

The Town's Abuzz: Collaborative Opportunities for Environmental Professionals in the Slow City Movement

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The global Slow Movement, a response to negative effects of speed on everyday life, seeks to reconnect people and their social and ecological environments. Slow Food and Cittaslow (Slow Cities) are allied Slow Movement networks operating in over 150 countries, including the United States (US). These two networks involve the interrelationship of numerous place-based factors important to social-ecological resilience: local and regional food markets, recovery and protection of biodiversity and local ecologies, support for cultural traditions, agricultural policy reform, climate adaptation planning, economic development, social inclusion, quality of life in the built environment, and the politics of land development. This article presents the philosophical underpinnings of Slow Food and the associated membership requirements of Cittaslow by using the example of Sonoma Valley, California, the first certified Cittaslow in the US (2009). The article then describes Sonoma Valley's Cittaslow Pollinator Stewardship Collaborative to show how the nascent organization has begun its work by facilitating the participation of environmental professionals in community life. In its first year, Cittaslow Sonoma Valley has used a combination of pleasure and responsibility to increase both the visibility of environmental concerns and the opportunities for diverse residents to act locally and globally on issues integrating environmental and economic support. Because it offers a different approach to environmental responsibility, the Slow Movement may be of particular interest to environmental professionals who are concerned about so-

cial response to the complexity and uncertainty of global environmental change.

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This article is concerned with two allied international networks of the Slow Movement: Slow Food and Cittaslow (Slow Cities), both intent on transforming the “fast” conditions of everyday life. The philosophy and activities of Slow Food and Cittaslow networks offer an uncommon response to social-ecological problems—an intriguing combination of pleasure and responsibility—and pragmatic insight into effective social change. We start with a review of the principles and structure of the Slow Movement and then take a look at a program to support pollinators that is the first initiative of the first certified Cittaslow town in the United States (US)—Sonoma Valley, California (begun 2009, <http://www.CittaSlowsonomavalley.org>). Cittaslow Sonoma Valley's Pollinator Stewardship Collaborative provides insight into ways in which the Slow Movement may provide new opportunities for environmental professionals to gain public and political participation and support. Specifically, the collaborative, also known as Pollinator Pals, and its various activities exemplify a civic approach to environmental problems that is motivated by the shared desire for better quality of community life.

Sonoma Valley's Cittaslow Pollinator Stewards Collaborative is an example of community-based partnerships in which a range of environmental professionals involve themselves in everyday activities in order to build ecological literacy and secure the support of local politicians and government officials, community leaders, and media. But it is also an example of action based on “slow knowledge” (Orr, 2002) and thus in some ways presents a challenge to professional expertise. Science does not stand apart from everyday community life but instead is offered as, one might say, part of a package deal: some fun, some ice

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cream, some social interaction, some learning, some beauty, some recognition of loss, some hope for restoration.

In this first initiative, Cittaslow Sonoma Valley has successfully encouraged and fostered local and international connections among many environmental and other programs, projects, and both business and educational initiatives. Cittaslow embodies an *asset-based* approach to social-ecological transformation, using the human and natural assets present in the area to address both social and ecological problems that manifest locally, as distinguished from a problem-driven strategy that seeks outside the area for resources and expertise to “fix” its deficits (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993). According to former Mayor Steve Barbose (2010), Cittaslow “helps remind us of what is special about what we are doing so we keep doing it. . . . We’re living in an era where people need to think about taking care of each other at the fundamental local level. Cittaslow helps keep this in front of people.” From a Slow Movement perspective, environmental professionals are known and valued according to their expertise but also are concerned residents, active stakeholders, and often parents who work in collaboration with diverse others to imagine creative initiative, learn from spirited conversations, uphold scientific rigor, exchange resources, seek practical compromise, expand their personal and professional networks, and enjoy themselves in the process.

A Note on Method

At the time of this writing, all academic publications in English on Cittaslow involve European towns (e.g., Andrews, 2008; Knox and Mayer, 2009; Mayer and Knox, 2010; Miele, 2008; Pink, 2008; Radstrom, 2011), yet two additional Cittaslow towns in the US have been designated since Sonoma Valley. This article reports on field and other research conducted within the first two years of Cittaslow’s arrival in the US in 2009. It is more descriptive than analytical. The evidence on Cittaslow Sonoma Valley comes from the author’s primary research: interviews with Cittaslow proponents, public and elected officials, local business owners and program partners; site visits; attendance at city council meetings; analysis of e-mail correspondence and application documents; tracking website development and information; and participation in discussions with Cittaslow Sonoma Valley board members on organizational development. In time, evidence may enable us to compare Cittaslow towns in the US, to analyze differences between US Cittaslow towns and those in other nations, and to assess the accomplishments of Cittaslow in relation to its goals.

