

## INTRODUCTION:

Hello and welcome to the Sustainable Solutions at the University of Idaho. My name is Olivia Wiebe, and I am the Sustainability Manager within the Office of Sustainability on the Moscow campus and today we're going to talk about sustainable initiatives on campus and ways you can get involved to help us achieve our sustainability goals.

So, what is sustainability? Well, it can be defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. We see it as a commitment to our shared future through an integrated and comprehensive approach to education, research, thought and practice. It is our responsibility to our students, our communities, and our state to foster efforts to understand and improve on our social, environmental, and economic goals.

To provide context, U of I Moscow campus sits within the native Palouse Prairie. This is an ecosystem characterized by lush native bunch grasses, pine woodlands, seasonal wetlands, and acres of vibrant wildflowers. Only 1% of the native Prairie remains. The University of Idaho recognizes our responsibility to restoring and enhancing native habitats and biodiversity.

Moscow is located on the homelands of the Nez Perce, Palouse, and Coeur d'Alene tribes. We extend gratitude to the Indigenous people that call this place home since time immemorial. U of I recognizes that it is our academic responsibility to build relationships with the Indigenous people to ensure the inclusion of tribal voices.

Let's meet the Office of Sustainability. We have Dr. Sarah Dawson who is the University Sustainability Director, myself, Olivia Wiebe, the Sustainability Manager and Madison Doherty, a doctoral candidate within the Environmental Science department, who works with us. You can reach all of us at a generalized e-mail of [uofi-sustainability@uidaho.edu](mailto:uofi-sustainability@uidaho.edu). Otherwise, you can find us at our personal addresses located on the right-hand column.

A brief history of sustainability at the University of Idaho can start in 2005. This is when the Talloires Declaration was signed by President White, an energy commitment that we will talk more about later. In 2006, U of I Sustainability Center was founded and funded by student fees. 2010 saw our Climate Action Plan draft that announced our carbon neutrality goal of 2030. 2019 was our first STARS submission which earned us a Silver Rating, STARS being the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System, a large survey that colleges across the nation are able to submit to and figure out where they're at as far as sustainability. 2020 our first solar array was installed on the Integrated Research and Innovation Center. 2021 the Sustainability Working Group was formed and drafted the Presidential Sustainability White Paper that can be found on our website. 2022 we submitted to STARS a second time and received a Silver Rating, and the first University Sustainability Director was hired. In 2023, the Office of Sustainability was founded within the President's Office and Campus Pollinator and Campus Tree committees were formed. Looking forward, we hope to work on our interdisciplinary Sustainability Certificate for undergraduates, create a campus-wide composting

program to deal with our food waste, and resubmit to STARS to hopefully achieve Gold and the highest ranking which is Platinum.

The areas of focus we'll talk about today are academics operations and engagement.

## ACADEMICS

Let's start with Academics. The University of Idaho has over 150 interdisciplinary degrees programs and certificates that relate to environmental, social, and economic sustainability so that every student can engage in sustainability-inclusive education. A few examples of our sustainability research opportunities include the Center for Resilient Communities, U of I Experimental Forest, the Taylor Wilderness Research Station, Semester in the Wild, our McCall Field Campus, the Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Rinker Rock Creek Ranch and Kimberly Research and Extension Center. At the end of this training, you will receive a document with links to all of these programs along with others as mentioned as we move forward. You can also find more information by going to [uidaho.edu](http://uidaho.edu) and searching for any of these programs. Some of the existing certificates in the undergraduate level include Remote Sensing of the Environment, Restoration Ecology, Tribal Natural Resources Stewardship, the Climate Change certificate, and Geographic Information Systems, or GIS. In the graduate levels we have Fire Ecology Management and Technology, Remote Sensing of the Environment, the certificate in Environmental Education and Science Communication, the Natural Resources and Environmental Law, Climate Change certificate and Nuclear Criticality Safety, Decommissioning and Used Fuel Management and Technology Management.

Moving on to Operations.

## OPERATIONS

Within Operations, we will be learning about energy, water, waste, transportation, food, biodiversity and landscaping, and our built environment.

## ENERGY

Let's start with energy. The University of Idaho is dedicated to reducing greenhouse gas emissions generated on campus. Our commitments include the Talloires Declaration, the President's Climate Leadership Commitment, and our 2010 Climate Action Plan.

Why is this important? Carbon Dioxide, also known as CO<sub>2</sub>, is the most abundant greenhouse gas and it contributes to a steady warming of our global climate, which puts our ecosystems and public health at risk. Locally, climate change contributes to a change in water availability and an increasing number of forest fires. Even though much of our local energy is generated via hydropower through Avista, our utility provider, we still depend on fossil fuels to

power our lives. In 2020, 50% of our CO2 emissions came from electricity alone amounting to 10,491 tons of CO2.

