

Greening the Community Assignment

Overview

The regions you have selected for this group assignment all have unique locations, settings, situations, and influences on their surrounding areas. There are three main sections to the project: you must research its history, document its current situations, and make proposals for “greening it” for the future. Your proposals can involve any of the different types of systems in your region that are amenable to greening: physical infrastructure, processes, inputs or outputs (e.g. supplies and waste), human involvement, specific structures, natural features (e.g. woodlots and creeks), the management of the region (e.g. lawns, parks, transportation), and aesthetics.

The important thing is that your topic be: reasonably approachable for performing a systems analysis; that its environmental performance can be evaluated, audited, and clearly described; and that your exercise can be framed by a perspective of sustainability. Your final submission must provide a thoughtful and clear evaluation linked to recommendations or prescriptions for improvement of the environmental performance of the region.

Phases

1. Project Selection - You have already selected the region you are going to study.
2. Project Definition - This is where you “scope out” your problem and decide how you are going to perform your analysis. You will prepare a two page statement that clearly and concisely identifies the project and defines it, establishes your primary research objectives, makes the boundaries of the project clear, highlights the key aspects of the problem, and states some investigative strategies you will consider. This assignment should help you organize your thoughts and gain some momentum on how to proceed.

Due Date: _____

3. Preliminary Proposal and Study Design - Here you will have finalized your ideas and plans in a sound proposed study design. The proposal should explicitly address your research problem within a concept of sustainability. It should briefly describe how your topic represents a problem of sustainability, and make your objectives clear. It should include a brief description of the systems involved in your study area and some notes on the major actors. Significant background information that you have located that have contributed to your understanding of the problem and the approach you are going to take in your project should be included.

You should indicate the methodology or plan of attack and validate its selection by showing why it is a good way to obtain the information you need as easily as possible and in the most useful form. Finally, your proposal should show how your results will be analyzed and what you think the outcome might be. It is also helpful to work out the delegation of duties and responsibilities, a timeline, equipment or personnel needs, expected contacts, and other requirements.

A well considered proposal will save you time and trouble down the road. Put your minds and your collective creativity to it - and the chances will be much greater that your work will proceed smoothly. The proposals will be submitted in writing (five pages plus maps and diagrams) but also presented in class so that we will know what the various groups are doing and have a chance to provide positive criticism and learn from each other.

Due Date: _____

4. Progress Report - This assignment is included to give you a chance to show how your work is proceeding. It should briefly indicate how well your work is meeting your expectations, what kind of results you have obtained, how your analysis is working out, account for difficulties and show how you have dealt with them, and inform other students of interesting things you have learned both about your topic and research. Your reports will be submitted in writing (two pages) and presented to the class.

Due Date: _____

5. Final Report and Presentation - Type up and bind together a professional looking report about the history, current situation, and proposals for “greening it” your region (eight to ten pages). Be sure include photographs, maps, diagrams, or anything else that can meaningfully contribute to the quality of the information being presented. A bibliography of resources must be included - documented in the correct format at the end of the paper and used as embedded references in the text where appropriate. Your presentation should highlight the key points of your paper (a brief history, a brief description of the status quo, and detail about each of your proposals) in a clear and concise manner. You will be required to use a slide show style presentation software package such as PowerPoint for this final presentation. Be sure to include only the key points and visuals on the slides and provide additional information verbally.

Due Date: _____