



Inspiring the visitors and businesses of Lake Simcoe to go green

GREEN FOOD SERVICES TOOLKIT



Explore Lake Simcoe Green Tourism Project

205 Lakeshore Drive, Barrie, ON, L4N 7Y9
705.739.9444 ex 104

In Partnership with:



This project has received funding support from the Government of Ontario.
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of this material.

About this Project

Explore Lake Simcoe

Helping your business Go Green!

Outdoor recreation is a number one draw that brings visitors to Lake Simcoe back, again and again. It's the beauty of Lake Simcoe's natural areas that residents and visitors love. And it's on these natural resources that your tourism business depends. As pressures affecting tourism grow, like increases in visitors, so will impacts on water, energy and climate – and the operating costs of your business.

Let's green our practices to reduce these impacts. By reducing water and energy use in your daily operations you will save money and the very resource our tourism industry depends on. Let's show visitors we're invested in the protection of Lake Simcoe – for the future.

It's easy to get started!

First, complete the self-assessment. Then, follow the practical steps offered in this toolkit to get your business started on the path to green practices. We're here to help. Be sure to contact our **Project Coordinator** to assist you in greening your operations at info@explorelakesimcoe.com.

What is sustainable or **Green Tourism**?

Developing and managing tourism in an environmentally, culturally and economically sustainable way that is viable for the long-term.

What's in it for YOU?

Consumers are increasingly seeking sustainable tourism offers and the need to meet guest expectations will be vital in promoting your business and remaining ahead of the curve. It will position you as a competitive player in a fast-growing market. And you will be recognized for your commitment to protecting Lake Simcoe and benefiting your local community.

These 7 points help demonstrate going green is great for business!

Resource Conservation – Lake Simcoe is the main attraction to the area and it is also most affected by overexploitation and degradation. It makes dollars and sense to take care of the resource your product is based on – Lake Simcoe's natural areas.

Cost Savings - The cost of resources such as energy, water and waste disposal will increase as pressures on resources grow, thus any reduction in use will result in cost savings. This will also improve the efficiency of your business operations. Most buildings can reduce their energy and water consumption by 15% with no adverse effects to their business operations.

The U.S. Green Building Council highlights that sustainability strategies can create:

- ✓ 30% in energy savings;
- ✓ 35% less carbon output;
- ✓ 50% less water usage; and,
- ✓ More than 90% less waste.

Source: (Hotelsmag.com 2008)

Consumer Demand - Consumer awareness of issues regarding sustainability is rising and it's important to remain on top of the trends in order to stay competitive in a very aggressive industry.

Company Image – For businesses in environmentally sensitive areas, company image and reputation are very important. Green practices can help differentiate your business and increase your competitive edge.

Employee Loyalty - Sustainability programs have proved to be an effective means of employee retention, as well as generating enthusiasm and motivating staff.

Risk Management - Understanding and staying ahead of environmental issues will save your company money and help reduce financial risk.

Legal Compliance - Greenhouse gas emission reduction policies will put pressures on businesses. Climate affects tourism as it influences operating costs like heating and cooling.

What about consumer demand?

- Nearly 95% of visitors to the Lake Simcoe area are from Ontario
- In 2012, the Lake Simcoe region had over 24 million visitors, the majority same-day visits
- In 2012, total visitor spending in the region was ~ \$2 billion
- Low-impact outdoor recreation activities (cycling, hiking) are primary motivators for visiting (Dodds, 2015)
- Dodds (2015), found that 73% of respondents were extremely or somewhat likely to consider sustainable travel options when deciding on their trip
- A recent study of visitors to Lake Simcoe by Dodds (2015), found that 61% of respondents thought it was extremely or very important for a business to showcase their sustainability initiatives
- Of these, anglers (70%) and outdoor recreation users (68%) felt it was very or extremely important for businesses to showcase sustainability initiatives (Dodds, 2015)
- A study by Sims (2009), found that more than 60% of visitors surveyed had deliberately sought out what they believed to be 'local' food (as cited in Dodds, 2015)
- Choice of food and beverage in Lake Simcoe area rated lowest for visitor satisfaction, suggesting there is a great opportunity to promote and develop sustainable, local food options (Dodds, 2015)

