



SUSTAINABILITY IN PRISONS PROJECT (SPP) NETWORK

New teams have joined the SPP Network to synchronize programming, evaluation, and dissemination of results. The SPP Network is building a set of science, conservation, and sustainability research projects that increase the reach of restoration efforts and possibilities for coordinated funding.

SPP ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

In support of new SPPs, SPP-Washington offers tips for success, custom protocols, and—most important—the Essential Components that define SPP. Although each state, county, and corrections institution is unique, our experience with the SPP approach points to five Essential Components for all SPPs. New SPPs may not be able to tackle all components from the start, but use them as guides for continued growth and improvement. Keep in mind that most SPP programs satisfy more than one of these essentials; our most successful programs encompass all five at once.

1. Partnerships with multiple benefits

Seek out partnerships adapted to the needs of your region. Establish a truly collaborative approach in which each contributor plays an important role. See partnerships as central to accomplishing program objectives. Involve and benefit:

- Incarcerated individuals
- Students and/or education organizations
- Conservation, sustainability, and/or science organizations or initiatives
- Correction centers and corrections center staff
- Local communities and ecosystems

2. Bringing nature “inside”

Create opportunities to work with living things through lectures, workshops, conservation programs, gardens, and other programming. Examples are:

- Endangered species and/or ecological restoration programs in partnership with relevant conservation organizations and regulators
- Conservation lectures and workshops
- Canine and feline rescue programs
- Beekeeping
- Horticulture programs which contribute food to facility kitchens or charities
- Houseplants and nature imagery in staff and living areas



3. Engagement and education

Offer science and sustainability education to underserved audiences involving and benefitting inmates, college students, corrections staff, scientists, and the broader community. Provide green job training and skills development for a variety of employment options. Examples are:

- Sustainable operations and conservation programs that include education regarding how and why programs are implemented
- Incorporation of job skills and certification programs
- Emphases on opportunities to contribute and the importance of each task—i.e., how actions influence and contribute to the broader community and/or restoration efforts

4. Safe and sustainable operations

Reduce, reuse, repurpose, and recycle materials whenever possible. Increase prison safety by providing programs that reduce offender idleness and engage offenders in pro-social activities. Example initiatives include:

- Rainwater catchment, effluent reuse systems, or other water conservation programs
- Energy Service Company (ESCO) projects, alternative energy, and other energy-use mitigation strategies
- Green purchasing and procurement
- Zero waste garbage sorting centers, on-site composting, and vermicomposting systems

5. Evaluation, dissemination, and tracking

Provide for tracking, evaluation, and a plan for sharing program progress and results as a component of program implementation. Specifics should include:

- Provision of a comprehensive evaluation program (with approved Human Subjects Review)
- Information dissemination regarding SPP programs to all program partners, other SPPs, the public, funding sources, media, etc.
- Data systems to record baselines and track progress on targeted goals such as energy use, waste reduction, water conservation, etc.

**THE SPP NETWORK IS FUNDED BY
THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION.**



Photos: Benj Drummond (front), Shauna Bittle (top and middle), inmate technician at MCCCW (2nd from the bottom); all the rest by SPP staff

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