

**A Sustainable Environmental and Economic Development Park
A SEED Park for the San Luis Valley**

by
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A SEED Park is an agricultural- or natural resource-based park developed to produce products and create jobs through Sustainable environmental and Economic Development. It co-locates agricultural- and natural resource-based businesses and integrates waste streams (residues, heat, liquid effluents, and gaseous emissions) so that the discharge of one business becomes the raw input of the next downstream business.

For example, local resources might include land, water, and nutrients, finances and people in an area where there is a nearby market for dairy products. An example of processes might involve a dairy and a dairy processing plant. The dairy produces a stream of residues commonly considered waste products – actually resources for recycling – such as water containing nutrients and manure. Every greenhouse needs water, nutrients and energy – byproducts available from a dairy. Methane gas derived from manure could be used as a source of heat for a greenhouse and nutrient-rich water could be applied as a liquid fertilizer to plants.

A second example might be a forestry-based industry with its primary products being lumber and construction timbers. A secondary business could be production of fuel-pellets for pellet-burning stoves or incorporation of sawdust into compost. Municipal solid waste might also be combined with wastewater treatment plant sludge and sawdust to produce compost. Compost piles generate heat and have been used to heat greenhouses in ski-resort communities.

The first step in building a SEED Park is to hold a stakeholders' conference. The community meets in a stakeholders' conference to brainstorm development of a list of resources, products, and processes. The inventory of local resources reflects the strength of the community and products imported reflects the potential markets within the community. Examples of resources, processes and products are as follows:

Resources	Processes	Products
Businesses	Biorefinery	Cattle
Community	Dairy	Cheese, Milk
Financial	Facultative Ponds	Ethanol
Land	Gasification	Fish
People	Greenhouse	Flowers
Schools	Raceway	Tourists
Water	Restaurants	Vegetables

The list of local resources, processes and products is much longer than our brief example and is developed in concert with the local community.

Once the community-based list is developed, the conference attendees define the pros and cons for establishing each of these in a local SEED Park. The attendees will rank the list of potential integrated businesses and business plans will be prepared for the top-rated items as the initial focus for the SEED Park. For this concept to be successful, it's vital to have widespread community involvement. A SEED Park allows a community to take control of its future, to create jobs, expand the tax base and see local benefits stay within the community. Most importantly, it will focus the community on sustainability while emphasizing the intrinsic and economic value of natural resources.

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