

## Preface

We began this project thinking that we would dig up lots of numbers about our university's pollution and energy-consumption sources. Next, we thought we would examine those numbers to find specific problems with clear-cut answers ("X is a big generator of the Y waste stream, so here's what X should do"). Our specific analyses and solutions would be pragmatically summed up in an official-looking document.

As with most big ideas, things did not turn out exactly as planned.

We thought we would come in as pollution prevention experts executing "the right" intervention; instead, we acted as consultants and facilitators who worked *with* members of the university community. We spent less time analyzing and more time communicating. Our goals became quite process-oriented. And the document following this preface has much more text than numbers.

Our university is a unique place. We realized that data on its consumption and pollution would not be very useful for students on other campuses—there are too many variables in size, location, and activities to make accurate comparisons. While we gathered *data* in the hopes that it would be useful for future pollution prevention at U-M, we believe it is our *stories* that will help people perform similar work at other institutions.

This approach—using narrative text—may be unfamiliar to academicians who only see "truth" in numbers. However, we believe that stories are inherently fascinating and can be as useful to the general population as tables or quantitative analyses. Therefore, we use chronologies and anecdotes to explain how we did things, how long they took, and what sorts of barriers and enablers we encountered.

We wrote this document for other students who share our dream of making their campuses more environmentally responsible. We hope that all of them—whether Ph.D. students or freshpersons, biologists or musicians, at campuses large or small—can gain vicarious experience from our stories and use our work as a model.

Here at the University of Michigan, we have studied action research, community participation, and environmental psychology along with environmental policy and the natural sciences. As we begin careers in these exciting fields, we are proud to have used their theoretical frameworks in a "real life" situation on our own campus. May you find our work useful, inspirational, and, above all, readable.

Sincerely,

The Members of the 1992-93 U-M Pollution Prevention Master's Project