Slow Food and Slow Cities: Guiding Philosophies and Organizations

Fast vs. Slow

The Slow Movement consists largely of what its proponents see as transformative responses to what they perceive to be the negative effects of speed on everyday life. In its broadest configuration, the Slow Movement includes, for example, Slow Libraries, Slow Medicine, Slow Schools, Slow Parenting, Slow Reading, Slow Housing, Slow Coffee, Create the Good Life, the World Institute of Slowness, the Sloth Club (<http://www.sloth.gr.jp/E-index.htm>), and Japan’s Slow Life public sector initiative (Honoré, 2004; Japan for Sustainability, 2003, 2009; Miedema, 2009).¹ Slow Food, the largest formal institution of the Slow Movement, was catalyzed in Italy in defense of small, community-based restaurants serving traditional local foods at a time when the transnational fast-food industry was gaining a foothold there. Slow Food promotes ecological and humanistic alternatives to food commodification, such as leisurely meals of locally produced and prepared foods, acquainting consumers and producers, encouraging biodiversity, and practicing agroecology. Carl Honoré (2004) identifies several aspects of “a cult of speed” such as overwork, abuse of stimulants, lack of sleep, neglected family life, the necessity for instant gratification, and road rage. He takes the reader on a tour of many initiatives of the Slow Movement, involving food, urban design for walkability, unhurried medical practices, shorter workdays, relaxed and “unplugged” family life, and schooling that follows a child’s natural pace. Additional critiques of *fast life* and documentation of the Slow Movement are included in cultural studies (Andrews, 2008; Parkins and Craig, 2006) and in the many publications by Carlo Petrini (e.g., 2003, 2007, 2009), co-founder and leader of Slow Food.

There is also academic research on speed that systematically assesses the relationship between acceleration, technology, and social practice. The interdisciplinarity of this literature indicates the extent to which the pace of human activity is integrated within our social-ecological systems. Speed is recognized as having significant social value—emergency services, convenient and efficient modes of travel, and the development of knowledge in response to crises—as well as being an enjoyable experience of risk, thrill, and control (Duffy, 2009; Kane, 2000). Furthermore, the combination of technology and speed holds significant political and economic advantage for both systems and individuals (Agger, 2004; Alakeson et al., 2003;

Hassan and Purser, 2007; Jennings and Haughton, 2000; Lovink, 2007). But much of the valuation of speed and acceleration does not consider its secondary effects, many of which are negative (Gleick, 1999; Kane, 2000; Orr, 2002; Rifkin, 1987). Comprehension, retention, and judgment are negatively affected by the speed and quantity of information delivered by current technologies for which increased speed and ubiquity are distinct design objectives (Carr, 2010; Eppler and Mengis, 2004; Eriksen, 2001; Schwartz, 2004; see also Himma, 2007; Jones, Ravid, and Rafaeli, 2004; Todd and Benbasat, 1992). As information and technological innovation grow exponentially, their velocity may make us less able to address complex problems effectively (Brand, 1999; Carp, 2012; Carr, 2010; Eriksen, 2001).

At the same time, the sense that we are running out of time to study, negotiate, plan, and implement effective action characterizes the current environmental policy debate and fuels the search for innovation. Environmental deterioration, habitat and species loss, and general reduction in systems resiliency continues at a rapid pace, matched by increasing urgency for effective responses at a time of scarce financial and human resources (Alig, 2010; Dailey et al., 1997; Foley et al., 2005; Walker and Salt, 2006). This situation calls for immediate decisive steps by the range of environmental experts working in any capacity. But synchronicity between human activity and natural systems is complex. Action to stave off imminent threats must be developed amid conflicting priorities where “socio-economic, scientific, and political development is towards ever faster change and ‘short-termism,’ [while] actions required by environmental change need ever-longer time-spans of reference and consideration” (Adam, 1995, p. 136). Environmental professionals, among many others, must negotiate these contradictory demands to act fast . . . but slow down.

Donnella Meadows (1996), biophysicist and systems analyst, describes multiple dimensions of slowing down and the benefits for both societies and ecologies:

Slowing down could be the single most effective solution to the particular save-the-world struggle I immerse myself in—the struggle for sustainability, for living harmoniously and well within the limits and laws of the Earth. Suppose we weren’t in such a hurry. We could take time to walk instead of drive, to sail instead of fly. To clean up our messes. . . . We could listen more and hurt each other less. Maybe we could even take time to reason through our favorite solutions, test them, and learn what their actual effects are. (paras. 7, 13)

Meadows ends her piece on slowing down by writing “Good advice. Too bad I don’t have time to take it. I have to go save the world” (para. 20).

Meadows’ sense that acceleration is the necessary response to the “save-the-world struggle” is offset by what might be called a *participatory turn* in environmental decision making. Collaboration and participatory processes are time-consuming, but an expert panel of the National Research Council (2008) finds that public participation in environmental assessment and decision making can improve fact-finding, enhance agency legitimacy, and build the understanding and trust among stakeholders that undergird the efficiency of future participatory decision processes (see also Carp, 2012). However, it is often difficult to recruit and adequately inform stakeholders for the effective, sustained participation required to negotiate (National Research Council, 2008). This may be because people tend to respond to crises only when they are immediately affected (Adam, 1995; Macnaghten, 2003). How, then, are environmental professionals to improve decision making by engaging in collaborative processes when the sense of urgency is great but it is hard to get and sustain people’s attention?

