

## Final Report of the Study-Circle Committee

### What can Coral Springs Residents do to promote a greener environment in our City?

#### **First Sessions**

The committee organized and conducted a total of five first sessions. These meetings were well attended (total of 52 participants) with active involvement from all attendees. The meeting dates, attendance, agenda, and handouts are presented in Attachment 2.

The format of the first sessions was, as is the Study-Circle norm, a round-table discussion of the important environmental issues as presented by the attendees. In general, the discussion was organized into the areas of: indoor issues; outdoor issues; and issues pertaining to the maintenance and operation of one's car. The discussion in all sessions was intense and wide ranging with many significant ideas discussed. Following Study-Circle procedure, every idea in every session was captured. The complete list of all ideas, as one might expect, contained many duplicates. After all first sessions were completed, the committee consolidated and organized the list of ideas. The first sessions produced about 130 unique ideas that the committee organized into about 22 related areas or themes. This preliminary consolidated list of ideas was distributed to all first session participants as the basis of discussion for the second session.

#### **Second Session**

The second session meeting was May 12, 2009. Approximately 38 of the 52 first session attendees participated. Again, in this second session, participants were involved, and the level of discussion was intense. The primary activities of the second session were: a summary discussion of the first sessions; a ranking of the ideas in the preliminary consolidated list of ideas; and discussion of possible next steps. The second session agenda is found in Attachment 3.

The committee notes that, while the normal Study-Circle process is to identify problems pertaining to the subject in the first session and to identify and articulate two or three solutions in the second session, we had, early on, recognized that this subject should be handled somewhat differently. So, rather than trying to drill down to a small number of most likely effective solutions, our focus became one of trying to identify, from our universe of submitted ideas, the ones that could have the largest impact on our community, and the actions that would be required to realize those impacts.

During the summary discussion of the first sessions, the participants told us that our preliminary consolidated list of ideas was not ideally organized. They reorganized the list, reducing our 22 thematic areas down to 13 by expanding the scope of several of the areas. All 130 original ideas were shuffled into these new classifications. The final consolidated list of ideas/issues can be found in Attachment 1.

An informal vote was conducted and the group selected, based on potential impact, the top five themes as follows:

## **Top Five Themes**

- **Educate the public on “sustainability”**
- **Energy savings on large appliances (including A/C)**
- **Water usage**
- **Recycling**
- **Things to do about your car**

Several of the participants voiced strong opinions on the importance, in particular, of two of the areas: water usage and recycling. The remaining three areas were discussed only in the context of what to do next.

### **Discussion on Water Usage**

Several of the participants argued strongly that the availability of a sufficient quantity of potable water in the future is in question; that water availability will be a limiting factor in the development of the region. The participants felt that likely the majority of our residents are unaware of this long-term threat. The consolidated list of ideas/issues (Attachment 1) contains several important conservation ideas that an education campaign could put forth. Plus, we need some form of measurement to track sustainability.

### **Discussion on Recycling**

Again, several participants voiced the opinion that, as a city, we are not recycling as much as we could. Many felt that a large segment of the population does not know or is confused about the rules. The group felt that the situation could be improved by an education campaign.

### **Discussion on What Next**

Our discussion on how to proceed was anchored in the following three areas: promote the ideas on the consolidated list; improve awareness among Coral Springs residents; and expand the number of citizens involved in these efforts.

As is usually the case with advocacy, the participants were eager to promote the many suggestions on the consolidated list. Many of these people would contribute to, or participate in, an education/promotion campaign if one was organized. It was suggested that existing City media, in particular the City web site, television/radio broadcasts and various publications, could add regular features and articles. Also suggested was to stage “green-themed” events such as library presentations (lectures, films, etc.), vendor expos, and green block parties.

### **Open Discussions**

There was significant discussion of specific items that the participants would like to see promoted, undertaken or changed. There was high interest in outdoor clothes drying, though it was noted that The City currently prohibits this. There was a significant interest in implementing a Farmer’s Market. Many participants asked about the possibility of starting community gardens, and there was significant interest in promoting composting among the residents

## Consolidated List of Ideas/Issues

### **Indoor Lighting**

Compact bulbs(level of hazard)  
LED Bulbs  
Traditional florescent  
Turn lights off when leaving a room  
Use night light

