Food Choices Matter, Peter Singer and Jim Mason.  
Several copies available in the Portsmouth Public Library

“Home Grown: The Case for Local Food in a Global Market,” Worldwatch Paper 163. Worldwatch Institute 2002  
[www.worldwatch.org](http://www.worldwatch.org)

Reduce unwanted junk mail by writing to Marketing Association’s Mail Preference Service at PO Box 643 Carmel, N.Y., 10512. Ask for your name to be removed.

Neighbor Nation.net is a neighborhood based program that helps neighbors connect for giving away unwanted items, sharing stuff, offering services or starting or joining a group. Visit [www.neighbornation.net](http://www.neighbornation.net). Also similar is Free cycle Network at [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org)

## Session 6: Protecting Biodiversity and Sustainable Land Use and Planning (Chapter 13 & 14)

1. Why are forests, wetlands, soil, rivers and streams, and wild creatures important to us humans? Are they important in and of themselves, and if so, why? Why might the very diversity of species on this planet be critical?
2. What are some important ecosystems in your area? What kinds of efforts are going on to protect them?
3. What do you think city and town planning is, and why is it important? Why could it be a useful or important avenue for working toward a sustainable community? What are some planning “successes” and “failures” in your community?
4. Are there some examples of “sprawl development” in your community or region? What are the characteristics of sprawl development? How does sprawl development affect people’s quality of life experience? How does it violate each of the four sustainability objectives?
5. Imagine you are a member of a community/municipal task force assigned with the job of coming up with new standards to guide development in the municipality or region. Based upon what you came up with in the previous question, think of some standards for new development or for redevelopment in your community that could guide it in the direction of each of the four sustainability objectives (Try for 2-3 standards for each sustainability objective). After you are done, see if any of your standards guide development toward all four objectives concurrently.

### Further Resources & Readings:

The Urban Open Space Foundation is dedicated to making open space systems recognized as essential to a healthy lifestyle for cities.

<http://www.uosf.org/>

NH Natural Heritage Inventory We currently study more than 600 plant and animal species and more than 250 communities and systems. Surveys on private lands are conducted only with landowner permission.

<http://www.dred.state.nh.us/divisions/forstandlands/bureaus/naturalheritage/aboutus.htm>

City of Portsmouth Master Plan

<http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/masterplan/index.html>

Whistler, Canada’s award winning comprehensive sustainability plan that is strongly influenced by the Natural Step can be found at

[www.whistler.ca/Sustainability/Whistler2020/](http://www.whistler.ca/Sustainability/Whistler2020/)

One way to begin understanding biodiversity in your community is to identify important habitats, flora and fauna that may have influenced its history and patterns of development. It is important to determine if any of these species are considered rare or threatened by the State of New Hampshire or the federal government. Often, one may find plants and animals that can serve as indicator species for biodiversity (bioindicators). The character of Portsmouth may also be influenced by the presence of special habitats. In your opinion, what native flora and fauna might be considered bioindicators in and around the City of Portsmouth? Explain. What habitats do you consider important and why?

What is your opinion on how well the city planners are doing in terms of protection of habitats you identified above? Is there consideration of connections among wilder lands (corridors) in the Portsmouth Master Plan and current zoning regulations? Why do you think this might be important? What is the current buffer width required for wetlands and streams in Portsmouth? Do you think this distance is great enough or too great? Why? Can you identify planning successes and failures in terms of biodiversity protection in Portsmouth?

### **The Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast.**

The Workforce Housing Coalition is a united group of businesses, government and community groups advocating and working towards a responsible increase in regional workforce housing. Their focus is community sustainability through diverse housing opportunities. For more information about the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast, contact them at (603) 766-3131 or [info@seacoastwhc.org](mailto:info@seacoastwhc.org).

