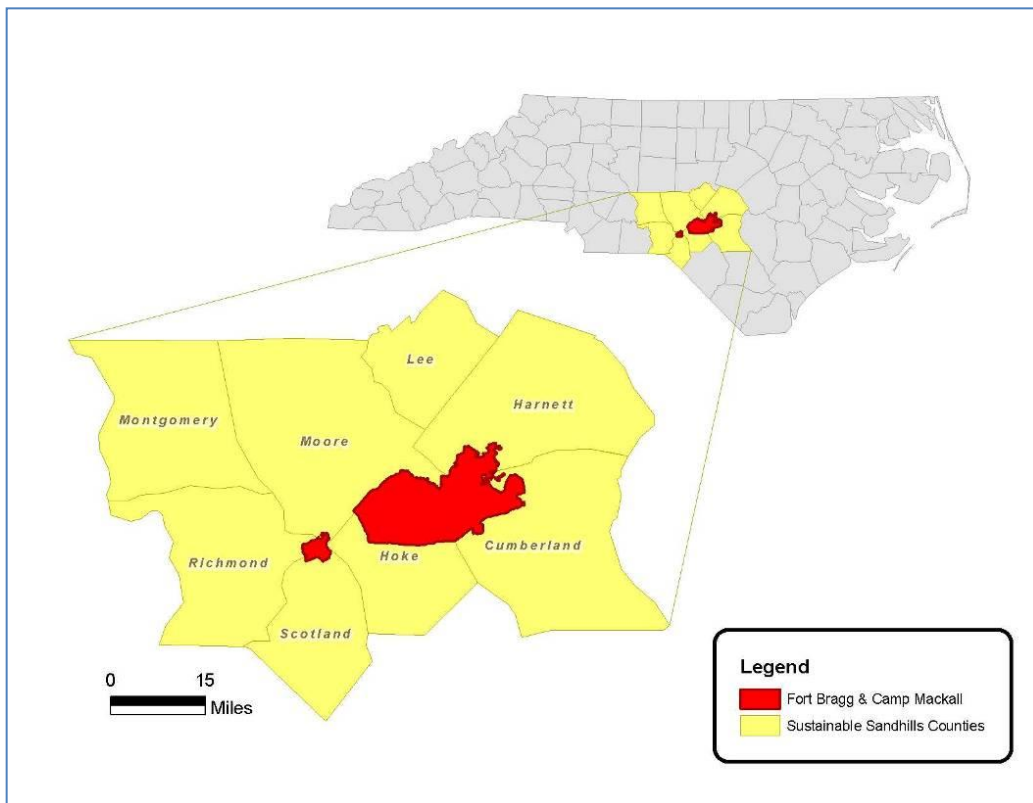




2010 Strategic Plan



Adopted by Sustainable Sandhills Board of Directors
January 12, 2010



Organizational History

In 2000, Fort Bragg leadership took a proactive stand to ensure the long-term viability of the installation. Resource constraints threatened Fort Bragg's ability to continue to meet their mission. By mid-2002, the installation's newly formed Sustainable Fort Bragg (SFB) program had identified its "environmental footprint," and developed goals and goal teams centered on air, water, energy, education and construction to reduce that footprint and ensure the long-term sustainability of the military mission.

A sustainable region was the next logical step. It was crucial for the survival of Fort Bragg to partner with the six counties (Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Moore, Richmond and Scotland) adjacent to the installation and to promote sustainability on a regional level. Fort Bragg's Garrison Commander met with the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NC DENR) to create what we know today as Sustainable Sandhills (SS).

