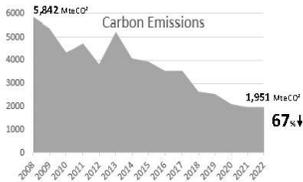


## Newsletter of the **Center for Sustainability and the Environment** at Wells College.



Since 2008, when former president **Lisa Marsh Ryerson** signed Wells College on to the *American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment*, we have annually calculated the carbon emissions from campus operations. These calculations help us chart our progress in meeting the goals of our Climate Action Plan to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Over the past 15 years, we have made substantial progress, dropping our campus carbon emissions by 2/3s from our 2008 baseline figure. That is an enviable decline, but it will still be a tough haul to get from here to zero.

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## Fall 2022 Sustainability Events

The *Center for Sustainability* programs a wide array of different types of sustainability-themed events each semester; this Fall's line-up is no exception. The **Sustainability Perspectives** series brings in mostly regional speakers to talk about sustainability from a variety of viewpoints. These talks take place on Mondays at 12:30PM.



September 12 12:30PM via Zoom

*Sustainability Perspectives* series: **Microplastics in Local Air, Rain and Snow**

Presenter: **Susan Allen**, professor, Dept of Environmental Studies & Sciences, *Ithaca College*  
Microplastics have been found pretty much everywhere – from the top of Mount Everest to the depths of the Pacific Ocean. It's not surprising, then, that microplastics are also in Cayuga Lake. But where do they come from? We will look at the relative contribution of microplastics in local snow, rain and ambient air.

**Zoom #:** 883 4043 3355 **passcode:** WYqR\$180



September 26 12:30PM via Zoom

*Sustainability Perspectives* series: **Dealing with Climate Anxiety**

**Adele Houghton**, president of *Biositu, LLC* and a registered architect

Ms. Houghton works at the intersection of public health, climate change, and the built environment. She will discuss the very real psychological phenomenon of climate anxiety, its root causes, and its negative impacts on the physical and mental health of especially young people. She will provide some real-world strategies for how to deal with climate anxiety productively. Ms. Houghton's appearance is made possible through the generous support of

the *National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC)*.

**Zoom #:** 837 2207 7452 **passcode:** k8u^\$mSj

October 17 12:30PM via Zoom

*Sustainability Perspectives* series: **Tompkins Food Future: Toward a More Resilient, Equitable and Healthy Food System**

**Katie Hallas**, community food system plan coordinator, *Cornell Cooperative Extension*

Katie will explain that Tompkins County is, by many accounts, a food-rich community characterized by agricultural abundance. Yet, observing the broader food system, it's clearer than ever: the current path is unsustainable. Characterized by extreme climate events, racial and economic injustices, ecosystem degradation, growing food insecurity, geopolitical instability, supply chain vulnerabilities and worsening public health outcomes, the time to transform our food system is now. *Tompkins Food Future* is building a more resilient, equitable, and healthy food system through community-driven planning and collaboration.

**Zoom #:** 848 1528 0517 **passcode:** GdSJ!lww



October 31 12:30PM via Zoom

*Sustainability Perspectives* series: **Sustainability Impacts of the NYS Cannabis Industry: A "Triple Bottom Line" Analysis**

**Dmitry Liapitch '10**, Staff Engineer - Carbon Management Strategies, *Kohler Inc.*

Are you interested in going green in the green industry that intends to make some green from selling greens? Good! This topic will cover how to use the Triple Bottom Line of Sustainability to evaluate the environmental, social, and financial aspects of the Cannabis industry in NY.

**Zoom #:** 826 8137 3864 **passcode:** \*DaA0pzT

November 7 12:30PM via Zoom

*Sustainability Perspectives* series: **Decolonizing Textiles**

**Sarah Gotowka**, visual and textile artist

In this lively class, we will talk about the oppressive systems and colonialist histories of cloth, dye and plants. We will look at some of the textiles we use daily, get to know their roots, and discuss the hidden pathways in which they came to be.

We will also look at contemporary artists who are subverting and transforming cloth, and brainstorm on ways we can challenge exploitation and racism through our relationship with cloth.

**Zoom #:** 859 7740 8776 **passcode:** 74ki\$Qz9



More Fall 2022 Sustainability Events, see page 4

## Faculty Accomplishments

At the end of June, we bid a fond but bitter-sweet farewell to retiring Provost and Dean of the College, **Cindy Speaker**. Since the founding of the Center in 2014 and the launch of the Sustainability academic program that Fall, Cindy has been a strong supporter of both the sustainability program and the Center's activities. We wish Cindy only the best with her move to Colorado to be nearer to family. We also wish her all success with whatever project toward which she decides to next turn her energy and expertise, because we don't believe for an instant that Cindy will really *STAY* retired!



