

EcoSikh Grid and Pledge¹

EcoSikh is a celebration. Our connection to the environment is an integral part of our identity as Sikhs. Thus, EcoSikh is not the project of any one individual, organization, or community, it is something that always has and will always belong to us all. EcoSikh is a way of life and a way of relating to the world upon which we depend. Our unique history exemplifies the ways in which humanity ought best to act in communion with our natural world and it is up to us to once again bring our environmental traditions to life. As Sikhs we are called to defend the weak and to uphold justice for all beings. EcoSikh recognizes that our natural world is facing new and grave challenges as its resources deplete at unsustainable rates. Our plan will help meet today's environmental challenges, to answer our call to protect our natural ecology, and to celebrate and prosper as Sikhs through our efforts.

The success of EcoSikh depends on the participation of each of us and your participation will enable our plan to grow in new and dynamic ways. We commit to the following goals and processes and invite you, by signing and supporting this document, to join us:

- a. By the end of Basant in 2015, the fifth anniversary of EcoSikh holidays, we will have developed the collaborations and infrastructure needed to enable both the diaspora Sikh communities and those in South Asia to operate with environmentally sustainable practices and to serve as models for other communities around the world.
- b. We invite every gurdwara to create an Environmental Council. Its first task will be to craft a customized EcoSikh Plan and to establish a firm timeline to meet with the goals of the plan. We encourage the Environmental Council to use the EcoSikh Seed Plan in conjunction with the EcoSikh Plans for Generational Change Guidebook to guide the customization of their own EcoSikh Plan. The Council may post their customized plan on the EcoSikh website and serve as a liaison between the EcoSikh Steering Committee and the larger community.
- c. The EcoSikh Plan is both ambitious and challenging. In order to break the task down into manageable work, we invite individuals and institutions to begin by utilizing this 3x3 grid:

	Assets	Education	Celebration
Individual / family			
Gurdwara / organization			
Wider community			

¹ The US Jewish environmental organisation, 'Hazon', who has drawn up a 7 year plan of environmental action for the Jewish community worldwide, has shared with us its vision of a 3x3 grid and pledge, which allows people to translate a large vision into small practical steps. Their vision has been a great inspiration for the creation of the EcoSikh Grid and Pledge.

The grid focuses on three of the five key areas described in the Seed Plan. These areas are designed to guide all of us – from individual to wider community – to take concrete steps toward the betterment of our ecological practices. Our other two key areas – media/advocacy and eco-twinning – enable us to create partnerships and connections that will help to take these steps together, in solidarity as Sikhs.

Because EcoSikh is a celebration, we believe that it is important to take time working through each of these 9 boxes, to reflect on our efforts, and to discover the joy that comes from working not only for the good of the planet but as an expression of who we are as Sikhs. We invite individuals and communities to take upon themselves a 5-year commitment to work in all 9 boxes – and to start with one or two:

	Assets	Education	Celebration
Individual / family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in local recycling programs Participate in local co-op gardening programs Buy locally grown and organic foods Plant herb gardens for home cooking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about food choices and their impact in the world Learn about the impact of transportation choices Learn about the energy efficiency of our homes and how we can save energy Learn how to reduce energy consumption by 10% each year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant an ecoSikh garden or tree Visit your local parks monthly as time for spiritual reflection and renewal
Gurdwara / organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in solar panels for gurdwaras Start rainwater harvesting programs Invest in copper storage pots to sterilize water Consult green architects to improve eco-friendliness of gurdwaras Purchase reusable plates and cups or materials made out of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold seminars on home composting, gardening, and energy efficiency Create a space to post weekly ecotips at the gurdwara Learn about and support eco-initiatives at other gurdwaras through eco-twinning programs Incorporate classes that celebrate Sikh eco-theology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the ragis sing more shabads with environmental themes Distribute tree saplings Participate in EcoSikh holidays

	<p>recycled and compostable material for langar</p> <p>Print all materials on recycled paper</p>	<p>Host “open gurdwaras” (like open houses) where you invite people from around the community to see how they can use your greening practices as a model</p>	
Wider community	<p>Support food sustainability initiatives</p> <p>Help community advocate for local green transportation, bike lanes, etc.</p> <p>Support seed banks and biodiversity initiatives</p>	<p>Join interfaith environmental advocacy groups</p> <p>Invite elected officials and other advocacy groups to speak at the gurdwara about environmental issues</p>	<p>Become an active part of Earth Day celebrations</p> <p>Join interfaith environmental celebrations</p>

The above examples are recommendations that can help us get started. Undoubtedly, our communities already have other ideas in place and may come up with new recommendations as we move forward. We invite everyone to share their best practices and recommendations on the EcoSikh website (<http://ecosikh.org>). We may find that certain ideas work better or are more appropriate for certain communities, while other ideas resonate deeply with other parts of our communities. We hope that we may collect and share all of these ideas so that they may inspire us to move forward together. In doing so we celebrate not only our efforts, but also our communities from which we are born.

Summary / key resolutions:

YES: I believe that by the end of Basant in 2015, Sikhs and gurdwaras across the globe will be able to operate with environmentally sustainable practices and to serve as models for other communities around the world;

YES: I call on all Sikh communities, small and large, to create an Environmental Council that will craft a customized EcoSikh Plan, no matter how small, and will begin in the next year;

YES: I believe that healthy environmental practices are an integral part to who I am as a Sikh. I commit in the next *month* to learn more about my actions, to change at least one of my behaviors for good, and to share my practices with at least five friends, family members or colleagues.

Sign:

Date: