

# SEYM MINUTE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

## APPLICATION OF THE “CARBON FOOTPRINT” CONCEPT

### Sarasota Monthly Meeting

*A. The Carbon Footprint* concept has been widely applied, serving as a kind of “common denominator” for evaluating the total impact, direct and indirect, of a product’s greenhouse gas emissions. For those interested in reading introductory material and commentary, each is included as an appendix in this PDF and bookmarked if you use the bookmarks in your PDF reader:

1. U. of Michigan Center for Sustainable Systems: [Carbon Footprint Factsheet](#) (Pub CSS09-05, 2011)
2. The Economist: [Following the Footprints](#) (June, 2011)
3. NY Times: [Reducing Your Carbon Footprint](#) (February, 2013)
4. Wikipedia: [Carbon Footprint](#)
5. Nature.com: [One Third of Our Greenhouse Gases Come from Agriculture](#) (Oct, 2012)

*B.* If you wish to begin with a more “hands-on” experience, I suggest going through your own household “carbon footprint calculation.” There are many web sites offering calculations (complemented by suggestions and house-hold specific calculations of savings opportunities. There are many web sites offering to perform the calculation. Many are quite poor. My recommendations, after trying out about ten sites are the following three. They have just enough detail (you need to be familiar with your average utility bills, preferably in Kwh or applicable measure, auto miles per year, etc...really not too much). None take very long. Try one or all three.

1. [http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/indcalculator.html#c=waste&p=reduceWaste&m=calc\\_yourEstimatedSavings](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/indcalculator.html#c=waste&p=reduceWaste&m=calc_yourEstimatedSavings) (from the US EPA)
2. <http://www.nature.org/greenliving/carboncalculator/> (from the Nature Conservancy)
3. <http://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/carboncalculator> (developed by U Cal, Berkeley)

My personal results were pretty consistent among these three, overcoming a common problem among the different “tools”. Some sections of the tools are more refined than others.

*C.* At an earlier meeting of the P&SC Committee, I discussed reasons considering the Carbon Footprint as a tool for SMM to respond to the SEYM Minute on climate change. If the Committee wishes, I’d be happy to summarize when we meet.

In conclusion, I hope many in the Committee will have the chance to at least try one or two of the Carbon Footprint calculators before we meet. Regarding the reading materials that were suggested in Section A, most of the articles are short. Reading the U of M material (ref. A(1), two pages) is probably more than enough advance reading.

## *Appendix A*

### Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minute on Climate Change - March 2013

We, the Friends of Southeastern Yearly Meeting, bring this minute forward at a time when the first phase of climate efforts are drawing to a close. Questions about the reality of climate change become irrelevant as we face catastrophic fires, drought, crop failures, ocean acidification and dead zones, and mass extinctions. As painful as they are, these realities that scientists predicted would occur with the unprecedented emissions and rise of CO<sub>2</sub> are before us.

We as a religious community are called to respond now. We recognize that many of us feel confusion and despair, and fear that humankind may not be equal to the task ahead. Many of us have used denial to protect us from what we see or fear is coming. We understand with compassion that this denial has been our attempt to protect ourselves from feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

We need to remind ourselves that hope can be found in our Quaker faith and practices, in the unfailing presence of the Light, of our testimonies that guide us and clarify behaviors asked of us. We value the process of determining leadings to give us the joy and determination to carry on. We find in our history that many Friends have found the resolve to bring attention and intention to the work they faced, as we can.

We face immense questions. What price the preservation of private property? What is wealth and how does money represent wealth? We know from our efforts to live simply that wealth is found in love, in faith, in family and community. It is found in the beauty of clean air, fresh water, or a quiet walk in the woods to see wildflowers. That, we know as Friends, is wealth.

Friends are already prepared to undertake this work through our meeting communities, and small groups who can work together as we are led. We are grateful for those Friends who have carried this concern for years and now pledge to join them in our collective work.

We commit ourselves as a community to the following -

1. We resolve to see clearly the slow moving emergency of climate disruption, to educate ourselves and to seek to see the work that is ours as individuals and as communities.
2. We commit as monthly meetings to discern our particular work and undertake it, especially working locally with other groups who share our commitment.
3. We commit to provide emotional, practical and spiritual support to those who work to care for the Earth.
4. We commit to seeking the Light to guide us in our work, to bringing the wisdom of our knowledge and the deep wisdom of our hearts to this work.
5. We commit ourselves to the well being of future generations whose lives will be so profoundly affected by what we do now.

Barbara Letsch, Clerk  
The Earthcare Committee of  
Southeastern Yearly Meeting

SARASOTA MONTHLY MEETING: CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE

SELECTED WEB SITES

Many organizations are devoting substantial resources to the study of climate change and related subjects. These include governmental agencies, the United Nations, foundations, educational institutions and private corporations. The following four Web sites appeared to strike a balance between credibility and readability. The references in Appendix B are designed to enable the reader to simply “click” on the link and be led directly to the site. Please let us know if you have a problem.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS (UM CSS)

The University of Michigan’s CSS project evolved from earlier studies on pollution prevention in 1991. Larger in scope than *carbon footprint* analysis, the Center’s publications consider *Sustainability* criteria in their evaluations. In particular, the CSS *Fact Sheets* offer two page summaries with graphics on a variety of subjects from *Carbon Footprints* to evaluations of the U.S. *Food System*.

