

Going beyond Environmental Programs and Green Practices at the American Library Association

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Recently, green practices and sustainable solutions in public and academic libraries have grown considerably. The American Library Association (ALA) has played an important role in shaping the history of environmental activities in librarianship and providing a platform for action. This article presents the last twenty-two years of ALA's "green" units, programs, practices, initiatives, and actions, and acknowledges librarians involved in these activities. Most of the programs and actions included in the timeline were organized by the Task Force on the Environment (TFOE or the Task) – a member of the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT). The Task was a prominent entity, but not the only group, in the ALA to present program, concerns, and action about environmental sustainability. Other groups that actively promoted the concept of environmental sustainability in libraries include: Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT), Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA), Association of College and Research (ACRL), Government Documents Round Table (GODAR), Library and Information Technology (LITA), Public Library Association (PLA), and Business Reference & Services Section (BRASS).

The intent of this retrospective from 1989-2011 is to provide a starting point for a more comprehensive assessment of libraries' progress towards environmental sustainability, and consequently contribute to a discourse on pathways that can enable sustainable development of libraries in the future.

1989

Environmental Information Task as one of the Social Responsibility Round Tables was formed.

In the year of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in the Gulf of Alaska, Elizabeth Morrissett, a librarian from the Alaska Pacific University, received approval from the Action Council to form the Task Force on the Environment. According to Elizabeth, "such a task force is long overdue within SRRT and ALA, especially given the current governmental situation in the U.S."¹ The first organizational meetings of the Task took place at the ALA annual conference in Dallas. The TFOE was the first official venue for ALA librarians interested in environmental issues following the lead of librarians in the Special Library Association (SLA), who by the late 1970s already worked on and discussed issues related to the dissemination of environmental information, management of natural resources, and libraries' roles in supporting environmental research.

1990

The Task Force on the Environment and its business meeting during the Annual ALA Chicago conference.

The Task's objectives were then and still are today:

- "Promote awareness of environmental issues within ALA.
- Unite librarians and information professionals for mutual benefit and support.
- Provide TFOE members with opportunities for career development, skills enhancement, and leadership experiences.
- Facilitate networking among peers and professional associates.
- Provide services, programs and publications that assist TFOE members and others in their careers, workplaces, homes and communities."²

Terry Link, an information/reference librarian from Michigan State University Library took the TFOE's helm after Elizabeth Morrisett. During the Chicago conference the members of the Task met four times to discuss its role in the ALA, programs for future conferences, and related projects. The same year the *Library Journal* published an article by Terry Link and members of the TFOE titled "Sources for Small Planet: Environmental Bibliographies Reflect a Question of Values." In the article, the founding members of the TFOE compiled sources pertaining to green consumerism, biodiversity, pesticides, periodicals, books for parents and children on the environment, online information, and sources of environmental information with a listing of first electronic forums on BITNET, Biosphere, Ecology Discussion List, Conslink, Econet, and Usenet news groups.³ In October 1990 the *Canadian Library Journal* published a "First Prize" article by Susan Safyan titled "Access to Information for Environmentalists: a Library Perspectives."

1991

Environmental programs during the ALA Annual Conference in Atlanta:

- How Green is Your Library: Environmentalists at Work,
- Empowering the Public: Information Literacy for Environmental Issues,
- Environmental Information Resources,
- TFOE members supported the idea of publishing *Green Library Journal: Environmental Topics in the Information World*.

In Atlanta the Task's first program presented "How Green is Your Library: Environmentalists at Work," where Laurie Sabol, Elaine Clark, Terry Link, and John Sams focused on environmental issues concerning all libraries, and various "green" initiatives in libraries. The Task also co-sponsored two sessions. The first session "Empowering the Public: Information Literacy for Environmental Issues," was organized in collaboration with ACRL's Law & Political Science Section, and provided an overview of legal environmental issues that people confront at the

local, state, and national level. The second session was organized in collaboration with the Public Library Association Metropolitan Libraries Section on "Environmental Information Resources." During the Task's business meetings librarians discussed the agenda items such as greening the ALA conferences, sick building syndromes, race, poverty, and an environmental awards for publishers, support in publishing by the University of Idaho Library *Green Library Journal: Environmental Topics in the Information World*, and the program for the next conference.

