

Newsletter of the Center for Sustainability and the Environment at Wells College.



We recently completed our annual greenhouse gas emissions inventory for the campus. Many thanks to Facilities for keeping such great records about our utility usage (electricity, propane, fuel oil, diesel fuel and gasoline). Thanks to the Business Office for allowing access to our solid waste/recycling bills. Thanks also to Amy Staples in the Study Abroad office for providing the data on how many and where Wells students studied abroad in FY 2015-16. All of this data is needed in order to calculate our carbon emissions due to campus operations.

Learn more below right.

Spring Semester Sustainability Events

Each semester, the Center for Sustainability programs a diverse array of educational programs and learning activities. As of press time, these were the events scheduled:

Sustainability Perspectives series (this series talks are held on Mondays at 12:20PM in the deWitt Lecture Room (106 Zabriskie Hall.)

January 30 **Reflections on the Paris Climate Agreement: What's Next**
Allison Chatrchyan, director
Cornell Institute for Climate Smart Solutions

February 6 **Organics and Food Waste: Successfully Turning a Waste Problem into a Resource Opportunity**
Greg Gelewski, recycling operations manager
Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency

February 13 **Thinking Spatially**
Nick Hollingshead, geospatial analyst
Cornell University

February 20 **Redemption! The recovery of America's Most Polluted Natural Lake**
Tom Vawter, associate scientist, EcoLogic LLC

February 27 **Resilient Seeds in a Changing Climate**
Petra Page, Mann, co-founder
Fruition Seeds

Sustainability Perspectives series, continued:

March 6 **Socially Responsible and Impact Investing**
Greg Pitts, financial advisor
Natural Investments LLC

March 27 **Invasive Species: A Challenge to the Environment, Economy and Society**
Hilary Mosher, coordinator, Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management

April 3 **From Barn to Home: One Woman's Building Adventure**
Deborah Jones, artist and adaptive reuser

April 10 **Environmental Stewardship in Collegiate Dining Programs**
Therese O'Connor, assistant director for training & development, Cornell University Dining

April 17 **The League of Women Voters and Effective Citizenship: Informed Work on Legislation, Lobbying and Educating the Public**
Kay Wagner, chair, Natural Resources Committee
League of Women Voters of Tompkins County

April 24 **Teaching Critical Thinking and Media Literacy through Sustainability Education**
Chris Sperry, director of curriculum and staff development, Project Look Sharp

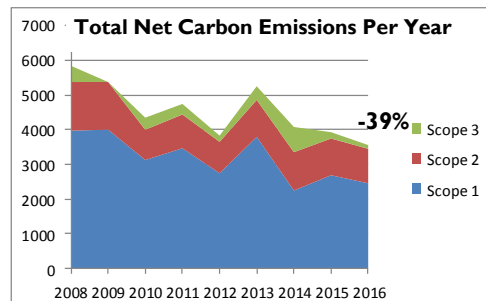
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Wells' Climate Action Plan Progress

We completed our greenhouse gas emissions inventory for 2015-16 and submitted this publicly to Second Nature, as required of signatories to the Carbon Commitment (formerly the American College and University President's Climate Commitment). These annual inventories are the means by which we chart our progress toward achieving our goal of carbon neutrality to which former president Lisa Marsh Ryerson committed us in 2008 and for which the campus community developed a Climate Action Plan. We have a goal of becoming a net zero emitter of carbon emissions by 2050, with interim targets of 5% emissions reductions by 2010 and 10% by 2020. In our baseline year of 2008, when a consultant completed our first greenhouse gas emissions inventory, Wells emitted 5,842 metric tonnes of CO₂ equivalents (MTCO₂e), the standard emissions reporting unit. The Wells community has made many decisions and taken firm action in the ensuing years to reduce our campus energy consumption—the primary source of emissions. In fiscal year 2016, our total emissions were 3,557 MTCO₂e, a 39% reduction in overall emissions, putting us far ahead of our 2020 interim target. The chart below shows our progress in reducing emissions. Scope 1 emissions come from on-site combustion of fossil fuels (building heating and vehicle fuels), accounting for nearly 70% of our emissions profile; this level has declined 38% since 2008. Scope 2 represents purchased electricity; those emissions have declined almost 30% during the same period, some from steps we have taken and some emissions benefits we realized due to mandated improvements to the New York energy grid. Scope 3 emissions, representing only about 3% of our profile, include student study abroad and solid waste generation; these have seen the greatest decline (77%) but also some variability over time. We are fortunate that the last two seasons have been quite mild; the sharp spike in heating-related emissions in 2013 was mainly due to the 15% more severe weather (measured as total annual degree days). It also helps that we don't air condition most spaces during above-normal summer temperatures like we experienced the last two years. Overall, we are making steady progress on our climate action plan. If either or both of the "big projects" we are currently working on related to renewable energy integration for electricity supply or fuel switching for building heating fuels come to fruition, we could realize even more dramatic reductions in Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions. *Stay tuned.*



