

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



On December 1st, we welcomed *Sustainability Speaker* **Nance Klehm**, founder of *Social Ecologies*, who offered a fascinating in-person workshop titled “*Grounding: From Theory to Practice and Back Again*”. Klehm shared some of her personal journey toward a more integrated and collaborative relationship with the land she lives and works on. She then led participants in a mapping exercise intended to serve as an inspiration for reflecting on how we are being and in dreaming futures.

In this issue:

Faculty Accomplishments	2
Student Sustainability Presentations	2
More Academic Sustainability Collaborations	2
Campus Store Updates	3
Senior Class Recycling Drive	3
G.P. Water Bottle Fill Station	3
2022 Wells College Seed Exchange	3
College Solid Waste Management Changes	3
Compostables Demonstration	3
Spring Semester Sustainability Events, <i>continued</i>	4
Reaching Out!	4

Spring Semester Sustainability Events

We have programmed an exciting line-up for our **Sustainability Perspectives** series, which explores sustainability from a variety of viewpoints. Due to COVID, we will offer each of these talks via *Zoom* and will post links to recordings of each talk on the Sustainability events archive page on our *Center for Sustainability* website. This speaker series is held on Mondays starting at 12:30PM.



January 31 **The Soil Factory Network: Advancing the Circular Bionutrient Economy**
Rebecca Nelson, professor, School of Integrative Plant Science, *Cornell University*

Modern sanitation and modern agriculture, two of humanity's most noted achievements, have enabled much of the world's population to avoid sickness and famine but are neither sustainable nor well suited to many contexts. In much of the world, nutrients flow from rural and peri-urban areas into towns and cities, depleting agricultural soils and polluting urban and aquatic environments. The *Soil Factory Network* (SFN) is a new collective that works to advance the circular bionutrient economy (CBE), recovering nutrients and carbon from organic waste streams to agriculture. The *Soil Factory* in Ithaca is a key node in the SFN that brings together artists, scientists and others from Wells College, Cornell University and beyond for work on the CBE and other fun topics.

March 7 **Moving an Upstate New York County Toward “Net-Zero”**

Terry Carroll, Chief Sustainability Officer, *Tompkins County*

Mr. Carroll is responsible for leading and overseeing the overall execution and efficacy of Tompkins County's Energy Strategy and the pursuit of a financially sound path to net-zero emissions in County operations. He will talk about the policies and practices the county is employing to reduce the energy intensity of its daily operations and how he works with County departments and community members to gain their support to achieve this ambitious vision.



March 28 **Genetically Engineered Trees: No Solution to Climate Change**
Theresa Church, assistant director, *Global Justice Ecology Project*

The climate crisis is leading to an increasing promotion of genetically engineered (GE) trees as a "solution," arguing that they will sequester “more carbon,” but at what cost to forests, communities, and health?

April 11 **Merlin, eBird, and the power of the birding community**

Cullen Hanks, project team leader, *MacCaulay Library, Cornell Lab of Ornithology*

The Merlin Bird ID app is a stand-alone app built by the Cornell Lab of O to help people identify the birds around them. Merlin is also a critical part of the *eBird* information system that leverages hundreds of thousands of observers and cutting-edge techniques in machine learning to connect people with birds and power research and conservation efforts. Cullen will focus on the Lab's efforts to expand access to Merlin to communities around the world, and how this is connected to our understanding of bird populations both locally and globally.



April 18 **Research Perspectives at the Intersections of Climate and Energy Justice**
Daniel Carrión, assistant professor, *Environmental Health Sciences, Yale School of Public Health*, and director of Education, *Yale Center on Climate Change and Health*

Energy is fundamental to human health, specifically the energy for cooking, heating during the winter, and cooling during the summer. However, historical choices for energy production are driving our climate crisis, with poor communities and communities of color bearing the brunt. This seminar will discuss research considering these intersections, specifically focused on energy poverty and energy insecurity.

