

Dr. Margaret S. Austin

Sustainability and Environmental Studies House

The SENS House promotes sustainable living and works to engage all members of the College community in the creation of a sustainable campus. We do this by providing a demonstration for the campus and the rest of the world of how ecological design, simple living, and community can intersect to provide a high quality of life without degrading the environment. We showcase technologies that contribute to a sustainable society, operate a resource library, organize campus- and community-based programs and workshops, and promote campaigns to move Berea College toward sustainability. As a member of the Berea College Ecovillage, the SENS House works with the other residents to achieve the Ecovillage's goals of community, sustainability, and learning.

The house:

Is the residence of four student SENS House Directors
Produces as much electricity as it uses.

Is connected to the grid through net metering.

Captures rainwater for all its water use

Has a composting toilet and a low flush toilet.

The house incorporates:

Passive solar design
Greywater treatment system
Low-flow water fixtures

Solar hot water with in-line on-demand gas heater
No central heating or cooling

Roof of structurally-insulated panels (SIPs)



A SunEarth Imperial Flat Plate Collector uses sunlight to heat water for the house.

The greywater treatment system cleans water from bathroom sinks and showers.

A SENS House Director leads a workshop on natural building.

A 1500-watt photovoltaic array tracks the sun as it converts sunlight into electricity.

The Sun-Mar Excel NE composting toilet.

Post-and-beam construction frames a straw bale wall.