

Summer
2021



GREY BRUCE CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK: A YEAR IN REVIEW

GBCAN is a grass-roots network of citizens' groups working with our municipalities to address climate change.

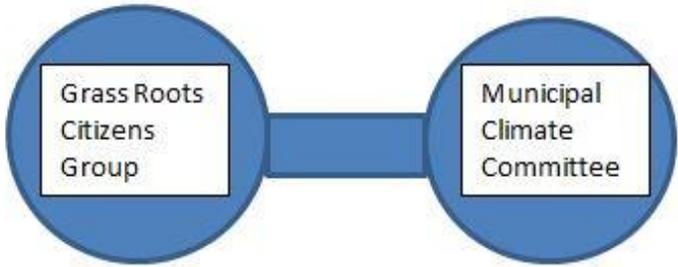
The Grey Bruce Climate Action Network (GBCAN)

The Grey Bruce Climate Action Network (GBCAN) is comprised of representatives from each of the citizen-led municipally-based climate action groups in Grey and Bruce Counties. We share a common concern for how our communities will respond to the climate emergency.

Now a year old, our purpose in networking is to support regional action to both mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. We share resources, strategies, lessons learned and come together when a regional voice or regional action is needed.

Currently, Network members represent eight communities around Grey and Bruce: Blue Mountains, Georgian Bluffs, Grey Highlands, Meaford, Northern Bruce Peninsula, Owen Sound, Saugeen Shores, and West Grey. Our meetings are also attended by representatives from Grey Bruce Sustainability Network (GB SusNet), Climate Forum (previously known as CAT Grey Bruce), Collingwood Climate Action Team (C-CAT), and staff from the Planning Department of the County of Grey.

In the efforts of these groups, we are seeing a model of collaborative climate learning and action that combines municipal leadership and grass roots leadership. Most of our groups are at some stage of nurturing this two-pronged model of climate engagement – a community group and a municipal committee that includes council members and citizens in a joint effort to help our communities explore ways to mitigate GHG emissions and prepare for the impacts of



Shared action, shared responsibility

climate change. We acknowledge the essential role of municipal and county governments in these efforts.

We believe this two-pronged approach, citizen leadership and the engagement of municipal leadership working together, has the best chance of protecting the future of our communities and building on the

natural assets of our region through the changes that climate change brings.

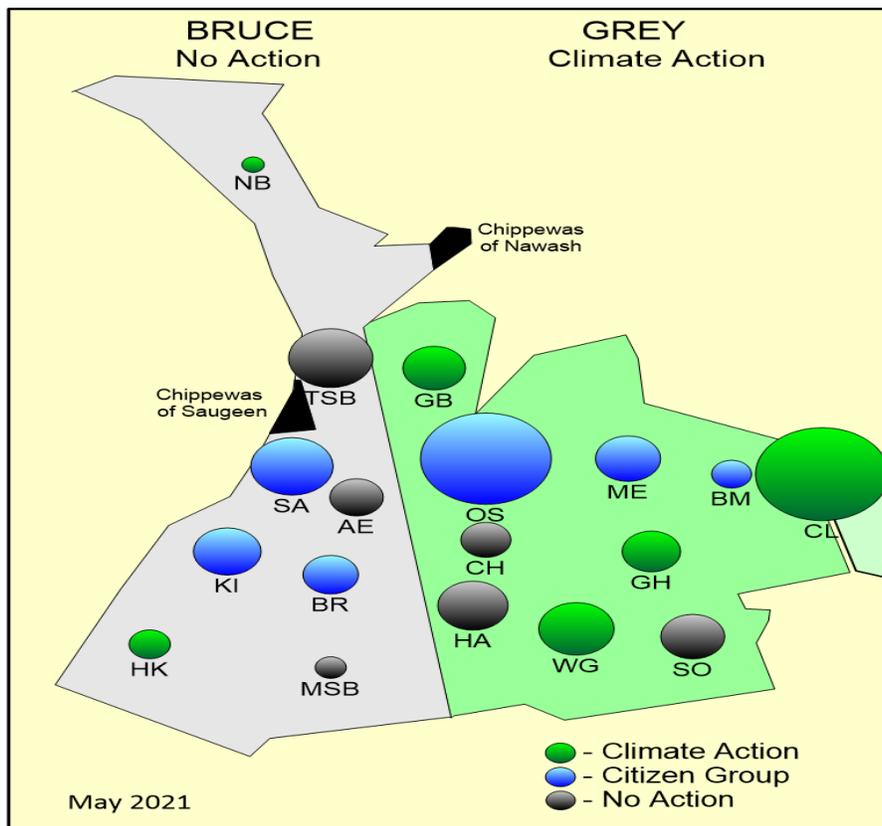
Each of our network groups has its own local agenda and contributes to both its own community and our region’s efforts. Each also has its own history – some active for several years and some more recently convened. In this report you will find the range of our members’ activities. We encourage the development of citizen’s groups in each municipality of Grey and Bruce and welcome new members to our meetings as we update, exchange information, and collaborate for action on climate change.