Out and About ...

Marian Brown, director of the Center for Sustainability, was invited to moderate a session for the "Applying STEM Disciplines to Support Sustainable Communities" conference at Alfred State College in January. Her session, titled "Team Up! Complementary Curricular & Co-Curricular Initiatives", explored how STEM programs and faculty can partner with Student Affairs, and how internal collaborations can enhance the collective impact of sustainability focused community engagement. This conference was sponsored by *New York Campus Compact*, an organization of which Wells is a member, that promotes active citizenship within higher education.

2016 BOLD
CONFERENCE

PROCEED
BOLDLY

Marian was the keynote speaker for the BOLD conference at Ithaca College in early December. Sponsored jointly by the Office of Student Engagement and the School of Business, the Business and Organizational Leadership Development (BOLD) conference is designed specifically for Ithaca students interested in applying their leadership skills in professional settings. Marian's keynote address, "Moving Beyond Financial Sustainability" educated the participants on what sustainability means and how to make more sustainable decisions as an individual and as an entrepreneur or business leader. She taught them how to achieve a 'triple bottom line' and what a socially conscious business is, and how to assess the kind of social change agent they are.

In February, Marian was invited as a guest lecturer for a Sustainable Living class at Ithaca College. Marian presented on the topic of "Environmental Justice," with the main focus of her talk on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's passive resistance to the Dakota Access oil pipeline project threatening their land.

GIS Expert In Residence

Environmental Science professor Niamh O'Leary organized a fascinating In Residence with Nick Hollingshead, GIS analyst for Cornell University. Nick offered two presentations, met with classes, and offered two in-depth workshops during his time at Wells.

For the *Science Colloquium* on February 10th, Nick discussed "Natural Resource Mapping: How Spatial Data Shapes our Understanding of the World". Nick drew on his past experiences to demonstrate how spatial data can be used to inform (or mislead) the decision-making process and can ultimately lead to better and more transparent environmental management choices. Nick presented "Thinking Spatially" during the *Sustainability Perspectives* series on February 13th. He explained that we are surrounded by spatial data, whether it's using the GPS in our smartphones to navigate to a restaurant or examining a map of temperature changes due to global climate change. But how well do we understand this spatial information? When are we fooled by poor spatial data and how can we learn to be more spatially intelligent? Nick focused on the principles of spatial thinking and geography in our everyday lives and in the study of our global environment.

Nick returned on February 15th to offer a three-hour workshop on *GIS Fundamentals—Mapping Natural Resources*, in which students learned to create a GIS for mapping and analyzing natural resources. Using ArcGIS software, students learned to map natural features, such as forests and wetlands, and use the software to characterize the condition of those features. On March 1st, Nick returned to offer the second 3-hour workshop on *Geospatial Field Technologies*, during which he explained that the Global Positioning System (GPS) has become an essential aspect of our information infrastructure and economy. GPS technology has become virtually ubiquitous, as evidenced by the GPS receiver in your smartphone. This hands-on workshop introduced the concept and uses of GPS and its application to broader geospatial work. Students learned how to collect data in the field and how to add that data to an internet mapping application—natural resource mapping was used as the primary example.

**Spring Gardening class**

FOOD 285 Introduction to Spring Gardening will continue the good work started last Fall. This team-taught course takes advantage of the talents, expertise and experience of different faculty. In the Fall round, the faculty involved included Chemistry professor Lindsay Burwell, (soil chemistry), Japanese professor and Master Composter Kurt Pipa (composting), and Anthropology professor Ernie Olson (water issues). This spring, the faculty team includes Sociology professor Laura McClusky (food preservation), Women's Studies and First Nation and Indigenous Studies professor Vic Muñoz (seed starting and indigenous foods), Theatre professor Siouxie Easter (garden bed construction), and Biology professor Jackie Schnurr (botany). The second block class will take advantage of the Zabriskie greenhouse to start seeds to put in the raised garden beds the class will build by Sommer Center.

