



Sustainable Kent News

The latest on sustainability efforts in Kent



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Happy Fall everyone! A lot of us associate sustainability celebrations with Earth Day in April, but did you know that many organizations across the globe celebrate sustainability in October as well?

As such, and in recognition of the City’s and community’s many sustainability efforts, the City has proclaimed October 2025 as Sustainability Month. The [proclamation](#) was read out at the City’s Council Committee meeting on October first.

The October Sustainability Month Celebration invites all residents, schools, businesses, and organizations to join this celebration by participating in activities throughout the entire month that promote sustainable practices.

Everything from remembering to take your own bags to the grocery store to hosting a special event promoting sustainable practices qualify as contributing to this celebration. By showcasing sustainability efforts together throughout the month, we’ll create a celebration as unique and special as Kent itself!

Be sure to visit the City’s October Sustainability Month Celebration [webpage](#) for more information about how to participate and for a listing of community practices and events.

Should you ever have questions, comments, and/or suggestions related to the City’s Climate Action Plan or other sustainability work, please feel free to contact the City’s Sustainability Coordinator, Julie Morris, at: julie.morris@kentohio.gov.

CHRONICLING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Expanding Solar: Exploring a Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Project at 800 Mogadore Road



CITY OF KENT, OHIO

STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING SERVICES: PHOTOVOLTAIC PROJECT

The City of Kent's Climate Action Plan (CAP) directs the City to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the stationary energy sector, which are generated by residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional energy use.

The CAP suggests a few strategies to help with reducing these emissions, two of which are expanding solar energy and finding ways to support local grid resiliency.

The City is very excited to share that it is moving forward with exploring a solar project to be sited at the 800 Mogadore brownfield site here in Kent.

Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc. have been hired to help shape the project. They will advise the City on various design, installation, and implementation options, as well as on financing aspects of this public-private project.

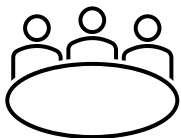
Staff had their first introductory meeting with the consultants in late September, and the City will provide more information as the process moves along and updates become available.

There is incredible potential with this project to meet various climate action goals, including the added benefit of moving the currently vacant brownfield to productive use.

VISIT OUR SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW WEBPAGE!

The City has a webpage to highlight its sustainability work and keep the community posted about related Climate Action Plan implementation progress, programs, news, events, and more!

Visit: <https://www.kentohio.gov/business-building-development/sustainability-overview/>



AROUND THE CITY



Davey's SEED Campus: A Living Lab of Sustainability

By The Davey Tree Expert Company

Davey Tree's SEED (Science, Employee Education and Development) Campus opened this summer, ushering in a new era for employee development and research. A walk around the 200-acre campus – the former site of Oak Knolls Golf Course – reveals a deep commitment to sustainability.

We're proud to share a few highlights. Be sure to check out [The SEED Scoop blog](#) to read more!



Stormwater Management

The SEED Campus manages its stormwater without any impact on the city of Kent with a three-acre stormwater retention pond, two water wells, and bioswales within the main parking lot. Bioswales are trenches full of moisture-loving vegetation that slow down rainwater and filter out pollutants, particularly salt.



Solar Arrays

A two-acre, 650-kilowatt photovoltaic solar array powers the SEED Campus, making it a net-zero site. It's also an [evolving research laboratory](#) where Davey Institute scientists are exploring low-maintenance, low-growth vegetation beneath the panels. Their findings are laying the groundwork for new sustainable best practices that Davey can offer clients.

Preserving Natural Resources

A nine-acre bog that lies at the north side of the property has been preserved in its natural state. It was important for us to keep this ecosystem because it's home to a wide variety of species and helps promote biodiversity.

Additionally, many mature trees from the golf course that once occupied the site have been carefully preserved and maintained.



Sustainable Turfgrass

All grass blends planted on the campus are A-LIST certified, meaning they require less water and fertilizer, while still maintaining high quality.



Pollinator Gardens

The campus's pollinator habitats – in peak bloom between June to August – are part of the Davey Institute's research plots. They were planted using a slit seeder, a method that minimizes soil disturbance and helps preserve soil carbon, and by drone.