1992

Environmental programs during the ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco:

- Poverty, Development, and the Environment: Information Challenges for Libraries,
- Tools of the Trade or Poisons for the Planet: the Environmental Impact of Paper, Computers, and Microfilm.

In San Francisco, David Brower, a chairman of the Earth Island Institute and a former chair of the Sierra Club, was the main speaker for Task program on "Poverty, Development and the Environment: Information Challenges for Libraries." Brower and other presenters discussed how governments and citizens were working to address poverty and the environment, and how libraries and librarians could help societies deal with these problems. The second TFOE program "Tools of the Trade or Poisons for the Planet: the Environmental Impact of Paper, Computers, and Microfilm," concentrated on environmental concerns with production and the use of various media in the workplace. During two business meetings the Task concentrated on issues related to a green publisher award, the Green Library in Berkeley - a non-profit environmental organization, a proposal for publishing "Environmental Information Sources: a Guide for Citizens and Libraries", and a program for the New Orleans conference. Nancy Pope and Trish Cruise from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge were appointed as the new chairs of the Task.

1993

Environmental programs during the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans:

- Tracing the Ecological History of Louisiana's Coast through Special Collections and Technology,
- Introduction of resolution on use of chlorine-free paper use by the ALA.

The 1993 ALA conference was marked by the Task's work on the resolution on use of chlorine-free paper by the ALA. In New Orleans the Task's program on "Tracing the Ecological History of Louisiana's Coast through Special Collections and Technology" featured Richard Condrey, Dwain Zack, and Nancy Pope discussing research on costal ecology using the special collections of LSU Libraries and scanning a 19th century French monograph, "Historical Collection of Louisiana." The Task held two business meetings devoted to the environmental bibliography book project, the resolution on chlorine-free paper, programming for the Miami conference, and the election of a new chair, Maria A. Jankowska from the University of Idaho Library, Moscow, Idaho.

1994

Environmental programs during the ALA Annual Conference in Miami:

-Libraries in the Balance: Bridges to Environmental Information,

-TFOE members supported switching from print to an online version of the *Electronic Green Journal: professional journal on international environmental information* (EGJ).

In Miami, the Task presented "Libraries in the Balance: Bridges to Environmental Information" with David Fisher, Gayle Alston, Laura Powers, and Millicent Gaskell as invited speakers. *Library Journal* chose the program as a valuable source of current environmental information. During the business meeting, the Task worked on a dialogue with the Exhibits Round Table concerning ALA's environmental impact on exhibitors, and a letter to endorse the concept of the National Institute for the Environment. Other activities included the discussion on the "Environmental Information Access Project" with Libraries in the Future from New York, the TFOE newsletter, and the presentation of the resolution on a chlorine-free paper. Maria Jankowska was elected as a co-chair of the Task, with Millicent Gaskell from the South Jersey Environmental Information Center, West Deptford Public Library, New Jersey.

In June of 1994 the first issue of *The Electronic Green Journal* (EGJ) was published by the University of Idaho Library with support of active librarians in TFOE. EGJ was the first peer-reviewed digitally born journal providing open access to scholarly international environmental information edited by librarians and published by an academic library.

1995

Environmental programs during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago:

-Global Change Data and Information Systems: Roles of the Libraries.

In Chicago, the TFOE presented the program titled "[Global Change Data and Information Systems: Roles of the Libraries](#)," with Robert Rand, Linda Hill, Gerald Barton, Patty Owen, and Fred Stoss as speakers. The session focused on libraries participating in the U.S. Global Change Data and Information System (GCDIS) to provide the full spectrum of information services for the worldwide dissemination of environmental information. During two Task business meetings Harriet DeCeunynck presented an update on the Clinton administration and the environment. Also an updated version of the resolution on chlorine-free paper use in libraries was presented, and Fred Stoss from Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center, Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee was elected as the new chair of TFOE.

1996

Environmental programs during the ALA Annual Conference in New York:

- Environmentally and Socially Responsible Business: Finding the Information to Make the Decision to Buy or Invest,
- *GreenNotes*, the TFOE electronic newsletter was created and published,
- The Library of Congress established new subject headings for environmental sources,⁴
- Tour of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Region 2 Library,
- A final version of the resolution on chlorine-free paper was presented.