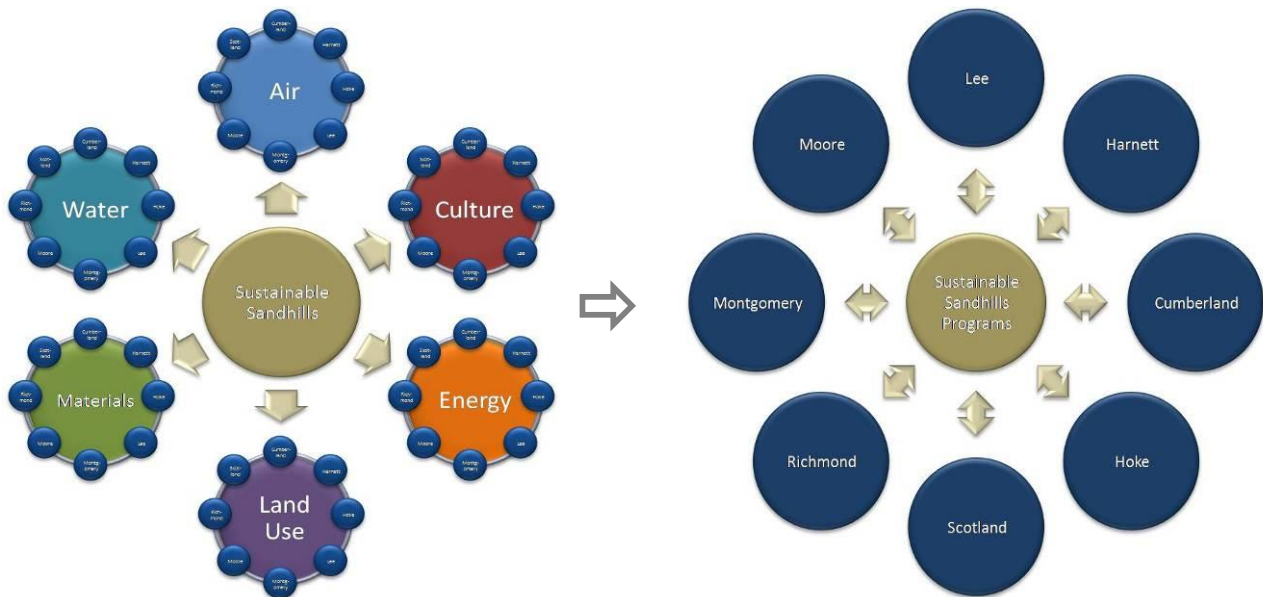
In February 2003, Fort Bragg and NC DENR convened stakeholders from the surrounding communities to propose the idea of a new partnership in the form of the SS initiative. More than 150 community leaders, state and local elected officials and government representatives were introduced to the concept and prospect of cultural change through sustainability. Representatives from Save Our State, the NC Department of Transportation, NC Department of Commerce, and the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs addressed the audience not only on their participation in sustainability efforts but also on the importance of finding a common vision for the region that could transcend political and municipality boundaries. At the conclusion of the conference, 40 attendees volunteered their time and talents to establish a Steering Committee and take the necessary steps to turn the idea into a plan. The Steering Committee hosted a workshop on sustainability to determine the primary purpose of this new organization.

The Steering Committee's four-day training session and workshop was held in May at Campbell University in Harnett County. The training and workshop began with "The Natural Step" framework, a philosophy based on scientific principles for a sustainable society. The initial focus was on six activity areas: 1) Agriculture, 2) Commerce and Economy, 3) Growth and Development, 4) Transportation, 5) Tourism, and 6) Military issues.

After evaluating the impacts of those activities for a day, the following common impacts were identified: 1) Materials Use, 2) Water, 3) Energy, 4) Land Use, and 5) Air Quality. Based on these five common impact areas, Community Resource Teams (CRT) were developed to establish desired end states, objectives and strategies. Leadership of the five CRT's incorporated as a NC nonprofit organization in November 2004. In September 2005, SS was granted 501c(3) tax-exempt status by the IRS, and the Board of Directors added Lee and Montgomery counties to the original list of six.

The success of SS over its first five years was based on the work of the CRT's. Over time, SS staff recognized many common challenges within the Teams. The size of the region made travel to CRT meetings difficult for many participants. Local participants often had interest in several CRT topic areas, which required attendance at several monthly meetings. And while the SS initiative had a regional scope, most of the CRT projects were local. In 2007, the SS Board elected to become a membership organization, and the CRT structure did not support an expanding membership base. In 2008, SS

adopted a new structure built upon staff-driven programs (closely tied to the previous CRT focus areas) and eight Community Action Teams (CATs), one in each county.



SS is one of the first compacts between a Department of the Army installation, an Environmental Regulatory agency and a group of surrounding communities to work toward improving the overall environmental, economic and social conditions of a region. This organization will continue to develop and grow as the Board of Directors, its staff and its members learn more about the sustainability issues and the types of actions that can be taken to “think regionally and act locally.”

Strategic Goals: Mid-Term (3-5 years)

1. SS is a Board-lead organization (more than staff lead).
2. Organizational growth is driven by locally-expressed needs.
3. SS achieves financial stability with a diverse funding stream.
4. SS Programs continue to grow and expand into additional counties.

