

# TGIF Taking Great Ideas Forward

Improving Northern Capital - Sustainable Development in the Northern Tier

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not reflect positions of organizations with which he is affiliated.

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*“Schools may be the starkest example in modern society of an entire institution modeled after the assembly line. This has dramatically increased educational capability in our time, but it has also created many of the most intractable problems with which students, teachers, and parents struggle to this day. If we want to change schools, it is unlikely to happen until we understand more deeply the core assumptions on which the industrial-age school is based .”*

-Peter Senge-

## MEETINGS and EVENTS:

Links will provide additional information. Dates for recent additions are in **bold**.

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>
<a href="#">Inventors and Entrepreneurs Club</a>	June 7 <sup>th</sup>	5:30 PM	Iron River Community Center
Climate Warming Lecture	June 7 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 PM	UW - Superior
BCEDC Board Meeting	June 11 <sup>th</sup>	10 AM – noon	Washburn Library
<a href="#">2007 Entrepreneur's Conference</a>	June. 12-13	All day	Milwaukee
<a href="#">Aquaculture Field Day &amp; Vendor Fair</a>	June 14 – 15	All Day	Bayfield & Red Cliff - NADF
<a href="#">Inland Sea Kaya Symposium</a>	June 14-17	All Day	Washburn WI
<a href="#">Midwest Renewable Energy Fair</a>	<b>June 15-17</b>	<b>All Day</b>	<b>Custer, WI</b>
<a href="#">Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference &amp; Workshops</a>	June 21 & 22	All Day	Telemark Lodge, Cable
<a href="#">Pie &amp; Politics</a>	June 28 <sup>th</sup>	Evening	Big Top Chautauqua
<b>Lake Superior Day</b>	July 15 <sup>th</sup>	All Day	Lake Superior Basin

PLEASE NOTE: The **Midwest Renewable Energy Fair** is held in Custer, WI, not as previously listed in Amherst, WI. I am intent on making a day trip to the Fair on Friday,

June 15<sup>th</sup> . My van will accommodate a few extra passengers. If you are interested in joining me, please call.

## The AGE OF SUSTAINABILITY

What happened on our way to the Paperless Society?

Wednesday, I dropped in on **Jane Silberstein**'s office at the **Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center**. Jane, as many TGIF Readers know, has recently taken on the assignment, with **Martin Nantel** of Environment Canada in Thunder Bay, of revising the Sustainability Chapter for the Lake Superior Management Plan(LaMP). Co-author, with **Chris Maser**, of “*Land Use Planning for Sustainable Development*,” Jane is superbly qualified as a deep thinker about sustainability and as a writer of excellent prose. Systems thinking, a bedrock for thinking about sustainability, is, it seems, embedded in every cell of her mind/body.

Yet when I walked into her office she had LaMP pages spread out on her desk and expressed frustration, in her gentle way, with the LaMP document with its frequent and clumsy references to other sections and appendices. I've read from the LaMP on several occasions and understand her concerns from personal experience. The LaMP is not unique. Most paper documents, with textbooks leading the way, make questioning, probing readers and time-constrained users suffer.

It struck me then, and I suggested as much, that the LaMP document should be a hyperlinked document.

After some overnight reflection, I suggested, in an email, to some makers and shakers with the Binational Program, that the entire approach to revision of the LaMP be centered on creating a digital document and that the LS Program forgo further printing of paper LaMP documents. To my surprise and pleasure, **Liz LaPlante**, head of the Lake Superior Workgroup at EPA Region 5 in Chicago, replied that she would find the elimination of paper A-OK and that she would welcome a dialog.

Well, here we go!

For openers, I'm suggesting that the **Lake Superior Binational Forum** take up an immediate action item to reach consensus – via e-mail – to recommend to EPA and Environment Canada, that all future LaMP Documents (for all Great Lakes) be developed as digital, hyperlinked documents and that printing as paper documents be done only when needed and justified.

In other words, the default position for LaMPs would be electronic documents. Paper documents would be a secondary consideration. For those few individuals or institutions justifying real need for a complete printed document, the digital files could be sent to a service bureau for printing and mailing.

Let's keep a few extra trees around for carbon sequestration, cleaning our air of pollutants, preventing rapid water runoff and sediment pollution of ground water, and a nice aesthetic touch for us humans and a great benefit to wildlife. A nice bonus will be making the LaMP document more useful and user friendly.

And, that is just for starters.

If we are serious about sustainability, it may be high time that we begin rethinking core assumptions about how we do a whole lot of what we do. Printing with ink on paper made from trees may be unnecessary. Textbooks, those venerable icons of education, didn't really change much when Gutenberg invented movable type. Textbooks that are designed for use in our industrial-age schools may not seem as critically important as we begin creating sustainability-age environments for learning. Consideration for teachers, tests and technology will follow. **Peter Senge**, quoted above, writing about schools as learning organizations (and distinguished from organizations for learning) emphasizes that remaking our schools will demand rethinking – with systems thinking – how our schools should function. As prelude to an Age of Sustainability that promises to be exciting.

Take care and have a great weekend!  
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*In addition Bruce maintains the following affiliations:*

[Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation](#), (BCEDC) Director

[Inland Sea Society](#), (ISS) Director

[Lake Superior Binational Forum](#), (LSBF) US Delegation Co-Chair

[Raindrop Garden Gallery](#), (RGG) Co-owner

[IDEA Consortium LLC](#), Owner

[Chequamegon Institute, Inc.](#) Initial Registered Agent

[Coalition for Eco-Industrial Development](#), (CEID) Work Group Member

[Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board](#), (WIB) Member

*The encircled fractal triangle represents an integrated cluster of seven ideas – economics, ecology, equity, ethics, experience, education and energy – that may be considered a core for sustainability studies. Bruce is available to present illustrated lectures and facilitate discussions about Industrial Ecology, Sustainable Development and the Sustainability Revolution.*