In New York, the Task's program was focused on "Environmentally and Socially Responsible Business: Finding the Information to Make the Decision to Buy or Invest" with Albert Wilson, TIAA-CREF; Alice Tepper Marlin, Council on Economic Priorities; Steven Lydenberg, partner in Kinder, Lydenberg, Domini & Co.; and Terry Link from the Michigan State University as a moderator. The program examined how companies, corporations, or pension funds could operate in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. Members of Task also visited the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Region 2 Library. The open house provided an opportunity for TFOE members to meet EPA Library staff and establish networking and communication links to the environmental resources community. The Task concentrated on an award for outstanding environmental children's books, bringing the resolution on chlorine-free paper to the floor for discussion and for final presentation to SRRT members at the 1997 Midwinter meeting in Washington, DC. Fred Stoss from the State University of New York, Buffalo, New York was re-elected as the chair for the next year.

1997

Environmental programs during the ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco:

- The Need for an Environmental Information Infrastructure,
- Environmental Education Resources for the 21st Century,
- [TFOE website](#) was created,
- The resolution on use of chlorine-free paper

[The resolution on use of chlorine-free paper](#) was brought to the floor for discussion and for final presentation to SRRT at the 1997 Midwinter meeting in Washington, DC. The resolution recommended that ALA Publishing and Reprographics services use only chlorine-free paper. TFOE held two programs in San Francisco in 1997: "The Need for an Environmental Information Infrastructure," and "Environmental Education Resources for the 21st Century." The Task

concentrated on the ALA Budget Analysis and Review Committee's answer to the resolution on chlorine-free paper, which stated that moving to chlorine-free printing would increase ALA expenses from \$70,000 to \$120,000 annually. The resolution recommended that ALA Publishing and Reprographics use only chlorine-free paper. The new chair was elected; Maria Anna Jankowska returned to the helm of the Task with Fred Stoss as the co-chair. In order to improve communication inside and outside the American Library Association, TFOE's home page was created with links to valuable information sources. The TFOE's mailing list was established.

1998

Environmental programs during the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC:

- Social Research and GIS: Applications for the Library,
- National Institute for the Environment (NIE) and a National Library for the Environment (NLE)--
An Update,
- Global Reach Local Touch: The Environmental Protection Agency Headquarters Libraries,
- It Isn't Easy to be Green: Environmentally Friendly Libraries Sustaining Our Resources.
- SRRT passed Resolution for Environmentally Responsible Papers

The ALA Action Council Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC) did not recommend moving to chlorine free paper due to the significantly greater expense (increase in publishing and printing expenses from \$70,000 to \$120,000 annually) and limited exposure of the elementally chlorine free paper that is currently used.⁵ The ALA Committee on Legislation did not endorse the NIE and NLE.

Going Green @ ALA was a theme for the 1998 conference in Washington, DC. The TFOE program at the conference entitled "Chemical Facts -- Essential Resources for Your Library Collection" presented two significant sources on hazardous substances: [Chemical Fact Sheets](#) published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and [Chemical Scorecard](#) published by Environmental Defense. During the Washington conference the members of the Task participated in the programs discussing "Social Research and GIS: Applications for the Library," "National Library for the Environment -- An Update," and "Global Reach Local Touch: The Environmental Protection Agency Headquarters Libraries." This last program was open house held at the EPA HQ Information Resources Center in Washington, D.C. Another conference program devoted to environmental issues titled "It Isn't Easy to be Green: Environmentally Friendly Libraries Sustaining Our Resources" was organized by the LLAMA Safety and Security of Library Buildings Committee. During TFOE business meeting the members of the Task endorsed the concept of a digital National Library for the Environment, discussed a resolution for environmentally responsible papers, and a program for the New Orleans conference. Maria A. Jankowska remained the chair for the next year.

1999

- Environmental programs and actions during the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans:
- Environmental Resources for Public, School, and Academic Libraries: Making Environmental Information Relevant,
 - GIS as a Tool for Collaborative Spatial Decision Making (CSDM): Libraries Perspective,
 - The [Libraries Build Sustainable Communities](#) (LBSC) Project, partially funded by the United State Agency for International Development (USAID), was started with the partnership between the American Library Association and Global Learning, Inc.,
 - ALA's [Resolution on Public Access to EPA Risk Management Plans and Community Right-to-Know-Information](#) was completed,
 - The 3rd edition of Philip D. Leighton and David C. Weber, [Planning Academic and Research Library Buildings](#), was published by Chicago: American Library Association.

