



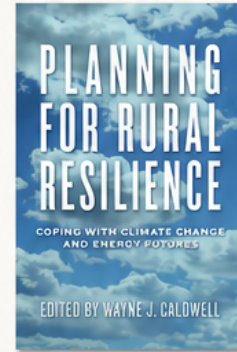
Peak Oil and Climate Change

A Rural Community Guide

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Completed in 2013 by Wayne Caldwell at the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph, this research project explored the combined challenges of peak oil and climate change and their implications for rural Ontario municipalities.

Funded by the **Partnership between the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the University of Guelph**, the project produced the *Peak Oil and Climate Change: A Rural Community Guide* — a practical manual to help municipalities build resilience and prepare for an uncertain energy and climate future.



Connected Book
Planning for Rural Resilience: Coping with Climate Change and Energy Futures

This companion book (University of Manitoba Press, 2015) provides the research foundation, case studies, and strategies that inform the Community Guide.

Further Information



The full report is available at <https://www.waynecaldwell.ca/projects/regional-development/>



The companion book is available through the University of Manitoba Press at www.umanitobapress.ca.

WHY IT MATTERS

Rising oil prices and climate change were—and remain—transformational forces for rural communities. These challenges threaten local economies, infrastructure, food systems, and natural resources. Municipal leadership, collaboration, and proactive planning are essential to strengthen community resilience and seize opportunities for a more sustainable future.

KEY THEMES



Climate Change Adaptation

Prepare for changing weather, extreme events, and environmental shifts.



Peak Oil and Energy Futures

Anticipate energy constraints and build local energy security.



Local Food and Agriculture

Strengthen food systems, farmland viability, and rural livelihoods.



Community Resilience

Build social capital, partnerships, and capacity to respond to change.



Municipal Leadership

Use policy, planning, and service delivery to enable positive change.

WHAT WE LEARNED

- ✓ **The future is uncertain.** Exact impacts of climate change and peak oil are unpredictable, yet communities must plan realistically.
- ✓ **Municipalities can create the foundation for action.** By balancing concerns for the future with a positive vision, municipalities can inspire and inform community response.
- ✓ **“Win-win” or no-regrets actions are powerful.** Many decisions benefit communities in the short term while building resilience for the future—low risk with high potential for positive outcomes.
- ✓ **Collaboration multiplies impact.** Partnerships across sectors and jurisdictions are essential to address complex, interconnected challenges.

COMMUNITY ACTIONS: AREAS OF FOCUS



Service Delivery

Provide efficient, resilient services and plan for infrastructure adaptation.



Population and Employment

Support local jobs, entrepreneurship, and community vitality.



Livelihoods and Lifestyle

Enhance quality of life and retain local talent.



Agriculture and Food

Protect farmland, support local food systems, and build food security.



Ecology and Water

Protect ecosystems, watersheds, and natural infrastructure.



Transportation

Promote low-carbon, accessible, and connected mobility.



LASTING LEGACY

The Guide and companion book remain valuable resources for municipalities, planners, and community leaders. They anticipated many issues that are even more urgent today—climate adaptation, energy vulnerability, food security, and resilient local economies.



Communities and municipalities have options and opportunities to make informed and constructive decisions in the face of uncertainty; many of these decisions are “win-win” in the sense that they benefit the community in the short term, while also building resilience for the future.

— PEAK OIL AND CLIMATE CHANGE: A RURAL COMMUNITY GUIDE