Furthermore, the resilience of complex, adaptive social-ecological systems likely depends on more than discrete groups of informed stakeholders and scientists; resilience needs the wider society’s capacity to take ecological impacts into account in everyday decision making.² Scientist Brian Walker (Walker and Salt, 2006) identifies society’s ignorance as a primary driver of unsustainability and offers “resilience thinking” as a corrective. David Orr (2002) also discusses the social epistemological basis of unsustainability, but in terms of speed. He sees the environmental impacts of conventional urban development as “design failures” signaled by, for example, the secondary effects of ubiquitous storm-water culverts: increased flooding, aquifer drawdown, and erosion. The underlying problem is the *fast knowledge* that rationalizes such development. It emphasizes technological innovations and global economy while disregarding the complex interrelationships of social-ecological systems (Orr, 2002) (Table 1). Orr turns to *slow knowledge* as a better basis for human action. “Shaped and calibrated to fit a particular ecological and cultural context,” slow knowledge is a moral and technical practice that harmonizes human intention and ecological results (p. 39). It takes into account the limitations of human capacity and the incremental pace of societal learning (p. 42). Environmental action stemming from slow knowledge would then value the time spent in collabora-

Table 1. Fast knowledge vs. slow knowledge

Fast knowledge

Only that which can be measured is true.
The more knowledge, the better.
Knowledge that lends itself to use is superior to that which is merely contemplative.
The scale of effects of applied knowledge is unimportant.
There are no significant distinctions between information and knowledge.
Whatever mistakes occur along the way can be rectified by yet more knowledge.
The level of human ingenuity will remain high.
The generation of knowledge can be separated from its application.
The acquisition of knowledge carries with it no obligation to see that it is responsibly used.
All knowledge is general in nature, not specific to or limited by particular places, times, and circumstances.

Slow knowledge

Wisdom is the proper aim of all true learning.
The velocity of knowledge can be inversely related to the acquisition of wisdom.
The careless application of knowledge can destroy the conditions that permit knowledge of any kind to flourish (a nuclear war, for example, made possible by the study of physics, would be detrimental to the further study of physics).
What ails us has less to do with the lack of knowledge but with too much irrelevant knowledge and the difficulty of assimilation, retrieval, and application as well as the lack of compassion and good judgment.
The rising volume of knowledge cannot compensate for a rising volume of errors caused by malfeasance and stupidity generated in large part by inappropriate knowledge.
The good character of knowledge creators is not irrelevant to the truth they intend to advance and its wider effects.
Human ignorance is not an entirely solvable problem; it is, rather, an inescapable part of the human condition.

From Orr, 2002, pp. 36–40.

rative decision making and would thus integrate responsibility for ecological health more fully into the everyday life of a community.

Slow Food and Cittaslow are growing international networks that promote a social transformation akin to that described as slow knowledge. They are largely made up of community-based collaborations of experts and nonexperts whose activities, in principle, promote ecological health and environmental action. But the Slow Movement adds a twist to similar grassroots sustainability movements: rather than emphasizing the necessity of limits on human activities, they assert greater significance in the experience of

pleasure. This leads to the question of how Slow Movement principles are operationalized and what creative initiatives they engender, described in the next section.

Slow Food and Cittaslow: International Networks for Pleasure and Responsibility

Now encompassing wide cultural diversity because of its global reach, Slow Food continues to support locally produced, handcrafted, and traditional foods enjoyed convivially at a leisurely pace. Slow Food has 100,000 members in 1,300 local chapters (or *convivia*) in 153 countries (Slow Food International, n.d., b). Within the US, over 200 Slow Food chapters are distributed through all 50 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico (Slow Food USA, n.d.).

It all started as a demonstration in 1986 at the planned site of a McDonald's chain restaurant in Rome. Afterward, a group of Italian political and cultural activists developed the *Slow Food Manifesto* that inspired Slow Food's establishment as an international movement within three years (Andrews, 2008). The international headquarters are located in Bra, Italy, where Slow Food also founded a University of Gastronomic Sciences in 2004. The Slow Food headquarters sponsors annual international events such as *Slow Fish*, *Cheese*, and the *Salone del Gusto* (Halls of Taste), which have spun off a number of smaller versions in other nations. A popular Slow Food program is the Ark of Taste, an international catalog of over 600 "heritage foods" at risk of extinction (Mayer and Knox, 2010; Pollan, 2003). An International Congress is held every seven years, where Slow Food leadership may introduce new initiatives to delegates of national networks and guests.³ With these activities and the establishment of the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity in 2003, Slow Food is developing what Andrews (2008) calls a "virtuous globalization" through "identifying the diversity of taste and flavours and then seeking to protect endangered foods and the communities which produced them" (p. 154). Despite the diversity of cultures, languages, and access to resources and technologies, Slow Food members sign on to support common principles: to integrate the experience of pleasure with local knowledge regarding biodiversity and ecological health, local economies, and the science and politics of food production (Latouche, 2007; Slow Food International, n.d., a) (Figure 1).

The *right to pleasure* has been a central tenet in the Slow Food/Cittaslow philosophy from its beginning. Focusing on pleasure in the context of food, as an example, demonstrates the connection of pleasure with many other as-

Our Philosophy

Slow Food stands at the crossroads of ecology and gastronomy, ethics, and pleasure. It opposes the standardization of taste and culture, and the unrestrained power of the food industry multinationals and industrial agriculture. *We believe that everyone has a fundamental right to the pleasure of good food and consequently the responsibility to protect the heritage of food, tradition, and culture that make this pleasure possible.* Our association believes in the concept of *neogastronomy*—recognition of the strong connections between plate, planet, people, and culture. [The language of Slow Food is constantly evolving; note the use of *neogastronomy* on the website (May 2011) although *ecogastronomy* is the term appearing previously and in publications.]