In New Orleans, the Task presented "Environmental Resources for Public, School, and Academic Libraries: Making Environmental Information Relevant" with Carolyn Offutt, Richard Huffine, Fred Stoss, and Maria Jankowska as speakers. This program concentrated on the essentials of the [EPA Superfund Program](#), navigating the EPA in cyberspace, resources for Earth Day, and the *Electronic Green Journal*. The second program, "GIS as a Tool for Collaborative Spatial Decision Making (CSDM): Libraries Perspective," was co-sponsored by LITA Geographic Information Systems Interest Group. The program presented by Dr. Piotr Jankowski was focused on collaborative spatial decision making, an emerging field combining GIS and a group approach to decision-making, and its application to an environmental restoration plan for the Duwamish Waterway in Seattle. The program also presented the Idaho Geospatial Data Center, known today as Interactive Numeric and Spatial Information Data Center ([INSIDE Idaho](#)), as an example of an on-line geographical data repository responding to public needs for spatial information. Two business meetings concentrated on the questions of the relevancy of the Task's activities to librarians' interests and needs, and steps aimed at attracting more members. Maria Jankowska and Fred Stoss were elected as co-chairs.

2000

- Environmental programs during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago:
- Libraries Build Community ALA initiative for 2000,
 - Libraries Making Earth Day Every Day,
 - Tour of the EPA Library in Chicago.

The ALA president, Sarah Ann Long, focused her 1999-2000 term on the theme "Libraries Build Community." In her presidential address, she stated, "Libraries in the United States have a unique opportunity to show their concern about the environment."⁶ One of her initiatives was support for a special pre-conference workshop held at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago on July 6, 2000. The main goal of the workshop was to teach librarians community building skills in order to promote sustainable development in their localities. The TFOE program demonstrated how libraries could sustain the momentum of Earth Day throughout the year with "Libraries Making Earth Day Every Day." This program included Jeffrey L. Brown, Executive Director, Global Learning Inc.; Fred Stoss, SRRT Coordinator; Maria A. Jankowska, chair of the TFOE and general editor of the *Electronic Green Journal*; and Irwin Weintraub, Life Sciences Specialist from the City University of New York, Brooklyn.

Maria A. Jankowska and Irwin Weintraub were elected as co-chairs of the TFOE.

2001

Environmental programs during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago:

- Sustaining Communities: Deciding Tomorrow Today the ALA workshop,
- Earth Day in the 21st century: Environmental Activism,
- Sustaining Libraries for the Future: Energy Efficiency, Friendly Buildings, and Libraries' Sustainability.

"Sustaining Communities: Deciding Tomorrow Today" was the theme of the workshops taking places in American libraries during 2001. The workshop participants enjoyed an interactive activity called "Postcards from Home." The postcards addressed issues related to traffic and parking lot space in a small suburban town, damaging results of coal mining in mountain ranges, unplanned development, urban sprawl and saving pristine drinking water sources. As part of the workshop the participants also enjoyed the Community Inventory Role Playing activity. This exercise demonstrated how public libraries could be involved in local communities in many domains including: economic development, air quality, land use, job training, health care, civic participation, literacy, and quality education. The ALA theme on "Libraries Build Community" brought important sustainability ideas into the librarian profession, and showed ways to change the libraries' image as an active partner in building local sustainable communities.⁷

"Libraries Build Sustainable Communities" was a major theme for the Association in 1999-2001, and saw nearly 1,900 librarians trained in expanding their knowledge and outreach on the concepts of sustainability--nearly ten years before "sustainable" became a common household term."⁸

In Chicago, the TFOE organized a program on "[Earth Day in the 21st century: Environmental Activism](#)," with Denis Hayes, one of the co-founders of the first Earth Day in 1970. The second program, "Sustaining Libraries for the Future: Energy Efficiency, Friendly Buildings, and

Libraries' Sustainability," presented three speakers. [Donald Wulfinghoff](#) from Wulfinghoff Energy Services explained how libraries could have more funds to buy library materials by savings energy expenses, while James Weiner offered practical guidelines on how to plan, design, and operate library buildings that are energy efficient and conserve resources. [Cate Gable](#) from Axion Communications International focused on how information technology and the global ecological crises could impact the sustainability of libraries. Maria A. Jankowska, University of Idaho Library and Irwin Weintraub, Rutgers University Library, were elected as the co-chairs of the Task.

