



Grey Bruce Climate Action Network

Annual Report, May 2021 to May 2022

Who We Are

The Grey Bruce Climate Action Network (GBCAN) supports regional action to both mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. We share resources, strategies, and lessons learned, and come together when a regional voice or regional action is needed.










Network member groups include Climate Action Teams (CATs) in eight Grey and Bruce communities: Blue Mountains, Georgian Bluffs, Grey Highlands, Meaford, Northern Bruce Peninsula, Owen Sound, Saugeen Shores, and West Grey and two more in Simcoe County: Collingwood and Wasaga Beach.

We use a two-pronged collaborative approach: citizen engagement and municipal leadership. We believe that working together with shared responsibility has the best chance of protecting our communities and mitigating the transforming impacts climate change will bring to our natural assets.

This Year: GBCAN Activities

In this our second full year of operation, we have seen some significant gains in our collective work to engage municipal leadership and the public in climate change learning, mitigation, adaptation, and engagement. The activities we have been involved in fall loosely into three categories: 1) **Capacity building**, 2) **Engagement with municipalities**, and 3) **Community engagement**. These are our key goals and projects.

Capacity Building: To strengthen our communities' ability to respond to climate change, we and our partners have worked within our network and across the region.

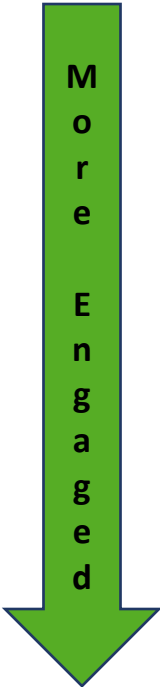
-  **GBCAN members** continue to meet monthly. Meetings include informative discussions, learning opportunities, support and sharing of resources. Occasionally, guest speakers are invited to meetings.
-  Development of a **GBCAN website** is underway with the launch this fall.
-  **Climate Forum** hosts monthly themed presentations to engage both members and the public. Speakers are followed by a Q&A. Co-hosted with The Sustainability Project.
-  **Collingwood CAT** was incorporated as a non-profit organization last year and achieved charitable status in March 2022.
-  There now are two **Facebook pages** on climate issues, one managed by members of [GBCAN and the Sustainability Project](#) and the other by CFUW Southport as [Saugeen Shores Environmental Alliance](#).
-  **All Candidates' (Provincial) Meeting focused on Climate Change** was hosted by the CAT Owen Sound and The Sustainability Project. Over 70 people attended.
-  OSCAT and GBCAT have **committees seeking and supporting municipal candidates** knowledgeable about a wide range of issues, including climate change.
-  OSCAT members designed a **GBCAN brochure with contacts for all member groups**, for distribution at events such as Earth Day.
-  **The Sustainability Project**, a partner organization, received funding for a **Grey Bruce Climate Action website** to support grass roots organizers' outreach.

Municipal Engagement: Our goal is to create a shared effort to learn about climate change, apply those lessons to public practice and policy and use the tools available to ensure we are prepared, including:









- adoption of a **climate lens** to evaluate municipal decisions,
- **membership in [Partners for Climate Protection](#)**, the national network of more than 400 municipalities who share the goal of acting on climate change, and
- the development and implementation of **municipal climate action plans**.

This year saw significant progress on Network members’ engagement with their municipalities. Some communities have actively embraced our model of a grassroots climate action group linked to and supporting a formal municipal climate committee and others are still building relationships and moving toward recognition of a shared agenda.

We began work on a Municipal Milestones survey process that will ultimately allow GBCAN to track and compare engagement among member communities and their municipalities, and share progress on developing mitigation, adaptation, and public engagement strategies for climate change solutions. When we surveyed members on their municipal engagement strategies, we were able to develop these 12 steps to engagement:

	1.	Development of a grass roots community Climate Action Team (CAT)
	2.	Meeting with municipal staff and/or councillors and or formal presentations to Council
	3.	Municipal declarations or engagement with climate group’s events or projects
	4.	Formal CAT engagement within municipal consultation process to represent climate interests in planning processes
	5.	Municipal and CAT participation in shared learning about climate change and potential impacts
	6.	Establishment of a formal municipal climate change committee
	7.	Dedication of municipal resources to climate planning and/or engagement i.e., hiring a climate specialist or consultants
	8.	Municipality joins the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Partners in Climate Protection
	9.	Co-development of a municipal climate action plan
	10.	Shared projects to adapt, mitigate and/or engage residents in a climate change initiative
	11.	Funding for CAT or community-driven projects
	12.	Funding for the municipality for climate initiatives

Some specific examples of member engagement with municipalities and the County of Grey include:

-  The draft [Grey County Climate Action Plan](#) was finalized with **significant and detailed input** from GBCAN.
-  Municipal Election and Climate Change: In a shared effort, member CATs created a **guide to nominating, electing, and supporting municipal climate-aware candidates**.
-  [The Northern Bruce Peninsula Climate Action Plan](#) is a great example of a community process that brings everyone's expertise to the table. This Council has also **approved the use of a climate lens in green procurement policies**.
-  [The Township of Georgian Bluffs Climate Action Committee](#) is working on a climate action plan and [#GBGOESGREEN](#) encourages **householders to measure their Carbon Footprint**. In return the municipality will plant native trees.
-  The Municipality of West Grey is working on a **climate action plan** and the municipally based Climate Action Advisory Committee is playing a key role in the development of the plan.
-  [Saugeen Shores Environmental Stewardship Ad Hoc Advisory Committee](#) tabled 39 recommendations to Council. While the committee itself was disbanded by Council on completion of their mandate, the work continues through a project of the Canadian Federation of University Women Southport, the Saugeen Shores Environmental Alliance, **to engage all community service groups in climate action in 2022-2023**.
-  Transition Meaford worked with the Meaford Council and staff to launch a **Styrofoam recycling program**. The community response has been enthusiastic.
-  CAT Owen Sound is working with city staff as they develop a comprehensive **Climate Action Mitigation and Adaptation Plan** in sync with the Grey County Climate Plan, scheduled for completion in Summer 2023. As a major stakeholder, CATOS champions climate action and assists with education, surveys, and communication.

Always there is learning. Here are a few key observations about this process of community-municipal engagement:

Some initiatives may raise awareness, but not translate into municipal climate action. We have found that the declaration of a climate emergency is such an example. Early organizing around climate change focused on challenge strategies: marches, a die-in and seeking political pronouncements, yet few of these resulted in municipal climate action plans.

Things go better in relationship. The better strategy is structured relationship-building and engagement between municipalities and its citizens. Now we are focusing on building municipal climate action committees and seeking other collaborative ways to respond to climate change.

Things change. As with any citizens' groups, the strength of individual CATs may grow or wane depending on leadership, opportunity and sometimes frustration with the work. We have learned to support member CATs with empathy and strategy. We also keep an "open tent" criterion for membership. This means we welcome and support individuals who are intent on developing a CAT in their community.



The longevity of municipal climate committees is dependent on political will. GBCAN members are in for the long haul and have, this year, begun to learn together and develop a municipal election strategy. Part of this work is supporting candidates and councillors who will speak for climate change.

We can link our communities up to the bigger campaigns. Presenting the work of larger organizations such as the Clean Energy Alliance's push to keep the Ontario Hydro Grid "clean" or 350.orgs petitions to our municipalities and communities motivates and tunes us in to the bigger picture provincially and federally.

Community Engagement: Our goal is to engage community members in learning about climate change and recognizing where ordinary people can make a difference.

GBCAN member groups worked with their communities to spread the word about climate change and actions we all can take. GBCAN also has partnered with other groups, including The Sustainability Project and the Earth Day Grey Bruce 2022 organizing committee on community activities. From Carbon Footprint workshops and challenges to online presentations and live events, we have reached more than 2000 people in Grey, Bruce, Collingwood and Wasaga Beach.