Reaching out about Sustainability

Wells' Admissions team has a focus on more regional recruitment and a number of new staffers on board to help tell the Wells story to prospective students. Recently, Marian Brown had the opportunity to team with Kaitlyn Justus, the Admission counselor for the Central New York region, to visit with two area school's counselors and administrators to make them aware of what Wells offers in general, but especially around sustainability education. We met with staffers at the *New Roots Charter School* in Ithaca, which offers an interdisciplinary academic program featuring hands-on, community-based learning that supports students in solving real-world problems. Their educational focus is on sustainability, so this was a natural connection to make. We also visited *Lehman Alternative Community School*, which is part of the Ithaca City School District but takes a different approach from traditional curriculum, allowing students to study subjects of interest in greater depth.

Be Your Own Boss competition

This year's business idea competition, which is open to all Wells students, drew more than sixty registered participants in more than 2 dozen teams. Judging was separated by for-profit and social impact, in addition to a special prize for *Most Sustainable Business Idea* and the new *Friends-Family-Faculty* division. The latter category allowed students to add one person to the team who is a friend at another college or university, a family member, a faculty member, or a Wells graduate. Each team presented to a group of expert business and entrepreneur mentors on March 1st, with the finalists publicly presenting their business idea to the campus community on March 2. The "Friends-Family-Faculty" team of business major/sustainability minor Yequarah Conner '19 and Center for Sustainability director Marian Brown took second place in their category with their business idea, "Hemp Green Home", using industrial hemp as raw materials for sustainable building products. The team also won the prize for 2017 *Most Sustainable Business Idea*.



Library Book Exchange

We noted recently that the Library placed this nifty Book Exchange bookcase on the landing between the 2nd and third floors of Long Library, inviting folks to drop off books they are done reading and don't wish to keep, and to freely take donated volumes to enjoy. This is a great addition to the Wells community. We remind folks that they can also donate used volumes to the book rack at the *Bargain Basement* in the ground floor of Main building for folks to take and enjoy. Used textbooks can always be donated at the College Store, which works with *Better World Books* to get still-usable volumes to schools in need.



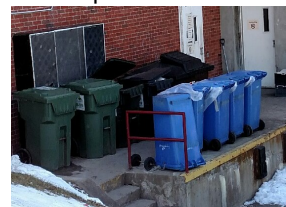
Seed Exchange Reopens

Our Library hosts the *Wells College Seed Exchange*, which opened for its third year in January. The Library moved the card catalog housing the exchange to a location allowing space for related exchange items (log book, gardening books, seed donation envelopes, and seed company catalogs). The *Center for Sustainability* solicited donations from thirty seed companies; 17 responded, sending us more than 1,500 packets of seed to give out to local growers — we peg the value of those donations at over \$4,300! At press time, our seed cabinet is just about empty, but dozens of happy, local gardeners are ready for the growing season.



Compost Pilot Underway

Since November, we have been piloting the collection of dining hall food waste—and coffee grounds from the GRIND café—with a hauler who takes these materials to a commercial compost processor. *Natural Upcycling* placed blue compost collection bins for the dining hall to use and another bin lives in the Zabriskie greenhouse, where GRIND staffers take spent coffee grounds and used filters. At press time, *Natural Upcycling* reports that we have diverted 9 tons of compostable materials from landfill trash. We are still running the numbers on how this compost diversion has impacted trash collections at the dining hall, but we are already looking to expand compost collection into the Well.



Filling a Need

We have had four Elkay EZH2O water bottle fill stations in place since January 2016, delivering chilled, filtered tap water. These units have all seen heavy use; we have now replaced the filters on all four stations; each filter is rated to purify 3,000 gallons of tap water. Each unit has a counter of how many “fills” have been dispensed into reusable water bottles - roughly equaling the number of disposable bottles avoided. The total number of “clicks” from our four fill stations is 13,513.



