



## 2008 Annual Report

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**[www.sustainableSWcolorado.org](http://www.sustainableSWcolorado.org)**

## **I. Chair's Introduction**

This year offered significant steps toward greater sustainability in Durango and La Plata County, and notable accomplishments for the Sustainability Alliance of Southwest Colorado.

Both the City of Durango and La Plata County hired new leaders in 2008: City Manager Ron LeBlanc and County Manager Shawn Nau. Both came to meetings with the Sustainability Alliance Board to share views about building a more sustainable community. We welcome their leadership and willingness to collaborate with one other and their openness to input from citizen's groups such as ours. We applaud our elected officials for their choices.

In City Hall, Ron LeBlanc has proposed reorganization of duties around recycling and transit into the City Manager's office to form the core of a Sustainability Services Department, as well as budgetary measures to provide fiscal means to support sustainability initiatives. Meanwhile, La Plata County appointed Walt Serfoss as its first Sustainability Coordinator.

A major step forward this year was the formation of the Four Corners Office for Resource Efficiency (4CORE), with initial major funding from the City, the County, La Plata Electric Association (LPEA), and a later contribution from BP, as well as a modest contribution from the Sustainability Alliance. After filing nonprofit corporation papers early this year, 4CORE hired Executive Director Aileen Tracy.

A major responsibility for 4CORE will be the development of a Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP) for La Plata County, as a step toward fulfilling the commitments the City and County made in 2006 in endorsing the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement. That political commitment resulted in large part from citizen activism coordinated by the Sustainability Alliance and the Southwest Colorado Renewable Energy Society (now the Alliance's Smart Energy Committee, or SEC). The merger of SWCRES into the SEC was a significant development for the Sustainability Alliance this year, and support for 4CORE and its mission remains the SEC's highest priority.

Another major development in 2008 was the completion of the *La Plata County Compass*, a concise but far-reaching strategic planning document. It articulates sustainability as a core value and lays out objectives in six key areas. In public meetings presenting the plan, county commissioners and their top staff made clear their commitment to supporting win-win-win initiatives that address multiple objectives. Such systemic thinking is essential to sustainability, and we applaud the County for conceiving its strategic plan in this way.

In the City of Durango, one of the most controversial topics of 2008 was the proposal for a clustered development on property near and partly encompassing the iconic Twin Buttes. Responding to the sustainability goals in the City's *2007 Comprehensive Plan*, the proposal from Lightner Creek LLC articulates ambitious sustainability goals, including energy conservation, renewable energy generation, traffic management, affordable housing, and community gardens, while offering an extensive wildlife management plan.

Despite the many positive aspects of the project, significant opposition emerged around siting and wildlife issues. Sustainability Alliance members spoke articulately on both sides of the issue, and the City Council ultimately voted to annex the property and approve the conceptual plan, subject to further review. A primary reason was the Council's conclusion that the alternative (development under state and county guidelines) promised the feared negative consequences without the benefits to the City of the development's positive elements. Key to achieving the project's sustainability goals will be the architectural design guidelines for construction through the projected 15-year build-out. Sustainability Alliance members, and possibly the organization itself, are likely to play a role in formulating these guidelines to ensure that the developer's promises are fulfilled on the ground.

The major initiative of the Sustainability Alliance's Sustainable Local Economic Development (SLED) Committee in 2008 was the nurturing of an alliance of local, independently owned businesses, now operating as La Plata Organizations Cooperatively Advocating Local (LOCAL). LOCAL raised funds for a "Be Local" coupon book that appeared in November, costing just \$12 and offering some \$2,500 in savings at local businesses. Besides providing direct benefits to citizens and business owners, the proceeds should provide sufficient support for LOCAL to spin off as an independent organization in 2009, supporting sustainability by keeping residents' money circulating in the local economy.

The ongoing efforts of the Sustainability Alliance's Food, Agriculture, and Farm-to-School Committee have resulted in an increased presence of nutritious, locally grown food in the region's schools, as well as the reciprocal support of local growers. The program received national attention at the Democratic National Convention in Denver in August.

With sponsorship from the Education and Outreach (E&O) Committee, Green Drinks came to Durango in 2008, meeting on the third Wednesday of each month beginning in February and attracting new interest in the Sustainability Alliance. The committee has also invested significant efforts in the development of a Sustainability Action Program, designed to engage the energy of participants in the 2009 Southwest Colorado Community Design Academy. Also planned for 2009 is a renewal of regular membership meetings, featuring speakers and film presentations followed by discussion on related sustainability topics.

