

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the purpose of the Taming Bigfoot Seattle competition?

The purpose is to

- raise awareness among Seattleites of their carbon footprints, what contributes to carbon footprints, and alternatives for reducing them;
- provide a way for people to take action to reduce their footprints;
- raise understanding of the climate crisis and options for responding to it;
- to develop a program that can be a prototype for other cities and other states;
- all while having some fun and getting to know other people interested in learning about carbon footprints.

Who is eligible to compete in Taming Bigfoot Seattle?

Any resident of the City of Seattle or neighborhoods outside city limits that are served by the same utilities—Seattle City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, and Puget Sound Energy for natural gas service.

How do I get on a team?

Visit the tamingbigfootseattle.org Web site. Sign up online [here](#) or submit a paper signup sheet available [here](#). You may form your own team or sign up and be placed on a team that is looking for another member. Indicate that you want to be added to an existing team on your application and the coordinators will find a team for you.

Can I form my own team with just my own friends?

Sure. Note, however, that each team will consist of seven members with at least one member in these categories:

1. Under 21 years of age
2. Age 21 to 35
3. Over 35 years of age, but not retired
4. Retired
5. Living a green lifestyle
6. Aspiring to a green lifestyle
7. A community leader

A team member may fit in more than one of these categories, but each team member should be identified as the member who fits one of these categories.

This requirement is intended to encourage involvement by team members from different generations with diverse experiences.

What if we cannot find someone living a green lifestyle to join our team?

No one lives a perfectly green lifestyle. Select someone who has a relatively green lifestyle. If you like, coordinators will identify someone in that category to join your team.

What is a “community leader?”

A community leader is any person of influence, such as a teacher, coach, a team leader, activist, supervisor, business owner, pastor, anyone in an elected office (including student class officer), or anyone taking initiative to help raise other’s awareness of carbon footprints. (You needn’t be a well-known member of the community.)

How will I compute my carbon footprint?

You will keep track of various activities, including miles flown, gallons of gas purchased, kilowatt hours used, cost of clothing, etc. The [Taming Bigfoot Calculator](#) (available via a computer or smart phone) will use these data to estimate the pounds of greenhouse gas (GHG) associated with each of these (including carbon dioxide and other gases). The calculator will provide monthly summaries and allow you to edit your data entries. For guidance on inputting these data go [here](#).

What if I don’t have access to a computer or a smart phone?

We will provide you with paper forms to use record your usage. Each team will select a Taming Bigfoot coordinator who will assist you and get help from the Taming Bigfoot project team to resolve any issues that arise.

How much time will I need to spend on this project?

- The 2-hour January 21 meeting will help you learn what you will need to know to record your usage.
- About 30 minutes each week to record usage. The competition will analyze GHG emissions for each calendar month—February 2018, the baseline month, March, and April as you explore ways to reduce your emissions.

- About 1 hour in March and April to consult with your team to discuss options for reducing emissions and facilitate recording of usage.
- About 2 hours to celebrate the results and collect your prizes at a celebration in May.

What is the purpose of the January 21 “Kick-off” event?

We will gather all the teams together and learn how to measure our individual Carbon Footprints. Speakers will explain how to use the [Taming Bigfoot Calculator](#) and how the program estimates GHG emissions. At the meeting we will review the [Guide to Using the Application and Reporting Accurate Data](#) which gives in-depth information about how to collect and submit the data.

What if I live in an apartment or condo and do not have a separate gas or water bill?

To estimate your usage, you will need to contact the property manager to learn where the building’s meters are. Monitor the building’s usage during the month. Determine the number of units covered by the meter and divide the building usage by the number of units for an estimate of your household usage.

What if other people in my household are not on my team?

Monitor utility usage for the household. The [Taming Bigfoot Calculator](#) asks how many people live in your household and divides the household usage by the number of people for an estimate of your usage. When possible keep track of your individual gasoline purchases, shopping, and eating.

What if three team members live with me?