Our Vision

We envision a world in which all people can access and enjoy food that is good for them, good for those who grow it, and good for the planet.

Our Mission

Slow Food is an international grassroots membership organization promoting good, clean, and fair food for all.

Figure 1. Slow Food International (n.d., a).

pects of social-ecological relationship in everyday life. The pleasure of eating is layered with meaning: pleasure comes from the good taste of the food; pleasure comes from one's knowledge that the food is produced and prepared in an ecologically healthy manner by people who are making a fair living; pleasure comes from one's appreciation of the local cultural tradition and biodiversity that brings the food to the table; and pleasure comes from sharing the experience with others during the meal. All of this takes time and attention to the human scale of everyday life; in Slow Food philosophy, it also implies personal and societal responsibility. People who are locally involved in the aforementioned activities are considered interrelated within a *food community*; this includes environmental professionals such as ecologists, entomologists, hydrologists, planners, soil engineers, and educators. (At the same time, environmental professionals are considered in more fully human ways, as well: eaters, patrons, residents, and participants in cultural traditions.)

Cittaslow, inspired by Slow Food philosophy, has also grown quickly since it was established in 1999 as a partnership by the mayors of four Italian towns (Andrews, 2008; Knox and Mayer, 2009). It has expanded into a global network, or *association*, of about 135 certified communities in 24 coun-

tries, clustered primarily in Europe but also including South Africa, South Korea, Australia, and Canada (Cittaslow Map, <http://www.CittaSlow.net/map.php?lng=2>). Slow Food and Cittaslow are similarly organized: clusters of local chapters form regional networks under a national umbrella organization. As in Slow Food, the national organizations within Cittaslow are also supported by an international headquarters in Italy, though it is much smaller. Also like Slow Food, the viability and accomplishments of Cittaslow towns depend on the creative initiative of local membership to mobilize local assets in support of shared principles.

Committed to apply Slow Food values to the complexities of urban life in small towns, Cittaslow addresses the design, development, and use of the built environment, as well as the politics of land development and public administration. As evident in the poor but charming English translation of the original Cittaslow Manifesto (*Cittaslow News*, 2008), Cittaslow International shares the spirit of Slow Food but is still developing its international public face (Figure 2). Cittaslow also lacks the central institutions and resources—such as a university or a foundation—that characterize Slow Food. Members of Cittaslow's governing bodies serve on a voluntary basis. At the same time, Cittaslow is an ambitious organization. The Cittaslow Charter (Cittaslow International, 2009) sets forth the association's structure, membership requirements, guidelines for Supporters and Friends (such as higher levels of government and professional organizations), and administrative procedures.⁴ Only towns of no more than 50,000 in population can qualify for membership, which is based on evidence of their performance in seven categories of analysis (see Table 3) and are periodically reviewed for their progress in these

The main goal of CittàSlow was and still is today, to enlarge the philosophy of Slow Food to local communities and to government of towns, applying the concepts of ecogastronomy at practice of everyday life.

Municipalities which join the association are motivated by curious people of a recovered time, where man is still protagonist of the slow and healthy succession of seasons, respectful of citizens' health, the authenticity of products and good food, rich of fascinating craft traditions of valuable works of art, squares, theaters, shops, cafés, restaurants, places of the spirit and unspoiled landscapes, characterized by spontaneity of religious rites, respect of traditions through the joy of a slow and quiet living.

Figure 2. About the Cittaslow Organization (*Cittaslow News*, 2008).

categories. Membership requirements are revised in consultation with an International Scientific Committee of academics and urban development professionals (Cittaslow International, 2009). Membership requires the commitment and involvement of the local government in international Cittaslow initiatives, and annual dues must be paid to the international headquarters (per its charter). Cittaslow towns are also required to use the Cittaslow logo (a snail) on their official letterhead. Delegates of each Cittaslow town are expected to participate in a triannual Cittaslow Congress (or Cittaslow Assembly) where they discuss and vote on policy.⁵ For example, the Sokndal Agreement was established at the First International Congress of Cittaslow in Sokndal, Norway, in June 2005. The participating delegates agreed to develop, support, and implement projects to promote sustainable energy production (Cittaslow UK, n.d.). This objective was then integrated into the membership requirements in the charter. The wording of the new policy illustrates the limited scope of Cittaslow's power: pledging support, encouragement, and influence rather than guaranteeing physical implementation.

Cittaslow towns are expected to find locally appropriate ways to meet membership requirements rather than to pursue standardization. The Cittaslow Manifesto extols the ability of a local community "to recognize and share its uniqueness and to discover its own identity, which is visible externally but is lived internally" (Cittaslow International, 2009). This becomes evident when navigating the Cittaslow International website or Googling "cittaslow." Either provides hundreds of links to Cittaslow websites showing common characteristics that link responsibility and pleasure: convivial events, collaborative projects, ecological literacy, pronounced aesthetic and cultural appreciation, regard for health and the body, concern to improve the quality of lived experience for residents and visitors, attempted social inclusion, support for ecological integrity based on sense of place, and promotion of local businesses. Many of these purposes are also generally equated with the sustainability movement, giving rise to a few studies showing that some European Cittaslow towns are moving incrementally toward sustainability in their urban development plans and projects (Knox and Mayer, 2009, 2010; Mayer and Knox, 2006; Pink, 2008). At some point, there will be a systematic study in English of why towns choose to become members and the extent to which their Cittaslow activities have made a significant difference in their development. Now, Cittaslow can be best understood as a grassroots movement of likeminded small towns that are committed to common principles (Table 2).

