

## Mission

PVSN is a broad-based network of organizations and individuals who are dedicated to creating a just and sustainable future for the Pioneer Valley region. Our members include a broad community of sustainability activists and professionals working together to create a flexible and effective regional model for actively advancing sustainability in the Pioneer Valley, which can be applied in other regions of the country.

**Our mission is to strengthen our members' ability to pursue sustainability and environmental equity effectively by:**

- information and idea exchange
- collaborative approaches to problem solving and visionary thinking
- giving members the tools they need to integrate sustainable practices and scientific information into both regional and community decision-making

## Guiding Principles

PVSN's members share a vision of a future for the Pioneer Valley that will be worth the struggle in the difficult years that we all know lie ahead. In this future, diversity is cherished and protected within the human community and beyond. The inhabitants of the Valley's cities, towns and countryside enjoy access to the clean air, the water, the food and the human support fundamental to good physical and mental health. They possess the information and the skills needed to meet the challenges of their day, and their communities are able to control many of the important decisions that affect their daily lives. The health, diversity and population levels of plants, animals and other life forms, both domesticated and wild, are treated as a sacred trust.

PVSN members work to support this broadly shared vision in many different ways. Some seek to create environmentally sustainable transportation, some to ensure that education from basics through to needed specializations is available, some to support regional food production and distribution and other basic economic activity, some work for clean air and water, some to create and distribute needed information, some to ensure that relevant basic science is carried out, some work for land and wildlife preservation, and some to ensure the development of effective structures for self-governance and regional collaboration.

PVSN's members believe that to move toward this just, sustainable, healthy and biologically diverse community of all living things, we must be guided by the following principles:

- Human diversity is a treasure to be preserved;
- Human communities must learn to support the physical and mental health, education and information resources and degree of self-governance needed to meet the challenges we will face;
- Biological diversity and robust populations of existing species of animals, plants and other life forms must be preserved;
- Active collaboration and information-sharing among PVSN members as well as between PVSN members and the broader community can and must play an important role in moving the Valley toward this desired future.

## Current PVSN Initiatives

- Create effective forums and communications pathways involving a broad range of stakeholders and the general public in increased discussions of sustainability in the Pioneer Valley:
  - Bi-monthly meetings of sustainability professionals—all are welcome 8-11 am on 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday at locations rotating around Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden counties of western Mass
  - Educational events
  - Bi-monthly newsletter
  - Calendar of events
  - Web-site [www.pvsustain.org](http://www.pvsustain.org)
  - Letters to the editor
  - Positions on local, state, and federal legislation
- Advance a clear basic understanding of the concept of sustainability throughout the Pioneer Valley.
  - Sustainability professional skills bank
  - Co-sponsor events
  - Calendar of events
  - Spring Sustainability event—open to the public
  - Fall member retreat
- Facilitate a process to define comprehensive measures of sustainability for the Pioneer Valley. We hope the sustainability indicators will be used by members of the PVSN, and by other groups and organizations in the Pioneer Valley, to make better decisions.
  - Sustainability indicators
- Provide a vehicle for incorporating sustainability and scientific information into specific regional and community-based decision making, particularly with respect to energy, water, infrastructure and land use.
  - Decision-support tool
  - Sustainability indicators
  - Skills bank
  - Ad hoc collaborations

## Network Structure

Our purpose is to foster dialogue and collaboration. We make decisions by consensus of the members present at our meetings about how and when to meet, what initiatives to take on, and how to complement them. We have agreed not to become another organization with staff competing for funding, but remain a community of professionals (paid and volunteer) working in sustainability who pay dues to support our collaboration, as a project of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

PVSN now has over 100 member organizations and individuals. We have one paid part-time staff position, in addition to the two paid part-time researchers who secured the original funding. A volunteer Chair facilitates meetings, a volunteer steering committee helps set agendas, and ad hoc committees emerge as needed to work on time-limited projects.

The work of PVSN is informed by a number of leading thinkers and practitioners in the field of sustainability. Among these are William McDonough and the Natural Step.

## Background

PVSN was created with the help of a 2007 Environmental Protection Administration grant proposed jointly by the Engineering Department and the Environmental Institute at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

## Networks Annual Budget Needs

Currently PVSN is operating on an annual budget of about \$90,000 a year, approximately 2/3 supports deliverables developed by UMASS faculty and students and 1/3 supports development and maintenance of the Network. To move forward we would like to increase staff time for Network maintenance and development. We estimate a budget of \$50,000/year will be sufficient to support the network and meet our goals. When the original grant runs out, operating income will come from member dues and small grants and donations. PVSN does not plan to incorporate. PVSN plans to continue to collaborate with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), using their staff.

Staff (7.5 hours/week @ \$75/hr)	\$29,250
(staff 'weave network', arrange/host events, produce newsletter, create content for website, etc.)	
Web-site maintenance	\$ 3,000
Meetings (6/yr)	\$ 3,000
Annual Events	\$ 5,000
Art of Sustainability (7.5 hrs/mo)	\$ 6,750
Travel/supplies/printing etc	\$ 3,000
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	\$50,000

## Membership Dues structure

Life-time Member	\$10,000 (One-time fee)
Corporate Sponsor	(to be negotiated)

## Organizational

Large (annual operating budget \$1,000,000 +)	\$500
Medium (aob: \$250,000 – 999,000)	\$250
Small (aob: under \$249,999)	\$100

## Individual

Sliding scale with a minimum of \$25 except for students who pay \$10

Tax deductible donations will be accepted under the 501-C3 status of the Pioneer Valley Regional Ventures Center Inc.