



What are we going to do as the oil runs out? The solution is in the community.

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The First U.S. Conference on Peak Oil and Community Solutions

More than two hundred people from around the U.S. and Canada attended The First Conference on Peak Oil and Community Solutions, held in Yellow Springs. It began Friday night, November 12, with an opening talk by Richard Heinberg, author of *The Party's Over* and *PowerDown*, who spoke at Kelly Hall Auditorium, to attendees and 150 additional people from around the area.

Saturday sessions began with a talk by Pat Murphy, Executive Director of Community Service, entitled "The Geopolitical Implications of Peak Oil." He began by summarizing the colonial history of European powers in the 20th century, and the implications of WWI and WWII on the Middle East. He went on to describe the changing policies in Russia and China, noting the real danger of nuclear war in the Middle East. He ended by describing various scenarios, from war to drastically cutting back our energy use while working together as part of the world community. He was followed by David Blume, who discussed the use of alcohol as an alternative fuel for automobiles and other machinery. Although David sees alcohol as a viable fuel, he stated several times that its use would need to be coupled with a reduction in consumption.

In the afternoon, Richard Register of EcoCity Builders, San Francisco, presented a series of slides from around the world which he had taken on his trips to investigate the ecology of cities. He described how many older cities could be very energy efficient. He was followed by Dr. Charles Stevens, a Miami University professor. He explained the history and importance of the Agrarian movement in dealing with upcoming energy shortages, citing Wendell Berry and other noted agrarians. The day ended with a lively panel discussion.

Sunday began with a talk on permaculture by Patricia Allison from Earthaven Eco-Village in North Carolina. She explained how permaculture is more than growing plants –/ that it is a whole system of sustainable living. Next, Harvey Baker of Dunmire Hollow Tennessee and the Fellowship for Intentional Communities, described the interpersonal problems and opportunities of these small highly integrated groups. The audience was very interested in these individuals who are already living a post peak oil lifestyle.

In the afternoon Julian Darley, author of *High Noon for Natural Gas* and founder of Global Public Media, spoke on Global Relocalization. Next, Stephanie Mills, author of *Turning Away from Technology* described the dangers of living in an increasing high tech world. Pat Murphy spoke again, describing Cuba's experience in 1990, when it suffered an unexpected Peak Oil with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The

Conference Presentations

- > Richard Heinberg's Presentation: [Powerdown](#)
- > Pat Murphy's Presentation: [The Geopolitical Implications of Peak Oil](#)
- David Blume's Presentation: [Alternative Fuels – Promise and Perils](#)
- [Richard Register's Presentation: Ecocities: Building Cities in Balance with Nature](#)
- > [Panel Discussion](#)
- > Charles Stevens' Ppresentation: [Agrarian Solutions to Peak Oil](#)
- > Patricia Allison's Presentation: [Permaculture: A Philosophy of Sustainability](#)
- > Harvey Baker's Presentation: [Lessons from Intentional Communities](#)
- > Julian Darley's Presentation: [Global Relocalization](#)
- Stephanie Mills Presentation: [Turning Away from Technology](#)
- > Pat Murphy's Presentation: [Low-Energy Lifestyle: Lessons from Cuba](#)
- > [Richard Heinberg's Closing Talk](#)

conference was closed by a final talk by Richard Heinberg.

Interest in the conference was far greater than the organizers had expected, showing that people see both the magnitude of the coming change and the realization that it is unwise to rely on high tech solutions. Participants were delighted with the presentations and the many solution-focused breakout sessions. Through The Community Solution program, Community Service, Inc. intends to form a network of conference participants and others to accelerate the development of community-based solutions. If you would like to be included in this network, send us your email in the Join box to the left.

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