Some engagement highlights:

-  **Earth Day Grey Bruce 2022 (EDGB)** was a pop-up event organised by five individuals, two of whom are members of GBCAN, partnered with GBCAT, CATOS, Sheatre, M'Wikwedong NFC and The Sustainability Project. The goal was to energize the community to take climate action on mitigation, adaptation, and justice. Thirty-five display booths offered information and activities. Paper maché workshops led to a parade on the day along with with live interactive musical entertainment. EDGB was awarded an Owen Sound Arts and Cultural Award for Most Promising New Event. EDGB is now established as an event that will continue in years to come.
-  **Carbon Footprint Challenges** were launched in Collingwood and Georgian Bluffs. At least 300 people are engaged in 29 community teams (including a team of Municipal councillors) across

seven municipalities around Collingwood, while in Georgian Bluffs the CAT has formed a registered committee and is promoting the activity through their municipal Climate Action Committee.



Carbon calculator workshops for the community were held in several municipalities, including Saugeen Shores and West Grey.



The Climate Engagement Group hosted an online book club, “Four Books to Heal the World”, with 40 registrants, to explore our connections to nature and our relationship to climate action.



The Climate Engagement Group also hosted **What to Do Wheel Workshops** for organizations and citizen groups. Nine workshops reached more than 500 people and resulted in formation of climate committees within several community service groups. The Wheel was also created as a game and travelled to Earth Day and to the One World Festival where many people “spun the wheel” to receive their climate change task.



The link between climate change and patriarchy was explored by two of our members and resulted in several public presentations.



Several Project Neutral based “**Talk Climate to Me**” sessions were held for women across Ontario.



In drafting **Northern Bruce Peninsula Climate Action Plan**, over 1000 members of the public provided feedback and there were two public presentations of the final document. The NBP CAT worked closely with the Municipality of NBP through the entire process.



Member groups, such as Town of Blue Mountains CAT and Grey Highlands CAT were deeply engaged in generating **community discussion on the proposed development of wild lands** during the current housing crisis.



Georgian Bluffs CAT hosted two online learning events to audiences of more than 100 people, exploring the connection between **Lyme Disease and climate** and impacts of flooding.

Other engagement activities:



Blue Mountains CAT participated in the Earth Day Roadside Clean Up.







Collingwood CAT held regular community events on topics including investment strategies, heat pumps for energy conservation, consumption and waste, and EVs and E-bikes.



Collingwood CAT also designed an Earth Day flag in collaboration with members of the Collingwood Youth Centre.



Georgian Bluffs CAT team participated in the Kemble Lions Club non-motorized Santa Claus Parade.

-  Transition Meaford planted pollinator gardens in Meaford parks and organized food gleaning opportunities.
-  Northern Bruce Peninsula CAT held two Family Climate Festivals, one in Lion's Head and the other in Tobermory.
-  Wasaga Beach CAT has developed a complete list of all the available grants for climate action.
-  And Saugeen Shores participated in shoreline cleanups with Lake Huron Coastal Centre.

Mapping Climate Action in the Grey - Bruce Region

We continued our focus on the climate action mapping project, updating and augmenting data collected last year on climate action by local municipalities. We are delighted to see municipalities giving more attention to climate change. Special kudos goes to Grey County and the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula for completing their climate action plan (CAP), after extensive public consultation and involvement. Also, the municipalities of Georgian Bluffs and West Grey began and continue to develop their CAPs. The City of Owen Sound's Official Plan (February 2022, Section 6.1.2.1) includes the stated intention to develop a CAP and it has a Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan aimed at understanding the impact that climate change has on city services and infrastructure and to increase their resiliency.

Effective climate action at the municipal level is greatly facilitated by membership in the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program. This program is focused on identifying and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from both corporate and community sectors. Equally important is the Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities (BARC) program focused on adaptation measures. Together, these two programs constitute substantial commitment to enable climate action. Membership in the PCP provides extensive technical support and advice to municipalities to develop and implement a CAP, as well as access to funding sources. This is an area where more is needed from our municipalities. Just five (Blue Mountains, Brockton, Huron-Kinloss, Northern Bruce Peninsula, and West Grey) of 18 municipalities, and Grey County are PCP members.