April 25 **Hazardous Waste Disposal Practices and Challenges**

Glenn B. Kays, account executive, *US Ecology*

We all generate relatively harmless waste materials that we send “away” at the end of their useful life, either into recycling processes or disposed of in landfills. But what about more problematic materials generated especially in businesses that require special handling during collection, packaging, transportation, and disposal to minimize any potential detrimental environmental and human impacts? What are some of these more hazardous waste products we don't think about and how is their disposal safely managed?



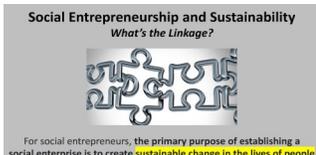
See page 4 for more planned Sustainability events this semester

Faculty Accomplishments



We are so pleased to finally welcome new Sustainability faculty member, **Jenny Myers**, to Wells for the spring semester. Jenny was recruited last summer but was unable to start in September. In December, Jenny successfully defended her dissertation titled, "Narratives of Resilience: Place Attachment in Vieques, Puerto Rico", to earn her Ph.D. in Sustainability Education from Prescott College. Jenny moved to the area from Corvallis OR where she was an instructor and practicum coordinator in the Sustainability Double Degree Program at Oregon State University. Jenny also was a program coordinator for OSU's Student Sustainability Initiative, so we are excited to see what she can do to strengthen sustainability engagement within our student life experience. Jenny also has extensive background with backcountry travel, gardening, and experiential education in wilderness settings. Jenny earned a Masters in Environmental Philosophy from Lancaster University and her undergraduate double degrees in Journalism and Government and Politics from the University of Maryland. Jenny is teaching two courses in Spring 2022: *Psychology of Sustainability* and *Sustainability Leadership*.

Kevin Miles, director of the *Sullivan Center for Business and Entrepreneurship*, invited *Center for Sustainability* director **Marian Brown** to his first *Social Entrepreneurship* class to explain the natural linkages with sustainability practice.



This newsletter is printed on 30% post-consumer-recycled-content paper; please be sure to recycle when you finish reading it.



Student Sustainability Presentations

In December, Sustainability senior **James Stover** presented his capstone project in a public talk over Zoom. His project, titled "Exploring the Sustainable Gardening Practices of the Southern Cayuga Community", was a deeper, well-researched dive into his findings from the summer 2021 faculty-student research gardening project in which he participated.



Students in SUS 101 *Introduction to Sustainability* learn about different campus sustainability challenges and also develop change agent techniques, culminating in their design and implementation of a sustainable behavior change campaign. **Grace Kahl '24** piloted food waste composting in Main building. The *Center for Sustainability* acquired two tall green bins for compost collection; Grace took responsibility for transporting collected food waste to the compost collection totes on the Dining Hall loading dock. Sustainability

minor **Nicole D'Aurizio '22**, who also headed the *Wells Campus Greens* organization, worked with club members and Residential Life staff to host a *Sustainable Costume Making* activity in mid-October. *Greens* provided the equipment and materials for participants to create unique costume elements, using repurposed clothing and Theatre costumes. Similarly, **April Washburn '25** offered a *Refashioning Workshop*, providing the expertise, equipment and supplies to help attendees adapt exist-

ing clothing items into more appealing garments. Several students undertook residence hall campaigns to get their peers to reduce water consumption using different strategies: **Kaitlyn Matthews '24** gave simple 5-minute shower timers to participants; **Jared Rash '23** created 5-minute shower playlists; **Connor Garvey '23** instituted a "Do it in Five" campaign; **Jake Stine '24** used the 5-minute "Navy Shower" approach; and **Ericka Arancio '23** used community based social marketing tips to encourage residents to reduce shower times and turn off faucets during toothbrushing. **Chastity Andino '24** focused her campaign on energy usage, providing an interactive activity at a campus Thanksgiving event to educate peers about the energy consumption of different light bulbs (photo right). **Nash '22** and **Mohammed Williams '22** both looked at strategies to divert redeemable bottles and cans from recycling or land-fill trash. **Alexa Quagliana '25** used a gamification approach to incent her target group to undertake different sustainable behaviors over a period of time.