2002

Environmental program during the ALA Annual Conference in Atlanta:

- Promoting Public Health and Community Protection: Can Libraries Help?,
- Going Green without Going Broke: High Impact, Low Cost.

In Atlanta the Task program on "[Promoting Public Health and Community Protection: Can Libraries Help?](#)" was presented by Mary Hudak from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and focused on outreach and information dissemination during disaster relief. The program "Going Green without Going Broke: High Impact, Low Cost" highlighted environmentally responsible products and solutions adopted in the building of Multnomah County library. Speakers included the library director - Ginnie Cooper, the architect - Ralph DiNola, and Alan Locke - the principal in the consulting engineering firm involved in the building's design.

2003

Environmental programs during the ALA Annual Conference in Toronto:

- Clear the Air and Water – Environmental selections for children, the public and academic libraries,
- Ralph Nader, American Green Party leader was a keynote speaker for the ALA President's Program.

Ralph Nader, the 2000 Green Party presidential candidate, was the keynote speaker for Maurice J. Freedman's ALA President's Program. "Clear the Air and Water – Environmental selections for children, the public and academic libraries" was focused on a selection of environmental resources for children, academic researchers, and the general public. The program speakers included Judy Halpern, a specialist in using children's eco-literature to inspire learning and the creator of The Magic Suitcase in Kitchener ON; Maria A. Latyszewskyj, Head, Environment Canada Library in Toronto; and [Tim Grant](#), Co-Editor, *Green Teacher* in Canada, who discussed and demonstrated various outreach initiatives going beyond library walls to educate the public about the environment. Maria A. Jankowska, University of Idaho Library and Jonathan Betz-Zall, Branch Librarian, City University, Everett, Washington became the co-chairs of the Task Force.

2004

Environmental program during the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando:

- Are you Missing any Information? Speak and Publish Freely on the Environment.

For the conference in Orlando the Task sponsored a program concerning the environment and intellectual freedom resources, "Are You Missing Any Information? Speaking and Publishing Freely

on the Environment." Maria A. Jankowska and Jonathan Betz-Zall, were elected as the co-chairs of the Task Force.

2005

Environmental programs during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago:

- [Bicycle Rentals at ALA Annual](#)
- Get the Lead (Information) Out!,
- Open House at the EPA Region 5 Library.

For the first time, ALA conference attendees enjoyed discounted rates on bicycle rentals to help them get around Chicago without having to burn petroleum fuel. The discounted rate was \$10 per day, which included the use of a helmet and lock. The program "Get the Lead (Information) Out!" presented access to timely information helping to identify children at risk in urban, suburban, and rural communities, and neighborhoods. Speakers from federal, state, and local lead poisoning prevention programs described the extent of the problem and efforts to prevent lead exposure, and addressed the issue of community involvement in preventing and stopping lead poisoning. The Task also organized the Open House at the EPA library in Chicago and joint ALA Conference Services in discussing how ALA's conferences could best observe "green" practices. Fred Stoss and Jonathan Betz-Zall were elected as the co-chairs of the Task Force.

2006

Environmental programs during the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando:

- Preparedness Matters Planning for Disaster,
- [Ecolibrarian](#) – website on environmental information sources from Seattle Public Library by Jonathan Betz-Zall was created.

The ALA took strong action in saving the EPA and federal libraries:

- ALA President Leslie Burger [spoke on EPA Library Closings](#) at the National Advisory Council Meeting,
- ALA's [Resolution on EPA Libraries](#),
- ALA's [Resolution on Saving Federal Libraries](#),
- ALA's [Resolution on Protecting the Toxics Release Inventory Program](#),

After the tragedy following the hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the need for more effective emergency preparedness and greater collaboration at all levels became apparent.