One Sustainability Alliance goal for 2008 was the development of a coherent marketing and fundraising campaign. Unfortunately, this effort was derailed by time conflicts of key Board members. Late in the year, the Board revisited the organization's mission statement, seeking a narrower focus that will enable us to better target our efforts in 2009 and beyond.

Demanding outside time commitments led to unexpected turnover on the Board this year. Julie Levy, who serves on the staff of the Regional Housing Alliance, resigned in February. In April, the Board appointed Carol Clark, formerly of the San Juan Citizens Alliance and now co-owner of Eco Logic Events, to fill her seat. Laurie Dickson, owner of the Eco Home Center, resigned in October. And Laura Lewis, Assistant Director of the Region 9 Economic Development District, decided after serving a 1-year term that she is unable to continue.

The loss of these Board members highlights the challenges faced by a wholly volunteer organization, placing even greater importance on our fundraising efforts in 2009. On the other hand, we have gathered estimates of the amount of time contributed to the community through the Sustainability Alliance in 2008. Although the estimates are rough, we are proud to report that our Board and other community members contributed more than 3,000 volunteer hours in 2008 through their efforts with the organization.

To successfully address the many opportunities coming our way, we will need volunteer effort from a wider membership and sufficient financial resources to have at least a small staff to manage the group and its activities. We encourage community members to *become members of the Sustainability Alliance* (donations are tax-deductible), either by filling out a membership form [online](#) or by requesting a form via [info@sustainableSWcolorado.org](mailto:info@sustainableSWcolorado.org).

We also encourage community members to consider new ways to help build sustainability in our community. If every individual engaged his or her passion in a single piece of the larger effort, we could have an enormous impact on our neighbors, on the community at large, and on the futures of our children and grandchildren. *Please join us.*

*—Dick White, Chair, Sustainability Alliance of Southwest Colorado*

## **II. Mission and Functions**

In late 2008, the Board of Directors began discussing revisions on the mission statement, primarily to make it more succinct and dynamic. These discussions were incomplete at the time of this writing.

### *Mission*

The Sustainability Alliance's mission is to help the communities of Southwest Colorado incorporate the concept of sustainability into all local and regional activities. We work with policymakers, business leaders, community groups, and individuals and inform them about the complex linkages among critical areas including environmental quality, social health, and economic development.

### *Vision*

A sustainable community is one that preserves and restores the integrity of its natural environment, nurtures healthy human and other living systems, and maintains a vital self-reliant economy, generation after generation. A sustainable community meets the basic needs of all people, which include but are not limited to the needs for food, water, shelter, health, safety, autonomy, connectedness, and meaning.

### *Functions*

To fulfill its mission, the Sustainability Alliance seeks to perform the following functions:

- offer coordination and synergistic connections for the diverse individuals and groups working to fulfill community needs;
- develop and maintain a comprehensive and freely available listing of community needs and resources;
- research best practices adopted elsewhere to foster sustainable communities;
- communicate with and educate the community about choices that affect sustainability;
- undertake or support specific projects that foster sustainability;
- instigate funding initiatives to support local sustainability efforts;
- educate the public about implications for sustainability of proposed public policy initiatives;
- as resources permit, coordinate sustainability efforts on a regional scale in Southwestern Colorado and on a bioregional scale in the Four Corners region.

### III. Activities in 2008

The [2007 Annual Report](#) recounts the development of the Sustainability Alliance through late 2007. The 2008 report summarizes activities since that time.

#### **Education and Outreach (E&O) Committee**

*Chair: Werner Heiber*

*Participants: Board members Rebecca Koeppen, Lisa Mastny, Marcus Renner, and Dick White, with Heather Gregory, Kevin Lockrow, Lissa Ray, and occasionally others.*

The mission of the E&O committee, articulated at the 2007 Board retreat, is "to develop relationships and vehicles for outreach to Sustainability Alliance members, to policymakers, and to the community at large." This replaced an earlier mission "to inform the larger community about the importance of sustainability in our daily lives and for future generations."

