



Maine Chapter

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FROM COOL COMMUNITIES & GREEN SNEAKERS TO CLIMATE ACTION TEAMS

Maine Partners for Cool Communities was all about finding solutions to stop global warming and climate change. It was a collaboration of Sierra Club Maine with several other organizations that were alarmed by the threat to the health of our planet caused by increased greenhouse gases in our atmosphere.

The Maine partnership included the American Lung Association of Maine, Maine Council of Churches, Maine Energy Investment Corporation, Physicians for Social Responsibility of Maine and Sierra Club Maine.

Notes from the Grassroots

COOLING MAINE COMMUNITIES

Arrowisc

A neighboring community to Bath, some town residents attended Cool Bath meetings and began to investigate energy efficiency in the municipal buildings. Future activities/projects will most likely be tied to Bath initiatives.

C Auburn (See Lewiston/Auburn)

I/A Augusta

An ICLEI emissions assessment/baseline was completed in 2000/2001. The community is targeted in 2008 for Cool Communities work through MPCC contacts.

CT/A Bangor and nearby Communities

With support from Maine Partners for Cool Communities, the Cool Bangor Coalition of local citizens asked the Bangor City Council to sign the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and become a Cool City. MPCC and the Cool Coalition held a meeting with Wendy Warren, City Environmental Coordinator, at which she suggested the team organize projects in the community that complement City energy policies, such as no-idling and other transportation measures.

The Cool Bangor Coalition has about 8 active

members and a much larger list of those interested in curbing global warming. Nearly 20 Cool members attended the Council's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee meeting in November 2007 at which MPCC members presented Cool Communities information and received great support. Committee members encouraged MPCC to meet with Penobscot County Commissioners to take the Cool Communities program countywide. School personnel have expressed interest in a no-idling campaign for the region with possible Community-Based Social Marketing/No-Idling workshop this spring.

MPCC has met with the Cool Team and representatives of the Eastern Maine Peace & Justice Center to discuss adding a Green EXPO to the popular annual HOPE festival on Earth Day Saturday/April 19, 2008. MPCC provided contact information for potential energy business exhibitors for the EXPO.

The Bangor City Council passed a resolve on January 28, 2008, creating a local action plan, which mirrors the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. As a first step toward devel-



Cool Communities are turning to alternative fuels for home heating.

Key to Cool Activities / Involvement

C

Cool Community signed onto the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement (15 as of 2/8/08)

CT

Active Cool Team/ Sustainability Group

TEC

Active Energy / Sustainability Committee sanctioned by Town

I/An

Inventory/audit completed or underway

Y

Youth Leadership

Sierra Club Maine helped develop a toolkit packed with resources, successful programs and technical assistance that would help communities meet the goals of the Maine Governor's Carbon Challenge and the US Mayors Climate Action Agreement. The Cool Communities/Cities campaign enabled volunteers to build political demand for smart energy solutions by advancing global warming solutions in communities and cities around Maine and the country.

The Maine campaign used the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and the Maine Governor's Carbon Challenge as organizing centerpieces around which solutions could be built. Nearly 300 mayors in 44 states, representing over 49 million Americans, signed the agreement pledging to meet or exceed the global warming reduction targets laid out in the Kyoto treaty, a 7% reduction in fossil fuel emissions from 1990 levels by

2012. Over 50 communities and organizations in Maine signed on to the Maine Governor's Carbon Challenge, which had similar goals for carbon reduction.

Creating Cool Communities across Maine was a win-win for all. It helped to secure a safer and cleaner environment and a sustainable economy for today's citizens and tomorrow's generations. It began building local foods systems, alternative methods of transportation, and energy networks that

connect us to our land, air, and water, and to each other as caring neighbors.

MPCC had a successful track record for delivering effective grassroots programs statewide. For nearly a decade Sierra Club Maine led the way on community-based initiatives that engages our constituents, their neighbors, local contractors and state agencies in actions to improve indoor and outdoor air quality, promote cleaner energy sources, and mitigate/adapt to global climate change.

The Green Sneakers Project, an off-shoot of MPCC, launched a door-to-door neighborhood campaign created to motivate local, personal actions that address the global challenge of climate change and deteriorating air quality through energy efficiency in the home. The Green Sneakers Project recruited and trained teams of local volunteers in eight communities to bring weatherization and energy efficiency technologies, information and opportunities directly to the doorsteps of at least 4000 Maine households.



The Climate Action Teams of today (our CAT teams) was built from the groundwork laid by The Green Sneakers project. Whereas the Green Sneakers Project focused on energy efficiency, today's CATs have expanded their scope to include many other projects that reduce fossil fuel emissions. Besides weatherization, the projects may include renewable energy, alternative transportation, plastic bag and waste reduction, no idling campaigns, municipal use of LED lighting, solar and anything that would help mitigate climate change.