Table 2. The Cittaslow Manifesto (excerpted from the Cittaslow Charter)

The Cittaslow are those that
Enact environmental policy that maintains and further develops the characteristics of the local area and urban environment, valuing techniques of recovery and reuse.
Create infrastructure policies that functionally value the local environment and do not take it over.
Promote the use of technology to better the quality of the environment and the landscape of the city.
Encourage the production and use of food products obtained by natural methods or techniques that are compatible with the environment, to exclude genetically modified foods, and when necessary to institute measures to protect and develop local products in difficulty.
Protect native products that have roots in the culture and traditions and that contribute to the uniqueness of the area, safeguarding the locations and methods of production, promoting events and places for the direct contact between consumers and quality producers.
Promote the quality of hospitality as a moment of true connection between the community and its uniqueness by removing physical and cultural barriers that can hinder the full utilization and diffusion of the city's resources.
Promote the awareness of living in a Cittaslow not only among those who work with Slow Food initiatives but among all residents, paying particular attention to youth and schools through the systematic introduction of good taste education.

From Cittaslow International, n.d., b.

As Sarah Pink (2007) notes, it is difficult to measure the intersubjective nature of *quality of life*, a common term used throughout the scholarly literature on Cittaslow to identify its overall direction (e.g., Andrews, 2008; Knox, 2005; Parkins and Craig, 2006). However, the certification process assesses each Cittaslow applicant according to 52 criteria as a way to evaluate its "slow life" character and to track the development of Cittaslow principles in member towns.

Becoming Cittaslow: Requirements for Certification

As previously stated, Cittaslow membership is open only to towns or municipal governance units that are relatively small in population (under 50,000). Interested residents obtain a spreadsheet of membership requirements from the closest operating Cittaslow network—national or international—and embark on a self-assessment. (The same seven categories and 52 criteria are appended to the Cittaslow Charter; see also Miele, 2008; Radstrom, 2011.) Citizens and/or officials address each requirement, providing

narrative evidence of the extent to which the town fulfills each goal.⁶ The completed spreadsheet is scored by Cittaslow leadership, and a total average (weighted) score is determined. The minimum score for certification is 60% of 128 possible points (according to Sonoma Valley's score sheet) (Table 3).

The qualitative, performance-based assessment provides a means to identify how the general goals of the Cittaslow program take particular form in a unique location, including both place-based assets and stakeholders. Setting the minimum score as the sum of all categories (weighted for relative value) allows for considerable variation in the pattern of those assets for each certified Cittaslow town. This kind of assessment also expands the opportunity for a town's particular Slow assets to be publicly recognized as such, and thus lending them additional civic value in a networked, multiscalar context connecting local and global. The assessment is also a planning tool. While the initial

assessment is based on activities and characteristics present throughout the municipality, after a Cittaslow is approved and certified, it must initiate Cittaslow programs that contribute to the area's Slow assets and is subject to reassessment every five years (Cittaslow International, 2009).

Following the self-assessment, a Cittaslow network staff member visits the town to verify that it has attained the requirements as claimed and is prepared to add Cittaslow responsibilities to its municipal organization. After verification and payment of dues [e.g., 600 € (about \$800)], the Cittaslow International governing body reviews the application and confirms membership in the Cittaslow Association (Cittaslow International, 2009). Pier Giorgio Oliveti, director of Cittaslow International, visited Sonoma Valley for several days of tours, meals provided by Slow Food Sonoma Valley, and meetings with city officials, educators, local business owners, and community members. Cittaslow Sonoma Valley was certified a few weeks later.

Table 3. Cittaslow certification: Requirements for excellence

Categories	Number of requirements	Examples of requirements (abbreviated from the original)	Weight of score
Environmental policies	11	Verification of air, water, and soil quality within legal parameters Ban on the use of GMOs Municipal wastewater treatment Municipal energy saving plan	28
Infrastructure policies	13	Improvement and reclamation plans for historic and cultural assets Mobility and traffic plans Bicycle paths between schools and public buildings	32
Technologies and facilities for urban quality	9	Planning and promotion (including personnel training) of bioarchitecture Citywide fiber-optic and wireless systems Monitoring system for electromagnetic fields	21
Safeguarding autochthonous production	11	Plans for developing organic farming Quality certification of local artisan products Programs to protect local artisan and/or craft products in danger of extinction	27
Hospitality	5	Training courses for tourist information and quality hospitality Using international symbols in the tourist signs of the historical centers with guided tourist itineraries Reception policies and plans to facilitate the approach of the visitors to the city and access to information and services	12
Awareness	3	Campaign to inform citizens about the aims and procedures of a Slow City, preceded by publicizing the intentions of the municipal government to become a Slow City	8

GMOs, genetically modified organisms.

