

Information to Participants Selected to Compete in Taming Bigfoot

This is an important message that describes the schedule, procedures, responsibilities and expectations of the 2016 Taming Bigfoot carbon-footprint reduction competition. Please read the entire message.

We are exceedingly glad you have chosen to participate. There are 17 (yes, 17!) teams in the competition. Their names and contact persons will be posted on the web site soon. With so many teams in the running, it is all the more important that everyone follow the rules and adhere to the process we have established to ensure a smooth-running and enjoyable experience for everyone.

Schedule

There will be four all-team meetings:

January 11, 2016 (Monday)

February 17, 2016 (Wednesday)

March 14, 2016 (Monday)

All from 7-9 pm @ Cotton Building, 607 Water Street, Port Townsend

April 22 (Friday, Earth Day)

6:30-8:30 pm @ Quimper Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2333 San Juan Ave,
Port Townsend

The January meeting is the Kick-Off event where teams will be able to introduce themselves, meet each other, hear the process of data collecting and reporting described again and receive answers to any questions they might have. It also marks the beginning of the baseline period (January 12 - February 10) where all participants are asked to conduct their lives in as usual and normal a fashion as possible. The data collected during this period will serve as the reference against which reductions in the competition period (February 11 – April 14) will be compared.

The February 17th meeting will be held a week after the baseline period ends. A lot has to happen during these 7 days: every participant must send their completed Data Reporting Sheet to their team recorder; the recorder must enter data for all 7 team members into the provided carbon calculator spreadsheet and send the spreadsheet to the organizers; and the organizers must collate all team results and prepare a summary to present at the February 17 all-team meeting. Everyone must act expeditiously for this tight schedule to work. The primary objective of the February meeting is to examine, compare and discuss the teams' baseline footprints. Team results (total footprint and by sector, e.g., home energy, transportation, food, etc.) will be posted on the Taming Bigfoot web site.

When the baseline period ends on February 10, the competition period of acting to reduce carbon footprints begins the next day (i.e., February 11—before the February meeting). The competition period is divided into two halves with the first half ending on March 7. This is one week before the next all-team meeting and, as before, that week is spent by participants sending their summary data to their team recorder, the recorder entering team data and forwarding the spreadsheet to the organizers who will collate it again and prepare it for display and discussion at the all-team meeting. The March meeting will be the first opportunity for teams to see how they are performing relative to other teams in reducing their overall and sector carbon footprints. These interim results will be posted on the website along with the baseline results and calculations of the reductions achieved.

The competition's second half will commence on March 8 and continue to the end of the competition on April 14, when the same process of data summary, entry into the spreadsheet and forwarding to the organizers occurs for the third and final time. As before, the organizers will need all participants to act quickly to allow time for the results to be compiled and the awards determined before the final meeting on April 22, Earth Day. This Earth Day event is the celebratory conclusion to the competition when the winners will be announced and prize packages distributed!

What Participants Do

The calculated carbon footprints can only be as accurate as the data collected, so accuracy is paramount. To assist participants in this task, the organizers have created a Tally Sheet for each of the three periods (Jan.12-Feb 10 baseline; Feb 11-Mar 7 first half of the competition; Mar 8-Apr 14 second half of the competition) and a Data Reporting Sheet to be filled out at the conclusion of each period and sent to the team recorder.

The Tally Sheets are designed to remind the participant what needs to be monitored and include a calendar format to simplify the recording. A Guide to the Tally Sheet has also been written that describes the various data categories in more detail along with some suggestions on how to simplify the monitoring task. Making notes of the monitored activities every day on the Tally Sheet will not only make the summary at the end of the period effortless, but it also will help remind the participant when it is time to summarize the period's data on the Data Reporting Sheet. The first Tally Sheet and Data Reporting Sheet are being provided to all the teams. These sheets and Tally Sheets for the subsequent periods will be available on the Taming Bigfoot website <http://www.L2020.org/climate-action/bigfoot>

It is important to note that the data to be entered are for the individual participant and should represent only their share of any multiple-use items. Examples are home energy in a multiple-person household and fuel for a vehicle that transports more than the participant. The collected data for these items will need to be divided among the people sharing that item so that only the participant's share is reported.

