



THE COMMON FIRE FOUNDATION

"In my life's work my heart longs for and seeks those who are committed to living and leading by example – from the ground up and the inside out. Common Fire is a shining and beautiful example of this."

-- Julia Butterfly Hill Founder, Circle of Life Foundation; Author, Legacy of Luna

UNPRECEDENTED GREEN BUILDING

In the summer of 2006 the Common Fire Foundation completed construction of a housing co-op in Tivoli, NY, just two hours north of New York City in the Hudson River Valley. The Common Fire Housing Co-op is a landmark for the region and the country as the "Greenest Building in the Eastern United States" (official certification pending from the US Green Building Council).

We invite you to learn more about the importance of green building, strategies for approaching green building, and details about the products used in the Common Fire Housing Co-op on our website: www.commonfire.org/green. We also offer regular tours of the building. Call or e-mail to schedule a visit.

UNPRECEDENTED LIVING FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND JUSTICE

The housing co-op serves as a nurturing and stimulating home for a diversity of people actively engaged in helping create a more just and sustainable world. By weaving opportunities for learning and engaging into the fabric of everyday life, the co-op offers an unparalleled opportunity for ongoing personal growth and transformation in the world. *Now accepting applications!* We also welcome changemakers to stay on retreat in our guest room. Contact us for more information.

COMMON FIRE MOVING FORWARD

- Common Fire aims to create a network of similar housing co-ops and co-housing communities.
- Work has begun on an international youth camp to help young people learn about critical issues of our times and experience ways of living more justly and sustainably, all in the context of a loving and nurturing community
- And we are in the planning stages of a retreat center to host a broad range of education, personal and professional development programs in the context of an inspiring and engaged model community.

Common Fire's success depends on the passion, skills, and support of a broad range of people. Please contact us if you wish to be involved. Tax deductible donations can be mailed in or done through our website.

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CITATIONS FOR FACTS AND FIGURES

¹National Association of Home Builders, Census Bureau

² US EPA and Sterling

³ US Census

⁴ US DoE

^{5, 6} Energy Star

⁷ Worldwatch Institute

⁸ Healthy Building Network

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

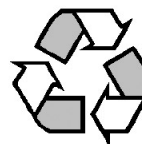


DOUG HOFFMAN OF ECO-CON BUILDING SYSTEMS

Eco-Con is the only exclusively "green building" construction company in the Mid-Hudson Valley
www.ecoconbuilding.com

CHUCK SILVER OF HUDSON RIVER DESIGN

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17
THINGS
YOU CAN DO
TO GREEN A
NEW BUILDING

BUILD GREEN AND SAVE GREEN - THINGS THAT COST THE SAME OR LESS!

1 The single most important thing you can do to help the environment – and your wallet – is to size the building appropriately. The smaller the building, the more materials, energy and money you save. That can help you afford some extra insulation or solar panels, or allow you to add some of the nice touches that really make a home beautiful and unique. A building that is larger than it needs to be will quickly overwhelm any benefits gained through energy-efficiency, thoughtful materials selection, etc. *The size of the average new American house has more than doubled from 1,100 square feet in the 1950s to 2,414 in 2004. Meanwhile, the average household has shrunk by over 1 person.* ¹

2 Let the sun be your friend! By facing the building toward the south and putting most of the windows on the south side you can let the sun light up your home during the day and warm the house in the winter. Planting trees on the south side and extending the roof's eaves can block out the sun's rays in the summer to keep the house cool.

3 Buy locally. This saves massive amounts of gas (and pollution, and corruption, and violence, and other oil-related illnesses) used to transport construction materials around the country and the world. And it means you're supporting people and places you know and that are accountable to you and the regional community for their environmental and social practices.

4 Recycle your construction waste instead of sending it to the dump. Taylor Recycling in Montgomery, NY can provide a dumpster for you and they will recycle or mulch 99% of the waste you produce. *25-40% of land fill waste is construction debris.*

5 Use dual-flush toilets. 40% of the water used in a home goes right down the toilet. Dual-flush toilets let you choose whether you need a big or a little flush. This simple choice saves at least 6,000 gallons of water per year for a family of four. They do cost a little more, but not much. Low-flow shower and sink fixtures will save additional water, much of it hot water, which saves money! ²

• **WE'LL THROW IN A FREE EXTRA TIP** – WHEN BUILDING, TRY TO IMPACT THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE AND WHEN LANDSCAPING USE ONLY PLANTS THAT ARE ADAPTED TO THE LOCAL CLIMATE. THAT MEANS YOU WON'T HAVE TO WATER THEM, MEANING NO SPRINKLER SYSTEM, SAVING WATER AND SAVING MONEY.

