



Corvallis Carbon Offset Fund

Contact

Brian Lee, PhD, Corvallis Interfaith Climate Justice Committee (ICJC)
bcllee@peak.org, (541) 758-4697

Description

Residents, businesses, and organizations may choose to neutralize their carbon greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by buying offsets that result in the prevention or capture of carbon GHG emissions. Proceeds will be distributed to selected, local organizations involved in clean energy production, vegetation planting, and restoration of carbon capturing lands. A local carbon offset fund has advantages over the several non-local funds that exist, and over donating directly to the local charitable organizations. The Corvallis Carbon Offset Fund seeks to:

- Provide a simple option to neutralize the more difficult to avoid carbon GHG emissions
- Collect money that would otherwise go out of the area to other offset funds and
- Redirect the money to benefit both the local community and the global environment.
- Report an official count of offsets toward the goals of the Climate Action Plan.

Timeframe

Initial conceptualization of a local carbon fund occurred in June 2018. However, the topic of carbon offset funds track back to discussions with 350 Corvallis members last December. The Corvallis Carbon Offset Fund would be expected to continue until the need for carbon offsets that benefit the local and global community are no longer needed, or if the lack of donations warrant its termination.

Funding

ICJC is an all-volunteer effort and currently has no expenses to fund, and therefore no funding sources. It also has no tax status. However, the administrative organization may incur some recurring expenses for the financial operations, such as receiving money, redirecting money to beneficiary organizations, acknowledging donors, bookkeeping, postage, photocopying, etc. These expenses are expected to be covered by incoming money.

If an administrative organization is not found and a new organization must be created, then business registration and charitable tax-exempt organization filing fees would be incurred. Startup grant money or donations would be needed to cover these

Third party environmental accounting certification is desirable. However, income must first grow to a level at which the certification expense becomes affordable.

Equity and Accessibility

Purchase of carbon offsets is voluntary and can be made at a level that is comfortable to the donor. Individuals, organizations, businesses, and governments may participate without regard to race, gender orientation, citizenship, age, or disability.

Habitat for Humanity homes are built or renovated with the assistance of members of the local community for qualified lower income residents.

Date Accepted: 10/03/2018

Approvals

Agreements with designated beneficiary organizations regarding the expected use of offset funds and type of reporting will be needed. Seeds for the Sol has already begun exploring a carbon offset funding model. Greenbelt Land Trust regularly deals with many different funding grants and sources, and is experienced in multisource accounting on use of funds. An agreement regarding donation tracking, acknowledgements, and donation collection and redirection, is needed with the administrative organization. IRS 501(c)3 status is very desirable as it can be a factor in encouraging offsets which are essentially donations.

Community Action Plan (CAP) Objectives

SS1: Sustainable City

Partners

First United Methodist Church

Beit Am

First Congregational United Church of Christ

Zen Meditation Group

Corvallis Mennonites

First Presbyterian Church

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



Which sections of the Climate Action Plan does your Initiative address?

Buildings and Energy
Urban Natural Resources

Action Type: Mitigation

What direct impact will your project have on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and/or preparing community members to adapt to the impacts of climate change (drought, wildfires, flooding, etc.)?

Floods, soil erosion, and temperatures are moderated when more vegetation growth is present. As mentioned earlier, solar power systems have the potential for becoming islands of resilience in the community when the power grid goes offline for an extended period, such as due to a major earthquake. Certain solar power system inverters can supply a standard outlet or circuit when the system is disconnected from the grid and the sun is shining on the panels. This could power communications radios, lighting, microwave ovens, medical equipment, smartphones, and laptops during emergencies. If power storage capacity is added in the coming years, these systems would have the ability to operate more hours when the sun is not available.

Beyond generation of electricity, roof-mounted solar panels (photovoltaic modules) provide shade, which can reduce attic heat, which reduces the heat transmitted into the living space below. This lowers the amount of heat that must be removed to cool the living space. Solar panel sunshades and carports combine energy generation, shade, and shelter functions although these designs have not yet been integrated into Habitat for Humanity builds.

Because the percentage of emissions neutralized by offsets is expected to be low, the impact of the Corvallis Carbon Offset Fund on GHG emissions is expected to be small. However, it is one of the few tools available to address "deep carbon" emissions until better solutions become available.

Does your project have any co-benefits (e.g. healthy local economy and local self-reliance, energy efficiency and greater energy independence from fossil fuels, sound economic investments, community livability, environmental quality and ecosystem resiliency, public health and well-being, equity and accessibility for low income/disadvantaged community members)?

N/A

What type of help, if any, do you need from the members of the Climate Action Advisory Board?

Suggested partners

Other: We are uncertain which groups would be interested in becoming the administrative organization. It should have charitable tax-exempt status, and will take care of the mundane activities of receiving and redirecting funds, and acknowledging donors. The Corvallis Sustainability Coalition may be a reasonable choice for the administrative organization. Another possibility may be the Corvallis Environmental Center. Since the amount of administrative effort needed has not yet been estimated, it is currently undetermined whether the Sustainability

Date Accepted: 10/03/2018

Coalition or the Environmental Center would be able to act as the administrative organization for the Corvallis Carbon Offset Fund.

If ICJC or a new organization were to administer the Corvallis Carbon Offset Fund, it would need some funding to cover the state and Federal filing fees. It would also need to develop organizational articles and a formalized structure.