The year's activities were divided into three broad segments:

1. Continuing work on 2007 goals such as the Green Umbrella Networking Event, nonprofit resource guide, sustainability celebration, systems workshop, Green Drinks, and discussions on how to optimize the impacts of volunteers. This last topic, not fully resolved, had the effect of prompting a realistic consideration of our capabilities.
2. Letting go of several goals, experiencing a summer lull, and re-grouping.
3. Revitalizing old and embracing new goals such as: membership meetings, *Durango Herald* articles, a high school sustainability competition, sustainability courses, and a "Sustainability Action Program" with the SW Colorado Community Design Academy.

#### **Summary of 2008 Activities**

The Committee continued or initiated the following activities in 2008:

- **Initiated sustainability decision-making guidelines** for elected officials (subsequently taken on by the Policy Committee).
- **Engaged in discussions on how to optimize the impact of an organization staffed wholly by volunteers.** Led by Marcus Renner, this was carried on over several meetings and asked the following key questions of committees, later discussed at a Board meeting:
  1. What is the purpose of your work? What are you trying to accomplish, and what are your primary goals? Think about your committee's work relative to the overall organizational mission.
  2. What is the geographic scope of your committee's work: Durango, La Plata County, SW Colorado, the Four Corners? Think about where you want to focus now, rather than your long-term hopes and dreams.
  3. Who is the audience for your work? 'Everybody' is a fine answer in that there is truly no discrimination or priority between different groups.
  4. What resources are available and/or needed to reach your goal? What key constraints do you face and what opportunities can you take advantage of?
  5. What role do you envision for the E&O committee in helping you accomplish your goal?

Although the discussions were never completed, they helped clarify the focus of E&O efforts. As a result, several projects were discontinued (see below), and the committee reviewed its priorities during the second half of the year.

- **Confirmed publication of four sustainability-related articles in the *Durango Herald* in 2009**, following initial discussions between Rebecca Koeppen and John Peel. The topics will be: a general introduction to sustainability and its importance to our community, followed by economic, environmental and social aspects of sustainability. Dick White, Faye Schrater, and Lisa Mastny agreed to review the articles prior to submission.
- **Held monthly Green Drinks meetings** beginning in winter 2007, with attendance ranging from 3 to 30 participants. Locations included Carver's, Cocina Linda, and Steamworks. The events will continue at least through the winter of 2008/09.
- **Scheduled monthly membership meetings** to start in January 2009, coordinated by committee members Heather Gregory and Kevin Lockrow. After contacting the Durango Library, they arranged for all events to be held in the new facility, which has a meeting space for up to 80 people. Topics will likely alternate between films and presentations, including videos from the Bioneers conferences. The LEED-certified library will be the subject of the first talk, to be held in cooperation with the library. The Durango Discovery Museum will also collaborate on the meetings.
- **Brainstormed a potential High School Sustainability Competition** in collaboration with the Discovery Museum. Initial meetings between Werner Heiber and Dick White and Superintendent Keith Owens, the 9R cabinet, and the San Juan Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) have been promising. A competition outline is awaiting input from 9R and BOCES. It is our hope that a competition would lead to an integrated high school sustainability curriculum.
- **Organized two sustainability related discussion courses** from the Northwest Earth Institute, to be offered in late 2008 or early 2009. Rebecca Koeppen and Keith Fox will coordinate "Voluntary Simplicity" at the Three Springs offices of the Tierra Group, and Lissa Ray will coordinate "Choices for Sustainability."
- **Outlined a "Sustainability Action Program,"** to be implemented in cooperation with the La Plata County Community Development Department. This is conceived as a follow-up to the Southwest Colorado Community Design Academy, inaugurated in 2008 by the Department and the San Juan Institute for Natural and Cultural Resources. The proposed program would meet a need articulated by Design Academy alumni for a mechanism to apply their experience in the larger community.

The Committee cancelled the following activities in 2008, due to either a lack of volunteers or a perception of insufficient impact:

- **Hosting a Green Umbrella Networking Event.** Although the initial event, held in the fall of 2007, was rated by the 50 participants as a success, we cancelled a follow-up event scheduled for May due to lack of interest. We concluded that we do not have the capacity to act as a nonprofit networking organization.
- **Drafting a nonprofit resource guide** (cancelled for the same reasons as above).
- **Holding a systems workshop** to promote and demonstrate the importance of systems thinking (cancelled due to lack of manpower and interest by elected officials and municipal staff).
- **Hosting a "local sustainability celebration"** (cancelled owing to volunteer limitations and to a proposal from Carol Clark to hold an event dedicated to green

living and sustainability).