Mapping Climate Action in the Grey - Bruce Region

A mapping project was initiated by GBCAN member and marine scientist, Dr. John Anderson, to understand and track climate action in the Grey-Bruce-Collingwood region. The project centres around a spreadsheet that captures citizen and council participation and action regarding climate change across the region. The table includes population sizes, key contacts, and a summary of climate action for both county and lower tier municipalities. Climate action at the municipal level has so far centred around the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program. This program is focused on identifying and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from both corporate and community sectors. Equally important is the Building Adaptive and Resilient Communities (BARC) program that is focused on adaptation measures. Together, these two programs constitute climate action.

A three-colour coding scheme is used to portray climate action as a map, both within the spreadsheet and separately on a geographic map: Grey – No action; Blue – An active citizen group and/or declaration of a climate emergency; Green – Municipal climate action.

The geographic map and summary tables below are updated over time to reflect additional climate action groups becoming active in their municipalities and more municipalities taking climate action. Currently, based on population, these active lower-tier municipalities account for 17% of emissions in our region. Clearly the engagement of more municipalities is essential.



So, how are we doing by community?

Grey County

Municipality	Population	Bruce Grey %	Population Centre	Citizen Contact	Council Contact	Climate Emergency	Climate Action Plan	Climate Implement Plan	Member of FCM-PCP	Citizen Action Group	Citizen Council Group
City of Owen Sound	21,341	13.2%	Owen Sound	Joachim Ostertag	Carol Merton	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Municipality of West Grey	12,518	7.7%	Durham	Nikki May	Geoffrey Shea	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Municipality of Meaford	10,991	6.8%	Meaford	Lesley Lewis	Shirley Keaveney	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Township of Georgian Bluffs	10,479	6.5%	Springmount	Ann Schneider	Cathy Cobourn	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Municipality of Grey Highlands	9,804	6.1%	Markdale	Joyce Hall	Danielle Valiquette	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Town of Hanover	7,688	4.7%	Hanover			No	No	No	No	No	No
Township of Southgate	7,354	4.5%	Dundalk			No	No	No	No	No	No
Town of The Blue Mountains	7,025	4.3%	Thornbury	Diana Dolmer	Andrea Matrosovs	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Township of Chatsworth	6,630	4.1%	Chatsworth	Vitold Kreutzer		No	No	No	No	No	No
Grey County	93,830	57.9%	Owen Sound	Marilyn Struthers	Sue Carleton	No	In prep	In prep	Yes	Yes	Yes

Bruce County

Municipality	Population 2016	Bruce Grey %	Population Centre	Citizen Contact	Council Contact	Climate Emergency	Climate Action Plan	Climate Implement Plan	Member of FCM-PCP	Citizen Action Group	Citizen Council Group
Town of Saugeen Shores	13,715	8.5%	Port Elgin & Southampton	Odette Bartnicki	Cheryl Grace	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Municipality of Kincardine	11,389	7.0%	Kincardine		Chrystal Murphy	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Municipality of Brockton	9,461	5.8%	Walkerton	Bruce Davidson	Steve Adams	No	No	No	No	Suspended Spring 2021	Yes
Town of South Bruce Peninsula	8,416	5.2%	Warton	Leigh Grigg		No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Township of Huron-Kinloss	7,069	4.4%	Lucknow		Lillian Abbott	No	Yes	In Prep...	Yes	No	No
Municipality of Arran-Elderslie	6,803	4.2%	Chesley, Paisley			No	No	No	No	No	No
Municipality of South Bruce Peninsula	5,639	3.5%	Mildmay			No	No	No	No	No	No
Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula	3,999	2.5%	Tobermory	Rod Layman	Megan Myles	No	In Prep...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Saugeen 29	1,041	0.6%	SON			No	No	No	No	No	No
Nyaashinigmiing	615	0.4%	Cape Croker			No	No	No	No	No	No
Bruce County	68,147	42.1%		Odette Bartnicki		No	No	No	No	No	No

Simcoe County

Municipality	Population	Bruce Grey %	Population Centre	Citizen Contact	Council Contact	Climate Emergency	Climate Action Plan	Climate Implement Plan	Member of FCM-PCP	Citizen Action Group	Citizen Council Group
Town of Collingwood	21,793		Collingwood	Catherine Daw	Cathy Jeffrey	Yes	Revitalizing	No	Yes	Yes	Yes - Collaborate
Simcoe County	307,050										

What GBCAN Member Groups are Doing

The activities we have been involved in over the past year fall loosely into three categories:

- **Capacity building** (educating ourselves, clarifying our mission, vision, and values, etc.)
- **Engagement with municipalities**, and
- **Community-based activities**

Capacity Building

- **Monthly meetings:**
 - Most climate action groups in the Network meet monthly. Meetings include informative discussions, learning opportunities, support and sharing of resources, and guest speakers.
 - The Climate Forum (formerly CAT Grey Bruce) hosts monthly themed presentations to engage both members and the general public.
- **CCAT Carbon Conversations:** This team offers a six-session program exploring carbon footprints and reduction.
- **The Climate Engagement Group:** Members from three other climate action groups attended the CCAT Carbon Conversations Facilitator Training. They have since developed an online format for workshops facilitating community engagement and strategy meetings featuring the "What to do Wheel" to support community organizations interested in taking individual and collective climate action.
- **Grey Bruce Virtual Climate Change Conference, Oct 2020:** Many of the Network's members participated and some were contributors.
- **Grey Bruce Sustainability Network:** As a partnering organization supporting local CATs, GBSusNet has funded development of the [Grey Bruce Climate Action website](#) to support grass roots organizers aimed at outreach.



