

# **Environmental Impact Assessment and Evaluation**

Includes:  
**Final Report**

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GREENING THE PETERBOROUGH ULTIMATE LEAGUE

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
The Greening Approach.....	4
Procedure .....	5
Feedback .....	6
Recomendations .....	7
Immediate .....	7
1 – 3 Years .....	7
3 – 5 Years .....	8
Work Cited.....	9
Appendix.....	10

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## INTRODUCTION

Event greening is a relatively new term that involves creating environmentally friendly leagues and events. When making an effort to “green” a sport, all factors (transportation, equipment and policies) must be carefully examined in order to determine how the league or event can be made more eco-friendly. Ultimate is an interesting and exemplary sport to green; the game requires little to be played, simply a disc and field. If Ultimate, a sport that is already eco-friendly by nature, can become greener then so can all other sports.

David Chernushenko, in his book Greening our Games<sup>1</sup> discusses how sport is evolutionary just as the relationships people have established with their environment are also evolutionary. He describes how some of the twists and turns in the process of evolution have led us to where we are today; he writes, however, that it is where we go from here that is of utmost importance. New relationships need to be founded upon better, more sustainable principles. Such relationships arise from awareness and changing people’s mentalities concerning their environment. For example, we must not accept the use of over one million MWh of electricity in Canada’s 2300 ice arenas and 1300 curling rinks. These arenas and rinks are air-conditioned during the winter months, contributing drastically to such inefficient energy use and, above all, illustrating the need for awareness. There is a desperate call for the understanding of sustainable practices, and change in the evolution of sport.

Greening sports is a novel practice and has yet to become mainstream. The Olympics is the largest sporting event in the world and is arguably one of the origins of green gaming. For the 24th Olympics in Seoul, South Korea, for instance, an energy structure was adjusted to control the pollution caused by coal-burning; a large-scale project was conducted to treat the water of the Hanjiang River; other measures were also taken during the games, such as temporarily closing some industries. Once the games had finished, moreover, the green initiatives continued to be effective and coal burning was reduced by 2/3. The Seoul Olympics is a perfect example of how greening sports can transcend the sport world, contributing to more eco-friendly practices and sustainable principles. Though the green initiatives shown over two decades ago have barely become a trend in today’s sporting world, Ultimate is one of the most forward sports when it comes to being green. This make Ultimate an ideal sport to have green initiatives which can be showcased.

Even two decades after an environmentally sound approach to sporting events was showcased on the Seoul Olympic world stage, there remains the resistance to something as simple as the ‘carbon flip’ (the team with the least amount of cars is granted first possession) in Ultimate. The largest Ultimate league in Canada, Ottawa Ultimate, has put implementing the carbon flip to a vote. It should be mentioned that Grant Conrad originally introduced the carbon flip in the Peterborough Ultimate League; his idea was published in ‘Ultimate Canada Magazine’ and has been adopted by other leagues throughout Canada. The quotes shown below are a statement and response to how people feel about implementing the carbon flip; these two posts serve as characteristic examples of the “carbon flip” debate:

*“Although, on second thought, I guess I could ask a few of my players to leave their hybrids and smart cars at home so that they can hop in with me to get to the game. I usually get a ride but my Hummer seats 7 and we’ll take any advantage we can get...”*<sup>2</sup>

*“Assuming that you’re not just driving 7x the distance, 7 people carpooling in a Hummer is likely to be more efficient than 7 separate hybrids or smart cars. If you take the distance travelled and the average city gas mileage for each vehicle, you can probably figure out the break-even point at which a full Hummer is better than several more efficient vehicles. Also, by removing 6 other cars from the road, you’re reducing traffic congestion and road delays, making everyone else’s commute that tiny bit more efficient.”*<sup>2</sup>

The Peterborough Ultimate League’s green initiatives could serve as a blueprint for other leagues to follow. The Ultimate field is a great place for the sharing and implementation of green ideas that could be adopted by not only other sports organizations, but also by people in general. On an Ultimate field there can be found many professionals, spectators and team members, from all disciplines; these people have the authority to take an idea like green games and expand it beyond Ultimate Frisbee.