## Session 7: What Gets in the Way of Change and Three Change Processes That Work (Chapter 15 & 16)

### Begin with the Circle Question

1. Have you ever attended a public hearing where a plan or project that interested or concerned you was being presented for public comment or input? What did you experience being there? Did you experience the feeling of participation in the plan or project?
2. Have you ever experienced a situation such as the one described on pp.179-180, where a plan or project designed by another is thrust upon you? How did that experience make you feel? How does it compare to the experience of participating in plan-making or projects from the beginning?
3. Consider the role of a guiding vision in plan-making and implementation (either work or personal). What are some examples of this from your own life or the lives of others? After we form a vision of what it is we want – be it a career, a life experience – what do we do next? How does this relate to “back-casting” described on p.193?
4. Open up your notebook to the grid that is entitled “Planning and Monitoring Results for Personal Vision”. We will learn the effectiveness of this simple tool to help us apply the four System Conditions of *The Natural Step* in a way that we can carry out to our larger community.

### Further Resources & Readings:

*How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* by David Bornstein (2003)

*The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People are Changing the World* by Paul H. Ray (2000)

*Wisdom for a Livable Planet* by Carl McDaniel (2005)

**Portsmouth Listens** a collaborative effort of citizens to shape the future of the city we love.

[www.portsmouthlistens.org](http://www.portsmouthlistens.org)

**North American Eco-Municipality Network** includes academic institutions and non-profit organizations at the local, state, national and international level established to exchange information and share resources related to sustainable community development.

### From Wisconsin:

*Participating in the Development Process—A Best Practices Guide for Developers, Neighborhoods & Policymakers.*

[www.ci.madison.wi.us/planning/](http://www.ci.madison.wi.us/planning/)

Portsmouth, NH City Planning: <http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/planning/index.htm>

City of Portsmouth, NH Sustainable Practices Blue Ribbon Committee:  
<http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/sustainability/index.htm>

Citizen planning in S. York County, ME: [http://www.keysregion.org/keys\\_ofbd/intro.htm](http://www.keysregion.org/keys_ofbd/intro.htm)

Kittery, ME Comprehensive Plan: [http://www.kittery.org/Pages/KitteryME\\_CompPlan/index](http://www.kittery.org/Pages/KitteryME_CompPlan/index)

**Session 8: Steps to Change and  
Process Leader  
(Chapter 17 & 18)**

1. Do you think it is necessary for there to be a process leader for a sustainable community initiative? How else might it be accomplished?
2. Do you think the eco-municipality approach can work successfully in your community or region? What are its advantages? What are the challenges? How might these challenges be surmounted?
3. How integrated are the four system conditions in your thinking now?
4. This being the last session, did we meet our original objectives? Review introduction page.
5. How relevant is a global perspective to our own decision making and planning?

**In Dane County Wisconsin -- Sustainability Action Teams:**

Sustainability Action Teams directly help in efforts to get Dane County and area communities to become eco-municipalities. Teams actively influence others through example, by engaging in dialogue, by becoming an advocate and organizing to promote change. To date, the Sustainability Action Teams have facilitated several study circles, built and installed rain barrels at the homes of a number of community members, organized and led tours of local sustainability best practices, designed and constructed informational displays of sustainable community development and have given presentations about eco-municipalities to area audiences. For more information contact Sustain Dane at 608.819.0689 or email [info@sustaindane.org](mailto:info@sustaindane.org)

**Further Resources & Readings:**

*Going Public: An Organizers Guide to Citizen Action* by Michael Gecan (2004)

**The Granite Earth Institute, a sister organization to the Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI)**

*Motivating individuals to examine and transform personal values and habits, to accept responsibility for the earth, and to act on that commitment.*

[www.graniteearth.org](http://www.graniteearth.org)

University of New Hampshire investigates sustainability efforts at UNH

[www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/](http://www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/)

**The Piscataqua Sustainability Initiative (PSI) is developing a website at [www.thepsi.net](http://www.thepsi.net) which will present information about frameworks for sustainability, examples of sustainable practices, links to related sites and a variety of other resources.**

**Blekinge Institute of Technology offers a master's degree program on Strategic Leadership Towards Sustainability that is based on the Natural Step. [www.bth.se/tmslm](http://www.bth.se/tmslm)**