In this section we'll talk about our energy commitments, the IRIC solar array, the District Energy Plant, and our steam microturbines.

The energy commitments signed at the University of Idaho include the 2005 Talloires Declaration, which declares a commitment to environmental sustainability and higher education. It provides a 10-point action plan for incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy and academics, operations, and outreach. In 2007, we signed the President's Climate Leadership Commitment, which is a commitment to creating comprehensive plans in pursuit of climate neutrality, including climate action plans and greenhouse gas inventories. In 2010, we drafted our first climate action plan that outlined the steps to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. This focuses on minimizing our energy footprint of our new buildings and increasing the efficiency of our existing buildings. Other priorities included transportation, solid waste, purchasing and food.

The IRIC solar array sits on top of the Integrated Research and Innovation Center. It was our first photovoltaic solar array installed on campus and it has a total of 368 panels that were purchased by 120 donors, including our ASUI student body and the Office of the President. These panels have the potential to produce a maximum of 132.2 kilowatts, which is nearly 15% of the IRIC energy demand. This is pretty significant because the IRIC is a research building and has very intensive electricity demands due to the equipment.

The District Energy Plant provides heating and cooling needs on campus, and they're met through this district energy system. There are large boilers in the plant that provide heating and three campus chiller plants that provide cooling. This plant is also often referred to as the Steam Plant and was converted from coal fuel to woody biomass in 1986. This woody biomass consists of wood chips that are sourced from local timber industry waste. According to the EPA, biomass is a renewable resource that is considered carbon neutral because the amount of carbon that is released upon burning it is the same amount that was consumed during its lifetime. Steam, chilled water, and compressed air are distributed through a network of underground utility tunnels that you can see labeled on the sidewalks throughout campus.

The steam microturbines are three turbines that are capable of producing electricity and were installed in 2022 to catch the steam generated from the heating and cooling processes. They offset the campus' electrical demand by 13%. The District Energy Plant is the first carbon negative building on campus, which means it produces more electricity than it consumes, and this is due to the installation of these microturbines.

So how can you help with energy? You can take steps to reduce the emissions and energy consumption on campus by turning off lights in empty rooms, unplugging unused appliances and devices, turning on your energy saving features on your electronic devices, adjusting your thermostats to the temperature outside, meaning set temperatures higher in the

summer and lower in the winter to reduce the demand on these systems, wash your laundry in cold water, and try to limit your dryer use, take alternative transportation to campus, we'll touch more on those opportunities later, and educate others about ways that they can help.

To summarize energy, the key points include that our IRIC hosts the University's first solar array, the District Energy Plant uses biomass waste from the local timber industry, and the microturbines turn steam produced in the heating and cooling process into electricity. This matters because despite the fact that our utility provider uses hydropower, we still rely on fossil fuels to power our campus. Using these fossil fuels create potent gases that trap heat in our atmosphere that warm our surface and alter our natural systems. You can conserve energy by turning off lights when they aren't needed, invest in energy efficient appliances, and enable energy saving features on all devices.

## WATER

The University of Idaho is dedicated to responsible water management and educating our future leaders on water conservation.

Why is this important? Every living thing needs water. The Moscow campus sits on the Grande Ronde and Wanapum aquifers, both of which are being pumped faster than they can recharge. This means that that we are removing water faster than it can be recharged through our natural systems. The water levels in the aquifers have been declining since the 1960s, although recent management practices have slowed the decline moderately. The rate of pumping from these aquifers is still outpacing the recharge, that ability to continue adding water into the system. We have thick units of clay and large areas of impermeable surfaces, meaning surfaces that water cannot get through, like cement, that prevents surface water from entering the aquifer. This is also known as infiltration. Combine that with our growing population, our region could face critical water restrictions in the near future. Keeping our streams free of pollutants and litter is also crucial to conservation efforts across the Palouse.

In this section, we'll talk about Paradise Creek Restoration, reclaimed water irrigation systems, our groundwater management and stormwater management.

Paradise Creek Restoration included a project in 2009. It was rerouted from its original channel to accommodate agricultural needs prior to the University's ownership and in 2009, the University led an effort to return the creek to its historic channel. This was a partnership with federal, state, and municipal organizations. Almost 19,000 trees and native shrubs were planted to stabilize creek beds, improve water quality, and help restore the riparian vegetation corridor, riparian meaning any areas adjacent to that stream system.