It also is important to emphasize that participants must be prompt in submitting their data to the team recorder. Delays will interfere with the organizers' ability to compile data from all the teams and prepare informative updates for the all-team meetings. Serious delays may lead to disqualification of a team.

What Team Recorders Do

The team recorder serves two critical functions. First, they are the single point of contact between the organizers and the team members. This simplifies the communication network which is very important given the large number of teams and participants. Questions from a team member should be passed through the team recorder to the organizing committee and the organizers will direct information intended for all participants through the recorders who are then responsible for distributing it to their team members.

The second function of the team recorder is to receive the Data Reporting Sheets from each team member immediately at the end of each period, enter those data in the Taming Bigfoot Carbon Footprint Calculator, and, once complete with data from all 7 team members, forward the completed spreadsheet to the organizers. This critical task has been designed to be extremely simple and straightforward and should be accomplished no later than 2 days after the end of the period. Again, serious delays that interfere with the organizers' ability to prepare informative all-team meetings may lead to team disqualification.

The custom-designed Taming Bigfoot Carbon Footprint Calculator is in the form of an Excel spreadsheet and will be provided to each team recorder prior to the start of the competition. It will be accompanied by instructions on how to enter team member data and to whom the completed file is to be sent. The recorder is free to share the calculator with their team members and the team may wish to examine the actual conversion factors used in the calculator, all of which are visible, in contemplating their team's carbon-reduction strategy. As data are entered, the carbon footprints (in lbs. of CO₂e) can be viewed, along with accumulated footprints in different sectors for both individual team members and for the team as a whole. Thus, the calculator is a valuable and flexible tool teams can use to explore the carbon-footprint impact of various lifestyle choices. Every conversion factor is documented in a report that will be sent along with the calculator, as well as posted on the Taming Bigfoot website.

What the Organizing Group Does

The Local 20/20 Climate Action Outreach Group is responsible for all organizational aspects of the competition. Extensive effort has been put into planning the competition in such a way that participants feel it is a fair and enjoyable experience. The Tally and Data Recording Sheets were designed to simplify and standardize the participant's monitoring role, and the transparent nature of the carbon footprint calculator was designed to help the teams understand the greenhouse gas impact of various lifestyle choices.

The organizers are responsible for running effective all-team meetings that allow participants to have their questions answered, to see how their team is doing in relation to other teams, and to offer some analysis of team performance in both numeric and graphical form. Team results at the end of each period (baseline and each half of the competition period) will be posted on the Taming Bigfoot website. Once the competition is over, the winners will be announced at the final Earth Day meeting, prizes awarded, and results posted for the entire world to see!

Prizes

Local sponsoring businesses have been extremely supportive and generous in donating a variety of prizes (visit the website to see a current list). Prizes are currently being grouped into "prize packages" so when a team wins an award, each member of that team receives a prize. The organizers are establishing many award categories so that prizes can be distributed among a large number of participants. To ensure that participants' efforts are broadly recognized and that no single team dominates the awards, no one team will be awarded more than one prize package.

Many of the more valuable prizes will be bundled together and awarded to the team that achieves the greatest reduction in carbon footprint. "Greatest reduction" will be measured both as greatest reduction in lbs. CO₂e from their baseline period as well as the largest fractional reduction from their baseline period. Having this second category avoids penalizing a team with a low baseline carbon footprint. In addition to these two overall categories, awards for other achievements are being discussed. The preliminary list includes team awards for the greatest reduction (both absolute and fractional) in the combined home energy, water & garbage sector, in the transportation sector and in the combined food & shopping sector.

A suite of individual awards is also being considered, given to each type of team member (e.g., PT resident, green lifestyle, prominent citizen, etc.) that achieves the greatest overall carbon footprint reductions (both absolute and fractional) from their respective baselines. And if that

isn't already enough, awards are being considered to those team recorders who respond most promptly with their completed spreadsheets.

The final list of award categories and the actual prizes to be won will be announced at the Kick-Off meeting on January 11th.