- A 2011 study by CondeNast Traveller said 58% of their travellers’ hotel choice is influenced by the support the hotel gives to the local community (source: sustainabletourism.net)

Primary motivation for visiting the Lake Simcoe watershed

Adapted from Visitor Travel and Spending Patterns Report, Ryerson University, May 2015

Activity	%	Activity	%
Visiting friend & relatives	22	Vacation	5
Outdoor recreation	19	Golf	3
Fishing	12	Shopping	3
Going to a cottage	11	Beach	2
Attending a festival or event	7	Motorized recreation (motorcycling, ATV)	1
Business/work	6	Eating out	1
Boating	5	Other (driving through, etc.)	4

(Dodds, R. (2015). Assessing Visitor Travel and Spending Patterns for Recreation and Tourism in the Lake Simcoe Watershed. Ryerson University, Toronto)

What are the benefits?

By adopting this toolkit you could be eligible to:

- ✓ Be included in a database of green tourism operators that will be available online as a listing for all to see
- ✓ Be included in ‘green tourism experiences’ or itineraries that will be created
 - Green tourism experiences will be suggested and marketed to visitors on the sustainable tourism website, *explorelakesimcoe.com*. Each ‘experience’ will have a certain theme or focus (outdoor adventure, culinary, agritourism, etc.) and will connect to other sustainable options that complement the experience (i.e. connecting restaurants with accommodations, cycling routes and varying activities)
- ✓ Gain priority marketing placement in digital media marketing campaigns that will highlight the businesses around the watershed that are taking steps to go green

Visit www.explorelakesimcoe.com to learn more

How to Use this Toolkit

Step 1

- Rate yourself using the Operator Self-assessment

Step 2

- Make an appointment with our Project Coordinator

Step 3

- Communicate your green actions!

Conversations throughout interviews and workshops demonstrated that in order to move Lake Simcoe towards the green tourism market the crucial first step is to “get our house in order.” To accomplish this, it’s been determined that an operator self-assessment is the most appropriate first step. An operator self-assessment is a manageable starting point – it’s easy, isn’t time consuming and will give you a quick picture of where your business stands among others.

The operator self-assessment is applicable to operators across all sectors, however, if you wish to pursue further sustainable practices in your particular sector, refer to the food services checklist at the end of this toolkit.

Make an appointment with our **Project Coordinator** to guide you through the process at info@explorelakesimcoe.com

Step 1

- Rate yourself using this Self-Assessment
- Send in your results to get recognized!

Operator Self-Assessment

Use the following assessment to see how you measure up. As with any change, progress occurs in steps. If you score at least 50%, you are well on your way. Once you have completed your assessment, take a closer look at the results to identify how you want to move forward. Keep your assessment results and complete it again in six to eight months to evaluate your progress.

We are here to support your efforts! Check out the rest of our website for easy tips to get you started. Book an appointment with our Sustainable Tourism Project Coordinator at info@explorelakesimcoe.com to discuss your goals and identify where you need support. We can point you in the direction of resources and networking support. See how your efforts can be chronicled under the Green Leaders and Eat/Play/Stay section of the website.

BUSINESS PRIORITIZATION OF SUSTAINABILITY

- You have developed a long-term sustainability plan that considers environmental, socio-cultural, quality, health and safety issues - suitable to your company's scale - 4 Points
- You regularly track progress against established environmental goals - 3 Points
- You have obtained third-party accreditation for environmental initiatives (i.e. Clean Marine Audubon Golf, Green Restaurant Association, Green Keys) - 10 Points

Total Points: /17

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION (optional category)

- Your personnel receive periodic training about their role in managing and supporting your businesses sustainability policies and activities - 3 Points
- You have consulted with staff to identify inefficiencies and set goals for new initiatives - 2 Points
- You have identified a "sustainable tourism champion" who tracks progress and regularly updates staff on progress - 3 Points