- **Improving and developing the website** (task was assumed by the Marketing and Fundraising Committee)

### **Executive Committee**

*Chair: Dick White*

*Participants: Vice Chair Rebecca Koeppen, Secretary Lisa Mastny, and Treasurer Tom Riesing*

The Executive Committee met 12 times between December 1, 2007 and December 1, 2008, customarily on the Thursday preceding the monthly Board meeting. The committee reviews minutes of Board meetings for referral to the Board for approval. It also considers the diversity of issues that might warrant attention from the Sustainability Alliance, addressing some of them and selecting critical issues for consideration by the full Board. The Committee manages additional routine business by e-mail consultation.

#### **Summary of 2008 Activities**

Most Executive Committee discussions in 2008 concerned internal operations. Among activities not mentioned elsewhere in this report, the Committee:

- **Applied for website funding.** In May, the Committee submitted a \$1,000 proposal to the La Plata Electric Association (LPEA) Roundup Foundation to support upgrade of the website. The proposal was not funded, but we were encouraged to follow up with LPEA for possible funding from its Educational Committee.
- **Submitted nominee for Heroes of Sustainability award.** In July, the Sustainability Alliance nominated Katrina Blair of the Turtle Lake Refuge for a Hero of Sustainability Award from the Alliance for Sustainable Colorado. We were delighted that Katrina won the statewide award in the nonprofit category.

### **Food, Agriculture, and Farm-to-School Committee**

*Chair: Jim Dyer*

*Participants: Board members Katy Pepinsky and Linda Illsley, and numerous other active participants.*

#### **Summary of 2008 Activities**

The Food, Agriculture, and Farm-to-School Committee (FTS) met 11 times between December 1, 2007 and December 1, 2008, with an average of 15 participants. Among its 2008 highlights, the Committee:

- **Received recognition for the Durango FTS program** at the Democratic National Convention in Denver by the Rhode Island School of Design and the Mayor's Office.
- **Was featured in local and state media**, including an [interview](#) with Chair Jim Dyer by the *Denver Post* Food Editor, and [article](#) in the *Durango Herald* on August 21, and an editorial in the *Durango Herald* supporting the FTS concept on August 22.

- **Participated in the Colorado Food Systems Policy Council Steering Committee**, with FTS as a prime focus.
- **Engaged in conversations with state leaders, the Colorado Health Foundation, and others on developing a Colorado FTS program.**
- **Participated in the Colorado FTS working group**, including Colorado State University and the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union.
- **Supported a Farm Aid proposal for FTS**, with Rocky Mountain Farmers Union.
- **Facilitated the purchase by Durango schools** of several hundred heads of lettuce and other produce, Fall 2008.
- **Facilitated the routine use in Durango schools** of local salad greens and grass-fed organic beef.

### **Marketing and Fundraising Committee**

*Participants: Board members Carol Clark, Lisa Mastny, Laura Lewis Marchino, and Laurie Dickson.*

The Marketing and Fundraising (M&F) Committee was formed in early 2008 following discussions at the January Board retreat. Goals include: increasing the visibility of Sustainability Alliance programs throughout SW Colorado; increasing the visibility of the Sustainability Alliance to build its donor base and increase the sustainability of the organization (both time and money); and educating the public on sustainability issues.

#### **Summary of 2008 Activities**

- **Initiated efforts to update website.** The committee identified the most pressing needs for the site and explored options for hiring someone to do the updating.
- **Received funding approval for the Buy Local campaign** (see Sustainable Local Economic Development).
- **Collaborated with the La Plata Economic Development Action Partnership (LEAD)** (see Sustainable Local Economic Development).
- **Recommended free opportunities for advertising**, including via the website and listserv; links to appropriate sites; community ads in the *Herald*; PSAs; local briefs (about community education programs, volunteer opportunities, and partnerships and coalitions); the annual report; and the "Heart of the Herald" section.
- **Recommended opportunities for educating the public**, including: radio (Chamber Chat or Talk of the Town, Four Corners Broadcasting, Good Dirt radio show); TV (DCAT series on sustainability); monthly newsletter, blogs & email blast; area chamber newsletters, LPEA magazine.
- **Developed a list of tasks for 2009**, including: developing a marketing and fundraising plan with a budget; designing a logo; looking into an article series; promoting the Buy Local coupon book & campaign; updating technology (website, e-mail updates, and links to resources); pursuing local grants (LPEA, Community

Foundation, Ballantine) and civic groups (Rotary, Kiwanis etc); holding a "signature" event.