Indoor Features

The main building includes low-flow plumbing fixtures, bottle refill stations, and LED lighting fixtures with occupancy and dim-control sensors. It also showcases several features made of reclaimed wood, including the [barn/events space](#).



An Antidote for Environmental Despair From The Kent Environmental Council

Despair about the environment causes people to become depressed, numb, apathetic, overwhelmed, hopeless—often causing them to feel immobilized, stuck and unable to plan and move forward to solve our environmental problems. Because we have the impression that the planet is doomed, we do not register the growing array of scientific studies demonstrating the resilience of other species. Read on to find out some of the “bright spots” of research and also how whales now aid in the capture of 40% of the carbon produced.

In her book *Hope Matters: Why Changing the Way We Think is Critical to Solving the Environmental Crisis*, Elin Kelsey posits that “only if we believe there’s an opportunity to make a real positive impact will we find the motivation to fight for the protection and restoration of ecosystems we depend on.” And then she shares hope-filled success stories specific to watery ecosystems.

For example, in Western Australia up to 90% of live coral was lost to rising ocean water temperatures causing coral bleaching. But in some sections of the reef, 44% of the corals recovered within 12 years. Also, kelp forests that were attacked by three years of rising water temperatures recovered within 5 years. By studying these “bright spots” where ecosystems persist in the face of major climatic impacts, we can learn management strategies to buffer destructive forces and promote resilience.

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Also, stories change over time. The Thames in London, England, was declared biologically dead in 1957, yet today is home to 124 species of fish and over 3,000 harbor and gray seals, as well as harbor porpoises, dolphins and whales; toxic chemicals have been removed for better water quality. Restoration works. (The Cuyahoga River here in Ohio is another example.)

Our attitudes also change over time, even toward species we most fear. In Monterey, CA, the sightings of one great white shark made news 20 years ago as a cautionary tale. But two decades later Monterey Bay is undergoing astonishing recovery thanks to world-class ocean conservation and new policies put in place decades ago. As the ecosystems grows healthier, white sharks and sea otters have returned and the Bay is healthier than in the past 200 years. The number of people surfing, boogie boarding, stand-up paddleboarding, diving, kayaking and swimming in those waters is also on the rise.

So, did more sharks and more people lead to more shark attacks? NO. The likelihood of being bitten by a shark dropped 91% between 1959 and 2013, despite the tripling of California's coastal human population. The US Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 led to an increase in elephant seal, harbor seals and sea lions—more animals that white sharks prefer to eat. Sometimes marine protected areas (MPA's) show results in just 3 to 5 years. Eight percent of the world's oceans are now protected.

The recovery of many marine mammals has been dramatic in general. For example, elephant seals were hunted to near extinction for their blubber in the 1800's and their total population in the North Pacific Ocean was down to 40 individuals by the end of the 19th century. And 60 years ago there were none in Ano Nuevo State Park Natural Preserve, near Santa Cruz CA. Today, there are 1,500 elephant seals at this park and 170,000 individuals in the North Pacific Ocean.

If we don't look to see if stories have changed, we miss huge things, like the impressive recovery of the California blue whale population, which is back to being almost the size it was before commercial whaling began. This is fantastic for all of us. People used to think that if the great whales returned, then all the fish would get eaten--but that isn't true.

It turns out that whales actually create conditions that help fish to thrive. Whales often feed at great depths, and as they return to the surface to breathe, they churn up the water column, spreading plankton and nutrients. They also often migrate long distances to mate, bringing nutrients with them to far latitudes where the water has fewer nutrients. Whales also produce vast amounts of poop rich in iron and nitrogen, which efficiently fertilizes microscopic phytoplankton upon which tiny marine animals feed. Fish in turn feed on these small creatures as well as phytoplankton. More whales equals more fish.

And that's not all! In 2019, researchers declared large baleen whales to be the "carbon capture titans of the animal world." Just one large baleen whale absorbs an average of 30 tons of CO₂ throughout its lifetime. Part of their carbon capture capacity is due to that phytoplankton just mentioned. Whales increase phytoplankton productivity and phytoplankton produce 2/3 of the planet's oxygen. It captures 40% of all CO₂ produced. Researchers tell us that the ocean's phytoplankton captures as much CO₂ as 1.7 million trees (an Amazon rainforest's worth). If you add up the contribution of a single whale makes to carbon capture, the fishing industry and the whale watching economy, a single whale is worth \$2 million. That make the global population worth more than \$1 trillion.