Moving forward to our reclaimed water irrigation system. In partnership with the city, University of Idaho uses discharge from the city's Wastewater Treatment Plant to irrigate much of its grounds. Nearly 90% of the Moscow campus is irrigated with this reclaimed water. Benefits of this system include a reduced pressure on groundwater demand, it provides nutrient

rich water for irrigation, which reduces that need for fertilizers, it reduces the wastewater discharge points to the stream which then allows nutrient absorption by plants, which reduces water pollution because when we have excess nutrients coming into the stream system this can cause big blooms of algae. That alga then takes up the oxygen and that negatively impacts the biodiversity within the stream system. Across campus, you will see signs that say reclaimed water, do not drink. Reclaimed water is safe for irrigation, you are safe if you come in contact with it, it's just not rated for being near domestic dwellings like dorms or houses and it is not rated for consumption. Reclaimed water is safe and effective and a great way to reduce the strain of pulling water out of our aquifer to keep our campus beautiful.

Here is a map to show you where the reclaimed water irrigation system is in service. You can see by the legend that the pink and the purple spots are where we have our reclaimed water the light and dark blue are domestic water and the orange is domestic water that comes from the city, domestic meaning it comes from the aquifer and reclaimed meaning it comes from that Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Groundwater management, groundwater being the water within our aquifer systems. We are an active member of the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee, also referred to as PBAC. PBAC is a collaborative bistate consortium that monitors, analyzes, manages, and conserves the local groundwater supply. In 1992, they published a Groundwater Management Plan to address that rapidly declining water table through monitoring and analysis guidelines, outreach and education, and municipal policy adjustments. In a response to this, the decline in the water table, or the level where the water is at within our aquifer, the decline dropped from decreasing by a foot per year to decreasing by .7 feet per year. So again, this is still being pumped faster than we can recharge it and so it is still dropping, our water table is still dropping, it's just dropping at a slower rate, a moderately slower rate.

Stormwater management is largely the runoff or the surface water from rain that comes through the streets. You'll see on campus these dump no waste-drains to stream labeling these catch basins. This runoff drains directly to local waterways including Paradise Creek and Hog Creek. This means that what we spill or drop near these basins drains untreated into the stream. The University has worked to develop a publicly available Stormwater Management Plan that outlines the measures to reduce pollutants in the streams, inspect our catch basins, control discharge, and provide education and outreach materials for public involvement. This plan is available on our website as well as the links that I will send after the training.

Stormwater reporting. So, a big piece of keeping our stormwater drains clean and our river systems and stream systems clean is reporting any spills you see, accidental or otherwise, to the city or the university. Off campus spills can be reported via the City Stormwater Hotline provided there, on campus spills can be reported via the University of Idaho facilities line provided there, and spills that are emergencies are reported directly to 911 and they will then contact the proper authorities.

So how can we help? Well, we can reduce the amount of water we use in daily activities by taking shorter showers, only washing full loads of laundry, turning off your faucets when not in immediate use, like when brushing your teeth, check indoor and outdoor fixtures regularly for leaks. If you are a home or property owner, you can replace your lawn with native plants that do not need supplemental water. The City of Moscow provides Conservation Programs that include a Wisescape Rebate Program that means when you replace 300 square feet of irrigated lawn with drought tolerant plants you can earn up to \$150 back, there is a Fixture Rebate Program which encourages you to swap out your old low high flow toilet with a low flow toilet to receive up to \$125 per toilet replaced, and the Conservation Device Program where you can receive free water-saving devices for inside and outside the home through the city. If you are looking at helping with the catch basins, stormwater, and groundwater management, eliminating litter and chemical disposal near these catch basins will help keep those toxic items out of our water systems.

In summary, the key points in our water section include the Paradise Creek Restoration Project having restored the creek to its historic channel, most of campus is maintained with reclaimed water, and water conservation efforts on campus include the groundwater management plan through PBAC and the Stormwater Management Plan. This matters because our aquifers are declining at a rate of 0.7 feet per year, which will likely lead to water restrictions in our region without conservation efforts. Keeping the waterways free of litter and pollution will also help preserve our riparian habitat. You can conserve water by using it wisely, fixing leaky fixtures or faucets, and reducing your irrigation needs. You can protect our local waterways by eliminating litter and reporting potential pollutants to the proper authorities.

## WASTE

Let's move on to waste. The University of Idaho is dedicated to creating sustainable waste systems through innovative practices and promoting active participation across campus.

So, what is waste? It includes solid waste, recyclables, and compostables. Solid waste includes any single use materials that can only be disposed of in a landfill or an incinerator. This often leads to air, soil, and water pollution. Through composting and recycling we can reduce our solid waste volumes by nearly 90%. Recyclable items can be collected and processed into usable materials, reducing the need for new resource extraction. Accepted materials can change based on location, but all recycling must be clean dry and properly sorted in order to be recycled. Compostable items are organic materials that can be broken down and added to soil to improve productivity without using fertilizers. By composting food scraps, bioplastics, and certain paper goods, we can also reduce emissions in landfills and incinerators.