## **Policy Committee**

*Chair: Dick White*

*Participants: Board members Werner Heiber, Rebecca Koeppen, and Tom Riesing, along with former Board members Bliss Bruen and Roy Horvath, with occasional participation by others.*

The committee met six times between January and November 2008. In March, the committee agreed on the following mission: "to track local and regional sustainability issues, formulate policy responses, and advocate for them with local government and other agencies."

Most of the policy activity of the committee has been simply to track developments concerning sustainability initiatives by the City of Durango, La Plata County, and the Four Corners Office for Resource Efficiency (4CORE), though most of the 4CORE involvement has been undertaken by the Smart Energy Committee (SEC).

### **Summary of 2008 Activities**

The Committee initiated the following activities in 2008:

- **Developed general committee definitions.** A priority of the committee is to develop the mechanics of addressing the multiple components of its broad mission. This includes procedures for coordinating with other committees and with other groups to identify the most effective group to lead efforts on specific policy issues.
- **Monitored the La Plata County emissions inventory and action plan** and recommended that it be undertaken jointly with Durango and other jurisdictions. The emissions inventory was completed, but substantial uncertainties were identified in its largest component, emissions from oil and gas production. The County is continuing to work with the industry to supply the relevant data. Revision of the County oil and gas regulations offered a vehicle for mandating data submission (see below). In October, 4CORE convened the first meeting in an expected year-long effort to formulate a climate action plan. Many Sustainability Alliance members, especially from the SEC and Policy Committees, are actively involved in this effort.
- **Monitored the La Plata County Compass strategic plan.** The *County Compass* reflects input from Sustainability Alliance members at public meetings in 2007. Four Policy Committee members attended at least one of the three roll-out public meetings. The Board of County Commissioners is using the *Compass* as a decision-making tool in reviewing county government and making budgetary decisions.
- **Monitored the City and County sustainability plans** and recommended that they be undertaken jointly. The Sustainability Alliance hosted Board discussions with new City Manager Ron LeBlanc and County Manager Shawn Nau. The County's new Sustainability Coordinator, Walt Serfoss, also attended several Board meetings and Green Drinks gatherings. The Durango City Council identified sustainability as one of its top priorities for 2009. Accordingly, the proposed 2009 City budget would make several administrative and financial rearrangements to facilitate sustainability efforts. Both governments have teams reviewing internal operations. The County convened a meeting of representatives from all governmental entities in La Plata County to

discuss development of a common approach to sustainability. The County Community Development Department, now headed by former Sustainability Alliance Board member Erick Aune, has conducted several workshops and engaged consultants to address sustainability issues. At the invitation of Erick, Dick White participated in interviews for the new long-range planner position subsequently filled by Jason Meininger.

Members of the Sustainability Alliance (particularly the Policy Committee) have attended most of the County-sponsored meetings. In particular, Dick White and Lisa Mastny participated in the 2008 Southwest Colorado Community Design Academy, where Dick also made a presentation on sustainability. Dick and SEC Chair Kim Herb joined County Commissioner Wally White, Erick Aune, and Walt Serfoss in attending the annual meeting of ICLEI: Communities for Sustainability, held in Albuquerque in May. At the meeting, Commissioner White accepted an award for the County's completion of its greenhouse gas emissions inventory. Since then, the City of Durango has joined ICLEI.