["Preparedness Matters Planning for Disaster,"](#) a half-day workshop organized by the TFOE

addressed libraries' roles in helping the communities they serve to develop community disaster and emergency preparedness programs, and assisting in recovery plans and operations in response to an emergency or disaster. Gayle Alston, librarian and regional training manager for the Department of Homeland Security/FEMA Region 4 in Atlanta, and Fred Stoss, Librarian in the Arts & Sciences Libraries at the State University of New York University at Buffalo led the workshop. Fred Stoss and Jonathan Betz-Zall were elected as the co-chairs of the Task.

2007

Environmental programs and events during and after the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC included the following themes and actions:

- Finding Environmental Information in the New Millennium: Continuing the Dialogue,
- The Data and Information Behind "Truth:" A Librarian's Perspective on Global Warming
- Robert Kennedy, Jr. was a speaker in the ALA President program; "[A Contract with our Future](#)"

focused on environmental policy and sustainable development,

- ALA President Leslie Burger testified on EPA Library Closings to Senate Environment and Public Works Committee,⁹
- [Eco-Libris: Plant a tree for every book you read](#) blog was founded.
- Wiki [Guide for Architects and Librarians](#) was created by the ACRL/LAMA Designing Spaces for Higher Education Task Force.

The "Finding Environmental Information in the New Millennium: Continuing the Dialogue" program sponsored by the GODOR, Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Roundtable, and the Task presented a dialogue on access to environmental information. Speakers included Bernadine Abbott Hoduski, Government Information Advisor and a professional staff member for Library and Distribution Services, U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on Printing for 21 years, and the founder of the ALA Government Documents Round Table; Jonathan Betz-Zall, Reference Librarian for Highline Community College in Des Moines, Washington, and co-chair of TFOE; Emma J. McNamara, Director of the Information Access Division of Information Analysis and Access in the Office of Environmental Information of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Jeff Ruch, Executive Director, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility; and Fred Stoss, University of New York at Buffalo, Arts & Sciences Libraries, co-Chair ALA Task Force on the Environment as moderator. In the program "The Data and Information Behind "Truth:" A Librarian's Perspective on Global Warming" [Fred Stoss](#), trained by Al Gore and The Climate Project trainers, reviewed data and resources used in Al Gore's Oscar-winning documentary film and *New York Times* bestselling book, "An Inconvenient Truth." Fred Stoss and Jonathan Betz-Zall were elected as the co-chairs of the Task Force.

2008

Environmental programs and actions during midwinter conference in Philadelphia and the ALA

Annual Conference in Anaheim and after conferences included the following themes:

- SRRT/TFOE “Cup by Cup” Campaign,
- ACRL OnPoint live chat session on [Green Libraries](#) conveyed by Mary Carr and Debra Rowe,
- Nature and the Environment @ your library: Nature Journals as a Tool for a Children's Library Program with [Selected Readings on Nature Journaling](#),
- [Greening of the Presses](#) improving the impact of publishing,
- TFOE/International Responsibility Task Force (IRTF) Earth Wind and Fire @ Your Library: Changing Climate and Changing Lives,
- LLAMA/From Castles & Coaster to Experience & Green, a preconference program,
- LLAMA/Security & Preservation of Rare Materials: Planning an Environmental Building Model,
- LLAMA/BES Sustainable Libraries - Shades of Green,
- [Electronic Green Journal](#) changed its publisher to the UCLA Library and was published via the University of California eScholarship,
- [Going Green @ your library](#) –website of environmentally friendly practices for libraries and beyond was created,
- [The Green Library](#) – blog on green activities, events, literature, and project that focused on libraries, was created by Gerry McKiernan,
- The [Libris Design](#) Project was supported by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services,
- The 5th edition of William W. Sannwald. Checklist of Library Building Considerations was published by Chicago: American Library Association,
- The 2nd *Library Journal* Design Institute “[Going Green](#)” took place at Chicago Public Library.

