

Topic: Engaging youth**Convener:** Beth Hart**Room:** A**Discussion Summary:**

Many students, both university and high school. See their interests as distinct from those of older people, and see themselves as the folks who'll be using whatever systems are developed today, and whose ideas are worthy of respect and who are an untapped resource.

- What's our purpose? Sustainable development. Ways to make sure that what we leave behind isn't toxic.
- What are the best mechanisms for getting youth involved – the motivation? Use organizations, not just schools, but Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, projects like Leave No Trace. Not just Earth Day in April, but year-round, and not just in high school: Make it a way of life. Like teaching foreign language – the earlier you start, the easier it is to pick up. Commitment has to come from the top down, like having a supportive principal. Sustainability is divided along political lines, although that's changing. More Republican suburban areas are going sustainable. Change lifestyle, so if there's \$1 gasoline, you still walk. Move forward even when there's no crisis, or we'll have fewer options during a crisis. America consumes; it's what we do best, but we're using up our natural resources. Future generations won't have what we have.
- Use advertisements to sell the issue – youth-created PSAs. Have young people develop the campaign. Example: MARC award to Girl Scouts is example of youth empowerment. Youth empowerment affects adults, too, because adults help them. A pat on the back from a mentor is great – makes you feel special. It's also a self-respect thing, when people see they've made a difference, even w/o an award. A sense of duty. Many of us learn by example, and adults have a duty to display that example. Plant your own food – the reward is in eating what you grew, and in getting outside and providing for self.
- Expectations – if you don't expect kids to do it, they're not going to do it; from when they're little, make the expectation known. Connect youth organizations. Take these conversations to elementary schools – spur discussion of environmental stewardship. Fire safety example – Every year students learn about fire safety and then need to get mom and dad to sign off on materials at home. Older students teaching a younger student works very well, and young people teaching their parents. Olathe South – little kids come to high schools and learn about animals from AP class. Teaching about environment – start out depressed, then see what we can do to change things. Build a progression between high school programs and college programs on sustainability, and real-world applications.
- People care more for the environment in places with mountains and forests and lots of natural beauty. Here, you have to look for the beauty.

Meeting time: Session 3: 11:30 a.m.**Recorder:** Jennifer Wilding