- **Assisted with 4CORE start-up.** 4CORE incorporated as a nonprofit, formed a Board of Directors, and hired Aileen Tracy as Executive Director (beginning in June). The Sustainability Alliance Board hosted Aileen for a conversation in July. (See the Smart Energy Committee summary for other 4CORE developments.)
- **Provided input on Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) rule-making.** Several Policy committee members attended the COGCC public meeting in Durango, though the Committee did not submit comments. In local rulemaking by the Board of County Commissioners, the Sustainability Alliance submitted a proposed amendment from the SEC that would mandate oil and gas industry reporting on greenhouse gas emissions from their operations. This was not adopted, but we understand that the County commissioners and staff are continuing collaborative efforts with the industry to secure the critical data.
- **Raised sustainability awareness during 2008 County and Congressional elections.** The Sustainability Alliance participated in formulating questions for the County Commissioner candidate forum sponsored by the San Juan Citizens Alliance.
- **Submitted potential budget requests to the City and County for 2009.** The Sustainability Alliance submitted proposals to La Plata County for supplemental funding in 2008 and for ongoing funding in 2009 from the Sustainable Local Economic Development Committee (SLED) to support development of a coupon book for LOCAL. (See Sustainable Local Economic Development section for details.)
- **Sought to establish Durango as a national "Center of Excellence" in sustainability.** Some would argue that the Twin Buttes development, for which the Durango City Council voted approval of a conceptual plan in November, is a step in this direction. Owing to divisions within the Policy Committee and the larger organization, however, the Committee recommended that the organization take no formal position on this project. Individual Sustainability Alliance members spoke on both sides of the debate, agreeing on the systematic development of sustainable community elements, but differing primarily over the suitability of the chosen site and potential impacts on wildlife. Former Board members Bliss Bruen and Roy Horvath, acting as members of the Grassroots Visioning Project steering committee, collaborated with City staff in convening a successful public meeting to provide a non-partisan forum for discussing the Twin Buttes project and possible alternatives.

- **Encouraged wider public meeting attendance.** Among other topics discussed briefly during the year was a suggestion that the Committee marshal volunteers to routinely attend meetings of City and County Boards.

The Committee cancelled or deferred the following activities in 2008:

- **Developing a concise set of “sustainability decision-making parameters”** that might be useful to public officials. This process was initiated but has not pursued this idea further.
- **Providing input to the Region 9 update of the Operation Healthy Communities indicator study.** While it proved to be too late to make contributions to the 2008 study, the committee hopes to play a more active role when the study is next updated.
- **Monitoring implementation of the County Land Use Code.** The Land Use Code is still on hold pending other issues.
- **Undertaking policy initiatives to facilitate work by other SASCO committees.** The Policy Committee found no need for this in 2008.
- **Analysing the sustainability of City and County budgets.** No effort was made on this very substantial task.

### **Smart Energy Committee (SEC)**

*Chairs: Charlie Kiene (through March), Kim Herb*

*Participants: Board members Dick White and Linda Illsley, and some 10 others, including former Board member Tim Wheeler.*

The SEC formed in January 2008 to continue the work of the Southwest Colorado Renewable Energy Society (SWCRES), which merged with the Sustainability Alliance at the end of 2007. The SEC adopted the following mission: “to support sustainable energy initiatives in public and private forums through energy efficiency, renewable energy, and advocating for facilitating a reduced carbon footprint in the Four Corners region.”

The SEC has set the following goals:

1. Support the Four Corners Office for Resource Efficiency (advocate for 4CORE and advocate for and participate in the development of the Climate Action Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in La Plata);
2. Influence policy (advocate for energy efficiency, renewable energy and carbon reduction policies at the local and state levels by: researching and understanding policies that are being developed, forming committee positions and advocating for strong EE, RE and carbon reducing policies; staying abreast of legislative issues/building codes/regulations; promoting representative support for sustainable energy initiatives; educating local and state representatives of the benefits of specific policy changes; and supporting Green Candidates, within limits of Sustainability Alliance non-profit status);
3. Create markets to support a sustainable local economy with respect to energy issues, by: (a) working with businesses to help them achieve sustainable practices (recommending that they reduce their carbon footprint by a specific amount and supporting those that do), and (b) seeing major investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy locally by working with local funding institutions to advocate for increased investment in these areas, advocate for a

system to track these investments, and promoting the economic viability of the initiatives.