During the Business thesis presentations, we noted senior **Colton Jaquith's** poster, "Evaluating the Environmental, Social and Financial Aspects of Natural and Artificial Turf". He did not identify a clear preference, noting that in the social aspect, athletes reported fewer injuries and less heat-related illness from playing on grass fields, but that those charged with maintaining playing fields liked the lessened need for irrigation and non-mowing of artificial turf, lowering its environmental impact.

Senior Biological and Chemical Sciences major **Jazzmyne Williams**, whose concentration is in Health Sciences, presented her thesis project titled "Can You Prevent Skin Sensitivity Caused By Reducing Linalool in the Formulation?" Linalool is used as a fragrance in most hygiene products and cleaning agents, including soaps, detergents, shampoos, and lotions. It exhibits antimicrobial and antifungal properties and is also used as an insecticide against fleas, fruit flies, and cockroaches.



More Sustainability Academic Collaborations

On February 9th, as part of the *Visiting Writers* series, organized by assistant professor of English & Creative Writing James Miranda, author **Madeline ffitc** appeared in person offering both a master class for writing students and a public reading from her critically acclaimed debut novel "Stay and Fight". The *Center for Sustainability* was a co-sponsor of Ms. ffitc's appearance because of her book's exploration of strong sustainability themes. In her Master Class, titled "Snake eggs, Styrofoam, and Sugar Maples: Writing Our Environments", ffitc explained what environmental writing can mean and how literature is diminished when we are disconnected from the natural world. In her evening reading, ffitc offered highlights from her book that explores the trials and tribulations of an untraditional family homesteading in Appalachia.



The *Center for Sustainability* collaborated with professor Petko Kitanov, coordinator of *Science Colloquium*, to host this in-person presentation in that series, which is held on Fridays at 12:30PM in Stratton 209:



February 11 **Reflections on over 500 sustainabilitymath.org blog posts**
 Presenter: **Thomas Pfaff**, professor and chair, Mathematics Department, *Ithaca College*
 Professor Pfaff will explain why he created the *Sustainability Math* resource site and blog. He will choose favorite graphs, data sites, and interesting facts. He will talk about how he and many others use this valuable educational resource to support Mathematics teaching and other research. What stories can these data tell us about sustainability?

Campus Store Updates

About 40% of the textbooks offered for the spring semester sport the yellow USED sticker, says Bookstore manager **Rich Kloster**. He explained that in past years, the mix of used and new textbooks offered was more evenly split. Fewer used texts are available as COVID forced many colleges to go remote and cancel Fall textbook buybacks. Rich also called our attention to his recent order of the *Positively Green* greeting card line. (We really like that green owl Get Well card!) These cards are *Forest Stewardship Council*-certified to be made from 100% post-consumer recycled paper and they are printed with soy-based inks. 10% of the profits from the sale of each card is donated to sustainability focused non-profit organizations. Nice going!



Senior Class Recycling Drive

Senior Class president **Anthony Westmiller '22** organized a redeemable bottle and can collection drive. Special collection boxes were placed in residence halls and the seniors will collect the donations through the end of the spring semester to take to an area bottle redemption center. The proceeds of this bottle and can drive will help fund Senior Week activities. Anthony reports that so far, the seniors collected 14 40-gallon bags of recyclables—estimated to contain ~4,000 containers.



G.P. Water Bottle Fill Station

Campus plumber **Randy Bench** informed us that he installed an *Elkay EZH2O* water bottle fill station in the Glen Park (aka G.P.) residence hall kitchen. (Thanks, **Nash '22**, for the photo!) These hands-free units safely dispense filtered, chilled water directly into one's reusable beverage container. We have prioritized installations of these units in residence halls to allow students to easily fill up on their way out of the building to class or other activities. We have more units to install, but this newest fill station adds to the dozen+ locations to safely "fill-er up!"