PAY NOW, SAVE LATER - THINGS THAT SAVE THE EARTH AND SAVE YOU MONEY OVER TIME

6 Location, location, location... Think carefully about where you build. Is it close to where you work, shop and play? You may pay more up front for a location in town, but you will save tons in gas money -- not to mention the time you'll save and quality of life you'll enjoy

being able to walk or bike to the market, a friend's home, the post office.... *The average American spends over 100 hours each year commuting.* ³

7 Effective insulation is the most cost-effective energy saver there is. No use getting fancy with things like solar panels if your home leaks energy! Try to get your attic insulation value up to R-50 and your walls up to R-30. It can cost more but the savings will pay for it in less than 5 years. Be sure to use Energy Star windows (go for three panes if you can) with a low-E coating. Pella Designer Series windows are currently the most energy-efficient windows that are widely available. Install weatherstripping around exterior doors and use expanding foam to seal gaps around pipes to the outside. *Inefficient windows and doors cost Americans \$40 billion each year in higher utilities costs and waste as much energy as the US gets from the Alaska Pipeline.* ⁴

8 Use energy-efficient lights. Compact fluorescent bulbs use 66% less energy and last 5000 hours, ten times longer than a regular (incandescent) bulb. Cold cathode lights use the same energy as compact fluorescents but last an incredible 25,000 hours and can be used outside. They're currently only available to replace regular 20-25 watt bulbs and need to be ordered online (energyfederation.org, goodmart.com). *If every US household replaced just one light bulb with a compact fluorescent or cold cathode bulb, it would prevent enough pollution to equal removing one million cars from the road.* ⁵

9 Choose appliances with the Energy Star symbol. They use 10-50% less energy than a standard appliance and can save about \$80/year. *If just 1 in 10 homes used Energy Star appliances, the change would be like planting 1.7 million new acres of trees.* ⁶

10 Include a root cellar into your home design. Root cellars keep vegetables and fruits fresh without refrigeration and increase your storage capacity. That allows you to buy and store lots of local food when it's in season and eat it when you would otherwise have to buy food shipped long distances. That supports local farmers and saves massive amounts of gas. *In the US, food travels an average of 1,500 miles before it reaches its final destination. Almost 50% of the food transported is lost to spoilage.* ⁷

• **FREE EXTRA TIP!** STAY FOCUSED ON THOSE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES! REDUCING THE AMOUNT OF MEAT YOU EAT IS NOT ONLY BETTER FOR YOUR HEALTH, BUT BETTER FOR THE PLANET. METHANE IS 21 TIMES MORE POWERFUL A GREENHOUSE GAS THAN CARBON DIOXIDE AND THE NUMBER ONE SOURCE OF METHANE WORLDWIDE IS ANIMAL AGRICULTURE. AND IT TAKES THREE TIMES LESS FOSSIL FUELS TO PRODUCE A MEAT-FREE DIET.

11 Use solar panels – and leave out the batteries! Solar panels can help you avoid the massive environmental and social ills of coal, nuclear, natural gas, and big dam projects. New York State will foot half the bill, and New York allows you to "Net Meter". That means you stay connected to the electrical grid and any time you produce more electricity than you use, it gets sent into the grid for someone else to use and your meter runs backward -- so you're part of helping provide clean energy to your neighbors. Then when you need more than your panels produce, you just draw from the grid like normal. This allows you to not use batteries, which are not so good for the environment, add a lot to the cost, and can only store so much energy before any extra is just lost.

12 Install geothermal heating and cooling. A geothermal system uses the earth's constant underground temperature to cool and heat your home, as well as provide all of your domestic hot water. It uses about 50% less energy to heat your home and about 25% less to cool it.

13 Use no-VOC and low-VOC primers, paints, sealants, and carpets. Volatile Organic Compounds can irritate eyes and throat, cause headaches and fatigue, damage major organs, and cause cancer. AFM Safecoat is one company that makes only no and low-VOC products.

SOME THINGS THAT JUST COST MORE TO DO RIGHT - BUT DO THEM ANYWAY!

14 Avoid PVC (vinyl) as much as possible. Dioxins are a byproduct of PVC. They also happen to be the most toxic substance on the planet, known to cause cancer, neurological damage, birth defects, and more. In the US, PVC is manufactured predominantly near low-income communities in Texas and Louisiana. Due to illegal dumping, mishandling, and burning, dioxins are now found all around the world – they are even detectable in our bodies. Dioxin exposure of the average American poses a risk of cancer of greater than 1 in 1,000. PVC releases deadly gases in fires, including one that turns to hydrochloric acid if inhaled. PVC is not biodegradable and less than 1% can be recycled. Powerful information about PVC and its alternatives can be found at www.healthybuilding.net/pvc/index.html ⁸

15 Buy FSC-certified wood. The Forest Stewardship Council provides independent audits that assure the wood you buy was not stolen from protected lands or lands of indigenous people without their consent. The FSC label also means wood was not taken from fragile ecosystems, that it was harvested sustainably, and that local communities benefit from the process. Sadly, all too often wood without the FSC symbol was clear cut, or stolen from protected or sensitive lands, or from lands of indigenous people, and more.

16 Buy green power or offset your carbon emissions. In New York State you can choose who supplies your electricity and there are many companies that use renewable sources, such as solar, wind and hydro power. It's very easy and reliable to switch. Just call your local utility or visit their website. If you are served by Central Hudson, sadly, none of the options is very green. But don't let that stop you! You can offset all of the electricity you use in your building, or all of the emissions from your car, or all of the emissions from any flights you take by going online and paying for the creation of an equivalent amount of clean energy. Two popular and reliable websites are nativeenergy.org and carbonfund.org.

17 Buy used and salvaged materials whenever you can. They add uniqueness and character to your building while taking materials out of the waste stream and saving energy required for new production.