So why is this important? On average, people in the United States produce 4.9 pounds of waste per day. This production of disposable goods and irresponsible waste management leads to water, air, and soil pollution. At the University of Idaho, due to our contract with our municipal servicer, Inland North Waste, our waste is transported to Oregon to be processed and landfilled. This transportation is carbon intensive and adds to the emissions produced by

disposal. Reducing our waste and recycling materials can also reduce negative environmental and human health consequences caused by raw resource extraction and the production, transportation, and disposal of goods.

In this section, we'll talk about our Vandals Recycling program, compost and how to reduce and reuse materials.

Vandals Recycle is the name of our Moscow campus campus-wide single stream recycling program. It relies on diligent sorting of recyclable and non-recyclable materials. Non-recyclable materials or normally accepted materials with food or drink residue are considered contamination. In order to keep our contract, contamination rates must stay below 5% of our total recycling to keep our contract with our waste provider. Here, we've provided the recycling guidelines for our single stream recycling program. Accepted materials include mixed paper, cardboard, and newspaper. Plastics that have a screw top and, on the bottom, have a resin code of #1 and #2, or aluminum and tin cans. Materials that are not accepted and considered to be contamination include glass, cartons, paper and plastic coffee cups, plastic bags, or clam shells. On campus, there are two collection points that accept plastic bags or plastic film. They are marked as TREX collection points. They go to the company TREX who creates decking out of them. They are located, one is in the Idaho Student Union Building by the Einstein's, and one is in the Pittman Center by the Info Desk and those are serviced by the Student Sustainability Cooperative. Plastic bags cannot go in the blue single-stream recycling bins. All materials must be clean dry and free of food or drink residue. For plastics, we want to be sure to check the resin code on the bottom. As you can see there is a small recycling sign with either a 1 or a 2. They also have to have screw tops, but we want to be sure to remove our lids and rings from those screw tops and throw those in the garbage. Everything has to be free of food or drink residue.

You can help make our program successful by reducing your single-use material consumption and reusing items to reduce our overall waste stream volumes. You want to be sure to be mindful when disposing of items to help eliminate the contamination within our recycling and you also can educate yourself and others by becoming a Recycling Ambassador, where you get a fun button and lots of different toolkit items to help you distribute the information of how to properly recycle.

Compost. More than half of our waste stream is comprised of compostable materials. Composting turns that waste into nutrient-rich soil additive. It also decreases the production of methane, which is a potent greenhouse gas that is produced in landfills as these organic materials rot. There are several different methods of composting. They include backyard composting piles for folks who have an outdoor space, countertop composting bins for apartments or housing units or condos where you can collect your scraps in a bin on your counter that will turn it to compost. Other options are outdoor large composting barrels, these are great because you are able to find a use for your food scraps and other organic materials and the sun creates the compost and you're able to put it on your garden beds. You can also collect your food waste in a yogurt container, a bucket, another type of bin, collect your scraps

and put them in the collection bays accessible to the public at the PCEI, or Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute, Nature Center. This is located at 1040 Rodeo Drive, and you can put all of your food waste into a bucket and take it there. You can also collect your yard waste and bring that to the collection bays behind the Moscow Recycling Center.

The last piece to responsible waste management is reduce and reuse. So, offices, classrooms, departments, and units can help reduce our waste generated on campus by limiting printing and use electronic document sharing services. At the University of Idaho, we all have access to Microsoft services and there are also Google services that allow you to share and collaborate on documents without having to print. You can utilize electronic devices for note taking, sketching and other office tasks. You can be sure that when you are printing you are purchasing only 100% post-consumer recycled paper, which is easily accessible now. You want to shop University Surplus for items you need and reselling items you no longer use. Our University Surplus is essentially a secondhand store within the university system. You can catalog your items and donate them to University Surplus and then you can shop the Surplus to be able to find furniture items or technology or any other needs you might have to see if they're available there first before purchasing new. You can also use reusable mugs dishes and utensils to limit the amount of those you are consuming on a day-to-day basis on campus.

So again, how can you help? Well, you can bring your own reusable mugs dishes and silverware, you can bring your reusable water bottle to refill it our many refill stations, you can avoid all products packaged in single-use plastic, you can collect compostable food scraps for your compost bin or backyard pile, you can stay informed on our best recycling and composting practices, you can be conscious about items that can be reused or donated to keep them out of the waste stream, you can reduce your consumption of items that only have a single use and you can be sure to research how to dispose of potentially hazardous waste properly. If you're on campus and you have questions about potentially hazardous waste, you can always contact Environmental Health and Safety for guidance.