### **Recycling**

What? People don't know what items are recyclable  
Encourage more people to recycle  
Commercial recycling  
Private recycling – apartment complex etc.  
When buying plastic bottles look for the lower numbers of plastic  
Flatten all boxes and place in recycle bins, All, cereal boxes, gift boxes  
Have recycle bins throughout the city, in areas like parks, malls/shopping center, and at gathering places  
so that people have a place to dispose of the recyclable materials  
Have recycle bins in corporate parks of other places of business to encourage business owners and employees  
to recycle at their offices  
Investigate possibilities re: The Recycle Bank  
Recycle batteries; use rechargeable batteries

### **Simple, low cost tips**

Turn off lights when leaving a room  
Look for lower numbers on plastic containers  
Short showers  
Cold water only for clothes washing  
Reduce watering yard to 2 times per week  
Unplug electronics  
Weather-strip doors and caulk windows  
Vinegar for cleaning  
Utilize your pasta water for your plants  
Make your own sodas using a carbonation cartridge  
Turn off all your paper billing statements for your credit card companies, etc. and go to e-bills  
Always print on the back and front of paper  
Do your homework online and email to your teacher

### **Water usage (hot/cold and indoor/outdoor)**

Dual flush handles  
Low flow shower (adjust water level)  
Modern washer (front load)  
Short showers  
Faucet flow restriction  
Change out toilet tank parts to include a water level  
Only run dishwasher when full and do not pre-wash dishes  
Do not run water while brushing teeth, shaving, etc  
Solar hot water  
Tankless water heaters  
Save “waiting” for hot water  
Cold water only for clothes washing  
Use modern front-loader washer  
Put timers on water heaters to turn on and off at appropriate times  
Turn water heater off when not at home for prolonged period of time  
Lower the water heater temperature to 110 degrees

Where does It go  
Label run off drains  
“Poop” in run off  
Home owner run off  
Cisterns  
Utilize micro-head sprinklers for landscape (Home Depot)  
Utilize your pasta water for your plants  
Purchase rain barrels on wheels  
Be part of a community group  
Use a bucket of water to wash the car on the grass

### **Landscaping / Gardening**

Community - create a community supported agricultural garden  
Plant a vegetable garden  
Propose and support Individual Gardens  
Use Styrofoam packing materials in the bottom of planting pots. By using a lighter material on the bottom, the pot is easier to move, and provides good water drainage for the plants  
Plant butterfly gardens  
Shred soy-based (ink) newspapers and use it as a first layer, underneath mulch, in a planting bed, or around trees. The paper decomposes, naturally, with the help of worms, which aerates the ground.  
Get children and adults interested in participating in the “bee project” – helps connects everyone with the environment and educates people about the importance of honeybees. Grow sunflowers and measure the number of bees that are attracted to it  
Xeroscape  
Investigate the usage of plastic lawns/grass  
Reduce water usage in yard. 2 times per week is more than sufficient. Over time the less you water the less your yard will require  
Improve outdated trees with more appropriate trees  
Plant native aquatic plants around canal areas  
Plant more trees, especially fruit trees for the benefit of shade, and produce  
Don't use your sprinkler system during the rainy season (June - November).  
A request for the city to provide a training session on how to effectively build a compost  
Build or purchase a compost bin

### **Energy saving on big appliances (including AC)**

Turning off electrical appliances – really!  
A/C, Water Heater, Dryer, Refrigerator, etc. seer  
Unplug electronics  
Program your AC thermostats for the times when you are home  
Consider adding power strips to provide convenient on/off switch  
When replacing any appliances, purchase more energy efficient available  
Utilize a collapsible clothes line for the garage for heavier items  
Install sensors for outside lighting or purchase sensor bulbs  
Install solar lighting  
Install solar tiles on roof  
Sign up for FPL electricity buy back plan  
Purchase a heat exchanger that transfers the heat from the AC compressor to the water heater.  
Install digital/programmable A/C thermostat  
Keep A/C filters clean. Purchase reusable ones and replace 2 times a month  
Turn off ceiling fans when not in that room  
Adjust your air vents so that vents closest to the AC unit are slightly closed  
This will force the cold air to circulate better to those vents further away from the AC unit  
Set ceiling fans to run counter-clockwise to force the air down from the air vents  
In cold weather, when using the heating system of your unit, turn off the unit as soon as your house reaches the desired temperature/comfort level  
Leave window shades/curtains closed to keep heat in during cold weather and the sun out during the hot weather

Raise AC thermostat to 78 degrees and replace AC filters

Purchase Smart Outlets/Power strips - the Smart Strip senses that you've turned off your computer, and automatically shuts off the peripherals; has surge protector and a cable prong

Purchase Kill a Watt that is an electricity usage monitor. Monitors energy an outlet carries when an appliance is plugged in but turned off.