From Cittaslow Sonoma Valley self-assessment spreadsheet, September 11, 2009.

Virginia Hubbell, a Sonoma resident, introduced Cittaslow to Sonoma Valley after approximately four years of research into sustainability programs applicable to small towns. In August 2009, she activated an organizing committee whose success was marked by the Sonoma City Council's unanimous vote to pursue Cittaslow certification. In November 2009, Sonoma Valley received its official Cittaslow designation (<http://www.cittaslowsonomavalley.org>).⁷

Sonoma Valley's self-assessment includes a combination of public and private activities and plans at several scales. For example, under "Environmental policies," the evidence offered includes Bay Area Air Quality Management District, a local commission's work on assessing the impact of leaf-blowers, brownfield decontamination, storm-water drains marked with "Flows to Bay" signs, public bike paths with areas designated "No pesticides," public-private recycling programs and household toxics disposal events, a public wastewater treatment plant powered by a solar array, way-finding signage for visitors, an Architectural/Design Review Commission, a locally based engineering firm consulting regionally on electromagnetic safety standards, a noise ordinance, an art and ecology center's campaign against genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and so forth. This is an example of how Cittaslow identifies a desirable pattern of diverse assets that is unique to a location but also cumulative through its multiscalar network. The diversity of activities and organizations considered to be environmental assets in the self-assessment also indicates the range of environmental professionals who are potential stakeholders in Cittaslow initiatives and programs.

For Cittaslows elsewhere in the world, Cittaslow activities are usually located in the mayor's office as an official responsibility of the municipal government (Hubbell, 2010). In Sonoma Valley, however, the program took shape along the lines of a public-private partnership when Cittaslow Sonoma Valley was established as a US Internal Revenue Code 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The relation of Cittaslow Sonoma Valley to the City of Sonoma is not yet firm. The US is a new and demanding political context for Cittaslow international leadership, and the City of Sonoma is uncertain about assuming responsibility to meet guidelines set by an international association. Board members, elected representatives, and city staff are working through this uncertainty and discussing alternatives.

Despite irresolution in its organizational development, Cittaslow Sonoma Valley has actively contributed to programs and partnerships consistent with its guiding philosophy.

The first-year experience of Cittaslow Sonoma Valley indicates how it implements Slow principles by working to connect people with one another and associates social and ecological well-being with the right to pleasure in the quality of community life. Because Cittaslow requirements fundamentally integrate environmental concerns, the initial activities of Cittaslow Sonoma Valley also indicate some collaborative opportunities for environmental professionals to gain public support and to contribute to public education and citizen action.

Cittaslow Sonoma Valley: Cittaslow Pollinator Stewards Collaborative

The Cittaslow Pollinator Stewards Collaborative (CPSC), informally named Pollinator Pals, is Cittaslow Sonoma Valley's signature initiative in its first year. Launched as a partnership among several organizations already active in pollinator conservation and education and also including several new partners, CPSC increases the coordination and visibility of their individual efforts. In addition to their formal members, CPSC draws on a diversity of professional experts and community entities to create synergy among their environmental, economic, public health, and educational concerns (e.g., the local Slow Food chapter, area beekeepers, farmers, vintners, business owners, and community service and cultural organizations). Cittaslow Sonoma Valley facilitates rather than leads the collaborative, which is cochaired by the Sonoma Ecology Center's education manager and a local beekeeper who crafts bee-related products. The collaborative also includes representatives of the City of Sonoma, regional government, local schools, the Boy Scouts, a youth philanthropy program, and research scientists from University of California-Davis and University of California-Berkeley. Its achievements are accomplished with existing resources.

There are three goals pursued simultaneously that also overlap in planning and in result: to reestablish bee colonies locally; to provide public education about the importance of pollinators for local food production; and to understand and plan for climate-change adaptation at the local level. The CPSC has achieved a measure of success in less than a year.

Goal 1: Reestablish Bee Colonies Locally

While several people and organizations had been already working within their own purviews to support pollinators, such as gardening to support insect biodiversity, collabora-

ration among them spurred public progress. In June 2010, several CPSC members, including the director of Cittaslow Sonoma Valley, attended a City of Sonoma public meeting to request that the government overturn its policy and allow hives within city limits. Their well-orchestrated presentation included both expert testimony by apiarists and backyard beekeepers, as well as nonexpert statements of support. Subsequently, the city planner conducted research into model ordinances, and the city council voted to allow residents to keep bees. Separately, members of the collaborative are providing technical expertise for a local Boy Scout's Eagle Scout Badge project, which involves supervising other scouts' construction of 40 habitats for three bee species. In an allied effort, a local group of youth philanthropists (the Connecting Project) was inspired by the collaborative to choose planting pollinator trees as an extracurricular project and sought their technical assistance.

