

How is your community addressing global warming?

In 2005, environmental sustainability became a major focus for the Frisco community and town leaders. More specifically, with Frisco's economy closely tied to ski tourism, with severe bark beetle problems plaguing surrounding forests, and with limited water resources, we recognized that climate change is a problem that needs to be addressed now. As such, a new direction was incorporated to the town's comprehensive visioning plan: to take action through implementation of strategies that address climate change and environmental sustainability.



When it comes to global warming, Frisco town leaders also realize that cities and towns are both the problem and the solution, with municipalities responsible for a significant percentage of all climate warming emissions. In response, Frisco is addressing this long-term sustainability challenge through its Environmental Sustainability and Stewardship (ES2) program. The ES2 program sets standards of practice to increase resource conservation, reduce waste, increase energy efficiency, and implement alternative modes of transportation and fuel. Another major component to this newly established program is to encourage local businesses, residents and visitors to find ways to address climate change.

With the creation of the ES2 program, the town is taking action! Recently, Mayor Zurbriggen, and the town signed onto the US Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement. The town leaders, community members and staff are now in process to developing a local action plan to meet the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol. In addition, Frisco is a member of the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization; the town has adopted environmental stewardship policies to govern day to day operations; the building department utilizes a hybrid vehicle for its daily inspections, and town staff is researching other alternative fuel options for Public Works' vehicle fleet; the town's public works facility is heated with waste oil; the town is aiming to purchase 100% windpower for its operations, for 2007 and beyond; staff and outside experts are underway to assess all town buildings to improve their energy efficiency; policies are in place to incorporate green building practices into future town development projects; several of the town's special events have been converted to zero waste events; and, employee programs are in place to encourage employees to find alternative modes of transit to and from work, as well as for increasing recycling with our "Got Gas" and recycling pledge programs. Externally, Frisco will be implementing an efficient building program for residential uses later this year. This program will also serve as the pilot program for all municipalities and the county, in Summit County. Frisco's building and zoning codes already have regulations in place for new development to address energy efficiency, recycling and outdoor lighting. The next step planned for 2007 is to begin to develop public-private partnerships to address climate change in the Frisco community.

While the ES2 program is still in its infancy, and while Frisco has limited resources and limited expertise in the climate protection arena, the community and town leaders have committed to proactively address climate change. The actions taken thus far with Frisco's ES2 program also may serve as a model for other smaller communities in Colorado – every small local step in the direction of climate protection will make a global impact.