On a related note: we offer a most sincere welcome to new Provost and Dean of the College, **Susan Henking**, who started full-time at Wells in July. A seasoned educational professional, Provost Henking has already expressed support for sustainability, especially in leveraging academic collaborations with area institutions.

Sustainability Center director **Marian Brown** was named to another term on the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Advisory Committee. She was named to the judging team for the 2022 AASHE Sustainability Campus Sustainability Research Award for research focused on operations. Brown was also tapped to serve on the working group for *Second Nature's* Climate Commitment 3.0 organizational update.



## New Sustainability Courses

A new sustainability-themed elective course was approved for delivery this Fall:

SUS 385 *Building Resilient Communities with Systems Thinking*

Instructor: **Jen Myers**, assistant professor of Sustainability

*Description:* Understanding the complexity of ways Earth's ecological, social, and economic systems function — and how they can be transformed — is fundamental to the work of sustainability. This course offers students opportunities to build their capacity as systems thinkers to better understand connections, feedback loops, and interdependence. We will investigate real-world case studies examining holistic efforts to strengthen community resilience locally and around the world. 3 credits



The following course, which was delivered as an experimental course in Spring 2022, was approved as a permanent, cross-listed elective:

ART/SUS 200 *Fields*

Instructors: **Anna Ialleggio**, assistant professor, Studio Art / **Marian Brown**, Sustainability Center director



This seven week outdoor interdisciplinary course explores the question: what does it mean to work "in the field"? Every class, we'll travel to a different nearby location to consider the many layers of working, living, and making that exist in that place through creative prompts, case studies, and exploration. Site visits, activities, and instructors will vary from semester to semester, so you may repeat this course. Potential topics include: local cultural and natural histories; agriculture; resource management, and recreation; learning from plants, animals, and rocks; creative writing; drawing; taking samples; and other interdisciplinary forms of "field work." 2 credits

Photo: Spring 2022 *FIELDS* field trip meets with organic grower John Shaw from *Heritage Harvesters* in King Ferry

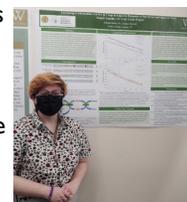
## Summer Garden Research Team

Again this summer, the Provost provided funding support for a faculty/student research team to study gardening practices in southern Cayuga County. This year's faculty team includes professor of Anthropology and Religion **Ernie Olson**, professor of Sociology **Laura McClusky**, and Sustainability professor **Jenny Myers**. The student research cohort includes: Creative Writing major **Brier Mae Ossont** '23, Theatre major **Alanna Riedler** '23, and Business major **Benjamin McMonagle** '22. The team is interviewing area gardeners and growers—most identified from their use of the *Wells College Seed Exchange* or their past participation in the *Aurora Farmers Market*—to learn about their gardening practices. Photo: Anne Mathieson garden interview



## Intelligence Community Student Research Projects

Wells College is among 37 institutions considered as an *Intelligence Community Center of Academic Excellence* (IC CAE), that support the goal of increasing diversity in the workforce of the 18 federal agencies comprising the *Intelligence Community*. Wells is included specifically because of our focus on liberal arts. Wells received a generous allotment of funding to support independent research projects undertaken by students in various disciplines with the guidance of faculty mentors. Five projects were completed this year, all having some sustainability impacts. In the Fall, chemistry major **Sabrina Burns** '23, worked with Chemistry professor **Lindsay Burwell** to study chemical pathways to improve food security. Sabrina presented her poster at the spring 2022 Internship Fair. This spring semester, Health Science major **Daniel Adelman** '25 worked with Sustainability Center director **Marian Brown** to research how to improve human waste management on forward operating bases; Daniel also presented at the Spring Internship Fair, which helps promote this independent student research program. Other IC CAE independent student research projects included: Health Science major **Sasha Lamoree** '23 worked with Biology and Environmental Science professor **Jaclyn Schnurr** to research the security threats from Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) impacting global water supplies. Sustainability and Environmental Science double major **Lili Talbot Gould** '23 worked with mentor **Jenny Myers**, assistant professor of Sustainability, to study seed vaults as a useful strategy to improve global food security. Business majors **James Deluna** '22 and **Colton Jaquith** '22 teamed up to work with mentor **Kevin Miles**, director of the *Sullivan Center for Business and Entrepreneurship* to study the potential to repurpose old shopping malls, warehouses for military base housing.



Wellspring

**Center Recycling Area Refresh**

It's been nine years since we first set up our recycling station in the *Center for Sustainability* classroom (Zabriskie 212), to divert burned-out fluorescent tubes, spent rechargeable batteries, and plastic films. The old collection



boxes were pretty battered from heavy use over the years, so we upgraded them with spiffy new collection containers and explanatory signage.