Goal 2: Provide Public Education about Pollinators' Importance for Local Food Production

The collaborative's achievements toward this goal have both local and international dimensions in keeping with Cittaslow's character. In the spring of 2010, students at Sonoma Charter School raised money for a Slow Food/Terra Madre project in Ethiopia, contributing financial support to a sustainable honey-production effort in the impoverished Wukro area (Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity, n.d.). That fall, Cittaslow Sonoma Valley arranged the participation of El Verano School students in the Vintage Festival. This annual Sonoma event coincided with Cittaslow Sunday, a day designated by Cittaslow International for all Cittaslows around the world to contribute projects and programs for Mother Earth (Terra Madre, <http://www.terramadre.info/pagine/welcome.lasso?n=en>). El Verano School, kindergarten through grade 5, is approximately 50% Hispanic/Latino, and about half of the students are economically disadvantaged (El Verano School, <http://elveranoschool.org>). They rarely represent the public face of Sonoma, which is known as a prime tourism destination in the California wine country. However, during the festival, El Verano School students dressed in yellow and black, and some in bee costumes joined city council members to carry "Bee a Pollinator Pal" and other "Bee" themed signs in the citywide parade. At the following month's international Terra Madre assembly in Italy, the director of Cittaslow Sonoma Valley met personally with representatives of the Ethiopian Wukro White Honey Project and established a global education "school twinning" partnership between the El Verano School and the Wukro school to facilitate common interests in youth and education, pollinators and biodiversity, local food, and job creation. En-

vironmental educators, parents, social service agencies, and bee experts are working together and with the students in this extended program.

CPSC members contributed to a variety of celebratory and pleasurable activities at the Vintage Festival, all of which connected pollinators, local food, and public education. They organized a Pollinator Pals booth offering organic ice cream made with local honey, with funds going to the collaborative. The booth included a display of native flowering plants beneficial for local pollinators, provided by Sonoma Ecology Center's Community Garden and local nurseries, and a bee observation box. The display was staffed by local environmental experts wearing "Bee Professor" name tags, and informational brochures were designed, printed, and distributed by the Sonoma Ecology Center.

Other activities of the CPSC connect food, pollinators, and education for local residents. The Sonoma Valley School Garden Project includes pollinator stewardship in its technical and curricular support for school garden programs, fostering of connections between local produce growers and restaurants, and involvement in a culinary/agriculture/viticulture program at Sonoma Valley High School. The Garden Project involves master gardeners, organic farmers, restaurant owners, and the Sonoma Valley Education Foundation, as well as relying on the professional resources of the Sonoma Ecology Center. The youth philanthropists of the Connecting Project, previously mentioned for their work in planting pollinator trees, also chose to raise funds for the same Wukro White Honey Project in Ethiopia with which students and educators of the low-income El Verano School are partnering.

Goal 3: Understand and Plan for Climate-Change Adaptation at the Local Level

The CPSC's efforts toward this goal are led primarily by the Sonoma Ecology Center, whose executive director has been involved regionally in climate-change issues for several years. The Sonoma Ecology Center contributed a watershed restoration/climate action booth at a regional festival where the Watershed Coordinator and CPSC members also solicited Pollinator Pledges from fair attendees as part of the Ecology Center's participation in the 350.org International Day of Climate Action. A total of 61 people took the pledge, taking home a variety of native flowering-plant seeds and promising to plant them the following spring. In another project, in response to the apparent effects of climate change on groundwater, the youth philanthropists

who are planting pollinator trees are using the Groasis Waterboxx water-conservation technology project supplied by the Sonoma Ecology Center and promoted by Cittaslow Sonoma Valley. A growing number of vintners are trying out the technology, as well, some of whom also provide workshops on dry farming that are listed on the Cittaslow website. Further strengthening these local connections between ecological health and human adaptation to climate change, several students are working with the Sonoma Ecology Center to restore a creek on their school grounds.

Throughout these varied, small-scale, community-oriented activities, the common focus on pollinators brings Cittaslow Sonoma Valley into mutually supportive relationship with several other initiatives in the area. In addition to its facilitative role, Cittaslow also makes particular contributions to the collaborative's activities: its international connections, cultural diversity, and social inclusion. This characteristic "widening of the circle" extends to the range of environmental professionals who found opportunities to contribute their expertise, such as horticulturalists and urban foresters, apiarists, entomologists and other research scientists, watershed specialists, environmental educators, stream engineers, and urban planners. They are local assets whose expertise is mobilized on behalf of activities meant to transform Sonoma Valley into a more ecologically healthy, more inclusive, more capable, more pleasurable, more resilient, and "slower" place for its residents and visitors.

Implications of the Slow Movement for Environmental Professionals

Environmental professionals who wish to work collaboratively are very likely to be welcomed into Cittaslow initiatives because these professionals bring ideas, professional expertise, and network contacts. In this way, they can participate in the convergence of economic, ecological, and social benefits as evidenced, in small scale, by the Cittaslow Pollinator Stewards Collaborative. Such outcomes work to mitigate the assumption that ecological and economic interests are always, inherently, in conflict.

None of this is easy, of course. Certainly, by drawing attention to the shared meaning in the contributions made by various Sonoma Valley residents, Cittaslow Sonoma Valley created feel-good links between diverse people and their common good. At the same time, local politics, turf battles between organizations, competition for funding, volunteer burnout, miscommunication, personal ambition, incommensurate expectations, and other societal factors shape the

context in which Cittaslow Sonoma Valley operates. This is nothing new to environmental professionals, like Richard Dale, executive director of the Sonoma Ecology Center, who can be not only accustomed to, but adept at, functioning effectively within these kinds of situations.