2022 Wells College Seed Exchange Opens



As of February 1st, our *Seed Exchange* opened for the season. All seed is available for free and is available while supplies last. Again this year, due to COVID, we are not allowing in-person access to the *Seed Exchange* inventory and instead provide an on-line inventory for patrons to review and order forms they can download to complete and email to us. Our 2022 season opened with an inventory of over seven thousand packets of different varieties of vegetable, herb, and flower seeds—more than ever before! Seeds were generously donated by over a dozen different seed companies. Once we open the exchange each year and notify past patrons and contact area listserves and press publications, we are absolutely inundated with orders from eager gardeners and growers as well as reps of community gardens, school programs, food pantries, and youth programs. Our Seed Intern **Liliana Talbot-Gould '23** has been steadily filling orders as time permits. One week in, we had already received over 90 orders! Lili's sustainability internship is unusual in that it spans parts of two semesters. In late Fall, she reached out to over 60 seed companies to request donations and she will continue to work this semester to fulfill order requests until we run out.

College Solid Waste Management Changes

Facilities director **Brian Brown** informed us in late Fall of a new partnership opportunity with the *Inns of Aurora* around solid waste management. The *Inns* leadership approached us about sharing our solid waste transfer station, maintained off campus at the college-owned farm property on Poplar Ridge Road. The *Inns* were interested in reducing noise and disruption from large trash trucks servicing their elite guest lodging properties downtown. The college had available capacity to accept the *Inns'* waste and recycling streams, but our infrastructure needed modernization. The *Inns* offered to replace the large landfill trash compactor (our old unit was on its last legs!) and upgrade the recyclables collection container. The upshot of this new partnership is that, in exchange for commingling our respective landfill waste and recyclables, the College gets upgraded trash and recycling infrastructure and the *Inns* absorbs the hauling fees. Both the college and the *Inns* also recently shifted their solid waste and recycling hauling services to a local firm, *McLaughlin Waste Disposal*, to get better service than our prior hauler provided. This money-saving change unfortunately means that, because our landfill trash and recycling is now conjoined with that of the *Inns of Aurora*, we cannot track our separate solid waste streams. This rules out our participation in the annual *Campus Race to Zero Waste* competition (formerly *RecycleMania*), in which we typically fared quite well against other institutions. We will figure out other ways to encourage our campus community to properly separate their recyclables and work to reduce our generation of solid waste material overall, which would also save the college significant dollars!



Compostables demonstration



For the December Holiday Employee Potluck organized by Staff Forum, Center director **Brian Brown** signed up to supply compostable tableware (plates, bowls, napkins, utensils, and cold cups). She also set up a waste separation station including a green compost collection bin (snagged from the SUS 101 student res hall compost pilot—see more page 2) lined with a compostable bag. This educational demonstration was well-supported—most folks got the right things into the proper receptacles. **Brown** added the food waste collected at the event to the compost tote in the *Zabriskie Hall* greenhouse, used by *GRIND Café* baristas to collect spent coffee grounds and filters for processing.



Center for Sustainability and the Environment

Marian Brown, Director
Wells College
170 Main Street
Office: 213 Zabriskie Hall
Aurora NY 13026

Phone: 315-364-3304
E-mail: mbrown@wells.edu or
sustainability@wells.edu

We're on the Web:
www.wells.edu/sustainability



Wells Center for
Sustainability and
the Environment



@Wells Sust Center

Reaching Out!

The Center for Sustainability continues to support area organizations with basket donations for fundraising auctions. We supplied a basket filled with more sustainable products for the Aurora Masonic Center's silent auction to benefit the Aurora Historical Society during *Christmas in Aurora* in December.



Center director **Marian Brown** was again named to a two-year term on the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Advisory Council. In early February, Brown was interviewed by Daita Serghi, AASHE's Education Programs Manager, about her views on current member offerings she uses and suggestions for AASHE programming to meet the needs for so-called "Advanced Practitioners".