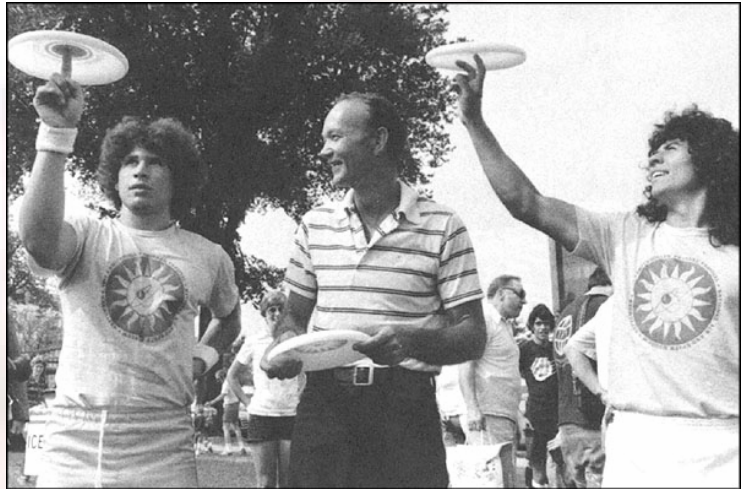


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## THE GREENING APPROACH

When Chernushenko talks about the evolution of sport, he stipulates that such evolution happens when it appeals to the masses. Peterborough may become the focal point for all other leagues to build off of but first, it must implement more green ideas. There can be many more green initiatives put into practice, and if this happens other leagues would look comparatively poor to Peterborough's. Change, however requires the action of a majority of people within a league or, conversely, the captain of the league must put rules in place. Pierre Pluye's paper Program Sustainability Begins With the First Events<sup>3</sup> determines that "routinization," which requires the promotion of sustainability from the start, as well as holding events accordingly is one method that can effectively popularize sustainability. It was found that when something had become routine people were far less likely to object; once the ideas have been implemented, enforced and continued to be played with people just accept the terms willingly.

The next challenge is to analyze what will foster the promotion of greening initiatives in other leagues. In Malcolm Gladwell's book The Tipping Point<sup>4</sup> he investigates how little things can make a big difference. He explains how there are certain people called "connectors" who have the ability to spread the word more powerfully, which, in turn, creates a ripple effect, resulting in more action by more people. As briefly touched on above, Gladwell discusses how professionals are likely to know many people and also have more connections when compared to the average person. This "professional ripple effect" is relevant to the Ultimate league because throughout the organization, any one of the professionals involved could be a "connector." If this is the case then green initiatives need to be in place within the PUL so they can spread to other leagues.



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## PROCEDURE

“Greening the Peterborough Ultimate League” began with much research of books, journals, articles and websites. An annotated bibliography was the first deliverable for this project. It contained 17 sources from which the green initiatives and proper methods of implementation were found. A number of articles were reviewed to determine what green initiatives have worked in other leagues, and which would work best for the PUL. Once all of the research was conducted the best ideas were used in a draft report that was circulated to select members of the Peterborough Ultimate League (shown in the Appendix). The recipients of the draft report were selected based on the fact that they would be interested in and affected by the further greening of their league. The draft report included a cover page outlining the project, its objectives, as well as my email address for correspondence. The remaining portion of the report included many greening initiatives from increasing league fees to pay for carbon credits to offset emissions, to buying a goat to cut the grass. A complete copy of the draft report is stapled to the back pages in the hard cover book attached to this report. The report was circulated via email to roughly thirty people. A week after the report was circulated I attended two weeks of league games. The purpose of my attendance was to answer any questions people had about the report and to speak with people who did not receive the email. Another twenty reports were handed out during league play to people who were interested in the subject and wanted to provide feedback. All feedback was received via email and through conversation with league members.



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## FEEDBACK

During the weeks following the circulation of the draft report, there was much feedback from players in the PUL. The email replies had different information with regards to which initiatives they considered practical and which they felt were either unnecessary or not feasible. There were comments received from nine players, most of whom gave an opinion of each green initiative idea. The primary ideas that people were in favor of included the creation of an environmental committee with attention being paid to maintaining a small number of people and ensuring that suggestions do not become overbearing; using this committee to promote green mentalities throughout the league also gained positive feedback. Players expressed their belief that the Wednesday night summer league is far more green than that of the Thursday night. Finally, the banning of water bottles was considered to be a strong suggestion; however, there were certainly concerns in the consideration of such a ban:

*...how to define 'single-use' water bottles? I might have an empty gatorade bottle I use all season...and suddenly I'm not allowed to bring that? Or what if I want to bring a can of pop or juice. This one is a good idea to promote...*

The use of performance bonds to make people abide to the league policies was considered going 'too far' for most respondents. Although the suggestion to raise league fees did not apply to all respondents, those who would be affected thought the fee should be quite nominal (two dollars), and that the carbon credits may not be the best investment.

