

Ottawa Friends Meeting House

An example of how the Eco-Friendly Meeting House Quiz can be used

by Peggy Land, Ottawa Friends Meeting

NOT unlike most Meetings with Meeting Houses, Ottawa Monthly Meeting has always maintained its building well, even though it could be argued that countless other worthwhile projects are more deserving. But the concept of sustaining our place of worship in a way that is gentle on Earth's resources goes beyond viewing the property as real estate, and reflects our deepening ecological testimony.

After our Premises Committee agreed to have an energy use audit done, we obtained cost-benefit analyses of what was needed to be done to reduce heating and water bills, and then found it much easier to justify a more pro-active approach to spending. We also saved money by not doing things we assumed incorrectly would be a good idea!

But such audits only reflect the current dollar values of energy resources, and they generally don't emphasize other considerations and values such as encouraging recycling, alternative transportation, and landscape naturalization, etc. In such ways, the Five-Star Eco-Friendly Meeting House Quiz attempts to broaden the maintenance

focus towards much longer-term sustainability. The five-point bonus question on awareness of previous habitation history encourages us to research who inhabited the land before us. A missing question is, "Are there any outstanding First Nations land claims in the area?" Also, there are no points for encouraging a sense of the sacred, but again, not everything can be reduced to numbers.

Those who use this quiz may find that their Premises Committees become in effect, Eco-Friendly Actions /Premises Committees, as has happened in Ottawa. Because the environment is not just another "special interest," we had decided not to tackle ecological issues within the usual committee framework. Actively exploring practical eco-friendly alternatives together on our Premises Committee, however, has proven to work well. We hope that the results will encourage life-style changes in our private homes and gardens too.

Let us see together what love and respect for all of Creation can do!

This rating system is a project of the Quaker Ecology Action Network (QEAN) of Canadian Yearly Meeting, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). See <http://www.quaker.ca/qean>

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How Eco-Friendly Is Your Meeting House?



**Quaker Earthcare Witness
and Canadian Yearly Meeting's
Quaker Ecology Action Net-**

H A Five-Star Quaker Meeting House Rating System H

Is your Meeting House or place of worship an Eco-Friendly place which inspires reverence for all Creation? Try this quiz as a starting point to address sustainability and outreach issues inherent to the concept of designated buildings for meeting for worship.

There is a maximum of six points per best practice, but give credit for any points that apply. Total them up and see what your score reflects. Try it!

Score
(out of 69)

Energy conservation

(1-3—4one item that best applies)

1. We had an accredited energy-use audit done on water and electricity use, but have not yet acted on these recommendations. ___/1
2. We have instituted some energy-saving measures which are already cost-effective, or will be within five years, and have not sacrificed comfort for efficiency. ___/2
3. We had an accredited energy-use audit done and have instituted all or nearly all of the energy-saving measures recommended, and it is as comfortable as, or more comfortable than, before these efficiency measures were taken. ___/6
4. We generate some of our power from renewable resources like solar or wind, or we access renewable-source energy off the electric grid. ___/4

Water conservation (4any that apply)

1. We have aerators on the taps, and they don't drip. ___/2
2. Toilets are low-flow types. ___/3
3. Runoff from the roof is optimized for the garden, and/or we are not hooked up to a community water system. ___/3

Recycling (1 or 2 & 5 or 6— 4 only the items that best apply)

1. We try to blue-box everything recyclable, but still we often put out some items that could have been recycled. ___/1
2. We provide receptacles for kitchen wastes, and we compost this for our Meeting House grounds, or we take it home. ___/2
3. We blue-box everything we can and provide waste containers for different types of recyclables, throughout the Meeting House and outside. ___/3
4. We try to minimize paper use. ___/1
5. At least some of the paper products we use are partially recycled paper products, and not chlorine-bleached. ___/2
6. All paper products we use are from 100-percent recycled paper, or from non-tree sources, and are not chlorine-bleached. ___/3

Cleaning products (4 any that apply)

1. We use at least some cleaning products that are non-toxic. ___/2
2. All of our cleaning products are non-toxic. ___/3

Landscaping (4 any that apply)

1. We do not use chemical pesticides or fertilizers on our grounds. ___/2
2. We encourage wildlife with birdfeeders, bird houses, and/or edible berry bushes, etc. ___/2
3. We have a space on the grounds for young Eco-Friends to call their own. ___/2
4. We grow only hardy native species perennials and shrubs instead of annuals. ___/3

5. Our grounds are naturalized or near maintenance-free because we have xeriscaped, planted only hardy species, etc. ___/4

Transportation (4 any that apply)

1. We have a bike rack. ___/1
2. We have adequate bike racks, which are user-friendly re: U-locks. ___/2
3. We actively encourage car-pooling or alternate transportation to Meeting. ___/3

Outreach, in-reach (4 any that apply)

1. We have a sustainability or ecology committee/working group. ___/2
2. We encourage communication with other faith groups who may be addressing these issues as well, and have participated in some local workshops together to promote eco-friendliness. ___/2
3. We have helped publicize the success of our efforts in local news media and/or have posted news about our efforts in publications or websites. ___/3
4. We have researched ownership and habitation history of the property. ___/5

Scoring

Five checks if you get more than 50 points

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ Dazzling!

Four checks if you get more than 40 points.

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ Very bright

Three checks if you get more than 30 points.

✓ ✓ ✓ Quite shiny

Two checks if you get more than 20 points.

✓ ✓ Twinkling

One checks if you get more than 10 points.

✓ Flickering

(Actually, take a bow if you are reflecting any Light at all, and vow to keep up the great work!)