



Yasodhara Ashram
YOGA RETREAT & STUDY CENTRE

News Release

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**Leading by Example:
Yasodhara Ashram Lightens its Ecological Footprint**

Kootenay Bay, BC - Yasodhara Ashram is now officially Carbon Neutral —the successful culmination of their 5-year program to address the global warming crisis.

The Ashram has demonstrated that reducing green house gas emissions is possible in a small BC community and it can be done in a way that has inspiring economic *and* quality of life benefits.

Dr. William Rees, professor emeritus of the University of British Columbia, an internationally acclaimed ecological economist and winner of a 2012 Blue Planet Prize, said of the Ashram achievement, “By striving for carbon neutrality, Yasodhara Ashram shows that communities can take significant steps to address global warming that are neither arduous nor a threat to their economies and lifestyles. Other communities should follow this example as if their lives depended on it – because ultimately they do!”

Starting in 2007, the Ashram began to develop a strategy to be carbon neutral by 2013, their 50th anniversary.

The Ashram’s Carbon Neutral program – which included a shift in local food sourcing and menu planning, converting to an integrated geothermal/solar heating and domestic hot water system and shifting to more fuel-efficient vehicles – has led to an 83% reduction in direct emissions. The outstanding emissions are being handled through the purchase of carbon offsets from Pacific Carbon Trust’s portfolio of BC-based greenhouse gas reduction projects.

“The Ashram’s achievement of carbon neutrality sets a great example of how steady commitment to a comprehensive plan can significantly reduce our impact on the environment,” says Pacific Carbon Trust CEO Scott MacDonald. “By purchasing BC-based offsets from Pacific Carbon Trust, the Ashram is helping support the low-carbon economy – proving that environmental progress and a strong economy can go hand-in-hand.”

At each stage of the program it became apparent that financial benefits were emerging. Arlene Trustham, a volunteer who led the final phases of the program, cited an example, saying “Refocusing the menus to local and seasonal items not only decreased costs, it also better



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focused the use of the Ashram's garden and began to support a complimentary network of local farmers.”

Paris Marshall Smith, a Director of Ashram Society says, “We embrace the ‘learn by doing’ and ‘lead by example’ concepts.” Both, she added, have personal as well as institutional application. “It is also a practice of *satya*, which means living truthfully, in ourselves, in our community and on this planet. We simply must lighten our environmental footprint. What we are doing together here at the Ashram is one way that works.”

Michelle Mungall, MLA Nelson-Creston agrees. "The work Yasodhara Ashram has done to become carbon neutral is commendable, and goes to show that these positive steps are possible in rural areas of BC."

Yasodhara Ashram has also been recognized by FortisBC's 2008 PowerSense Conservation Award, and by Tourism British Columbia with its prestigious Environmentally Responsible Tourism Award in 2009. Reader's Digest named the Ashram as Canada's best yoga retreat.

About Yasodhara Ashram

Yasodhara Ashram (www.yasodhara.org) is a Yoga Retreat and Study Centre founded in 1963 by Swami Sivananda Radha. Today, 50 years after it began, the Ashram remains a vibrant community welcoming people of all ages and backgrounds to discover the transformative power of yoga.

The Ashram is like a small village with 115 acres on the east-shore of Kootenay Lake in the mountains of southeastern BC. The year-round population averages 50 to 55 people, with seasonal peaks of 100 to 110.

Yasodhara Ashram is a Canadian charity and a registered educational institution. It is operated by volunteers in the tradition of charity and service embodied in its constitution.

About Pacific Carbon Trust

Pacific Carbon Trust (www.pacificcarbontrust.com) is a Crown corporation established in 2008 to deliver BC-based greenhouse gas offsets, to help clients meet their carbon reduction goals and to support the growth of BC's low-carbon economy.

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