Engagement with our Municipalities

- **Township of Georgian Bluffs** responded to a request from GBCAT and approved the formation of a Climate Action Committee (the Deputy-Mayor, one Councillor, and five members of GBCAT), which submitted to Council a work plan to develop a Climate Action Plan and budget. Funds were approved for 2021 and a climate specialist has been hired.
- **Northern Bruce Peninsula** has joined the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Partners for Climate Protection ([FCM PCP](#)). They established a Climate Action Committee with citizen involvement. Data collection of corporate emissions is nearly complete. External funding enabled the creation of a temporary staff position to help with the community emissions inventory.
- **West Grey Council's Committee** has also joined the FCM PCP and has committed \$50,000 in 2021 to develop a Climate Action Plan. They have also approved a Styrofoam recycling program and, pending funding, will proceed with a Waste Diversion Study.
- **CAT Owen Sound** has continued to consult with Council on the OS Draft Official Plan and the need for a Climate Action Plan. They met with the new City Manager to discuss steps toward a Climate Action Plan which is scheduled, according to the Strategic Plan Refresh, to be completed April of 2022.
- **Saugeen Shores Committee** is collaborating with their Council on an Environmental Stewardship Ad Hoc Advisory Committee, whose mandate is to provide a set of prioritized recommendations to Council in December. The focus to date has been on waste management and tree protections.
- **Town of Blue Mountains' CANN** has an on-going working relationship with the TBM Council including membership on the TBM Sustainability Committee and on the Attainable Housing Design Task Force. They have worked with the Town on Styrofoam and drywall recycling programs.
- **Transition Meaford** meets monthly with the Deputy Mayor to discuss potential climate and environmental actions. Bee and Butterfly gardens have been established in local parks, and work is progressing on establishing a Styrofoam recycling program.
- **Collingwood's CCAT** has incorporated as a non-profit organization and has six working teams (Carbon Conversations; Community Engagement; Consumption and Waste Reduction; Energy; Food and Agriculture and Transportation). They continue to build a good working relationship with Collingwood Council and staff.

As well....

Deputations to Councils

- Groups have also made deputations to their Councils on a range of issues including: a request for full public consultation on development of Talisman lands in the Beaver Valley; for Councils to send a letter to the Ontario Government objecting to the expansion of MZO;,, hiring a Climate Coordinator in Owen Sound; establishing a Tree Trust in Meaford; and climate change/environmental concerns for a development in Durham.

Letter-writing Campaigns

- There have been several letter writing campaigns including letters to: Grey Highlands Council regarding the Beaver Valley; Owen Sound Council to save Stoney Orchard Park from severance for development; and the Town of Blue Mountains Council regarding a gravel pit at Clearview Rd. 91, about making an attainable housing project sustainable, concerning protection for the tree canopy, planting trees, and in support of the TBM Tree Trust. Member groups also wrote to the Provincial Government challenging their changes to the management and mandate of Conservation Authorities and expressing strong support for the current mandate of CAs.

Official Plan Reviews

- Several municipalities have begun a review of their Official Plans. These plans have legal status and guide all the Municipality's planning decisions. They outline land use and development strategies and establish policies to direct the form, location, nature and rate of growth and change for the future. Our members have been and will continue to be actively engaged in this review process. We are urging all Councils to apply a climate lens to all planning and to include natural infrastructure in all of their Official Plans.



Our Community-based Activities

There is a wide range of community-based activity across the groups: from hands on work creating community food and pollinator friendly gardens, participating in local clean-up efforts; to creating websites/Facebook sites, hosting webinars for education and awareness raising and holding virtual discussions that highlight the threats, challenges and mitigation opportunities related to climate change.

Activities include:

- **Emphasizing personal actions**, such as the use of Guppy laundry bags to prevent micro-plastics from entering the environment; organizing and supporting group action, such as the local Fridays for Future and the Young Climate Heroes Creative Challenge where youth created drawings, pictures and poems on our post COVID climate future.
- **Organizing Community-wide action**, such as promoting the use of electric vehicles and alternative methods of transport i.e. bicycling; creating a home survey to calculate individual residential annual emissions; educating the local community on the 7 R's to reduce landfill waste and increase diversion rates; a 'Meatless Monday' challenge to encourage more locally-sourced, organic, plant-based eating; and outreach to existing local groups involved in environmental action.
- **Publishing articles and letters** in local media on sustainable development, salt alternatives for roads, eco-friendly fire-fighting practices, Styrofoam recycling, pollinator friendly gardens, and the problems associated with single use plastics, and home and personal cleaning materials.
- **Local political activism and advocacy** include letter writing campaigns about the threat to Conservation Authorities, to save a local park from development, commenting on a new subdivision in the area, and to advocate for the importance of using a climate lens for proposed development of the Beaver Valley. The latter has grown into an ongoing coalition-building effort to ensure the Talisman Lands are developed in an environmentally sustainable way.