Total Points: /8

CUSTOMER-FACING COMMUNICATION

- You communicate your commitment to Sustainable Tourism in all your business marketing - 3 Points
- You publicize your business' sustainability initiatives - 2 Points
- You actively promote at least 2 other local businesses that are working towards being more sustainable (businesses can be in different business sectors to avoid conflict of interest) - 2 Points
- You communicate Lake Simcoe's green tourism objectives to staff (if you employ staff), colleagues, industry and community networks, and you champion the cause - 1 Point

Total Points: /8

EFFICIENT RESOURCE USE

- You keep track of your monthly bills (energy, waste, water) and try to reduce them - 3 Points
- You measure your ecological footprint and actively work to reduce it - 1 Point
- You incorporate simple business practices that conserve resources and communicate these practices regularly to staff and or customers (i.e. reduction of use of straws, not automatically giving cutlery, closing blinds on hot days) - 1 Point

WATER

- You use water conserving technology (i.e. low-flush toilets, low-flow showerheads, faucet aerators) - 2 Points
- You carry out business tasks in a way that conserves water (i.e. clean sidewalks with a broom instead of water) - 2 Points

WASTE

- You divert at least 40% of waste from landfills - 2 Points
- You minimize the use of disposable items (i.e. single use water bottles, disposable cleaning supplies), and seek reusable, compostable, or recyclable alternatives - 2 Points
- You actively find ways to reuse business items (i.e. furniture) - 1 Point
- You have an e-waste policy to recycle batteries, printers, computers, etc. - 1 Point
- You compost or divert food waste through collection programs - 1 Points

ENERGY

- You take advantage of energy incentives - 1 Point
- You use recognized energy efficient appliances (i.e. Energy Star) - 2 Points
- You insulate, add weather stripping, use window shades, and adopt similar methods of energy conservation - 2 Points
- You use a programmable thermostat and supplement air conditioning with ceiling fans - 2 Points
- You have renewable energy onsite (i.e. solar, geothermal) - 3 Points
- You have completed an energy audit - 2 Points
- You take advantage of regional climate, vegetation, sun angles and wind to maximize solar gain in winter and shading in summer - 1 Point

Total Points: /29

LOCAL AND ETHICAL PURCHASING

- You purposely use suppliers that have environmental or socially responsible policies or practices - 2 Points
- You buy in bulk when appropriate to minimize packaging and you seek out product suppliers that minimize packaging - 2 Points
- You supply organic and fair trade products (i.e. coffees and teas) - 2 Points
- You use FSC certified paper - 1 Point
- You showcase or sell products or art and handicrafts from local vendors - 1 Point
- You support local businesses as much as possible - 2 Points

Total Points: /10

LOCAL FOOD SOURCING (optional category)

- You use at least 20% local food in your dishes - 2 Points
- You grow your own vegetables or herbs for your guests - 2 Points

Total Points: /4

HABITAT CONSERVATION AND LANDSCAPING PRACTICES (optional category)

- You naturalize as much of your property as possible, use plant buffers between land and waterways, and use sustainable turf management practices (i.e. leaving grass clipping on the grass to compost) - 2 Points
- You minimize your use of fertilizer, apply it properly and at the correct time of year - 2 Points
- If you have to water the lawn you do it at dawn or dusk to reduce evaporation (lawns require no more than 2.5 cm of water weekly) - 2 Points
- You use environmentally friendly lawn care products and employ organic lawn-care methods - 4 Points
- You plant drought tolerant plants and therefore do not water them or you water plants from collected rainwater - 2 Points
- You use native plants in your landscaping and remove invasive species - 2 Points
- You use permeable materials instead of asphalt or concrete to allow water to percolate into the ground - 2 Points
- If you have a septic system, you maintain it regularly - 2 Points
- You encourage wildlife on your property (i.e. you have bird/bat boxes) - 1 Points
- You have active involvement of staff/guests in a wildlife/habitat conservation project - 1 Point

Total Points: /20

SNOW AND ICE MANAGEMENT (optional category)

- You use mechanical snow removal to avoid excessive salt use, and you take steps to reducing use of chloride-based ice melter (including using alternatives such as sand) - 2 Points