**And the winner is...**

... by a tongue, Wells' tap water. For two spring Admission events and Reunion in June, the *Center for Sustainability* offered an *Open House* featuring our popular *Water Challenge*, a blind drinking water taste test. We pitted College-produced tap water against two bottled water products: *Poland Spring* and *Aquafina*. All three water products are presented in blue coolers with only X, Y, or Z labels and all samples are chilled with ice made from the same water. The good news is that of all the taste testers expressing a preference, 48% preferred Wells' tap water. *Poland Spring* placed second at 37% and *Aquafina* was a distant third at 15%.



**100% Recycled Content Paper**

**Andrea McClatchie**, assistant for Academic Affairs and Student Life, placed the annual bulk reorder of paper for campus offices and computer labs. Andrea again took advantage of very favorable New York State contract pricing to purchase 100% post-consumer recycled content office paper for use in printers and multi-function machines. The quantity Andrea ordered remained the same as last year, which represented a significant drop from past years, because we simply are all printing out fewer documents these days.



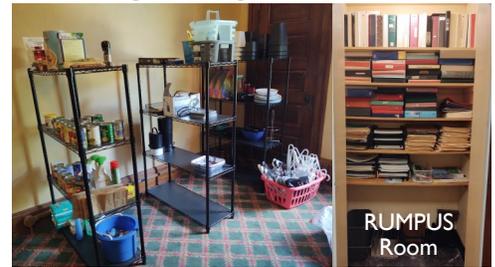
**Food Waste Diversion**

Wells contracts with *Natural Upcycling* to support our food waste diversion in the Dining Hall and GRIND Café. *Natural Upcycling* provides 65-gallon waste collection totes and comes weekly to empty full totes, wash them out and return them for more food waste collection. *Natural Upcycling* bills us for the number of full totes they empty each week. This past year, with their help, Wells diverted 12,375 tons of food waste, which was taken to the OCRRA Amboy processing center to be converted into compost, useful as soil amendments.



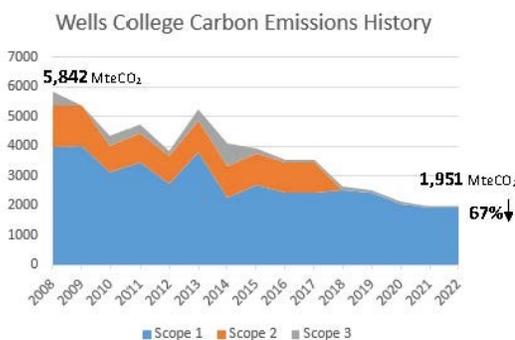
**Co-located Food Pantry and Bargain Basement**

Since Fall 2015, when we first set up the *Bargain Basement* in the ground floor of Main building, using items retained from that spring's student move-out, this area provided free, 24/7 access to an assortment of reusable housewares, room furnishings, costumes, craft supplies and more. Last year, Student Affairs made the decision to increase student security by restricting access to residential areas, but one unintended consequence of this move was that free access to the *Bargain Basement* was limited to Main residents. At the same time, the campus Food Pantry was being well-used, but there was some feeling that some campus community members accessing that resource might feel stigmatized. So a resolution to both problems was to conjoin the two programs in a new room on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Main building, accessible to the entire campus community 24/7. Now, folks can go to one place to get food items and maybe the cookpots to prepare them or the plates and utensils to eat them. At least for now, we are keeping the *RUMPUS Room* for reusable office and school supplies in Macmillan 111A. Check out both spaces!



**FY 2021-22 Campus Energy Use**

As reported on page 1, our annual carbon emissions have declined significantly from our baseline year (2008) - our emissions are down 67% as a result of concerted efforts of the campus community to conserve and be more efficient with our consumption of fossil fuels (the major source of carbon emissions). There are a number of specific areas we measure and track. *Scope 1* emissions are from fossil fuels combusted on-site, whether burned for building heating (stationary) or for powering our vehicles (mobile). This aspect of our annual emissions profile (in blue) has proven to be the most resistant to making substantive change: we continue to explore strategies to switch to renewable fuels for our central utility plant or to electrify buildings and vehicles. *Scope 2* reflects our purchased electricity (in orange) and no, we didn't stop using electricity



around 2018, but Facilities director **Brian Brown** contracts for electricity generated entirely from renewable wind energy, which "zeroes out" that emissions aspect. *Scope 3* (in gray) is a mix of different emission sources, including landfill waste generation (which is balanced by our recycling and food waste composting), and study abroad travel (which we mitigate by purchasing carbon offsets for the passenger air miles traveled).

**HEBI Update**

Wells was one of the initial participants in the *Higher Ed Benchmark Initiative* (HEBI), sponsored by the EPA to attempt to make their *EnergyStar Portfolio Manager* data collection system more useful to track and benchmark energy use for the somewhat unique complement of building types found at colleges and universities. Last time, we provided data for calendar year 2019. We recently provided data for calendar year 2021, which showed that our weather normalized *Source Energy Use* was 131.0 kBtu/ft<sup>2</sup>, which is 27.45% lower than the median of institutions reporting during this round. Our baseline (2019) *Source Energy Use* was 138.4 (which was 23.38% lower than the median); we reduced our overall energy use by about 5% between these two years. These results additionally verify that our energy use is headed in the right direction—downward.