In Conclusion:

Despite challenges due to the pandemic, our inaugural year has been a good one. Through our shared commitment, we have deepened our understanding, strengthened our resolve and expanded our impact on regional opportunities to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change. Looking ahead, there are already several initiatives underway or planned.

We will continue cultivating relationships with both our Federal MP and Provincial MPP to respectfully advocate for a focused and proactive response to Climate Change from their governments.

Many municipalities in Grey-Bruce have already begun a review of their Official Plan and some are developing Climate Action Plans (CAP). We will continue to urge municipalities to ensure that a climate lens is consciously and explicitly brought to the Official Plan review and that our rich natural infrastructure is given a strong profile and role. As Grey County nears completion of its CAP, we anticipate and hope for even greater collaboration with lower tier municipalities on developing Municipal CAPs.

It is possible for municipalities to receive funding, advice and support in creating CAPs through membership in the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program. The PCP program is a national network of over 400 municipalities with the shared goal of taking action against climate change and reducing local greenhouse gas emissions. Membership is free. Several municipalities, including Northern Bruce Peninsula, West Grey, and Georgian Bluffs have already/or plan to join the FCM PCP program. We will encourage the other municipalities in our region to become members.

GBCAN has become a forum for ideas and support. There are currently three collaborative projects with a regional focus. We would welcome more.

- **Carbon Conversations & measure your carbon footprint**
Collingwood CAT, working with their partner, [Project Neutral](#), are exploring carbon footprint measurement and reduction through their 6-session program and something new. They will be launching a community carbon reduction challenge in Collingwood (and then the wider region) in 2021.
- **Climate Engagement Workshop**
For community groups keen to engage their members the Grey Bruce Carbon Conversations Group has created a virtual workshop called *What Should We do?* Tailored to the needs of specific groups, the goal is to increase engagement in climate change awareness and action throughout the region.
- **The Forum** is a monthly public discussion on climate change every third Thursday evening. Hosted on Zoom, everyone is welcome.

Climate Matters: Get Engaged

Join us – find the group in your municipality

Climate Action Team Georgian Bluffs	Ann Schneider	a2gbcats@bmts.com
Climate Action Team Owen Sound	Joachim Ostertag	joachimostertag@gmail.com
Blue Mountain Climate Action Now Network	Diana Dolmer	resiliencetbm@gmail.com
North Bruce Committee	Rob Layman	layman.rod@gmail.com
Transition Meaford Team	Lesley Lewis	llewis.hb@gmail.com
Grey Highlands Climate Action Group	Joyce Hall	greengreycounty@gmail.com
Municipality of West Grey Sustainability Advisory Committee	Nikki May	nikki.mayb@gmail.com
Saugeen Shores	Odette Bartnicki	obartnicki@icloud.com
Collingwood CAT	Catherine Daw	cdaw53@gmail.com

Create a group in your municipality - we will help

Marilyn Struthers	mstruthers@ryerson.ca
John Anderson	jta350@gmail.com

Host a *What Should We Do?* community Zoom workshop

Danuta Valleau	danuta@michaelmcluhan.com
Marilyn Struthers	mstruthers@ryerson.ca

Tune in to the Grey Bruce conversation

Watch the film <i>Resilience</i>	https://resiliencedoc.info/
Sign up for invites to the Forum : 3 rd Thursday public events on climate	https://greybruceclimateaction.ca/about-us
Check out the community website	https://greybruceclimateaction.ca/
Ask your municipality how their climate change planning is going	Read the Grey County Draft Plan https://www.grey.ca/programs-initiatives/climate-change-action-plan
Check out the Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/groups/628024257701333/

Special thanks to Grey County for their encouragement of this work and to Odette Bartnicki and Liz Zetlin for photographs

The time to act is now....



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