



# SUSTAINABILITY SPOTLIGHT

April 2012

## Campus Tree Advisory Board Helps Replant Mount Oread

The University of Kansas and its Campus Tree Advisory Board launched a new initiative to “Replant Mount Oread” on March 29.

More than 30 volunteers from the campus community planted 10 redbud trees along Jayhawk Boulevard just west of Lippincott Hall. Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little helped kick off the inaugural event by helping plant the first tree.

As part of ongoing efforts to maintain and enhance the beauty of the campus landscape, and preserve

historic green spaces, Chancellor Gray-Little established the Campus Tree Advisory Board in January. The board is made up of students, faculty, staff and community members, and is responsible for assisting with the development of campus tree replacement and tree care policies, providing guidance for annual Arbor Day and service-learning projects related to campus trees, and identifying funding for future planting projects.

The launch of “Replant Mount Oread” marked the anniversary of the first Arbor Day celebration at KU, when in 1878, Chancellor James Marvin called a special holiday to encourage faculty and students to plant approximately 300 tree saplings on Mount Oread. The board hopes to revive this tradition by working with students on annual planting and tree inventory projects.



Students from the Environmental Law Society help plant a redbud tree. Source: KU School of Law.

### Celebrate the Earth, Celebrate KU!

Earth Day used to be my least favorite time of the year. To me it meant fitting all things “green” into the month of April. It meant planning events, tabling on Wescoe Beach, and coordinating volunteers, then feeling totally exhausted through the month of May.

But then a good friend reminded me that Earth Day isn’t about trying to save the planet in one day, it’s about celebrating what we have accomplished every other day of the year. And there is much to celebrate at KU!

In the last year, we have completed a [campus sustainability plan](#), earned a Bronze [STARS Rating](#), launched a campus [tree planting initiative](#), and developed a new partnership to reduce stormwater runoff while raising funds for the KU Student Rain Garden (see page 2).

KU has also been working on bold discoveries that will reduce our impact on the environment, and teaching students through more than 400 sustainability-related classes the skills they need to create a sustainable future. One class, *Green Reporting, Green Justice*, is highlighted on page 4.

I hope you will join me in celebrating these and the many other achievements KU has made in advancing sustainability. Whether attending events (page 5), hosting a celebration in your department, or rewarding yourself for personal accomplishments, enjoy this time of year. There will be plenty of time to worry about saving the planet next month.

Jeff Severin, Director  
Center for Sustainability

You can help fund future tree planting events by donating to the Tree Bank at [www.kuendowment.org/replantMtOread](http://www.kuendowment.org/replantMtOread)

## Rain Barrels on Parade to Support KU Student Rain Garden

On April 23, community members will have a unique opportunity to reduce stormwater runoff at home while supporting environmental initiatives at KU. *KU Rain Barrels on Parade*, a partnership between Coca-Cola and KU Environs, KU Dining Services, Student Union Activities, the KU Bookstore and the KU Center for Sustainability, will auction off rain barrels designed and decorated by students, faculty, staff, and community members as part of this year's campus Earth Day.

Proceeds from the auction will benefit the KU Student Rain Garden, a native garden at the Ambler Student Recreation Fitness Center that is maintained by student volunteers.

Rain barrels are used to capture rain water from household rooftops by connecting to downspouts. This not only reduces stormwater runoff which can lead to localized flooding, but provides a free and natural source of water for irrigating gardens between rains.

The barrels were donated by our Coca-Cola partners as a way to reuse & repurpose syrup containers. Nearly 60 barrels were converted and decorated for the auction, with designs that represent Community, KU Spirit, or Gardening and Farming.

The Rain barrels will be available through silent and live auctions held during and after the panel discussions that are part of the public event, *Our Campus, Our*

*Community, Our Environment*, from 5 to 9 PM on April 23 in the Kansas Union Ballroom. The silent auction will begin at 5:15 and end at 7:15, and a live auction of six barrels, selected through online voting, will immediately follow.

Photos of the decorated barrels are posted on the *KU Rain Barrels on Parade* Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/kurainbarrels](http://www.facebook.com/kurainbarrels). Visitors to the site are asked to vote for their favorite barrels by clicking "Like" on the photos. The barrel with the most votes in each category will be featured in the Lawrence Earth Day Parade and be included in the live auction. Some of the barrels will be on display at the Lied Center starting April 10.

*(Continued on page 3)*



Rain barrels are decorated with one of three themes: Community, KU Spirit, or Gardening & Farming. View more barrels at [www.facebook.com/kurainbarrels](http://www.facebook.com/kurainbarrels).

