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## Sustain Spartanburg: Takin' Care of the 'Burg

Thursday, June 11, 2009

By Tammy Stokes | [5 Comments](#)

How important is it to you to leave your grandchildren's world in good shape? Is their future worth that much to you? That's something each of us needs to ask ourselves because we need to get busy protecting their future. So here I am. Welcome to the first blog entry in a new project the *Spark* has invited me to do about one of the things I am incredibly passionate about — sustainability and how citizens can take action in Spartanburg.

What exactly does sustainability mean? It means a lot of things but I like this definition: "Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." That's the most widely used definition from a 1987 [Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development](#).

That means, you and I need to be more conscious of how we use our natural resources and take good care of this earth so those that follow us can enjoy the same things we have.

Sustainability is something that I hope we start addressing in our city sooner than later because the time will come when folks will need to return to the cities and we need to prepare not to mention it goes along with that hope for seeing a more progressive city.

It's also important because promoting sustainability encourages supporting local which builds our local economies, conserving energy, rethinking waste (recycling, composting, product packaging, etc.) and eating local, in-season, healthier foods that are grown in sustainable ways.

If none of these reasons are attractive ... think about frugality! You can save money by implementing a more sustainable, simpler lifestyle!

Government and industry are two of the major ways we can address sustainability but it is also important that we, as individual citizens, step up to the plate as well. It is NOT enough to rest on our laurels and expect our government to fix our problems and it is unacceptable to allow industry to be irresponsible when it comes to the Earth. We need to press upon our local and state government the importance of moving our community in a more sustainable direction as well setting expectations that industry steps up and does the same. And we need to do our part!

All of us have a responsibility in this matter. We are going to have to make sacrifices and change the way we live and we can either start the transition now or wait until we are forced by the government. We cannot continue to damage our life support systems and expect to survive.

I'm sure some of you are thinking, "Man, this is kind of a downer." Well, yeah, it is — change is always hard. Breaking old habits? Real hard. But, we're adults with responsibilities and sometimes we have to deal with stuff that is a little more complex than *American Idol*. Have you ever picked up a history book about past civilizations? You should because it might help you understand why this is so important.

I am currently reading a book, *Topsoil and Civilization* by Vernon Gill Carter and Tom Dale, written in 1955. They point out that historical records of the past 6,000 years show that civilized man (with few exceptions) has never continued a progressive civilization in one locality for more than 800 to 2,000 years. Civilized man's dominance over his environment lasted only a few generations. After a few hundred years of growth and progress the civilization declined or perished or was forced to move to new land.

Why? Because man ruined the environment that helped him develop his civilizations by depleting and destroying the natural resources. He cut or burned most of the timber, overgrazed and denuded the grasslands, killed the wildlife, including the fish and other water life. Permitted erosion to rob him of his topsoil. Wasted easily mined metals or other needed minerals and so on.

Starting to sound familiar? Yeah, it's very familiar. We're doing the same thing. Hopefully, our awareness of that will help us navigate ourselves out of this dilemma because the way we are living is not sustainable so we must adjust and teach our children a different way than we were taught.

So each week I will present ways that you and I can make a difference as regular 'ole people. I might include conservation tips, an interview with a local expert from the [Spartanburg Water System](#) (or another utility) about what they're doing to protect our watershed and encourage conservation or introduce a local non-profit such as [Spartanburg Area Conservancy \(SPACE\)](#), [Upstate Forever](#) or [Partners for Active Living](#) so you can learn about what they're doing in our community to make a difference. I'll share resources such as where and how you can purchase local meat at the [Upstate Farmers Alliance](#) or another local farm. I'll keep you updated on local and state initiatives involving sustainability issues. I'll highlight local businesses and restaurants. Some of the things discussed you may be able to do...some of them maybe not, but if

each of us takes steps it will add up. Every effort makes a difference. I hope you'll be optimistic and open to learning more and doing what you can.

Tags: [Community](#), [Environmental](#), [Sustain Spartanburg](#)

This entry was posted on Thursday, June 11th, 2009 at 9:05 am and is filed under [Opinion](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed.

## 5 Responses to "Sustain Spartanburg: Takin' Care of the 'Burg"



[Daniel](#)  
[06/11/2009 at 9:23 am](#)

What about hedonists with no intention to reproduce?

[Reply](#)  
#2956



[Lisa](#)  
[06/11/2009 at 10:55 am](#)

I was pretty impressed with the conservation plan I read about in the Spartanburg Journal weekly about Pacolet, Clifton and Glendale all getting linked up in some sort of nature preserve. I think a lot of people don;t realize these areas exist! We took a ride down to the Glendale Preserve a few weeks ago and it was really a nice preserve.

[Reply](#)  
#2960



[Sylvie](#)  
[06/11/2009 at 6:31 pm](#)

Go Tammy! I look forward to reading future columns. I am the green freak at my house although what I am able to do is still on the small scale. I look forward to learning how better to leave an environmental legacy for my grandchildren.

I vividly remember buying meat, milk and eggs from local farmers when I was a kid. I'd sure like to give it a go as an adult.

Write away girl. You've already got one anxious reader awaiting.

[Reply](#)  
#2967



[Christopher George](#)  
[06/11/2009 at 9:14 pm](#)

Wonderful! It'll be really great to have someone covering the environmental/sustainability front, and I can't think of a better person for it than you Tammy. I'm really looking forward to reading your columns and educating myself about a local issue that I'm not nearly as familiar with as I should be. Welcome on board!

[Reply](#)  
#2968



[Philip](#)