Stations are located in Sommer Center entrance, Cleveland Hall second floor, and Macmillan 1st and 3rd floors on the north end. Fill 'er up!

GOTCHA covered!



The *Center for Sustainability* issues new GOTCHA Being Green cards four times each year, during each block of the Fall and Spring semesters,

good through the end of that block. GOTCHA cards are issued to those spotted using their reusable beverage container for water from the fill stations or beverages from the GRIND Café. Each GOTCHA card is redeemable for a free beverage refill from the GRIND when the recipient presents the card with their reusable container. *Campus Greens* club members serve as our “spotters”. In Block 2 in the Fall, Greens members gave out 150 GOTCHA cards; 69 were redeemed at the GRIND.

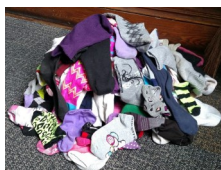
E-Waste - Easy Does It

In February, our IT group sent over a thousand pounds of collected electronic waste for safe disposal. Also known as e-waste, this includes obsolete and/or broken monitors, computers, laptops and miscellaneous electronic equipment. Hard drives on computers are wiped clean of any data if they are slated for reuse or are destroyed. EWASTE+, the company we work with, is certified by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation as meeting C7 compliance standards, meaning the company responsibly disposes of such e-waste to ensure that any hazardous materials contained in the equipment does not damage the environment.



Mid-year Trash2Treasure

In December, Facilities and Residential Life collaborated with us to again place recycling bins in the lounges in the residence halls, to collect items from students graduating early or those planning to spend the spring semester abroad. We don't get that much during this mid-year move-out collection—not like at the end of the year—but we did net 38 pounds of reusable clothing and shoes, bedding, school supplies, housewares, books, and costume items. Some of these collected items were reloaded back on the shelves in the *Bargain Basement* or the *RUMPUS Room* for other students to freely take and use. Some items were donated to area reuse outlets and some things – oh, that omnipresent pile of odd socks! – were discarded in the trash.



Recycling—By the Numbers

At press time, we are still in the midst of *RecycleMania*, the annual competition among more than 200 institutions to see who can increase their recycling rates the most. Wells has competed the last two years (since we revived our campus recycling program in fall 2014) and has improved each year. We won't know until April how we did in *RecycleMania*, but we can get an idea of our recycling progress by comparing the first six months of trash/recycling figures to last year's numbers – we have seen a 27% increase in recycling over 2015.

	Landfill Trash	Recycling
May-Dec. 2015	43.47 tons	13.12 tons
May-Dec. 2016	39.44 tons	16.67 tons

Trash is decreasing while the amount diverted to recycling – 42% – has steadily increased. We hope our recycling rate will rise more during *RecycleMania*. Thanks to our community for pitching in - into the right bin, of course.

Sustainable Residence Re-dos

Facilities and Residential Life have worked steadily since last summer to renovate bathrooms and give lounges in many of the residence halls a much needed face-lift. In Glen Park, all the bathrooms were redone, with new fixtures. In Leach, the toilet rooms were upgraded over Winter Break, with the shower rooms slated for renovation soon. In Dodge, the last of the bathrooms are being finished this semester. In Main building, common areas on the residential floors (2-4) received new furniture, paint, flooring and lighting was upgraded to create modern, enticing spaces to hang out. All lighting involved in these renovations was upgraded to high-efficiency LED lighting, reducing energy consumption by 75% or more. All water fixtures (toilets, shower heads, sink faucets) were replaced with Water Sense certified fixtures.





Center for Sustainability and the Environment

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Wells Center for
Sustainability and
the Environment



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Bored to Death Gang Visit



The Center for Sustainability was delighted to welcome this group of lifelong learners from throughout southern Cayuga County, who come together monthly to tour and learn more about a regional business or non-profit entity. We taught the Gang what sustainability means and why and how Wells is embracing sustainability as a guiding value. The group also enjoyed lunch in the dining hall during their visit.



Marian Brown, director of the Center for Sustainability was invited to join the review committee for the Central New York Municipal Solar Procurement Program, in which Wells is the only non-municipal, non-public partner.

Sustainability is a decision-making framework for continuous improvement that mindfully takes into account the social, environmental, and economic impacts of our choices.