Total Points: /2

TRANSPORTATION

- You provide or promote car-free transportation options to tourists - 3 Points
- You actively discourage vehicle idling at your place of business - 3 Points
- You offer secure bike racks or bike parking - 2 Points
- You promote local cycling or walking tours in your area - 1 Point
- You support and encourage alternative transportation (either for yourself or employees) by providing amenities such as bike racks, showers, or incentives - 2 Points
- You use a hybrid, electric, or biodiesel powered vehicle/machinery and or have an electric vehicle charging station on site - 4 Points

Total Points: /15

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND RESPECT

- You regularly provide financial or in-kind support for local not-for-profits 2 Points
- You provide opportunities for staff to pursue professional development or local volunteering for at least 2 days a year (or you do so yourself) - 1 Point
- You showcase your local heritage/promote local heritage places and events - 1 Point
- You donate to community groups in need (i.e. old linens or other supplies) - 1 Point
- If you hire employees, you provide year-round opportunities - 4 Points
- You collaborate with First Nations representatives to promote their heritage and culture - 3 Points

Total Points: /12

VISITOR STEWARDSHIP

- You review your visitor environmental code of conduct with guests and make it visible - 1 Point
- You offer reusable mugs or water bottles to visitors and promote the use of reusable shopping bags - 1 Point
- You ask visitors to make choices that reduce resource use (i.e. less frequent washing of linens, use of reusable shopping bags) - 1 Point
- You take advantage of opportunities to educate visitors about the natural environment around your business - 1 Point

Total Points: /4

TOTAL SCORE

BUSINESS PRIORITIZATION OF SUSTAINABILITY __/17

OPTIONAL CATEGORY-- EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION __/8

CUSTOMER-FACING COMMUNICATION __/8

EFFICIENT RESOURCE USE __/29

LOCAL AND ETHICAL PURCHASING __/10

OPTIONAL CATEGORY-- FOOD SOURCING __/4

OPTIONAL CATEGORY-- HABITAT CONSERVATION AND LANDSCAPING PRACTICES __/20

OPTIONAL CATEGORY-- SNOW AND ICE MANAGEMENT __/2

TRANSPORTATION __/15

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND RESPECT __/12

VISITOR STEWARDSHIP __/4

TOTAL POINTS __ / (SUM OF POSSIBLE POINTS IN CATEGORIES THAT APPLY TO YOUR BUSINESS)

FINAL CALCULATIONS—INSTRUCTIONS TO CALCULATE TOTAL PERCENTAGE

- Add the total potential points for all of the categories that apply to your business. Please note that all categories marked “optional” can be excluded depending upon the type of business—all other categories are mandatory.
- Add the number of points your business earned in relevant categories.
- Sum the total points that could be potentially earned for the categories that apply to your business. Then divide your total by this potential total to calculate your final percentage.

Step 2

- Make an appointment with our Project Coordinator

If you're taking steps – make sure you get recognized!

Once you've successfully completed the self-assessment contact our Project Coordinator to make sure you're featured in Lake Simcoe's green tourism promotions.

Our Coordinator is here to help tourism businesses around the watershed green their practices. Make sure to get in touch for resources, funding and product information. We will assist you in taking the steps to green your operations in the short, medium and long-term.

Aileen MacMillan
Sustainable Tourism Project Coordinator
Email: info@explorelakesimcoe.com
Tel. 705.739.9444 ext. 104

Step 3

- Communicate your green actions!

The most important part of a successful green tourism strategy is a united vision for the future – and this needs to be communicated to everyone!

Make sure you're communicating your green actions to your employees, community and guests. Social media is a very useful tool and you should make your efforts known on your website, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. (For tips on employee engagement please see www.explorelakesimcoe.com)

Consider the Lake Simcoe green tourism mission and see if it aligns with the mission of your business. If so, adopt the mission and make the pledge to be a green operator working towards ever increasing sustainability within your business.

Have your mission visible so visitors see you are working to make Lake Simcoe a sustainable community!

Please find mission and communications templates on www.explorelakesimcoe.com

Energy Incentives and Funding Options

For more incentive and funding options please see [Natural Resources Canada](#).

The [Ontario Ministry of Energy](#) searchable guide is also very useful.