Strategic Goals: Short-Term (1 year)

1. There are vibrant, healthy and engaged Community Action Teams (CATs) in eight counties.
2. Ensure the long term viability of SS.
3. Awareness & Education Program continues to be strong and effective.
4. Green Business Program continues to grow in Cumberland, Harnett and Moore Counties and expands to other counties.
5. Ensure Programs and Projects of SS contribute to SS’s resources and/or desired outcomes.

2010 Strategic Plan

The SS Strategic Plan is an annual plan based on the calendar year, so all metrics are based on a 1/1/2010-12/31/2010 period, unless otherwise stated.

Strategic Goal 1: There are vibrant, healthy and fully engaged Community Actions Teams (CATs) in eight counties.

The experience of SS has pointed to a need for local engagement, and the CATs are the method for achieving this type of awareness and participation. Local needs should drive local projects, and multiple common needs can drive regional projects. Each CAT is made up of residents, business owners, local government staff and elected officials within each county. CAT participants will be from the same county and SS will host regular CAT meetings in the evening within the participant's 'home' county. The CATs will be able to address all SS program areas in each meeting, instead of the single focus areas of the CRTs.

A key benefit of the CATs is the engagement of residents and local officials in joint projects. For example, if residents want to learn more about local government plans for a recycling program, they can easily do so through the CAT. Or, in the reverse situation, a county commissioner is able to utilize the resident participants of the CAT to gather feedback on a recycling program proposal. The CATs provide direct connections between local residents and local governments.

SS will be the common thread between each of the eight county CATs; success and lessons-learned can be shared between CATs. Local projects will benefit from the support of SS's regional programs and those program partners' technical resources.

What is a Community Action Team?

A Community Action Team is a forum for people with ideas and concerns related to sustainability (interconnected economic, environmental and social issues) to form networks and identify projects to act on these concerns. It is a venue for community activists to share their projects with the public. The outcomes of Community Action Teams meetings include:

- 1) Awareness of possible projects for community members to get involved with;
- 2) Identification of champions within the community to help move existing projects forward, or to start new projects;
- 3) Education and training, as requested by community members in support of projects.

Strategic Goal 1 Actions

1. Secure speaking opportunities to introduce SS in each of the eight counties (examples: Rotary, Kiwanis, churches, etc.)
2. Identify opportunities to partner with community organizations on local projects (examples: Project Plug In, Rain Barrel Art Show, Local Food Survey)
3. Facilitate CAT in each of the eight counties
4. Compile CAT Assessment Report for each county
5. Compile Regional CAT Baseline Assessment
6. Continue to involve Sustainable Fort Bragg planners in CATs

Strategic Goal 1 Metrics

| Metric | Target |
|---|---|
| Number of outreach speaking engagements prior to CAT | 2 per county (Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Montgomery, Richmond, Scotland) |
| Number of counties with active CAT | 8 counties |
| Number of attendees to CAT meetings | 400 |
| Number of projects per CAT | 1 per county |
| Number of CAT Assessment Reports | 1 per county |
| Number of Regional CAT Baseline Assessment Reports | 1 report |
| Number of Sustainable Fort Bragg Planners with active CAT roles | 4 planners |

Strategic Goal 2: Ensure the long term viability of Sustainable Sandhills.

The success of SS depends upon its Board of Directors (BOD); they are the volunteers with the greatest interest in and commitment to the organization. In order to be engaged the BOD needs support and guidance, as well as the opportunity to make contributions through tasks that interest them and align with their personal and professional skill sets. Currently the organization is working without a committee structure to assist in accomplishing its mission, which makes many tasks staff driven. By developing a committee structure and having board members serve on one or two committees that reflect their areas of interest and passion, they can use their talents and expertise to strengthen the SS organization and to help relieve some of the burden on staff.

As SS grows as an organization, there is a need to retain and support an Executive Director and professional staff to meet its vision and purpose. Some of the tasks conducted by the organization include: provide administrative support, facilitate CATs, interact with local governments and other non-profits, support the Board of Directors (BOD), and provide subject matter expertise for programs and projects. The organization began by utilizing volunteer time and effort, and this will continue to be the basis of much of the work conducted by the organization. Volunteers must be supported with a consistent and reliable organization, which requires a capable and professional staff, office space and other administrative capabilities. SS must pursue financial resources in order to stabilize the organization and ensure its long-term success. Currently, the organization relies heavily on a single funding source (federal) which makes it vulnerable if this source should decrease dramatically. In the long term, a diversified portfolio of funding resources will enable the organization to survive if one or more of the sources fluctuate during a given year.