During the midwinter conference in Philadelphia, a campaign ["Cup by Cup for a Greener ALA"](#) sparked by Monika Antonelli from the Minnesota State University was considered a successful environmental campaign. The Task also organized a program on “Nature and the Environment @ your library: Nature Journals as a Tool for Children's Library Program,” which presented the use of nature journaling to enhance children's literacy environmental programs in libraries. Speakers included Doug Wechsler, Director, The Academy of Natural Sciences; Mark Baldwin, Director of Education; Roger Tory Peterson, Institute of Natural History; and Andy Boyles, Science Editor, Boyds Mill Press and Highlights for Children magazine. In Anaheim the Task presented two programs. “Earth Wind and Fire @ Your Library: Changing Climate and Changing Lives” was focused on the consequences of global warming in our homes, places of work, and recreation. The program emphasized the "global" aspects of global climate change while discussing energy-smart and environmentally friendly behaviors needed to address climate crisis. The main speaker was Fred Stoss, among the first 500 people to give Gore’s slide show on climate change. The second program “Greening of the Presses” was a presentation of speakers from the Green Press Initiative, the Book Industry Study Group, New Society Press, and the Task. They discussed environmental impacts of book publishing and printing and the need for environmental stewardship within the publishing world. Fred Stoss and Jonathan

Betz-Zall remained the co-chairs of the Task. Also during the ALA conference LLAMA presented preconference-featured tours of “green” designs of Santa Monica and Cerritos libraries. LLAMA also presented two programs on “[Sustainable Libraries: Shades of Green](#),” devoted to green library buildings presented by Peter Magnani and Greg Mullen, and “[Security & Preservation of Rare Materials: Planning an Environmental Building Model](#)” with Caryn J. Carr, Director, State Library of Pennsylvania; Dr. Larry Nesbit, Chair, Rare Books Room Committee; Cornelius Rusnov, Project Architect; and Dr. William Joyce, Head of Special Collections, Pennsylvania State University.

2009

Environmental programs during the National Meeting of the Association for College and Research

Libraries (ACRL) in Seattle, midwinter in Denver, and the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago included the following themes:

- Seattle/Green Libraries, and eco-friendly practices, including a means to reduce the meeting’s ecological footprint by committing to the Green Pledge,¹⁰
- ACRL OnPoint live chat session on [Seattle Green: Lessons learned from greening the ACRL 14th](#)

National Conference conveyed by Charles Forrest, Karen Munro, and Tory Ondrla,

- Kermit, It Is Easy Being Green! Librarians' Perspectives and Ideas,
- *American Libraries*/Auditorium Speaker Series in Chicago- Simply Living host Wanda Urbanska,
- Grassroots Greening /Greening Libraries from the Inside,
- ALA Publishing went greener -“Each year, approximately 30 million trees are used to make books sold in the United States 1,153 times the number of trees in New York City’s Central Park, according the Green Press Initiative (GPI). This statement, among other issues and concerns, has prompted ALAs Publishing Committee to examine ALAs green publishing practices, with the goal of making them as environmentally friendly as possible,”¹¹
- ALA the 2009 State of America’s Libraries Report - [Public-library design reflects environmental concerns](#) was published,
- *American Libraries, the Magazine of the American Library Association* – [Ageless & Evergreen: Spotlight on Design & Construction](#) was published in April,
- [CLS Newsletter](#), a semiannual publication of the College Libraries Section of the Association of College and Research switched to electronic format. “Advantages to an e-only publication are obvious: unlimited page count, color vs. black/white, environmentally friendly, and it saves the association about \$12,600!”¹²
- [Green Libraries](#) –a website for information about green and sustainable libraries in North America was created by Monika Antonelli,
- ALA Connect/ [Green Libraries Community](#) wiki was created by Fred Stoss,
- ACRL integrated sustainability into all aspects of the life of the association, [Charting our future ACRL Strategic Planning 2020](#).

In Settle, the ACRL's conference attendees signed "green pledge" to put ecological ideas into practice. The conference featured bags made of recycled materials and the lack of tangible handouts at program sessions. The conference was called as "the most eco-friendly major event ever held by an ALA division."¹¹ During ALA midwinter conference in Denver the TFOE discussion was focused on "Kermit, It Is Easy Being Green! Librarians' Perspectives and Ideas." In Chicago Wanda Urbanska urged the crowd to make green choices in their libraries and their lives. "Reclaim your role as eco-role models and exemplars in your community," she said, "change is happening rapidly. Let libraries continue to be at the center of it."¹³ The Task presented "Grassroots Greening /Greening Libraries from the Inside" focusing on energy usage in libraries.