Granting Organization	Program	Description	Potential Dollar Value
Hydro One/Local Power Company	Small Business Lighting and Retrofit programs	Start with an assessment, receive recommendations, incentives for lighting and technology updates available	\$2,000 and up
Ontario Power Authority	Save On Energy	Pre-approval required, incentives provided for lighting and other equipment	Variable
Union Gas	Energy efficiency programs by industry	From calculators and tips to equipment incentives	Variable
Enbridge Gas	RunRightProgram	Initial assessment to find energy savings and assess applicability for installation incentives	Up to \$10,000 implementation incentive

Please contact our Sustainable Tourism Project Coordinator or visit www.explorelakesimcoe.com for more green resources

FOOD SERVICES

Have you completed the **Operator Self-Assessment**? Please make sure that you have completed the self-assessment before continuing.

The following section provides you with detailed strategies to improve your efficiency, implement sustainable practices and position yourself as a sustainable tourism leader in the Lake Simcoe watershed.

WHY BOTHER?

“As landfill space decreases, the costs for landfilling our garbage will continue to grow, ultimately being passed on to businesses and residents in the form of higher disposal fees. Now, more than ever, reducing waste and recycling are smart tactics to incorporate into everyone’s business policies. Restaurants can do a lot to minimize or reduce these potential cost increases by incorporating simple recycling and waste reduction programs and procedures that will eliminate much of the waste otherwise thrown away. Not only will this help save your business money, but will extend the life of landfills and save valuable energy and natural resources. Consumers are ever-increasingly aware of, and more willing to embrace, (both with their votes and their pocket books) solutions to the many environmental challenges we face today. It makes good economic and environmental sense for our restaurants to do so as well.”

(From Food for Thought: Restaurant Guide to Waste Reduction and Recycling, City of San Francisco’s Integrated Waste Management Board)

WHAT ARE MY PRIORITIES?

- ✓ **Reduce Waste:** Buying in bulk, composting and making food to order will significantly reduce your waste output
- 📄 **Buy local/organic/fair trade:** Support local food producers and fair trade suppliers as part of a sustainable purchasing program
- 📄 **Save Water and Energy:** Kitchens can be the black hole of resources. Auditing your current practices and upgrading to energy and water efficient appliances will visibly lower your utility bills

- ❖ The **Grey Bruce Foodlink** and **Simcoe County Farm Fresh** websites provide maps of retailers and restaurants that feature food and wine produced locally. Examples of businesses featured on the sites include **Cravings Fine Food and Caterers** in Barrie and **Bite Me! Fabulous Food Experiences** in Minesing.

SHEDDING SOME LIGHT ON COMPOSTERS

Before you start composting on site make sure you've chosen the right composter for your business:

- ② **Digesters:** use solar heat to help compost organic waste directly into the soil and are very simple to set up and maintain. They accept most organic waste, except paper, and are limited to approximately two kilos of waste per day. If you are a large business, you may need several. These composters are useful to place next to caravan or camping pitches, so waste can be dropped right where it's created.
- ② **Intensive Composters:** usually need some garden waste added, regular feeding and proper maintenance. They have lids or doors to shut off access, which is paramount if you are composting food waste.
- ② **Traditional Compost Heaps:** work fine for most domestic volumes of vegetable waste but, because they tend to be easily accessible, should not be used for cooked food waste.
- ② **Wormeries:** are enclosed bins that house their own worms to digest vegetable waste. This is a good choice when you can involve younger customers and visitors to help feed the worms. Note: they are not suitable for more than two kilos of waste per day.

Sustainable Strategies

SHORT TERM

Consider the following strategies to become more sustainable in the next couple of years:

Communications

- ✓ Establish a sustainable tourism mission/vision
- ✓ Post your sustainability mission in plain sight for visitors to read and on your website. The policy should express its aims to be equitable, minimize environmental impacts, contribute to the local economy
- ✓ Begin to write a sustainable tourism policy with clear goals and objectives
- ✓ Distribute sustainable tourism information to your customers through your website and social media
- ✓ Post signage throughout your facility educating staff about how they should participate in your sustainability efforts (i.e., turn off the lights, turn off POS system/computers at night, save water, conservation information, etc.)
- ✓ Use an email database of contacts to reduce paper mailing and flyers for promotions, etc.
- ✓ Post signage for guests about how they can be green while visiting your restaurant (i.e. turn off the lights, use hand dryers, recycle paper napkins, etc.)
- ✓ Use LCD screens to display dynamic, onsite information such as daily schedules and specials and Kitchen Display Systems for orders to reduce waste, reduce errors and inefficiencies and save money
- ✓ Identify local and organic choices on your menu
- ✓ Include a local, seasonal feature as a daily special