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

Spring Semester Sustainability Events, *continued from page 1*

For our **Sustainable Business** speaker series, the Center for Sustainability collaborates with the Sullivan Center for Business and Entrepreneurship to bring in presenters who can address the integration of sustainability in corporate thinking and practice. Due to COVID, we will offer these talks via Zoom at 7:00PM and the recording of these talks will be available on our Sustainability Events archive. We have scheduled two exciting, national speakers in this series:



February 23 **Retailers Reaching for Net-Zero**

Scot Case, VP for CSR and Sustainability, *National Retail Federation*

Climate change is already affecting retailers. More intense storms, forest fires, flooding, power outages and other climate-related impacts are disrupting retail operations, including supplier operations deep within supply chains. While more than three dozen retailers have announced or committed to developing science-based climate targets, some retailers are relatively early in their sustainability journey. Some have more sophisticated sustainability strategies, while others are unclear where they are along the sustainability continuum. Mr. Case will share insights from the NRF's recently released guide to help retailers clarify and prioritize their response to climate change. "Retailers Reaching for Net-zero" provides an overview of the science, highlights the business case for taking action and describes a framework for setting science-based greenhouse gas emission targets. It also includes observations and lessons learned from leading retailers.

March 8 **Sustainability at ALDI**

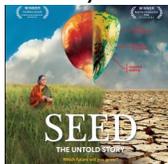
Amber Hardy, director of Facilities, Systems and Sustainability, *ALDI, Inc.*

ALDI was recently ranked as the No. 1 most sustainable grocery retailer among seven of the most popular U.S. chain stores. ALDI achieved this ranking as a result of their measurable actions and commitments to decrease harmful operational emissions and reduce plastic pollution. In 2019, ALDI made specific commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26% and make all product packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. They were also recognized for their dedication to create sustainable product lines as well as their continued use of sustainable energy sources throughout their network of stores, warehouses and corporate offices across the United States. This ranking solidifies ALDI as an industry leader when it comes to sustainability, and their ambitious targets within their sustainability charter inspire the company to continue striving to achieve their sustainability goals. ALDI continues to lead the industry in investment of natural refrigerants and investment in renewable energy.



We are also holding three in-person events this semester, all at 7:00PM:

February 16 **Sustainability Film: Seed—The Untold Story** Zabriskie Hall Rm 106

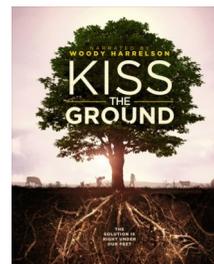


Few things on Earth are as miraculous and vital as seeds. Worshipped and treasured since the dawn of humankind. SEED: The Untold Story follows passionate seed keepers protecting our 12,000-year-old food legacy. In the last century, 94% of our seed varieties have disappeared. As biotech chemical companies control the majority of our seeds, farmers, scientists, lawyers, and indigenous seed keepers fight a David and Goliath battle to defend the future of our food. In a harrowing and heartening story, these reluctant heroes rekindle a lost connection to our most treasured resource and revive a culture connected to seeds. SEED features Vandana Shiva, Dr. Jane Goodall, Andrew Kimbrell, Winona Laduke and Raj Patel. Runtime: 94 minutes



April 19 **Sustainability Film: Kiss the Ground** Zabriskie Hall Rm 106

This inspiring and groundbreaking documentary film, narrated by and featuring Woody Harrelson, reveals a solution to our global climate crisis...and it's right under our feet. By regenerating the soil, we can completely and rapidly stabilize Earth's climate, restore lost ecosystems, and create abundant food supplies. Featuring the world's leading scientists, experts, farmers, and activists, NASA and NOAA footage, and real-world examples of regenerative agriculture, the film illustrates how the relatively simple solution of drawing down atmospheric carbon into the soil can solve humanity's greatest challenge...if we don't give up and we work together. Runtime: 94 minutes



April 21 **Sustainability Special: Around the World in 90 Minutes** Sommer Center One part lecture, one part theatre, one part slide show, one part comedy—it's the type of show where the audience has fun laughing at the stories, oohing and aahing at the photos, and then, when it's all done, they realize just how much they've learned. Multi-award-winning author Marty Essen traveled all seven continents, looking for rare and interesting wildlife; in this show, he shares his best photos and stories.