In summary, the key points of our waste section are that our single-stream recycling program depends on limiting that contamination, composting is a great option for disposing of food waste and non-recyclable paper products, and reducing and reusing your materials decreases our overall waste generation, which decreases the stress that are on these systems. This matters because reducing the amount of waste that's generated and landfilled improves our water and air quality while reducing our soil pollution. It also reduces our overall waste. Reducing our overall waste can also result in fewer truck trips to Oregon, lowering our carbon emissions. You can reduce our landfill waste by eliminating single-use packaging, following our recycling guidelines, reusing items when possible, and composting your food and paper scraps.



## TRANSPORTATION

Let's talk about transportation. The University of Idaho is dedicated to promoting alternative forms of transportation. Moscow campus has well maintained walking and biking paths as well as a SMART Transit System that make it easy to get around without a personal vehicle.

Why is this important? More than half of our transportation emissions come from personal vehicles. Relying on traditional personal vehicles perpetuates our dependence on fossil fuels and accelerates climate change but informed personal choices can help reduce the impacts of transportation. Additionally, walking or biking to work promotes environmental and personal well-being.

In this section, we'll talk about our walkable campus, our bike friendly features, our SMART Transit System, and our break buses, along with other regional travel solutions.

Our walkable campus fits within a two-mile diameter. Also, the scenic Paradise Path that runs through Paradise Creek allows for a quiet and beautiful walk to campus. Paved shared sidewalks are well maintained and inclement weather, which allows for year-round walkability, and Campus Security provides a free Safe Walk program with no questions asked if you'd call the number provided.

A selection of the bike friendly features on campus includes bike parking shelters, which are covered bike parking with racks, bike fix stations, which are a collection of common bike tools to help with on-the-go maintenance, and the Vandal Bike program, which is first-year student rental program where you submit a deposit. All maintenance costs are included. It includes a bike helmet, ulock and bike light, and once you are, as long as you don't purchase a parking pass, you can get this bike for your deposit and then you can use your bike throughout your four years and then upon returning you can either get your deposit back or you can choose to keep the bike.

The SMART Transit System is Moscow's public transportation. There are two routes, the East, and the West route. It is fair free. Both routes leave the Intermodal Transit Center near Parking and Transportation between 6:40 and 7:00 PM Monday through Friday, and it's 6:40 to 4:00 PM on Saturdays. Buses leave at 10 and 40 minutes after each hour. There are convenient stops throughout campus including Deacon and College, the ISUB, Ag Sci and the Pittman Center, as well as all throughout Moscow and the community.

The Vandal Break Bus is a chartered bus for students. It's low-cost, safe, and convenient transportation to Boise and Idaho Falls during fall, winter, and spring breaks. The Boise route is \$100 for round-trip, and the Idaho Falls route is 150 for round-trip. You can reserve these online through Parking and Transportation and they depart Saturday morning after the last day of classes.

Other regional travel options include Northwestern Trailways, which offers buses to Spokane during breaks, the Wheatland Express, which offers weekend and vacation express buses to Seattle and Portland, and the Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport shuttle, which is a free, fixed schedule bus between campus and the airport. It opens several days before the start and end of the fall and spring semesters, and you can submit a request online prior to your trip to reserve a space. Pickup locations of the shuttle include the Pitman Center and the LLCs on Paradise Creek Street.

How can you help with transportation? By walking or biking to campus, you can help us reduce our carbon impact and contribute to a generally healthy society. When walking or biking is not an option, use public transport or carpool to reduce the commuting emissions. You can also utilize buses and other shared transit methods during breaks.

In summary, transportation has these key points. Our centralized campus has well maintained walkways, Moscow has a convenient and free SMART Transit System, there are ample bike paths and repair stations that make biking a great choice. This matters because transportation, especially in traditional single person vehicles, generates a large amount of our greenhouse gases. To meet our climate commitments and carbon neutrality goals, we all need to find new ways to reduce our carbon emissions. We can do this by choosing low-carbon methods of transportation like walking or biking when possible and otherwise utilizing ride sharing carpooling or public transport.

## FOOD

Moving on to food. The University of Idaho is dedicated to reducing food waste and emissions, combating food insecurity in our community, and sourcing more goods locally.

Why is this important? Sustainable food systems reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides, compost food waste for soil enrichment, can save water, and promote healthier ecosystems. We can help reduce food insecurity in our community by donating time, money, or usable food items to our local pantries.

This section includes the Soil Stewards Farm, IdahoEats, our on-campus dining service, and the Vandal Food Pantry.