### Summary of 2008 Activities

The Committee continued or initiated the following activities in 2008:

- **Monitored the La Plata County Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory**, including the study's release and data.
- **Advocated for adequate funding of 4CORE.**
- **Collaborated with the San Juan Citizens Alliance and League of Women Voters candidate forums for County Commissioners.**
- **Engaged with local state legislators to promote energy efficiency policies and funding.**
- **Successfully got SWCRES founding member and SEC member Tim Wheeler appointed to the 4CORE Board of Directors**, following a year in which he took a very active role on the 4CORE Steering Committee.
- **Recommended and approved a donation to 4CORE of \$1,000** from SWCRES-derived funds, fulfilling the commitment made by SWCRES in the course of the SWCRES/ Sustainability Alliance merger.
- **Actively supported the preparation by 4CORE Director Aileen Tracy of the New Energy Communities proposal to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs**, which led to a \$1.2 million award to support smart energy initiatives in La Plata County.
- **Cosponsored the October 23 climate science presentations by Dr. Kristen Averyt**, one of which served as a successful kickoff event for the renamed Climate and Energy Action Plan (CEAP). Kim Herb worked closely with 4CORE to implement the CEAP kickoff meeting. The event was attended by approximately 90 people including representatives of Durango, Bayfield, Ignacio, La Plata County, and the Southern Ute Tribe; local businesses; the oil and gas industry; Fort Lewis College; 9R school district; and a variety of local nonprofits including social services, environmental protection, ecological conservation, and housing.
- **Served on the CEAP Coordinating Team.** Both SEC Chair Kim Herb and member Ryan Huggins serve on the team and worked closely to implement the CEAP Work Group Summit meeting on November 12, 2008. The summit was coordinated to assemble and direct work groups put in place to develop the CEAP. The event was attended by approximately 50 people. Between SEC members and Board members, the Sustainability Alliance has representation on 7 of the 8 work groups (Emissions Inventory, Reduction Targets, Climate Change Preparation, Science, Technology, and Analysis Advisory, Agriculture, Forestry, and Waste GHG Mitigation, Energy Supply GHG Mitigation, and Residential, Commercial, & Industrial GHG Mitigation). The only work group without SASCO representation is Transportation GHG Mitigation.
- **Notified Sustainability Alliance members (via list-serv) regarding the federal draft environmental impact statement for proposed energy transmission corridors on public lands** in the 11 western United States, including Colorado. The notice urged recipients to tell federal agencies that the corridors must avoid our most

sensitive landscapes and wildlife habitats, be limited in number and scope, and facilitate the connection of renewable energy sources to the power grid.

- **Developed talking points in favor of HB 1107 and distributed them to the Sustainability Alliance list-serv.** HB 1107 directs cooperative electric associations and municipal utilities serving 5,000 or more customers to engage in conservation and energy efficiency programs and to devote funding equal to 1 percent of sales revenue in their first year, and 2 percent in their second and subsequent years, to such efforts. The SEC also approached both Sen. Isgar and Sen. Roberts regarding our support of HB 1107 and to discuss their position on the bill. Neither supported it.
- **Recommended that the Sustainability Alliance Board vote to propose an amendment to the La Plata County oil and gas regulations that would mandate greenhouse gas emissions data reporting by the industry.** In November, the Board of County Commissioners approved their extensive revision of the oil and gas regulations, but without the proposed amendment.
- **Encouraged the candidacy of Sustainability Alliance Board member Denise Rue-Pastin for the District 1 seat on the LPEA Board of Directors.** Two other challengers to the incumbent also emerged. The committee coordinated with the San Juan Citizens Alliance to distribute questionnaires to the four candidates and posted the results on the Sustainability Alliance website. After reviewing all the responses, the SEC concluded that Denise was the best candidate to advocate for smart energy strategies and recommended that the full Board vote to endorse Denise, which it did. Denise finished second to the incumbent candidate.
- **Supported a September forum for county commissioner candidates focused on environmental issues,** hosted by the San Juan Citizens Alliance.

### **Sustainable Local Economic Development (SLED) Committee**

*Chair: Marcus Renner*

*Participants: Board members Jim Dyer, Katy Pepinsky, and Tom Riesing. Significant contributions also came from former Board member Tim Wheeler, as well as Peter Schertz and Roberta Eickman.*

In 2008, the SLED committee focused almost exclusively on launching LOCAL (La Plata Organizations Cooperatively Advocating Local), a new independent business alliance for La Plata County.