Dale (2010) points to direct benefits from his collaboration with Cittaslow Sonoma Valley. He finds that the pool of potential board members and other supporters is widening as people become concerned about the local ecology through their interest in Cittaslow. He describes this as a broader opportunity to engage in education toward changing unsustainable behaviors, and he is seeing some individuals take their first actions to reduce the size of their ecological footprint. Through their interest in Cittaslow, local residents become more aware of environmental issues and look to the Sonoma Ecology Center (and others) for scientific knowledge and insight into what the area's most pressing environmental issues are. This also helps build public will to support Dale's current policy development work on regional climate adaptation initiatives, conservation of land and ecosystem services, and groundwater management. At the same time, engagement of elected officials in environmental planning has amplified since the establishment of Cittaslow Sonoma Valley. Dale (2010) says, "The council is abuzz because Cittaslow goals fit what they're working on." Not only do Cittaslow goals "converge" with the goals of Sonoma Ecology Center, but Cittaslow has "worked as a lever" to get the city council more involved with the Ecology Center.

Environmental Professionals Finding Pleasure in Community Transformation?

The Slow movement's focus on the pleasures of lived experience in a community provides some new opportunities to environmental professionals. Everyday life is the setting for social change that is expected to improve quality of life and ecological resilience, simultaneously, in a unique and valued place. The actions of all those involved in the activities of the Cittaslow Pollinator Stewards Collaborative demonstrate their commitment to be "implicated participants" in their social-ecological location rather than disconnected, apathetic, or cynical observers (Adam, 1995, p. 127). While it requires taking part in slow processes of collaboration and participatory decision making, it is not so much a chore as a radical commitment to enjoy greater quality of life and to extend it to others. Such a standpoint addresses the *value/action gap*—the widely observed disjuncture between public awareness of environmental degradation and individual action in response. As Macnaghten (2003) observes, public

support for environmental protection is more likely when it relates to people's personal, everyday experience: "The environment becomes meaningful when it engages with social life, inhibiting or facilitating the development of ongoing human relationships, whether in the context of the family, friends or communities of interest" (p. 80). In the Slow Movement, the experience of meaning in everyday life becomes the basis for action in everyday life; the commitment to pleasure—and the responsibility for ensuring that it is shared—leads to, encourages, and rewards a manner of everyday life that is good.

Thus, instead of relying on experts to control sources of environmental and social problems, Cittaslow highlights place-based opportunities for members of a community to respond constructively to the inevitable uncertainty, inconsistencies, and injustice of civic life. Such public agency calls for what Robert Chambers (1998) identifies as "a new paradigm for professionals": working with people rather than things as the means to address the challenges of sustainability because "good change" is based on *learning how to change* so as to achieve well-being for all (pp. 128, 123; see also Fazey et al., 2007). By engaging in a socially and ecologically transformative process, taking both responsibility and pleasure seriously, Slow Movement proponents—professionals and others—act as implicated participants in the resilience of their social-ecological location. This also makes them informed stakeholders who may better understand the value of new participatory approaches to natural resource management and planning, and thus devote the time they require. According to Virginia Hubbell (2010), "There are towns lined up wanting to be Cittaslow right now" on both coasts. This national interest may well translate into new collaborative opportunities for the environmental professionals who are drawn toward slowing down and engaging in community life in order to enhance our social-ecological resilience.

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Notes

1. These Slow Movement initiatives are best accessed by keyword search on the Internet.

2. To a great extent, government regulation is effective in ecosystem protection, but insufficient. In some cases, as revealed by the 2009 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, "the pace of technology has definitely outrun the regulations" (Urbina, 2010).
3. Slow Food's newest major initiative is Terra Madre. It is a network of "food communities" that attempts to strengthen the precarious livelihoods of small-scale food producers, particularly in developing countries, through facilitating supportive, place-based exchanges among the food producers and nearby professional cooks and academics, including students and scientists (Terra Madre, <http://www.terramadre.info/page/welcome.lasso?n=en>; see also Andrews 2008; Petrini 2009).
4. Currently, the primary documents of the Cittaslow organization are in Italian, and English translations can vary widely. Thus, to supplement the limited available literature, the author secured a unique translation of the "Statuto CittàSlow Internazionale," or Cittaslow Charter, that sets forth the operation of the organization and membership requirements (Cittaslow International, n.d., b, p. 30).
5. English terminology is quite variable in Cittaslow documentation, and it is accordingly quite difficult to determine whether a particular term (e.g., "Congress" or "Assembly") connotes a different meaning.
6. Miele (2008) appends parts of the revised self-assessment document for San Vincenzo's (Italy) membership in Cittaslow (translated into English). Scores are not included. The self-assessment for Sonoma Valley's membership is held in confidence by Cittaslow Sonoma Valley. Sebastopol's self-assessment document is available at http://ci.sebastopol.ca.us/sites/default/files/griffinj/sebastopol_CittaSlow_application.pdf.
7. In 2010, neighboring towns Fairfax and Sebastopol were certified by Cittaslow International, creating the minimum requirements for a regional network in Northern California. This precipitated the formation of Cittaslow USA in June 2010, a national network now in the initial phase of organizational development. The author serves on the advisory board of Cittaslow USA.

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