Products

- ✓ Incorporate locally-sourced organic produce, dairy and meat products in your menu (aim for 20%)
- ✓ Serve sustainably caught fish. See seachoice.org and become a SeaChoice Chef Champion
- ✓ Include vegetarian dishes in your menu
- ✓ Brew fair trade, organic coffee and tea
- ✓ Serve fair trade, organic chocolate
- ✓ Purchase 20% of non-food products locally
- ✓ Purchase bulk, reusable and refillable options; avoid individually-wrapped products (i.e. milks and creamers; replace canned pop and bottled water with fountain drinks)

- ✓ Ensure up to 10% of your chemical-technical products are eco-certified (see the Green Resources section of explorelakesimcoe.com for more information)--products should have neutral pH levels, no known carcinogens, low or no VOCs, biodegradability, less packaging
- ✓ Use only phosphate free soaps and detergents
- ✓ Use homemade vinegar-based cleaners
- ✓ Identify plastics that can be replaced with compostable, biodegradables (bags, food containers, cutlery)
- ✓ Consider going “beverage straw free” or switch to eco-friendly reusable stainless steel or biodegradable options
- ✓ Use paper table napkins instead of cloth (emissions and water use are much lower for paper in high volume settings)
- ✓ Use paper products that are FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified
- ✓ Eliminate the use of aluminium foil, and if used, recycle where programs exist
- ✓ Use cleaning cloths instead of paper
- ✓ Use products that are pump action as opposed to aerosol
- ✓ Switch at least 20% of light bulbs to low-energy bulbs (LEDs or CFLs)--see saveonenergy.ca for government incentives
- ✓ Ask suppliers about their environmental/corporate responsibility policy; have suppliers take their packaging back

Efficient Resource Use (energy, water, waste)

- ✓ Set up a system to record energy, water and waste metrics on a quarterly basis and review it annually to identify opportunities to reduce impacts (i.e. kWh/Ft² metrics)
- ✓ Implement a leak checking program; regularly monitor and fix leaks immediately
- ✓ Implement an organic collection and composting program
- ✓ Ensure you are properly sorting waste and recycling

Energy

- ✓ Conduct an energy audit
- ✓ Upgrade to energy efficient appliances, i.e. Energy Star (check your power company for incentive programs)
- ✓ Ensure the energy savings features of all electronic equipment are enabled
- ✓ Complete a building envelope assessment
- ✓ Ensure POS and computers are switched off at night
- ✓ Implement a “lights off” policy
- ✓ Use a programmable thermostat and supplement air conditioning with ceiling fans (check your power company for incentive programs)
- ✓ Optimize the use of heating and cooling to reduce energy and costs. In the winter, during daytime hours set to 20 C, while unoccupied reduce to 14-15 C. In the summer, set daytime temperature to 24 C, while unoccupied set to 28 C.
- ✓ Weather strip and/or caulk doors and windows
- ✓ Paint wall surfaces a light colour (reduces the need for artificial light); make the most use of natural light
- ✓ Close windows and curtains at the end of the work day
- ✓ Establish an anti-idling policy
- ✓ Minimize business travel through teleconferencing and videoconferencing
- ✓ Run dishwashers only when full; turn off at night
- ✓ Allow hot food to cool before storing in refrigerators and freezers
- ✓ Avoid over-filling refrigerators; cooling occurs best when air can circulate
- ✓ Ensure refrigerator and freezer doors fit and close properly and seals are in good condition
- ✓ Ensure refrigerator compressor belts maintain proper tension
- ✓ Check and clean fans, condensers and compressors regularly
- ✓ Defrost freezers frequently as frost build-up reduces efficiency