Yes, "the vast scale, complexity, and destructive power of biodiversity loss, climate change, and countless other issues are real. Yet assuming a fatalistic perspective is not reality, and positioning hopelessness as a foregone conclusion is not reality." It is a widespread and debilitating mindset that not only undermines positive change, it squashes the belief that anything good could possibly happen. So keep hope alive. Do what you can. (Source: Hakai Magazine, www.hakaimagazine.com, January 18, 2021)

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The words of Jane Goodall, just before her recent death, are relevant here:

“Do not lose hope. If you surrender to hopelessness, you become indifferent and inactive. If you desire to preserve the beauty that still exists in this world...reflect on the choices you make each day. Because when multiplied by millions, even small actions can lead to significant change.” Dr. Valerie Jane Morris-Goodall, 1934-2025

For more information about the Kent Environmental Council, click <https://kentenvironment.org/blog/> or find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/KentEnvironment>



Product Alert: Help! What do I do with all the plastic bags and packaging I've been collecting?

**By Judy Nelson,
Chair, City of Kent Sustainability Commission
Chair, Portage County Solid Waste District's
(PCSWD) Policy Committee**

No worries – we got this! If you recall, in last quarter's article about my visit to the Oakwood Material Recovery Facility (MRF), I mentioned that there are easy ways to recycle the plastic bags/film that cannot be added to your recycle cart because of the danger they pose to the workings of the MRF system. This type of single-use plastic includes but is not limited to grocery bags, dry-cleaner bags, bubble and shrink wrap, air pillows, plastic shipping envelopes, and Ziploc bags.

Thanks to a plastic film recycling program called NexTrex®, our collections of plastic bags and packaging can be diverted from the landfill and live on to serve a whole new purpose. 😊 The program is run by Trex®, a manufacturer of low-maintenance composite decking and railing made from 95% recycled materials - reclaimed wood, plastic film and sawdust, as well as eco-friendly outdoor living products.

Lucky for us, we have several options for participating in this recycling program.

First, drop off containers can be found at the following recycling partner locations:

Giant Eagle in Stow, Meijer in Stow, and the Portage County Solid Waste District Recycling Center.

Additionally, Trex® sponsors a Recycling Challenge Program that enables community groups to sign up and earn free Trex® furniture benches by collecting more than 1000 pounds of soft film plastics and packaging in a 12-month span. Groups that I have confirmed are currently collecting these materials here in Kent include:

Kent Lions Club – Collection on the last Friday of the month from Noon to 2pm in the Kent United Methodist Church's parking lot

Kent United Church of Christ – Drop off containers are inside the facility, please contact them for more information and/or access

Trinity Lutheran Church in Kent - Drop off containers are inside the facility, please contact them for more information and/or access

Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent – Drop off is located on the front porch of the Church’s office building

If you know of other groups who are collecting, please let Julie Morris, the city’s Sustainability Coordinator, know and we’ll add them to the list.

Details regarding the NexTrex® programs and what materials are and aren’t acceptable can be found at the links below:

[All About Plastic Recycling | NexTrex](#)

[School & Community Recycling Challenge | NexTrex](#)



Bag of Mixed Materials Ready for Drop Off

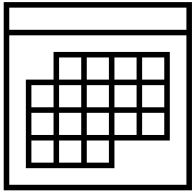


Bench at the rear of Standing Rock Cemetery near the Cuyahoga River that was donated by Kent Lions Club



Portage County Solid Waste District Recycling Center – Drop off cart/shed





CALENDAR & ITEMS OF INTEREST

Supporting our local businesses and organizations is a key component of Sustainability! Check out the City's Culture & Community section of the website (www.kentohio.gov/culture-community/) for more details about the following:

- **Haymaker Farmers' Market**

- Open year-round, every Saturday morning in Kent: Held outdoors in downtown Kent on Franklin Ave. from April through November, 9am to 1pm, and indoors at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent – Hobbs Hall from December to March, 10am to 1pm. Visit www.haymakermarket.com for full details.