The Soil Steward's Farm is a student-led organic farm that was the site of a major soil remediation effort to restore the former gravel parking lot to the vibrant farm that exists today. They provide organically grown produce as well as providing students an opportunity to learn about sustainable food systems. You can contact them at [soilstewards@uidaho.edu](mailto:soilstewards@uidaho.edu) for more information about the farm and how to volunteer. They host harvest sales every Thursday from June to September and provide a community supported agriculture, or CSA, program for community members that provide monthly subscriptions to fresh produce.

IdahoEats, our campus dining service, has several sustainability commitments including serving fair trade, USDA organic, and rainforest safe or locally grown coffee at multiple locations. They're committed to providing more healthy food options throughout dining locations. They're committed to partnering with How Good, a program that identifies Best, Great, and Good recipes based on the 8 sustainable metrics, and they are committed to producing goods from local vendors when available. You can learn more about these commitments by visiting the IdahoEats website.

Food insecurity and higher education is a major issue. According to the US Department of Education, an estimated one in three college students experience food insecurity. The USDA defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live active, healthy lives. This can be a temporary situation for a family or can last a long time the lack of access of food can negatively affect academic performance, physical health, and mental well-being.

The Vandal Food Pantry aims to address this. It is an open-format pantry space with perishable and non-perishable items. It is open to students, staff, faculty, and community members Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 5:00. It relies on donations from our campus community to stay stocked. It aims to address short-term food insecurity while providing a sustainable alternative to usable food waste. Those experiencing long-term food insecurity are encouraged to reach out to the Office of Sustainability or the Dean of Students office to be connected with resources. The Vandal Food Pantry also partners with IdahoEats to recover food from marketplaces and expired food that can be composted is brought to the PCEI Nature Center and all clean packaging is recycled. Non-perishable donations, meaning shelf-stable, are accepted year-round. Due to supply, non-vegetable donations are preferred. You can also donate through the Parking and Transportation Food for Fines program, where they accept in-need items, food items as well as personal hygiene items, that can be donated to the Vandal Food Pantry in exchange for forgiving your parking tickets.

How can you help? Well, we can prepare more seasonal plant-based meals that are nutrient-dense and regionally available. You can shop locally for produce and other goods. Shopping locally reduces carbon emissions from shipping as well as supports our regional economy. You can support the Soil Stewards Farm. You can volunteer at the Vandal Food Pantry, or you can organize a food drive in your classroom, department, or unit.

In summary, the key points of our food section include that local organic produce is available from the Soil Stewards Farm seasonally, IdahoEats is continuing to improve the sustainability of dining services, and the Vandal Food Pantry is available to everyone and relies on usable donations. This matters because growing and consuming our food responsibly has the potential to improve our water, soil, and air qualities. Food insecurity is also common on college campuses. You can shop from local organic vendors and aim to prepare more plant-based meals that minimize food waste when possible. You can compost your food scraps and you can also donate any usable items to food insecurity organizations.

## BIODIVERSITY AND LANDSCAPING

Next up is biodiversity and landscaping. The University of Idaho is dedicated to preserving the natural beauty of the region through native landscaping and habitat restoration.

Why is this important? Our local ecosystem, the Palouse Prairie, is the most endangered ecosystem in the continental US with less than 1% of the native habitat remaining. The native Palouse Prairie remnants are often only a few acres each and are scattered throughout the region. This creates a disconnected patchwork of land for our native plants insects and wildlife. The native ecosystem holds significance for the Indigenous peoples of the region and supports an intricate network of native plants and animals.

Through sustainable landscape management and habitat restoration the University of Idaho has the potential to become a sanctuary for our native species to find food, shelter, and sites for reproduction. Native plants require less water, provide stabilizing root systems for our soil, and attract native pollinators, who are most effective at pollinating native plants. We rely on biodiversity for many things including replenishing the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the soil that grows our food.

In this section, we'll talk about the native pollinator garden, Bee Campus USA certification, Tree Campus in Higher Education certification, the ACSP golf course certification, and service-learning opportunities.

The native pollinator garden on campus was funded through the Student Sustainability Cooperative Sustainable Initiatives Fund, where a student project installed a native pollinator garden along Paradise Path near the East end of Guy Wicks Field. This garden was planted with multiple native wildflowers and grasses including Jessica's aster, Idaho fescue, western yarrow, and several others. The garden is currently maintained by the Society of Conservation Biology Club.

Bee Campus USA is a certification through the Xerces Society and as a recent proud affiliate of Bee Campus we have committed to establishing a standing Bee Campus Committee to advocate for pollinators, creating and enhancing pollinator habitat on campus by planting more native plants, begun work on an Integrated Pest Management plan to regulate pesticide use, offered continuing education focused on pollinator conservation, offering service-learning projects through the Student Sustainability Cooperative to enhance pollinator habitat, and begun to create signage focused on pollinator conservation.

