Central Ohio Climate Action Plan 4.22.26 EPN Earth Day Workshop Activity Summary

Workshop Overview

At the 2026 Environmental Professionals Network Signature Earth Day event, a group of School of Environment and Natural Resources (SENR) Capstone students designed and facilitated a workshop on the Central Ohio Climate Action Plan (COCAP) in collaboration with Sustainable Columbus and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) to educate and start conversations around the region's new climate action plan.

Workshop participants were provided with educational materials on the contents of the COCAP and were then asked to rank the six core goals of the plan by order of importance. They were also instructed to write down actions aligned with those goals – both those which they were already implementing ("Current Actions"), and actions they wish to take or see implemented on a larger scale ("Next Steps").

The following slides highlight the six main goals, with respondents' "Current Actions" and "Next Steps" listed. Participants of this workshop included students, volunteers, and representatives from non-profit organizations, state and local government departments, universities, and businesses/consulting firms.

Advance Mobility Systems

Current Actions

- Taking campus and city bus
- Driving electric vehicles
- Biking to work
- LinkUs
- Enhance public transit and transit access
- Bike share program

Next Steps

- Carpooling
- Passenger rail
- Tax credits/financial incentives
- Research clean fuel
- Expand trail system
- More bus routes and safer routes

Use Clean Energy in Buildings

Current Actions

- LED lights
- Weatherization
- Turn off AC
- Solar
- Goal setting for buildings
- Education
- Upgrading appliances

Next Steps

- Create roadmaps/standards for homeowners and building owners
- Broad implementation of energy efficiency/weatherization
- Focus on distributed energy
- State and federal residential solar tax incentives

Strengthen Water and Waste Systems

Current Actions

- Lo-flow sinks/toilets/shower
- Rain barrel
- Full dishwasher/laundry
- Composting
- Green infrastructure
- Avoiding wasteful water use
- Reducing use of plastic
- Reducing clothing waste

Next Steps

- Curbside composting
- Composting and use of compost
- Improve infrastructure to handle increased precipitation
- Rain barrels and rain gardens
- Expanding community composting including to businesses

Protect Natural Resources and Land

Current Actions

- Protect trees
- Avoid using pesticides
- Plant native plants
- Engage with FLOW and SWAG
- Picking up litter in parks
- Community gardens
- Building vernal pools
- Shopping local

Next Steps

- Conservation/preservation zones
- Increase wetland area
- Expand tree distribution network
- Plant raingardens
- Protest unsustainable data centers
- Improve transportation infrastructure
- Utilize native plants
- Food co-ops

Advance Industrial Systems

Current Actions

- Climate commitments
- Accountability for meeting standards
- Capture emissions at source
- Green purchasing
- Avoid AI use
- Repurposing industrial equipment
- Collaborate with industry

Next Steps

- Carbon credits
- Efficiency and performance standards
- Improve emissions standards/policy
- Incentive industry to use clean energy
- Rooftop solar
- Limit water usage for data centers
- Local control over development

Innovation and Education

Current Actions

- Outreach
- 4-H/FFA/Scouts
- Nature day camps
- School gardens
- Workforce training
- Build community gardens
- EPN
- Spreading awareness

Next Steps

- Standard environmental curriculum
- Expand school gardens
- Embed outreach and education with all efforts and provide funding
- Embed sustainability into operations
- Participate in local outreach opportunities
- Incentives for businesses