Each contestant should enter their usage on the [Taming Bigfoot Calculator](#). The calculator asks how many people live in your household and divides the household usage by the number of people for an estimate of your usage.

When do I start changing what I do?

During February you simply record your consumption without changing your behavior.

In March and April you should try to reduce your GHG emissions. With baseline data from February you and your team members can meet to talk about options for reducing emissions.

What if I can't figure out how to report data required by the Bigfoot Calculator?

Check the [Guide to Using the Application and Reporting Accurate Data](#) again and consult with your Taming Bigfoot coordinator. If you still need assistance, contact the project coordinators by email at tamingbigfootseattle@gmail.com.

How do I read my gas meter?

See [How to Read your Gas Meter](#).

How do I read my water meter?

See [How to Read your Water Meter](#).

How do I read my electric meter?

See [How to Read your Electric Meter](#).

Can I volunteer to help the bigfoot competition?

The Taming Bigfoot project team needs assistance. You can volunteer by responding to the Web page's [volunteer signup form](#) or email the team at tamingbigfootseattle@gmail.com.

Can I donate to the project?

Yes. Contributions to the project are tax deductible. Anyone or any group that donates \$200 in cash or in-kind may be recognized as a Taming Bigfoot sponsor. Make your check payable to 1 Sustainable Planet (a 503(c)(3) organization) with "Taming Bigfoot" on the memo line. Mail contributions to

1 Sustainable Planet
c/o Ron Sherman-Peterson
10818 27th Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98125

I can't read my water meter. It's buried or impossible to read. How can I calculate my water usage?

Call the Seattle Public Utilities shop at 206-386-1800 and explain why you can't read your meter. They will come out and fix the problem. Meanwhile, you can estimate your usage by looking at your last water bill. Look for "Avg consumption/day" and multiply that number by the number of days in the month, or the number of days that you were not able to read the meter. If you receive another bill that covered the February, March, or April period you can update those numbers by editing your entries on the taming-bigfoot.org site. Note however, if the Seattle Public Utility meter readers have been unable to read your meter, your bills will be based on estimates of your water usage. When you get access to your meter, you may find that the estimates were too low, or too high. You may owe more than you have been billed, or be due a credit from the utility.

I can't read my natural gas meter, because there is so much condensation behind the glass. How can I calculate my gas usage?

You can get the meter reading by calling Puget Sound Energy at 888-225-5773. Select the option for other billing questions. When you reach a representative, ask them to look up your meter reading. They read meters remotely at the end of each day. Ask for the reading on January 31st. Tell them why you can't read your meter and they should come out and check your meter for trouble.

What do I use as a baseline for gasoline consumption for my vehicle? How do I measure usage, exactly?

Fill your tank on Feb. 1st. Don't report how many gallons you purchased on February 1st. You consumed those gallons in January before the competition started. It's important that you have a full tank at the beginning of the competition. Record the number of gallons for every subsequent purchase of gasoline in February. Fill up your tank on the morning of March 1st (or the night before). The total of your gasoline purchases from Feb. 2nd through your fill up on the morning of March 1st is your baseline for the competition. Use the same procedure for March and April, and we can compare these with the February baseline month. During the February baseline, just drive as you normally do. Work on reductions in March and April.

What if I didn't fill my vehicle fuel tank on February 1st?

Estimate how many miles you drove before filling it up. Divide the miles driven by the miles per gallon (mpg) average for your vehicle. The dividend is the estimated number of gallons you used from February 1st to the day you filled up the tank. Post that amount in taming-bigfoot.org.

Seattle City Light replaced my old electric meter with a new meter. How can I calculate my usage for the month?

Call Seattle City Light at 206-684-3000 and ask them for the final reading on the old meter. Subtract your reading at the beginning of the month from the final reading on the old meter. Enter the difference in taming-bigfoot.org with the date City Light installed your new meter. At the end of the month record the usage on the new meter. The calculator will add up the entries for the month.