Tree Campus and Higher Education is a certification through the Arbor Day Foundation that we are trying to pursue, and we hope to gain recognition as a Tree Campus soon. To do so, we have made the following commitments: We have established a Campus Tree Care advisory committee, we've begun drafting a Campus Tree Care Plan we have observed Arbor Day through

engagement events and provided service-learning opportunities through the Student Sustainability Cooperative.

The ACSP golf course certification we are pursuing through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for golf is a program that promotes environmental protection and the preservation of natural heritage on golf courses. This certification addresses the following aspects of sustainable golf course management: environmental planning, wildlife and habitat management, chemical use reduction and safety, water conservation, water quality management, and outreach and education.

Service-learning opportunities include working with the Student Sustainability Cooperative. Since 2006, the SSC has planted over 8000 native trees shrubs and grasses in partnership with local restoration organizations. The SSC has volunteer opportunities that every Vandal can join that focus on Prairie restoration and environmental stewardship.

How can we help? You can volunteer with the SSC and other restoration organizations in the area, you can choose native plants while making landscaping decisions using our native plant guide, you can provide nesting sites for native bees, birds, and other wildlife when you are able to, and you can eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides in landscaping decisions.

In summary, the biodiversity and landscaping section had the following key points: Bee Campus USA symbolizes our commitment to rebuilding and protecting native pollinator habitats on campus, the Tree Campus in Higher Education symbolizes commitment to sustainable stewardship of our campus trees and the ACSP golf course symbolizes our intention to restore native wildlife habitat and protect our water systems on our golf course. This matters because native Palouse Prairie restoration is a priority for local, state, and national conservation groups due to the critically endangered status of our region. It is our responsibility to create land management practices that enhance native habitats for plant and animal life. You can help by volunteering with native habitat restoration through local conservation organizations if you have influence over land or property be sure to include native plants in your landscaping and eliminate your use of harmful pesticides or herbicides.

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Moving on to built environment. The University of Idaho is dedicated to applying sustainable solutions in the built environment. How we source, construct, and manage our buildings, distribution systems, and infrastructure impacts our natural world.

Why is this important? Procuring materials, using equipment to build, and operating buildings account for nearly 40% of the annual global carbon emissions. Building and maintaining spaces to live, learn, and recreate requires materials sourced from the natural world, which can lead to the destruction of vital habitats around the globe. Our built environment also contributes to water and soil pollution and produces construction waste.

Buildings that are built sustainably are able to reduce their utility consumption, operational emissions, and are constructed using materials that require less energy to produce.

In this section, we'll talk about our LEED Silver Policy, the LEED Gold buildings on campus and the ICCU arena.

Our LEED Silver policy follows the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, which is a rating system that provides a framework for healthy, efficient carbon and cost saving green buildings. In 2008, U of I committed to minimizing environmental impact of new and renovated building projects. The building standards require all new construction and major remodels to be certified as meeting or exceeding a Silver LEED rating.

There are two buildings on campus that are rated LEED Gold. The first of which is the College of Education. It was built in 1969 and renovated to fit LEED Gold standards. Features include low flow toilets, water bottle refill stations, natural lighting, and other energy efficient features. The Integrated Research and Innovation Center, or IRIC, was a new construction finished in 2017. Features of that building include our first photovoltaic solar array, a green roof with native grasses, and energy efficient fixtures that utilize natural light.

The Idaho Central Credit Union Arena made history when built in 2021 with its stunning timber design and locally sourced construction materials. The wood was harvested by the UI experimental forest and made into timber beams by Idaho mills and laminators. Using wood decreases the carbon footprint of the building and required less energy to produce than steel or concrete. Using local mills and sourcing also greatly reduced the shipping emissions.

So how can you help with built environment? Increasing the efficiency of systems within your living space is the best way to promote sustainable buildings. Pursue fixture rebates after replacing high flow toilets throughout the City of Moscow, pursue energy rebates through Avista Utilities depending on types of dwelling, and you can refit your home with shower heads and faucets with the EPA Watersense label to reduce your water usage and pursue purchasing appliances that are certified EnergyStar which meet the EPA strict energy efficiency requirements.

In summary, the built environment section key points are that all new campuses campus buildings are built to LEED Silver standards or better, there are two LEED Gold buildings on campus, the College of Education building, and the IRIC, and the ICCU arena was constructed using local timber mills and labor. This matters because building and maintaining our offices, classrooms, and living spaces requires energy and invaluable resources. Sustainable construction and maintenance helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, landfill waste generation, and the strain on natural resources but you can retrofit your home with water and energy saving devices, invest in EnergyStar appliances, and build with natural or low emission materials in personal construction projects.