#### **Summary of 2008 Activities**

The Committee initiated the following activities in 2008:

- **Recruited 20 founding members and 123 regular members** for LOCAL.
- **Raised approximately \$50,000** for the organization through memberships and coupon/story page sales. Secured an additional \$10,000 from La Plata County for the Look Local First Campaign

- **Hired Juliet Whitfield as the project manager** for the *Be Local Coupon Book* project. Retained SOF, Inc. as the graphic designer for the *Be Local Coupon Book*.
- **Established the website [www.laplatalocal.org](http://www.laplatalocal.org).**
- **Partnered effectively with LEAD, the Durango Chamber of Commerce, Healthy Lifestyle La Plata, and the FLC Environmental Center** on the Look Local First campaign.
- **Published 2,000 copies of the *Be Local Coupon Book*.** This included writing educational material for the book and securing donations of 51 pieces photographs and pieces of artwork.
- **Generated numerous articles about the LOCAL effort** in local print media, including the *Durango Telegraph* and the *Durango Herald*.

## **VI. 2009 and Beyond**

Priority activities of the Sustainability Alliance for 2009 and beyond include:

- Fundraising efforts to support organizational activities, especially upgrading the website and possibly hiring a part-time Executive Director and/or clerical assistant.
- Inaugurating membership meetings and the Sustainability Action Program.
- Contributing to the Climate and Energy Action Plan and continued evolution of 4CORE, and giving necessary attention to state and federal policy developments.
- Supporting the spin-off of LOCAL as an independent organization.
- Engaging with Twin Buttes design guidelines.

These and specific committee priorities will form the agenda for a Board of Directors strategic planning retreat in January 2009.

## **VII. Staff and Board of Directors**

The Sustainability Alliance currently employs no paid staff. All of our activities are carried out by individual Board members and through the generous contributions of volunteer time. We estimate that Board members have contributed well in excess of 2,000 hours to the community in 2008 and that other committee members have contributed more than 1,000 hours more. This is the equivalent of having more than 1 full-time and 1 half-time person serving sustainability needs in Southwest Colorado.

*Board of Directors*

Erick Aune (2006–2007)  
Bliss Bruen (2006–2007)  
Carol Clark (2008–2009)  
Laurie Dickson (2008)  
Jim Dyer (2006–2008)  
Ron Englander (2006)  
Roy Horvath (2006–2007)  
Werner Heiber (2006–2008)  
Linda Illsley (2008–2009)  
Rebecca Koeppen (2006–2007, 2008–2009), *Vice Chair* (2006–)  
Julie Levy (2006, 2007)  
Laura Lewis Marchino (2008)  
Lisa Mastny (2007–2009), *Secretary* (2007–)  
Sue Morris (2007)  
Katy Pepinsky (2006, 2007–2009), *Secretary* (2006)  
Marcus Renner (2008)  
Tom Riesing (2006–2008), *Treasurer* (2006–)  
Patricia Robertson (2006)  
Denise Rue-Pastin (2007, 2008–2009)  
Tim Wheeler (2006)  
Dick White (2006–2008), *Chair* (2006–)

Board meetings normally occur on the second Thursday of each month. Board elections are held prior to the annual meeting, which in 2008 will take place on December 11. Members are invited to contribute nominations, including self-nominations. The 2008 elections will fill six 2-year terms and one 1- or 2-year term (to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Laurie Dickson in late 2008.).

#### **IV. Membership and Finances**

##### *Membership*

As of October 31, 2008, the Sustainability Alliance membership comprised 52 dues-paying individuals who contributed a total of \$2,525. The distribution of those membership contributions is as follows.

- \$10–\$35: 28 members, for a total of \$830
- \$36–\$50: 12 members, for a total of \$600
- \$51–\$100: 12 members, for a total of \$1,095

We received a donation of \$50 from PayPal because we raised \$1,405 using PayPal (on which we paid fees totaling \$47.90). We also extend our thanks to Tim Wheeler, Werner Heiber, Mary Gwinn, Cindy Dvergsten, Laura Lewis, Kelly Landau, Kent Ford, Dick White, and the Southwest Organization for Sustainability for their generous contributions.

##### *Subscribers*

As of December 1, 2008, our e-mail list serv had 648 subscribers, all of whom have voluntarily elected to receive our bi-weekly electronic newsletter, *E-News*. This reflects an 84 percent increase over 2007, indicated the growing interest and commitment to sustainability issues in our community.

##### *Finances*

As of October 31, 2008, the balance in the Sustainability Alliance account at the Community Foundation stood at \$555. Our Bank of the San Juans account held \$457 and our PayPal account held \$1,435 (including \$28 that we earned in interest this year), for a total cash balance of \$2,447.