Sustainability events, continued from page 1



Feb. 23 Hemlock Woolly Adelgid workshop and walking tour
Stefani Lutter from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County and Jessi Lyons (left) from the NYS Hemlock Initiative at Cornell offered a workshop on how to identify this invasive species and led a tour to check the status of the HWA infestation noted on campus last winter. Good news: there were few signs of live HWA on the hemlocks next to the gorge, but we did find a small, new infestation on hemlocks next to Macmillan Hall.

The Center for Sustainability collaborated with the First Nations and Indigenous Studies speaker series:

February 8 *Why I Went to Standing Rock: Reflections from an Air Force Veteran and Climate Warrior*, Retired Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Colleen Boland
4:30PM, Zabriskie Hall Rm 106



February 21 *Cayuga Presence on Cayuga Territory*, Dan Hill, Cayuga Nation
4:30PM, Zabriskie Hall Rm 106



March 7 *Healing for Peace*
Frieda Jacques, Onondaga Clan
Mother and educator
12:30PM, Zabriskie Hall Room 106



March 29 *Stopping Violence Against Native Women*, Winona LaDuke, author, environmental activist
12:30PM, Zabriskie Hall Room 106



March 25 Critter Carnival

Wells College Campus Greens will hold this family-friendly fun event to raise funds toward their bus trip to participate in the People's Climate March in Washington DC on April 29th.

12:00—3:00PM Sommer Center

April 12—Sustainable Business series
Pat Govang, founder of EZE Materials and Technology Licensing specialist, Cornell
7:00PM, Zabriskie Hall Room 106



April 20: *Sustainability Film THE AGE OF CONSEQUENCES*
7:00PM, Zabriskie Hall Room 106 Free popcorn

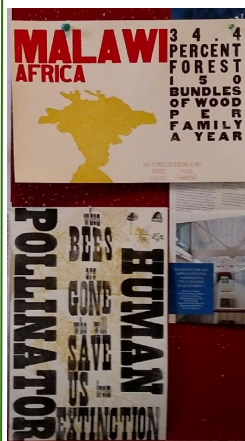


Different ways to reach out

The Center for Sustainability and the Wells Campus Greens partnered to offer an Upcycling workshop for the community during the Christmas in Aurora celebration in early December. Workshop participants could make handmade cards, ornaments, or gift items from repurposed materials. The Book Arts Center, the GRIND, and the College Store also participated in this community holiday event.



We noted these nifty posters with sustainability themes—obviously printed at our Book Arts Center - appearing on bulletin boards around campus.



We had absolutely nothing to do with this Retail Therapy clothing exchange and sale, organized by the Women's Lacrosse team at the end of the semester, but we applaud this, and other great sustainability ideas. Keep 'em comin', folks!

Treat yourself to a little Retail Therapy!

hosted by Women's Lacrosse

Thursday, December 8th
Sommer Center 2-4 p.m.
&
Friday, December 9th
Faculty Parlor 2-4 p.m.

Finals.
Nothing a little shopping can't fix!

In keeping with Wells College sustainability practices, the Women's Lacrosse Team is hosting an affordable shopping & clothing exchange event.

We hope this event will also help relieve some stress!

Unsold items will be donated to those in need this holiday season!

Affordable way to get some new clothes!

Bring in your own well kept, stylish clothes, accessories and shoes. You will receive money towards new purchases!

All clothing types and sizes welcome!

Wells stands up for climate action

President Jon Gibraltar was one of more than 325 signatories to a letter from a diverse group of higher education institutional leaders that was sent to the new Congressional delegation and incoming Presidential transition team in January. The letter reads in part:

"We, the undersigned leaders of higher education institutions throughout the United States, recognize our academic and ethical responsibilities to current and future generations to take aggressive climate action; to reduce our sector's carbon pollution, to support interdisciplinary climate education, and to continue research that expands our understanding of rapidly changing earth systems. We are committed to developing and

deploying innovative climate solutions that provide a prosperous future for all Americans.

We join our colleagues in the business and investment communities in supporting the science-based targets outlined in the Paris Climate Agreement. In fact, many of our institutions have voluntarily set even more aggressive carbon reduction goals to lead our sector forward and to demonstrate what is possible for others."

President Gibraltar was an invited panelist at the Second Nature Climate Leadership Summit in Arizona in February, taking about what all Wells is doing.