*Though, again...I would be particular about which organization we donating too. It would need to be a 'neutral' organization ....not an 'advocacy' organization. This would help better reflect the PUL organization.*

The concept of a green and fair-trade purchasing policy is a sound one as long as the quality of product is comparable with the one already in use (make sure the eco friendly discs fly as well as discraft). When speaking with the players, it was evident that they have an allegiance to "discraft," and seem uninterested in throwing discs made by other companies. The feedback indicated that the players were interested in having a greener league. When all of the feedback was taken into consideration the best recommendations can be made, making sure the league becomes greener and the players remain happy.



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# RECOMMENDATIONS

Having both short and long term goals is a feasible way to ensure that the Peterborough Ultimate League will remain on a path that leads to a more green future. It is important that the league has already been identified as having green initiatives with the addition of the “carbon flip.” As the feedback from this project has made apparent, any green ideas put forth must be slowly implemented in order to take into consideration all parties involved. If only one new green rule is set in place per year, perhaps what Puyele calls “routinization” will occur; in this sense, people will be more likely to adapt to small changes, allowing such evolution within the sport to become routine. With the carbon flip in place, Peterborough players recognize it as a green practice within their league. Those who are new to the league adhere to the rule simply because it is a rule that everyone follows.

## Immediate Goals

- The league should form a green committee that is made up of volunteers. Their main goal would be to assess the greenness of the league and to determine how it could become more green. They would also be responsible for determining how the ‘green tax’ is used (if implemented in the future).
- Confront the Spiplex about the use of green-certified cleaning products and recycled garbage bags, while ensuring that such confrontations are carried out with caution in order to not seem too aggressive since field time is in such high demand, and the PUL would not want to lose any of its time.
- Make sure everyone within the league knows how the “carbon flip” is being adopted by other leagues, creating a sense of pride with the PUL and, hopefully, encouraging people to want more green initiatives employed.

## 1 – 3 Years

- Raise league fees by two dollars, calling it a ‘green tax’. It should not be outlined that the leagues fees are being raised for such a purpose, but attention should be drawn to what will be done with the money. The green tax should be used in ways that the green committee sees fit, for example, planting trees in the area.
- Implement a fair trade/second hand jersey rule. If a team would like to make jerseys with their name and number, it must be fair trade clothing. All other jerseys (if bought) must be second hand. Such a practice is made easier by pre-assigning colors to teams.
- Ban single use water bottles but have PUL water bottles for sale at the game.
- Use the green tax to buy discs made from recycled material and showcase them at each game. People will need to be weaned off of discraft, which may take more than one season.

- Allow people to share ideas on the web site regarding what other green practices could be employed; people should also have the option to vote for new practices they are in favor of.

### **3 – 5 Years**

- Have the green tax raised to five dollars within five years.
- Offer a “Greenest Team Award” once other green initiatives have been put into place, which will provide more ways to measure how green a team is.
- Have a cost associated with the carbon flip



<sup>1</sup>Chernushenko, David. *Greening our Games*. Centurion: Ottawa, 1994.

<sup>2</sup>Ottawa Ultimate Frisbee League: <http://www.ocua.ca/> accessed on February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009

<sup>3</sup>Program sustainability begins with the first events; 2005, Pierre Pluyea, Louise Potvinb, Jean-Louis Denisc, Jocelyne Pelletierd, Chantal Mannoni: *Evaluation and Program Planning* 28: 123–137

<sup>4</sup>Malcolm Gladwell. *The Tipping Point – How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*; Little Brown, 2000





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6 March 2009

To Members of PUL,

I want to introduce you to my community-based research project about environmental issues in the Peterborough Ultimate League. The project is being sponsored by PUL EcoDisc coordinator, Grant Conrad, supervised by professor Stephen Hill, and facilitated by TCCBE project coordinator Christie Nash. The intent of the project is to generate recommendations for further greening the activities of PUL.

Environmental initiatives have become common in many corporations. However, nonprofit and volunteer-driven organizations such as PUL can also take action. In 2008, PUL began the Carbon Flip, an initiative that other leagues are now looking to implement. Professional sports are also getting on board: some NHL players offset their carbon emissions and the Superbowl buys carbon credits to offset the emissions from fans' travel. Sport captures our attention and imagination and therefore can serve as a vehicle to change public attitudes toward environmental issues. Moreover, the culture of ultimate has a close fit with environmental concerns; many players are keenly aware of issues and are ready to act.