While there is still a disappointing lack of focused climate action among many regional municipalities, an increasing number of municipalities are demonstrating an awareness of climate change planning and the challenges it poses for us all. Several now have initiatives in place aimed at mitigation or adaptation. The Official Plans of some municipalities (e.g., Blue Mountains, Brockton, and Collingwood, and Kincardine), reflect the need to adapt to climate change through land use and greener development patterns, greener energy, and energy efficiency options. Some municipalities currently are reviewing their Official Plans, and we hope to see a greater emphasis on climate change in the revised versions. Blue Mountains, Collingwood and Kincardine have focused on sustainability. Blue Mountains has a Sustainability Fund, and its Corporate Strategic Plan has sustainability as a key pillar. Collingwood's Sustainable Community Plan (2008) was developed specifically to respond to anticipated "local forces of change" including climate change. Kincardine has an Integrated Sustainability Plan and

Council endorsed several climate adaptation projects in May 2022. Other municipalities acknowledge the need to respond to climate change in their Asset Management, Transportation and Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plans. In the charts the below: blues indicate a citizen’s action group in the municipality, the darker blue, new this year. Green indicates municipal climate action by the municipality, darker green is new progress this year.

GREY COUNTY												
Municipality	Population 2016	Population 2021	Bruce Grey %	Population Centre	Citizen Contact	Council Contact	Climate Emergency	Climate Action Plan	Climate Implement Plan	Member of FCM-PCP/ICLEI	Citizen Action Group	Citizen Council Group
City of Owen Sound	21,341	21,612	12.4%	Owen Sound	Joachim Ostertag	Carol Merton	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Municipality of West Grey	12,518	13,131	7.5%	Durham	Nikki May	Geoffrey Shea	Yes	In progress	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality of Meaford	10,991	11,485	6.6%	Meaford	Lesley Lewis	Shirley Keaveney	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Township of Georgian Bluffs	10,479	11,100	6.4%	Springmount	Ann Schneider	Cathy Cobourn	No	In progress	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality of Grey Highlands	9,804	10,424	6.0%	Markdale	Joyce Hall	Danielle Valiquette	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Town of The Blue Mountains	7,025	9,390	5.4%	Thornbury	Lorraine Sutton	Andrea Matrosos	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Township of Southgate	7,354	8,716	5.0%	Dundalk			No	No	No	No	No	No
Town of Hanover	7,688	7,967	4.6%	Hanover			No	No	No	No	No	No
Township of Chatsworth	6,630	7,080	4.1%	Chatsworth	Vitold Kreutzer		No	No	No	No	No	No
Grey County	93,830	100,905	57.9%	Owen Sound	Marilyn Struthers	Sue Carleton	Yes	Yes	In prep	Yes	Yes	Yes

BRUCE COUNTY												
Municipality	Population 2016	Population 2021	Bruce Grey %	Population Centre	Citizen Contact	Council Contact	Climate Emergency	Climate Action Plan	Climate Implement Plan	Member of FCM-PCP	Citizen Action Group	Citizen Council Group
Town of Saugeen Shores	13,715	15,908	9.1%	Port Elgin & Southampton	Odette Bartnicki	Cheryl Grace	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Municipality of Kincardine	11,389	12,268	7.0%	Kincardine		Chrystal Murphy	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Municipality of Brockton	9,461	9,784	5.6%	Walkerton	Bruce Davidson	Steve Adams	No	No	No	Yes	Suspended Spring 2021	Yes
Town of South Bruce Peninsula	8,416	9,137	5.2%	Warton	Leigh Grigg		No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Township of Huron-Kinloss	7,069	7,723	4.4%	Lucknow		Lillian Abbott	No	Yes	In Process	Yes	No	No
Municipality of Arran-Elderslie	6,803	6,913	4.0%	Chesley, Paisley			No	No	No	No	No	No
Municipality of South Bruce	5,639	5,880	3.4%	Mildmay			No	No	No	No	No	No
Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula	3,999	4,404	2.5%	Tobermory	Rod Layman	Megan Myles	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Saugeen 29	1,041	784	0.4%	SON			No	No	No	No	No	No
Neyaashiinigmiing	615	580	0.3%	Cape Croker			No	No	No	No	No	No
Bruce County	68,147	73,381	42.1%		Odette Bartnicki		No	No	No	No	No	No
Total Grey & Bruce County	161,977	174,286	100.0%									