Water

- ✓ Complete a water audit
- ✓ Change air conditioner and heater filters regularly (every 3 to 6 months)
- ✓ Install low-flow pre-rinse spray valves (see saveonenergy.ca for incentives)
- ✓ Fix all water leaks immediately
- ✓ Offer guests tap or filtered tap water instead of bottled water

Waste

- ✓ Conduct a waste audit
- ✓ Diver 20-50% of waste from landfill through composting, recycling, reusing, reducing
- ✓ Provide recycling bins throughout the facility
- ✓ Use black and white printing instead of colour and print double-sided
- ✓ Reuse products whenever possible (i.e. waste paper for note-taking)
- ✓ Ban plastic water bottles from workplace
- ✓ Equip dishwashers with automatic detergent doses
- ✓ Evaluate and adjust the size of meal portions if they are consistently returned unfinished
- ✓ Ensure no mini, individually-wrapped portions of butter, jam, sugar, milk or creamers are used
- ✓ Compost all types of material, i.e. food waste, coffee grinds, grass clippings, etc. Use the resulting soil to help maintain your garden or property or donate it to a local farm
- ✓ Use vegetable and meat trimmings for soup stock
- ✓ Donate extra food to a community meal service or nearby working/hobby farm
- ✓ Collect used cooking oil for recycling
- ✓ Donate old uniforms to theatre companies or thrift shops, or find textile recycling programs

Habitat Conservation and Landscaping

- ✓ Use sprinklers or water only at dawn, dusk and overnight to reduce evaporation
- ✓ Identify and remove all invasive species; replace with local flora and fauna
- ✓ Apply mulch to hold water in beds
- ✓ Clean outdoor pavements with a broom instead of water hose
- ✓ Use phosphate free fertilizers; minimize use of fertilizers
- ✓ Use low or non-chloride based snow and ice control materials
- ✓ Put up bat and bird boxes on your property
- ✓ Become a backyard beekeeper
- ✓ Plant trees around building and over patios for shade and energy conservation

Transportation

- ✓ Offer secure bike parking (bike racks) for guests and staff
- ✓ Provide or promote car-free transportation options to tourists
- ✓ Promote local cycling or walking tours in your area
- ✓ Encourage and support employees in using alternative transportation (i.e. provide showers, change room facilities, discounted transit passes, incentives for carpooling)

Community Support

- ✓ Employ local labour and services
- ✓ Provide year round employment opportunities to the local workforce
- ✓ Identify local organizations, community groups and NGOs that would be a good partner to your business
- ✓ Showcase your local heritage/promote local heritage, places and events
- ✓ Connect with locals and suggest ways for guests to meaningfully connect with locals
- ✓ Donate to community groups in need (i.e., charity events, old linens, office furniture, old dishes, etc.)

- ✓ Host a community group in need for a free lunch or event
- ✓ Offer free lunch, coffee or baked goods to the homeless one day a month or year
- ✓ Showcase local art
- ✓ Be an equal opportunity employer

Employee Engagement (Teamwork and Leadership)

- ✓ Create a Green Ambassador or Green Team (recommended for businesses with 4+ staff) to track progress
- ✓ Communicate the expectations of an adopted sustainability plan to employees
- ✓ Train staff on sustainability and environmental initiatives; host lunch and learns on various topics and the importance of sustainability
- ✓ Educate staff on reduce, reuse, recycle (with the biggest emphasis on how to reduce)
- ✓ Organize a “clean out the drawers day” with lots of recycling bins on hand
- ✓ Suggest employees engage in at least 10 volunteer hours per year
- ✓ Plan a team “clean Up day” for employees to pick litter at a community beach or park
- ✓ Plan a team volunteer day for employees to give back to a local community group (i.e. soup kitchen)

Visitor Stewardship

- ✓ Offer visitor incentives, i.e. discounts for sustainable transportation practices (i.e. cycling or using public transit)

WANT TO DO MORE ?

- ✓ Find local food producers and suppliers in your area, visit
 - o Simcoe County Farm Fresh: simcoecountyfarmfresh.ca
 - o Ontario Fresh: ontariofresh.ca

FOR MEDIUM AND LONGTERM STRATEGIES PLEASE BOOK AN APPOINTMENT

WITH OUR PROJECT COORDINATOR info@explorelakesimcoe.com