ENGAGEMENT

Moving on to our last section, engagement.

Why is this important? Everyone deserves access to environmental benefits. Historically, people of color and low-income communities have been disproportionately impacted by environmental pollution and hazards, negatively affecting their health and safety. Additionally, their voices have often been excluded from sustainable solution conversations. Volunteerism and engagement let people in communities create a stronger sense of environmental stewardship.

Environmental justice is defined by the EPA as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which we live, learn, and work.

In this section, we will be talking about sustainability access and integrity, how to get involved, and different volunteer opportunities on campus and in the Palouse.

## ACCESS AND INTEGRITY

Let's begin with sustainability access and integrity. The University of Idaho is dedicated to creating equal access to food, housing, academic opportunities, employment opportunities, and healthcare as well as providing basic needs support programs. Sustainability includes making space for everyone to live healthy, productive lives.

A selection of support programs include the Vandal Food Pantry, as spoken about earlier, the Bruce and Kathy Pitman Emergency Fund that provides financial assistance to students who are experiencing emergency situations, Vandal Health Education, which provides free education on the health and well-being practices, the Vandals for Recovery program, and host Well Space, a quiet place for any Vandal to come and relax in the Student Recreation Center, and finally the Vandal Care Report system that connects Vandals in distress with the right resources including health counseling and basic need services.

A selection of university entities that promote access and integrity include the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Offices of Equity and Diversity, the Office of Tribal Relations, the Center for Disability Access and Resources, the International Programs Office and the LGBTQA+ office.

## GET INVOLVED

Last up is getting involved. The University of Idaho is dedicated to providing a plethora of opportunities to get involved with sustainability on local, regional, and national levels. Make a difference and engage with our programs, initiatives, service-learning, and events. The Student Sustainability Cooperative, also known as the SSC, is a student-fee funded sustainability organization within Student Affairs. A Sustainability Coordinator leads a team of students that work to provide sustainability-related events, service-learning opportunities, and educational outreach materials. Some of the volunteer opportunities include Get Rooted, where we plant native trees, Get Dirty, where we organic farm with the Soil Stewards, and Spruce the Palouse, where we practice general environmental stewardship with local conservation organizations. The Student Sustainability Cooperative was formerly the Sustainability Center.

There are several ways to get engaged with sustainability on campus. You can take the Vandal Sustainability Pledge and motivate yourself to make positive changes. You can join the EcoVandals to help spread the word about sustainability programs on campus. You can apply for Green Event and Green Office certifications. You can nominate yourself or others for the Sustainability Champions Award. You can become a Recycling Ambassador. Volunteer with the SSC to practice environmental stewardship. Support sustainability-related student clubs through events and fundraising. Respond to surveys sent by the Office of Sustainability to help us with our STARS submission, and engage with the Office of Sustainability for guidance, questions, or suggestions. These programs can all be found in greater detail on the sustainability website.

So how can we help? You can educate yourself and others about environmental injustice, promote inclusion in sustainable solution conversations and implementation, and you can donate or volunteer to support local organizations that elevate the voices of underserved communities.

Below are a few of the volunteer opportunities available. On campus, we have the Student Sustainability Cooperative, the Center for Volunteerism, the Vandal Food Pantry, and the Soil Stewards Farm. In the Palouse, you can volunteer with the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute, the Palouse Conservation District, Backyard Harvest, or the Palouse Land Trust. Statewide you can find chapters of the Idaho Conservation League, Idaho Fish and Game, the Sierra Club Idaho chapter, and the Citizens Climate Lobby. All of these institutions and organizations have volunteer opportunities linked through their respective websites.

In summary, the engagement section had the following key points: there are a variety of support programs on campus that aim to help every vandal succeed, many offices and units are dedicated to promoting access and integrity, there are several ways to engage with sustainability at U of I, find what works for you! This matters because making space for every Vandal to enjoy healthy clean lives is a key component of a sustainable community. Educating yourself and others about historical and current environmental injustice allows us to come together to advocate for a better future and build lasting solutions. You can stay informed about current environmental injustice issues and learn how to engage with organizations that need your help. You can donate your time or funds to local organizations that support equality in



environmental activism and when given the chance please promote inclusion in any conversations regarding sustainable solutions.

You're free to direct any questions to [uofi-sustainability@uidaho.edu](mailto:uofi-sustainability@uidaho.edu) or you can contact me directly at my personal address oliviawiebe at uidaho.edu.

In order for your training to be marked as complete please fill out the post training survey. Once this is completed, you will receive your certificate of completion. Thank you!