Attached to this letter are some potential ideas for greening PUL based on my review of environmental management in other sport leagues and discussions with my committee. I am asking you to read them and email me with your feedback about these ideas ([blakewatters@trentu.ca](mailto:blakewatters@trentu.ca)). What did you like, what didn't you like and why? You can also provide comments to me directly; I will be coming to the Thursday games on March 12 & 19 to seek your feedback in person. In both cases, I will appreciate your candid answers and ideas: your comments will be kept anonymous. I will be using all of the feedback as I research the final paper, which will be made available to the PUL executive.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Blake Watters  
[blakewatters@trentu.ca](mailto:blakewatters@trentu.ca)

## **1. Structuring Environmental Management with PUL**

### ***1.1. Environmental Committee***

1.1.1. PUL should consider formalizing an environmental committee that would have the mandate and authority to examine and implement environmental initiatives. The committee would set environmental goals, develop policies and programs, and regularly review progress on environmental initiatives.

### ***1.2. Appoint an Greener Keener for each team***

1.2.1. The Greener Keener could act as an environmental champion for and within their team. They could take the lead on environmental things like carpooling so that the Captains don't become burdened with new work.

## **2. Potential Initiatives and Tools**

### ***2.1. League Education & Communication***

2.1.1. Use the Captains and/or Greener Keeners to promote green activities within league. Meetings held at the beginning of each season could explicitly outline green initiatives and actions within the league.

2.1.2. Seek ideas from the league:

- i. Each captain's meetings could have a short item to discuss ideas for incorporating new green initiatives in league activities.
- ii. PUL members could be encouraged to share their green ideas to league organizers through the PUL website.

2.1.3. Promote online car pool services such as [www.pickuppal.com](http://www.pickuppal.com) to facilitate carpooling to league games and tournaments.

2.1.4. Encourage players to learn more about environmental issues and reflect on their individual environmental actions (e.g., promoting environmental books, films and events on PUL website).

2.1.5. Continue sharing PUL environmental initiatives with other leagues.

2.1.6. Consider providing regular online reports of environmental initiatives within the league and individual environmental actions by league members.

### ***2.2. League Policies and Regulations***

2.2.1. Implement a green purchasing policy:

- i. Fair trade clothing for uniforms and/or discs (e.g., <http://fairtradesports.com/>).
- ii. Purchase from local suppliers (as does EcoDisc).
- iii. Purchase from "green" suppliers (e.g., [http://www.vcultimate.com/pages/green\\_program](http://www.vcultimate.com/pages/green_program)).

2.2.2. Create an award for “Greenest Team,” which increases friendly competition and gives people another reason to be green.

2.2.3. Ban single-use water bottles on league fields and tournaments (within reason).

### **2.3. Market-based Incentives**

2.3.1. Increase leagues fees by a nominal amount per player to create a fund for green initiatives.

These might include:

- i. Providing some funds to be used at the discretion of the environmental committee;
- ii. Purchasing carbon credits to make the league carbon neutral (e.g., through Zerofootprint Peterborough);
- iii. Buying a round of drinks or other prize for the Greenest Team (e.g., as determined by carbon flip wins or other green measures); or
- iv. Making a league donation to an environmental organization.

2.3.2. Attaching a cost to the carbon flip: Place a nominal parking surcharge on each vehicle brought to league and tournament games. Captains would collect money each game that could be used as in 2.3.1 above or to buy beers for the carbon flip winners at Hot Belly Mama’s.

2.3.3. Use a performance bond to ensure teams abide by any league policies. For example, each team would submit \$100 that would only be refunded if they followed the green purchasing policy (or, indeed, any league policies). Trent Intramurals uses performance bonds to ensure fair play within their hockey league.

### **2.4. League Equipment and Infrastructure**

2.4.1. Discs can be produced that are less harmful to the environment:

- 60% post-consumer recycled discs are available for only a marginal price difference and could be used for the league disc: <http://www.frisbeedisc.com/products/custom/index.php>

2.4.2. Fields have an impact on the environment in terms of pesticides and watering. The Ottawa Ultimate, when they built their fields a few years ago, incorporated environmental design features in their field design ([www.uoguelph.ca/news/archives/001440.html](http://www.uoguelph.ca/news/archives/001440.html)). PUL might consider actively working with their field suppliers (city, schools, Trent, Lakefield College, Spiplex) to encourage environmentally sound field design and management. A league committee could oversee a Trent research project on field management and design standards.

- i. Use sheep instead of lawnmowers! The losing team from the previous week picks up droppings – this method of turf maintenance is practiced in parks in New Zealand.

2.4.3. Work with the Spiplex to encourage the use of green-certified cleaning products, recycled garbage bags, and so on. (This is done by Chelsea Piers, the largest sports and entertainment complex in the United States.)