SIMCOE COUNTY												
Municipality	Population 2016	Population 2021	Simco%	Population Centre	Citizen Contact	Council Contact	Climate Emergency	Climate Action Plan	Climate Implement Plan	Member of FCM-PCP	Citizen Action Group	Citizen Council Group
Wasaga Beach	20,675	24,862	4.7%	Wasaga Beach	Kathleen Caswell	Joe Belanger	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Town of Collingwood	21,793	24,811	4.7%	Collingwood	Catherine Daw	Cathy Jeffrey	Yes	Revitalizing	No	Yes	Yes	Yes - Collaborate
Township of Clearview	14,151	14,814	2.8%	Stayner	Suzanne West		Yes	No	No	In Progress	No	No
Simcoe County	479,635	533,169										

In Conclusion:

In this, our second year, members of GBCAN have made significant progress in engagement with their municipal leaders and with members of their communities. One municipality has a completed Climate Action Plan in place; two other municipalities have CAPs under development and municipal leaders are working closely with the local CAT or municipal Climate Action Committees (CAC) giving GBCAN members a seat at the table. In other municipalities the CATs are in close communication with their municipal leaders and staff resulting in a positive influence on municipal climate action. As Official Plans are updated, CATs and municipal CACs are working hard in several jurisdictions to promote policies that will help mitigate climate change and prepare municipalities for more extreme weather events.

In summary: GBCAN member groups have been very active in their communities, raising awareness of the importance of climate action through workshops, Earth Day festivals, booths at farmers' markets, webinars and many other diverse activities.

Looking forward: in the Fall, we are meeting to plan our activities for the coming year. We hope to find creative ways to share the message on the need for more widespread action among the residents of Grey Bruce and the importance of strong relationships with municipal leaders and staff.

Last Words:

Climate change is now affecting every country on every continent. And the global temperature is still rising. There is still a window of opportunity to limit climate change, but only if we take unprecedented action immediately. Everyone needs to be involved, including governments, businesses, communities, and individuals. Take action to transform our world.

UN Sustainable Development Goal 13: Taking Climate Action

When you really take a moment to soak in how beautiful nature is, you realize planting a flower is not just planting beauty, it's planting life. You've got to grow for other living things, not just for yourself.

9-year-old Ella Zingraff

Come and join us! Climate Matters

How to Get Engaged

Join us – find the group in your municipality

Georgian Bluffs Climate Action Team	Ann Schneider	a2gbcats@bmts.com
Climate Action Team Owen Sound	Joachim Ostertag	joachimostertag@gmail.com
Blue Mountain Climate Action Now Network	Kay Shaltz	km.schaltz@gmail.com
North Bruce Committee	Rob Layman	layman.rod@gmail.com
Transition Meaford Team	Lesley Lewis	llewis.hb@gmail.com
Grey Highlands Climate Action Group	Joyce Hall	greengreycountry@gmail.com
Municipality of West Grey Sustainability Advisory Committee	Nikki May	nikki.mayb@gmail.com
Georgian Bluffs & GB/Owen Sound	Marilyn Struthers	mstruthers@ryerson.ca
Saugeen Shores	Odette Bartnicki	obartnicki@icloud.com
Collingwood CAT	Catherine Daw	cdaw53@gmail.com
Wasaga Beach CAT	Kathleen Caswell	kc4green@gmail.com

Create a group in your municipality - we would be happy to help

Marilyn Struthers	mstruthers@ryerson.ca
John Anderson	jta350@gmail.com

Host a facilitated community planning meeting featuring the *What To Do Wheel*

Danuta Valleau	danuta@michaelmcluhan.com
Marilyn Struthers	mstruthers@ryerson.ca

Tune in to the Grey Bruce conversation

Watch the film <i>Resilience</i>	https://resiliencedoc.info/
Join the mailing list for the Forum: Third Thursday public events on climate in our area	https://www.thesustainabilityproject.ca/projects/climate-forum
Check out the community website	www.thesustainabilityproject.ca
Ask your municipality how their climate change planning is going	Read the Grey County Plan https://www.grey.ca/programs-initiatives/climate-change-action-plan
Check out the Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/groups/628024257701333/