

Eco- municipalities Position

Adopted April 21, 2008 by the membership of the LWV Stevens Point Area.

Eco-Municipalities Position

The LWV of the Stevens Point Area (LWVSPA) recognizes “eco-municipalities” as communities that work towards economic, social and ecological sustainability and supports these **Guiding Objectives** and **Conditions for Sustainability** (adapted from The Natural Steps for Communities by Sarah James and Torbjorn Lahti.)

Guiding Objectives for our area as an Eco-Municipality:

- 1) Continually strive to reduce the use of fossil fuel, scarce metals and minerals.
- 2) Continually strive to reduce the use of chemicals and synthetic substances that accumulate in nature.
- 3) Continually strive to reduce our community’s encroachment upon nature (e.g. land, water, wildlife, forests, soil, ecosystems).
- 4) Meet human needs fairly and efficiently

Conditions for Sustainability require that our community work to

1. Reduce concentrations of harmful substances extracted from the Earth’s crust (e.g., heavy metals and fossil fuels.)
2. Reduce the concentration of synthetic substances that may be harmful.
3. Protect natural systems that support life (e.g., land, water, wildlife, forests, soil, ecosystems.)
4. Promote basic human needs, as air, water, food and shelter over luxuries. As well as safety, jobs, equal treatment, efficiency, and the essential rights/responsibilities of our democratic society.

The Stevens Point Area LWV may provide community education which supports individual efforts and take action to support local governments’ efforts which work toward economic, social and ecological sustainability, as described in these Guiding Objectives and Conditions for Sustainability.

Study History: Eco-municipality Study conducted April 2007- through April 2008

At the LWV of Stevens Point area (LWVSPA) annual meeting April 24, 2007, the membership selected as a study a specific environmental issue, “the development of an eco-municipality which has as its goal developing sustainable policies tailored to local conditions.”

In June 2007 the mayor of the city of Stevens Point, Andrew Halverson, charged a task force to study eco-municipality with the possibility that the city would entertain a resolution to become an eco-municipality.

The city’s eco-municipality task force was a stimulus for the LWV study. The LWVSPA did not have a local position on eco-municipalities. The membership wanted to be prepared to take a position in the event the city discusses becoming an eco-municipality.

Activities of the study included collaborated efforts with the City of Stevens Point Wisconsin Eco-municipality Task Force. LWVSPA members who participated on the city’s task force and its sub committees included Amy Heart, Lynn Markham, and Jen Knade

There were at least 10 book studies of “The Natural Step for Communities” completed. Members of the community, task force members, and LWV members participated and lead discussion. LWVSPA members who participated in these 8-week book studies included Sally Overholt, Liz McDonald, Christine Klessig, Deb Knippel, Lois Feldman, Lois Lawler, Becky Dougherty, Jen Knade, Jo Ellen Seiser, Lynn Markham, Sally Freckmann , Sharon Reichert.

Two general community meetings were completed. Attendees included both LWVSPA members and non-members and came from the city of Stevens Point as well as surrounding communities in Portage County. Attendees participated in developing a vision for a sustainable Stevens Point in 2020 and heard speakers from two existing eco-municipalities Mary Rehwald and Irene Blakely, Ashland and Washburn, respectively as well as local task force members, LWVSPA study coordinators and a member of the Stevens Point Common Council. Attendance at each event was approximately 80 people.

LWV members were provided other educational materials and websites for independent study.

This position statement and report has been reviewed by members of the LWVSPA Eco-municipality Study Committee and Steering Committee and is submitted for consensus and adoption of the membership at the annual meeting April 21, 2008.

Eco-municipality study committee; Lynn Markham, Amy Heart, Jen Knade, Lynn Kirby, Jean Rumsey, Tamara Holmes, Lois Feldman, Lois Lawler, Christine Klessig, Deb Knippel, Liz McDonald, Sally Overholt, Sharon Reichert, Jeannie Tauchmann, Sharon Radford.

Steering Committee; Becky Dougherty, Jen Knade, Lynn Markham, Jan Seiler, Christine Neidlein, Nancy Moore, Jean Rumsey.

Committee members propose that the local study committee continue and focus initially with 2 main purposes: consider broadening its goal and purpose, and help identify ways LWVSPA can strive to follow the guiding objectives and sustainable system conditions within its own operations.