

## Environmental Policy UF TREEO Center



The University of Florida Center for Training, Research and Education for Environmental Occupations (UF TREEO) has long been a model for environmental training and stewardship. UF TREEO is dedicated to helping protect the environment for future generations by incorporating sustainable practices in all aspects of our operations. Therefore, a logical next step for us was the development of *Tools for Sustainability*, which is a concept used to describe the integration of UF TREEO activities, events and partnerships into a cycle of sustainability. A key component of our *Tools for Sustainability* is an Environmental Management System (EMS).

An EMS is part of an organization's management system, which is used to develop and implement its environmental policy and manage its environmental aspects and impacts.

The mission of the University of Florida Center for Training, Research and Education for Environmental Occupations (UF TREEO) is, '*Excellence in Environmental Education.*' Consistent with the mission is the UF TREEO commitment to conducting its operations in an environmentally responsible manner by the establishment of an Environmental Management System. In fulfillment of this commitment, it is the policy of the UF TREEO Center to commit to:

- Comply with all legal and other requirements that are applicable to the Center's operations
- Establish a goal of continual environmental improvement
- Implement sustainable and conservation measures in the conduct of the Center's business affairs and operations

The EMS provides a framework where the responsibilities and activities can be linked. The model of "Plan, Do, Check, Act" contained within the management system will ensure that new and existing practices are integrated with the organization's efforts related to training, monitoring and measurement, and reporting as well as establishing a commitment to continual improvement.

A properly implemented management system enables an organization to identify and establish goals, and then plans can be developed to meet those goals. A huge benefit of an EMS is the ability to calculate measurable progress, and provide a way for continuous improvement. The management system is not designed to replace existing sustainable operations and activities; rather it is there to support, enhance and contribute to the overall success of the sustainable practices already in place within the organization.

Sustainability was originally equated with 'green buildings' or sustainable development, however sustainability has evolved to have a farther reach, and become encompassed into all operations and activities in the organization. Basically, sustainability is an integrated approach to

environmental management. The most used definition is from the Brundtland Commission's 1987 report to the United Nations: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Sustainability increases the scope beyond just the environment, to create a relationship between natural resources, business activities, people and community issues, and the bottom-line for the organization.

Being sustainable, or "green," is rapidly becoming a mainstream best management practice, and the following activities are some of the ways UF TREEO is integrating sustainability into our mission:

- The UF TREEO Center is registered as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, Existing Building (LEED EB) project
- Utilizing compostable flatware (eating utensils)
- Recycling all paper and paper products
- Recycling plastic bottles and aluminum cans
- Reusing name tags
- Turning the heating/air conditioning off when the room is not occupied
- Turning lights off when the room is not occupied
- Utilizing energy efficient lighting
- Implementing an Environmental Management System (EMS) for our operations
- Implementing green practices in our classes, conferences and other events
- Utilizing the web and email more instead of printing and distributing materials, and utilizing recycled paper when we do print

### **How is Sustainability Linked to EMS?**

An EMS that is guided by sustainability goals will focus on issues critical to the mission of the organization. The EMS can be considered the managing arm of the organization, which enables environmental activities to be assessed, managed, and improved. Sustainability constitutes the actions that the EMS needs to do, which are, assess, manage, and improve.

When an EMS is guided by sustainability principles it facilitates employees in understanding the effects of their activities on the job. With the EMS in place these effects are managed and problems can be addressed quickly before they result in a crisis. This process allows organizations to focus on goal-accomplishment while preserving resources and not solely on the environment just for its own sake. A successful EMS will integrate the sustainability program into all of its operations.

### **Sustainable Tools Used at UF TREEO**

#### **A. Tools**

##### **Sustainable Building and Operations**

- LEED Classes
- Energy Modeling
- Green Buildings

- Florida Green Lodging Conference
- Sustainable Operations
- Sustainable Resources
- EMS Implementation and Training
- Conserve Florida Water Clearinghouse (CFWC)
- Green Conferencing Services

## **B. Actions**

- **Education, Awareness, and Training**
  - Communication: to implement a communication plan to include but not limited to a consistent process to communicate sustainable operations messages and success stories both to internal and external audiences.
  - Incentives: to recognize employees who demonstrate sustainable operations practices, create a process for capturing and reinvesting cost savings at the unit that generated it, and participate in local or government-wide greening award programs.
- **Sustainable Planning and Leadership**
  - Building commitment: develop opportunities for individual units to show commitment and share ideas on Best Sustainable Practices
  - Collaborate to develop sustainable operations language that all employees can follow
  - Leadership: Help to establish common expectations related to measuring, monitoring and reporting sustainable operations successes
  - Partnerships: cultivate a strategic approach to sustainable operations partnerships by matching the scope and scale of an opportunity with prospective partners, as well as engage other Federal Agencies as partners.
- **Standards and Measurement**
  - Organizational effectiveness and process review: seek ways to integrate sustainable operations into the organization, provide direction and support, and implement a process of continual involvement and improvement.

This policy is communicated to all UF TREEO employees and senior management at the Division of Continuing Education through training and will be made available to our customers, the public and any other interested parties.