## Center for Sustainability and the Environment

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Wells Center for  
Sustainability and  
the Environment



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Earlier this summer, Wells College hosted the *Cayuga Lake Watershed Network* and the *Community Science Institute* for their joint *Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Harrier* workshop for area lakeshore owners to learn how to identify, collect and report water samples to verify the presence of HABs. Wells also hosted the training session for the Watershed Network summer volunteers. The Center donated a *Green Goodie Basket* to the fundraiser for Cayuga County's *Habitat for Humanity*.



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

## Fall Sustainability Events, *continued from page 1*

December 5 12:30PM via Zoom

*Sustainability Perspectives* series: **Challenges to Cayuga Lake and Opportunities to Protect It**

**Liz Kreitinger**, Steward and Executive Director, *Cayuga Lake Watershed Network*  
Liz will explain the work of the organization to identify key threats to Cayuga Lake and its watershed, and its efforts to advocate for solutions that support a healthy environment and vibrant, sustainable communities. The *Watershed Network* empowers private landowners, recreational users, and visitors to take action and make informed decisions about care of the lake and watershed.

**Zoom #:** 857 7081 1837 **passcode:** F9W&pB#



The **Sustainable Business** speaker series, a collaboration between the *Center for Sustainability* and the *Sullivan Center for Business and Entrepreneurship*, explores the intersection of business and sustainability.

Tuesday, October 4 7:00PM deWitt Lecture Room 106, Zabriskie Hall

*Sustainable Business: Discovering Your Future in the Meta Dimensions of Sustainability*

Mark Coleman, president, *Convergence Mitigation Management (CMM) LLC*

Mr. Coleman will offer a dynamic discussion of current affairs, the state of sustainability in society and business, the role of individuals-citizens-consumers, and the nexus between corporations, government and society on truly manifesting a sustainable future.

Many have a contextual sense of sustainability, but sometimes they don't fully see or understand the complexity of systems or the nuance of different points of view and sectors. The sense of urgency on climate action is rapidly intensifying. This can leave many feeling either invigorated or helpless, frustrated, and even apathetic to the state of affairs and fate of their future in the face of climate and sustainability risks. Having perspective on the role one can serve and having a vision for one's future given the need to change and adapt, can be empowering and uplifting and enable the individual to have resolve in how they engage within the multi dimensions of sustainability.



Wednesday, November 9 7:00PM via Zoom

*Sustainable Business: Collaboration is a Long View Game*

Rachael Ristau '15, Corporate Social Responsibility manager, *Bigelow Tea Company*

Infinite questions emerge when analyzing how to better manage globalization. With corporate social responsibility new to our capitalistic economy, reasoning for participation and pushback varies across companies and sectors. Start with active listening as a means to connect the dots across related industries, identify shared interests, and build systems inclusive of stakeholder voices. Global and local collaboration is a long view game--that's the answer.

**Zoom #:** 845 5727 1599 **passcode:** 18k&YS@C

The **Sustainability Film** series offers in-person screenings of films with sustainability themes. Organic popcorn and butter is served at each screening.

Tuesday, September 27 7:00PM deWitt Lecture Room, 106 Zabriskie Hall

*Sustainability Film: Uninvited: The Spread of Invasive Species*



This documentary introduces the concept of invasive species and highlights some of the species threatening New York's environment and economy, while also showing some innovative ways that New York State is combatting these threats. Runtime: 55 minutes

Following the film, Matthew Gallo, Terrestrial Invasive Species Outreach Coordinator for the *Finger Lakes PRISM*, will be on hand to answer questions about local invasive species of special concern.

Tuesday, October 25 7:00PM deWitt Lecture Room, 106 Zabriskie Hall

*Sustainability Film: Nature's Cleanup Crew*

To us, it's garbage. To them, it's dinner. There are some busy scavengers who live among us-- crafty critters who share our cities and recycle the mountains of food waste our messy society leaves behind. Vultures, ants, foxes, opossums and others offer us many benefits, simply by sharing our space. This documentary presents a cast of vital creatures, each beautiful in their own right. Without them, our waste would be piling up and we would be dealing with many deadly diseases. Runtime: 54 minutes



A **Sustainability Special** event will be held on Wednesday, September 14 at 6:00PM on the Boathouse lawn. The *Bread+Puppets* political theatre troupe will perform their **Domestic Resurrection Circus**, described as "a response to our culture's unwillingness to recognize Mother Earth's revolt against our civilization." This family-friendly event is free and open to the public.