- **Main Street Kent**

- A non-profit organization that focuses on the promotion, beautification, and revitalization of downtown Kent. The City of Kent, Kent State University, local businesses, and community members support Main Street Kent. Check out their full calendar of events here: www.mainstreetkent.org/events/full-calendar/.

- **Kent In Good Company Podcast**

- Hosted by Kent resident and small business owner, Katy Thomas, head to the Main Street Kent website at the following link to listen and learn more about Kent's local businesses: <https://mainstreetkent.org/discover/in-good-company/>.

- **The Kent Area Chamber of Commerce**

- Visit www.kentbiz.com/events/eventcalendar for a full listing of Chamber and Community events.

- **Kent Historical Society & Museum**

- Learn more about our community at Kent's primary history resource and reference center! Visit www.kentohiohistory.org for organization details and events.

- **Kent Parks and Recreation**

- Offers a variety of locations, programs, and events for individuals and families to enjoy. They provide quality recreation and entertainment for the community through parks, sports, fitness, education and cultural arts. Visit their full program and event offerings at: www.kentohio.gov/culture-community/kent-parks-and-recreation/

- **Yard Waste Transfer Site Open!**

- The yard waste transfer site hours are Tuesdays 9am-1pm, Wednesdays 5-8pm (through October 29, 2025) and Saturdays 9am-noon. The site is a place for residents of Kent to drop off brush, clippings, and other yard waste. It is also the place to get the grindings from the waste, to use like mulch, for free! Stop by near Cherry Street and Mogadore Rd, near the entrance to Plum Creek. Full details at: [Yard Waste | City of Kent](#)

- **Main Street Kent's Rainbow Weekend – 10/17-18/2025**
 - Kent Rainbow Weekend takes place in October (rather than June, the traditional Pride month) because it's important to have the Kent State University community here to celebrate as ONE community. October is LGBT History Month, and The Rainbow Weekend committee has planned a full weekend of events, entertainment, a makers' market, Courageously Queer storytelling, workshops, and exciting, engaging activities for all ages. Full details at: [Rainbow Weekend – Main Street Kent](#)
- **City of Kent Lights Out! at Plum Creek Park – 10/19/2025**
 - City of Kent Lights Out! at Plum Creek Park event Sunday, October 19th from 7pm-8:30pm. Join the City of Kent's Sustainability Commission and community partners for educational presentations about light pollution's impacts on bats, migratory birds, and other creatures of the night. There will be additional activity options and a Lights Out experience. Full details at: [October Sustainability Month Celebration | City of Kent](#)
- **Clean Up Kent: Fall Edition – 10/25/2025**
 - Main Street Kent will be hosting the Clean Up Kent: Fall Edition event Saturday, October 25th from 9am-11am. Full event details are available at <https://www.facebook.com/share/1A4p9wN2rZ/>
- **Family Friendly Halloween – 10/31/2025**
 - Head downtown on Friday, October 31st from 5pm to 7pm for family-friendly trick or treating at Kent's local businesses. Full details available at: [Family Friendly Halloween – Main Street Kent](#)
- **Small Business Saturday & Festival of Lights – 11/29/2025**
 - Make sure to visit downtown Kent for what is sure to be a fantastic day on Saturday, November 29th from 11am to 8pm for Main Street Kent's Small Business Saturday, and the Festival of Lights. Stay tuned for more details as they become available at: [Small Business Saturday & Festival of Lights - INFO COMING SOON! – Main Street Kent](#)
- **Cookie Walk – 12/7/2025**
 - Main Street Kent will be holding the Cookie Walk on Sunday, December 7th from 12pm – 5pm. Stay tuned for more details as they become available at: [Cookie Walk - INFO COMING SOON! – Main Street Kent](#)
- **Unsilent Night – 12/14/2025**
 - Main Street Kent will be holding the Unsilent Night event on Sunday, December 14th from 6pm-9pm. Stay tuned for more details as they become available at: [Unsilent Night - INFO COMING SOON! – Main Street Kent](#)
- **Coffee Walk – 1/10/2026**
 - Main Street Kent will be holding the Coffee Walk on Saturday, January 10th from 12pm-5pm. Stay tuned for more details as they become available at: [Coffee Walk - INFO COMING SOON! – Main Street Kent](#)