Purchase Energy Star appliances

### **Building Issues**

Building Insulation level

Place film on windows in house to keep heat out. Seek FPL credit

Modify existing architecture plans to place windows more appropriately; add awnings

Plant trees to cover window exposures

Weather-strip doors and caulk windows

Replace windows

Purchase thick wood blinds to provide insulation

Keep blinds and curtains closed to allow the house to remain cooler.

Install solar powered gable/roof fan which removes the hot air out of the attic

### **Cleaning products**

Vinegar

Utilize all natural cleaners in the house, essential oil, baking soda, and white vinegar

Make your own natural cleaning products that are chemical free (refer to websites for information)

Keep it simple with products like baking soda, vinegar, and bleach (small amount is all that is needed)

### **Utilize "green bags" instead of paper or plastic bags**

Reduce/eliminate the use of zip lock bags, plastic wrap, and brown lunch bags

Reduce usage of plastic drink bottled water; install water filters in home/work

Utilize stainless steel cups, mugs versus bottled water

Utilize reusable gift wrap, department store gift bags for gift wrapping

Discontinue the use of all paper/Styrofoam plates and cups

Make your own soda using a carbonation cartridge eliminating the need to purchase soda in plastic/aluminum

Use reusable shopping bags

Use new plastic bags that are made of a cornstarch product that decomposes in a year

### **Dispose of unused/outdated medications properly**

Do not put in garbage or flush down the toilet

Keep for regular hazardous waste drop-off dates

Many pharmacies will collect

### **Things to do about your car**

Reduce the amount of things in your car before driving such as strollers

Walk more versus driving

When taking a trip be sure to plan it out – go to all your places in an efficient order

Change air filters on car more frequently

Check tire pressure on your car

Car pool

Ride a bike more

Service the cars on a regular basis

### **Purchase post-consumer recycled content products**

Carpets

Window blinds made of recycled plastic

There are websites that provide product information

### **Sustainability**

Educate the public about "sustainability"

Learn about “Transition Towns” which are towns that develop an awareness to sustainable living.

## Attachment 2

### First Sessions Dates & Times, Facilitators and Attendance

Thurs.,	April 30 <sup>th</sup>	10 am-12 pm	Gordie/Jerry	11
Tues.,	May 5 <sup>th</sup>	10 am-12 pm	Gordie & Becca	11
Tues.,	May 5 <sup>th</sup>	7 pm- 9 pm	Hilda & John	6
Thurs.,	May 7 <sup>th</sup>	7 pm- 9 pm:	Hilda & Jerry	9
Sat.,	May 9 <sup>th</sup>	10 am-12 pm	Lorraine & Jerry	15

### First Session Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

What is a Study Circle

Topic: What can Coral Springs Residents do to promote a greener environment in our city?

Ground Rules for Discussions

Share Background Information

Discussion to Identify Issues/Ideas

Wrap-up and Confirm Next Meeting

### First Session Handout

How does Coral Springs Compare? How does your Household Compare?

Coral Springs Population	130,000
Coral Springs Households	46,000
Tons of Trash Collected	7,764 tons per month
Tons of Recyclables Collected	66 tons per month
Gallons of Potable Water Supplied	6 to 7 million per day
Gallons of Waste Water Processed	7 to 8 million per day
Electricity Consumed (household avg.)	936 kWh per month
Gasoline Consumption (household avg.)	4 Gal per day
Water Usage (per person avg.)	60 – 70 Gal per day
Solid Waste Generated (per person avg.)	4.6 Lbs per day

Some Interesting Web Sites.

<http://www.sustainabletable.org/home.php>

<http://www.thinkgreen.com/>

<http://www.globalstewards.org/ecotips.htm>

<http://www.biggreenswitch.co.uk/green-directory/sustainable-development-advice>

<http://www.greenlivingpedia.org/Directory>

## Attachment 3

### **Second Session Agenda**

#### **What can Coral Springs Residents do to promote a greener environment in our city?**

- Welcome
- Summary Discussion of Preliminary Sessions
- Rank, by Potential Impact, Your Top 5 Ideas
- What Next - Discussion of How We Can:
  - 1) promote the ideas
  - 2) involve more citizens
  - 3) expand awareness
- Open Discussion:
  - 1) Participant Comments
  - 2) Q/A with City Experts
- Wrap Up