Strategic Goal 2 Actions

1. Update the Strategic Plan
2. Update the Fundraising Plan
3. Pursue grant opportunities to support the organization and fund projects
4. Increase Board involvement with CATs
5. Ensure quorum is met at each meeting
6. Develop a committee structure
7. Ensure each SS BOD member participates on at least one committee
8. Continue to participate in Sustainable Fort Bragg staff meetings

Strategic Goal 2 Metrics

| Metric | Target |
|--|---|
| Strategic Plan | 1 plan, reviewed and approved by BOD |
| Fundraising Plan | 1 plan, reviewed and approved by BOD |
| Number of CAT meetings attended by BOD members | 2 CATs per BOD member (Cumberland & Moore) 1 CAT per BOD member (all other counties) |
| BOD meetings held with quorum (= 50% of BOD members present) | 100% |
| Develop a BOD committee structure | Recommend structure to full BOD at January 2010 BOD meeting |
| BOD members involved in committees | Each BOD member serves on at least one committee |
| Number of Sustainable Fort Bragg Staff meetings attended | 12 meetings |

Strategic Goal 3: Awareness & Education Program continues to be strong and effective.

Awareness and education are part of all the activities of SS and are the key actions that lead to increasing the organization's visibility to the Department of the Army, in the region, in the state and nationally. Awareness and education also lead to increasing membership, volunteer support, project development and ultimately improved outcomes for the region. Even though this goal is reflected in all SS activities, it is essential enough that specific support actions are called out in this Strategic Plan.

Strategic Goal 3 Actions

1. Prepare and publish bi-weekly electronic newsletter (via email)
2. Continue to convene the Combined Air Team
3. Prepare and distribute an Annual Report for SS membership
4. Ensure success of Sustainability Film Series
5. Hold at least two major events (examples: Urban Farm Tour, Regional Sustainability Symposium)

Strategic Goal 3 Metrics

| Metric | Target |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Number of bi-weekly e-Blasts | 22 e-Blasts |
| Number of Combined Air Team Meetings | 5 meetings |
| SS Annual Report | 1 report |
| Sustainable Film Series | 4 film showings in Cumberland & Moore. 2 film showings in Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Montgomery, Richmond & Scotland |
| Major Events | Conduct at least two major events (ie: Urban Farm Tour, Regional Sustainability Symposium) |

Strategic Goal 4: Green Business Program continues to grow in Cumberland, Harnett and Moore Counties and expands to other counties.

The Green Business Program is one of the strongest programs for SS; it has great potential for education and awareness, increasing the visibility of the organization, growing membership, and improving environmental and economic outcomes in the region. Support by the Public Works Commission (PWC) of Fayetteville has enabled the successful implementation of the program, and SS will continue to expand the program in this County. Next steps are focused on capturing the benefits and determining how to implement the program in other counties.

Strategic Goal 4 Actions

1. Continue implementation within Cumberland, Harnett and Moore Counties
2. Expand Green Business Program into other counties
3. Implement an Awards Program
4. Ensure recertification of businesses participating in the program

Strategic Goal 4 Metrics

| Metric | Target |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Number of newly certified green businesses | 40 |
| Number of businesses that have recertified | 10 |
| Number of special recognition awards made | 2 awards |
| Expand Green Business Program | Expand to 2 additional counties |

Strategic Goal 5: Ensure Programs and Projects of Sustainable Sandhills contribute to the organization’s resources and/or desired outcomes.

As SS continues to grow, it is important to evaluate the activities the organization participates in. Activities must build SS resources (staff, members, volunteers, partners, engaged community, money, government, etc.), have an impact on outcomes such as energy and water use, solid waste disposal and air quality, and influence things such as our carbon footprint, unemployment rates and obesity rates. SS is often faced with difficult decisions about whether or not to take on another activity. This goal will focus on proper evaluation and determination of proposed activities.

Strategic Goal 5 Actions

1. Develop an evaluation document to use in reviewing potential programs and projects
2. Develop a Green Growth Program and implement the Green Growth Toolbox
3. Develop a Commercial & Multifamily Recycling Program with the City of Fayetteville

Strategic Goal 5 Metrics

| Metric | Target |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Potential program and project evaluation document | 1 document prepared and approved |
| Green Growth Program development | 1 program developed |
| Implement Green Growth Toolbox | 2 planning jurisdictions |
| Develop a Commercial & Multifamily Recycling Program | 1 program developed |