The *Homepage* of the organization: <http://css.snre.umich.edu/>

Their publication catalog of *Fact Sheets*: <http://css.snre.umich.edu/factsheets>

You may wish to look at their *Fact Sheet* on the *Carbon Footprint*, which is nicely designed and only two pages, located at: [http://css.snre.umich.edu/css\\_doc/CSS09-05.pdf](http://css.snre.umich.edu/css_doc/CSS09-05.pdf)

The *Homepage* has a number of helpful navigation aids, including the *search* box in the upper right corner.

UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS (UCS)

The Union of Concerned Scientists began in 1969 as collaboration between faculty and students of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and is a leading voice of independent scientists on a wide range of subjects, including *Global Warming*.

The *Homepage* of the organization: <http://ucsusa.org/>

At the top of its *Homepage* is an *Issues* tab, which directs the reader to the top issues tracked by UCS. Four of the seven issues are directly related to climate change – clean energy, clean vehicles, food & agriculture and *global warming* at: [http://www.ucsusa.org/global\\_warming/](http://www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/)

A search for *Carbon Footprint* using the *search box* on any of its main pages produces dozens of publications and papers on the subject, many in PDF format for easy download.

INTERNATIONAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC)

The IPCC is a leading international body assessing climate change, established by the U.N. and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988. One hundred ninety-five countries are currently members, with its *Homepage* at: <http://www.ipcc.ch/index.htm>

Using the left side of its *Homepage*, the reader can access the organization’s principal reports and data, or connect with one of the helpful *Links* provided.

## CENTER FOR CLIMATE AND ENERGY SOLUTIONS (C2ES)

C2ES began in 2011 as the successor to the *Pew Center on Global Climate Change*. It describes itself as an independent organization seeking *concrete actions* and *innovative policies, working together* with the principal stakeholders, including the business, environmental and policymaker communities to ensure safe and affordable energy sources, while protecting the global climate.

The *Homepage* for C2ES at: <http://www.c2es.org/>

The *Tabs* near the top of its *Homepage* are organized interest areas of the organization, which lead the reader to tables, reports and policy summaries under each area. The University of Pennsylvania, among others, gives it high grades. More than other sites, it probably includes more industry perspective on issues and accepts major support from large corporations in energy-related fields, but represents that it keeps an independent perspective.

## Sarasota Meeting • Carbon Footprint • Resources

*Note: this sheet is to replace the original SMM document, 'Appendix D,' which was a series of articles, which SEYM cannot post on the website due to copyright law. The links below are to those articles and other resources referred to.*

### Reducing Carbon Footprint

25+ Ways to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint: <https://cotap.org/reduce-carbon-footprint/>

CarbonFund.org: Reduce What You Can: <https://carbonfund.org/reduce/>

UM Center for Sustainable Systems:

- Food System Factsheet: <http://css.umich.edu/factsheets/us-food-system-factsheet>
- US Environmental Footprint Factsheet: <http://css.umich.edu/factsheets/us-environmental-footprint-factsheet>
- Biodiversity Factsheet: <http://css.umich.edu/factsheets/biodiversity-factsheet>

UF Energy Efficient Homes series:

[http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_series\\_energy\\_efficient\\_homes](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_series_energy_efficient_homes)

- Air Conditioning: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy1026>

FPL Home Energy Survey: <https://www.fpl.com/save/programs/online-energy-survey.html>

Eat less meat: CO2 emission of our food: <https://timeforchange.org/eat-less-meat-co2-emission-of-food>

Environmental Impact Of Meat Production (pdf)> (Creative Commons license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)

Greeneatz: Food's Carbon Footprint: <http://www.greeneatz.com/foods-carbon-footprint.html>

*Giving Up Beef Will Reduce Carbon Footprint More Than Cars, says expert*, the Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jul/21/giving-up-beef-reduce-carbon-footprint-more-than-cars>

*Meat Eater's Guide: Get to Know the Carbon Footprint of Your Diet*, treehugger.com: <https://www.treehugger.com/green-food/meat-eaters-guide-get-to-know-the-carbon-footprint-of-your-diet-lamb-beef-cheese-are-the-worst.html>

*Your Biggest Carbon Sin May Be Air Travel*, NY Times: [https://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/27/sunday-review/the-biggest-carbon-sin-air-travel.html?\\_r=0&pagewanted=print](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/27/sunday-review/the-biggest-carbon-sin-air-travel.html?_r=0&pagewanted=print)

### Other Carbon Footprint Calculators

Carbon Independent: <http://www.carbonindependent.org/>

*The 15 Best Carbon Calculators*, Mother Nature Network: <https://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/climate-weather/stories/the-15-best-carbon-calculators>

### Carbon Offsets

*Make Forests Pay*, NY Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/20/opinion/a-carbon-offset-market-for-trees.html>

Taking Root.org: <https://takingroot.org/>