2010

Environmental program during the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC and beyond:

- TFOE/Is It Safe to Go Outside? Health Effects of Climate Change and Global Warming,
- BRASS/Clean, Green, and Not so Mean: Can Business Help Save the World?
- [Green your Library](#) blog was published by the *American Libraries*;
- [ALA goes green for ALA election](#) – made decision to hold an online election only,
- ALA book edition by Kathryn Miller, *Public Libraries Going Green* was published,
- Spotlight: Buildings Get Greener, special edition of *American Libraries, The Magazine of the American Library Association* was published,
- *How Green is My Library?* was published by McBane Mulford Sam and Ned A. Himmel,
- An Amigos Online Conference: [Going Green @ Your Library 2](#), Working Green, Teaching Green

In Washington, DC BRASS of ALA's organized program on "[Clean, Green, and Not so Mean: Can Business Help Save the World?](#)" This program revealed the trends that are transforming business from the boardroom to the grassroots level. Speakers included Timothy Fort, Executive Director of the Institute for Corporate Responsibility at the George Washington University School of Business; Lisa Hall, Executive Vice President and Chief Lending Officer of the Calvert Foundation; and David Deal, CEO and Founder of Community IT Innovators and Michael Matos, Business and Economics Librarian at American University. The TFOE program co-sponsored with the new Interest Group on Health Science of the Association of College and Research Libraries entitled, "Is It Safe to Go Outside? Health Effects of Climate Change and Global Warming," was cancelled. Main speakers Lise Van Susteren and Fred Stoss went to Nashville for a training [session with Al Gore on climate change.](#)

2011

Environmental program during midwinter ALA Conference in San Diego, CA and beyond:

- Task Business meeting was not well attended.
- ALA rejected the Rachel Carson Book Award for children books proposed by Task.

Year of 2011 was not fruitful on environmental fronts for the Task and ALA. For many years all SRRT Tasks meetings were held on Saturdays at 8am. This might be one of the reasons that business meeting in San Diego did not happen and Task did not sponsor any program for the ALA conference in New Orleans. However, librarians were active outside the ALA by participating in the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Conference and Expo in Pittsburgh. Librarians who attend the [AASHE Conference](#) in early October gathered for a networking event called “Libraries for Sustainability”. The event was initiated by Madeline K. Charney from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Bonnie J. Smith from the University of Florida Libraries. The result of the discussion was a document [10 ideas](#) for connecting campus libraries as partners in the academic sustainable movement.

Conclusions

For more than twenty years, the ALA librarians have worked on many environmental resolutions, programs, actions, campaigns, activities, and operations. The TFOE together with SRRT, LLAMA, ACRL, GODOR, LITA, BRASS, and PLA worked on introducing chlorine-free paper in publishing and communication operations, greening conferences, environmental initiatives aimed at book publishing,¹⁴ and disseminating environmental information. Other activities involved participating in environmental scholarly communication by publishing *Electronic Green Journal*, saving the EPA libraries, and contributing to building sustainable communities as well as designing and building green libraries.

The diversity of activities covered many facets of environmental sustainability in libraries and librarianship.

Looking into the future, we should move beyond environmental sustainability exemplified by various practices of “greening libraries” and focus on proactive steps to guarantee future sustainable development of libraries. The concept of sustainable development advocating a balance between economic growth, social equity, and ecology “that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”¹⁵ moved from theory into practice after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. Libraries have already started practicing this concept before Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992. Libraries’ operations had the basic characteristics of sustainable practices long before the concept of sustainability gained a wider acceptance. The economic model of library operations is characterized by frequent borrowing instead of constant buying of information materials, and by sharing of resources rather than unnecessary duplication. Social equity values have been practiced in libraries by collecting, archiving, preserving, and providing public access to collections for current and future users. Environmental values have been expressed by developing collections focused on environmental topics, teaching environmental literacy, disseminating environmental information, building green libraries, and green practices and sustainable solutions taking place in libraries.

It is time for libraries to go beyond exercising environmental stewardship in collaboration with the publishing industry, greening of the ALA conferences, requiring green practices and products from vendors. Libraries should collaborate with campuses and communities on increasing awareness of sustainability in areas of social equity, responsible investments, and ecology. Academic library services and practices could support institutional curricular and research needs promoting open access, institutional repositories, retaining author rights, building sustainability-related collections and research guides, incorporating sustainability content into instruction and teaching, and collaborating on sustainability research and teaching projects.

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