

Project team meetings, interviews, meetings with community groups, research visits, and discussions are ongoing as initial research is carried out by current project team members.

As a demonstration to lead the way, on its own land on Cranberry Lake near West Guilford, *Abbey North* has undertaken to erect a small year-round greenhouse, and to install a bank of sun-tracking solar panels to provide additional energy to the grid. These first steps will provide valuable experience for the project team and aid in the subsequent design and implementation of the overall project.



Photo of sample greenhouse dome

<http://www.geodesic-greenhouse-kits.com/sizes.php>

Abbey North will also take the lead on locating and developing a large piece of land in the County that is suitable for the primary project development site.

In a separate but related project, a group of community members have embarked on an effort to ‘green’ all sacred spaces in the county as a first important step towards making all buildings and institutions in the county energy efficient.

We welcome enquiries from any who wish to cooperate and participate.

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Haliburton’s *Abbey Gardens* Project

A Concept Paper

The purpose of the *Abbey Gardens* project is to focus our community on a collective effort to reduce its carbon footprint and to foster community-based action research and demonstration projects designed to increase the ecological viability of the community.

Our Project Vision



Power

We envision Haliburton County as a community with distributed power generation, using renewable resources to generate heat and electricity. Sustainable approaches to energy generation will be encouraged with the end in mind of energy self-sufficiency for the county.

Food

We see a dramatic increase in local food production with robust year-round greenhouses and farmers' markets producing increasingly more of what we consume. There will be a dramatic spiking of vegetable growing encouraged in the county which will demonstrate county-wide self-sufficiency in vegetable growing and food preserving and storage. It will be shown that it is unnecessary to import food into our county. Outdoor summer gardens will be used to teach people the skills of growing good private and community gardens in the Haliburton environment. Cooking classes in the restaurant kitchens will teach healthy cooking of locally-grown foods.



<http://www.geodesic-greenhouse-kits.com/gallery.php>

Waste

Haliburton County's waste management infrastructure and facilities will be transformed to dramatically reduce the load on local landfills. The heating systems in the greenhouses will use the waste that now ends up on the forest floor after logging operations or in the landfills of the county. Residents will be trained to set aside compostable kitchen waste for collection and processing into nourishing soil for the greenhouses and other gardening operations in the county.

Innovation

The site will eventually host what will come to be known as Canada's finest environmental education centre. The centre will focus on the kinds of things that every family and institution can and indeed must do in

order to reduce our county's carbon footprint to a fraction of its current level. The development of small eco-friendly businesses will be encouraged. It is intended that the site will also host a centre for environmental innovation and for the performing arts.

Education, Farmers' Market, Restaurant, Gift shop

A community education centre, farmers' market, restaurant serving locally-produced meals and gift shop will attract tourists to the area to see what we have built, and to learn how they too can rehabilitate their communities from an ecological perspective.

Financial Sustainability

Revenue generating opportunities include solar and wind electricity generation, sale of fresh local foods, restaurant and gift shop sales, site entrance fees, education and training programs, rental of facilities and entertainment events.

Many new jobs and business opportunities will be created in all related fields.

Investment for this effort will come from local investors and from government and foundation grants and loans. Cooperative, community approaches to ownership and operation will be explored.

Getting Started

John & Thea Patterson of *Abbey North* instigated the Abbey Gardens project in the spring of 2008, inviting friends and associates to participate.



Photo by Joe Truss 2008