## Rain Barrels (Continued)



### KU Rain Barrels on Parade

- Coca-Cola
- KU Environs
- KU Dining Services
- Student Union Activities
- KU Bookstore
- KU Center for Sustainability

The Earth Day event will also feature panel discussions on solid waste management, preservation, land use, environmental law and policy, and history of environmentalism moderated by KU Environs as well as informational booths. Light refreshments

featuring some local food will be provided by KU Dining Services, and the band *Heartscape Landbreak* will provide music for a mixer to conclude the evening's events. Join the celebration at any point from 5-9 pm on April 23rd!

## Greening the Crimson and Blue

### Supply Swap to be held on April 19

The Environmental Stewardship Program and Center for Sustainability and are teaming together for the second annual Office Supply Swap to help campus departments clean out their closets and save money on office supplies.

Now through April 16, KU Recycling will pick up the new and gently used office supplies that you no longer have use for followed by a FREE office supply swap to redistribute supplies.

All campus departments are invited to come and pick up materials between 11:30 AM and 1:30 PM Thursday, April 19 in the Jayhawk Room on Level Five in the Kansas Union to help restock your supply shelves with items you DO need.

To donate items, take them to the collection bin at any ink cartridge recycling location. Bins will be collected for the final time on Tuesday, April 17th. To arrange for items too large to fit in a bin or for a full bin to be picked up, email KU Recycling at [kurecycling@ku.edu](mailto:kurecycling@ku.edu) to schedule a special collection.

As you are cleaning out your supply closets, remember to recycle any no-longer-usable office pak— including envelopes, manila folder files, brochures or junk mail— newspapers, chipboard, and old phonebooks and catalogs.

For more information about this event visit [www.recycle.ku.edu](http://www.recycle.ku.edu).

### Are You a Green Office?

It's not too late to apply for the Green Office Recognition Program! We are extending the deadline to April 13. New and renewing Green Offices will be recognized during our Sustainability Ambassador meeting on April 17. For more information and to download the application, visit the [Center for Sustainability website](#).



## Sustaining our Planet

### Learning by Doing: Our Class Trip to Oakland, California

By Sarah Link

“Green Reporting, Green Building, Green Justice” is the name of a KU course designed by journalism professor, Simran Sethi as a way to bring students out of the classroom to learn in different environments. This course is also the reason that three other students and I spent our 2012 spring break in Oakland, California.

This course is not a traditional one. We only met a handful of times prior to spring break and much of our homework revolved around posting to Twitter, a platform we used to document our experiences in Oakland. But truth be told, I hope that this is the direction in which higher education is moving and it is precisely why I plan to pursue a PhD and hope to teach geography

and environmental studies at the university level.

The focus of the class is effectively communicating environmental concerns related to water and our classroom was the San Francisco Bay Area, primarily Oakland. We spent five days working with a myriad of organizations, companies, and individuals each dedicated to environmentalism and communicating these issues to the public. We focused a great deal of attention on environmental issues and responses in Oakland because it has some of the worst air and water quality in all of the Bay Area. It also has a lower average household

income than most of the other Bay Area cities.

The combination of low income populations and environmental degradation is nothing new and occurs in many communities around the world. This concept has been deemed, “environmental racism,” and its response is called, “environmental justice.” What I take away from our trip and class is that environmental justice



**Left:** Garbage - mostly plastic - accumulates on the Damon Slough Beach in Oakland, CA.

**Right:** Manuel Mansylla from Plastic Pollution Coalition displays the plastic waste he collected in about an hour at the beach. Source: Sarah Link

is an expansive topic and takes on many forms—the activism of the Rainforest Action Network, the scholarly work of the Environmental Working Group or the Breast Cancer Fund, the journalistic work of the Earth Island Journal, and the corporate sustainability work of GAP and Levi’s each plays an integral role in the grand scheme of things.

This class has been an inspiration as well as a much needed breath of fresh air for this KU senior.

*Sarah Link is a senior in geography with a focus on community responses to resource scarcity and environmental racism. You can view class Tweets from Oakland at #kuwater*



The class visited Levi Strauss headquarters in San Francisco where they learned about Levi’s corporate sustainability programs that focus on reducing water use. Source: Sarah Link

## Live Sustainably

### Upcoming Campus and Community Events

#### April 10, 7:30-9 PM

Humanities Lecture Series  
Landscapes and Memory: Jamaica Kincaid  
Kansas Union, Woodruff Auditorium

#### April 12, 8:30 AM-5 PM

KU Energy Conference  
Oread Hotel  
Register at [www.continuinged.ku.edu](http://www.continuinged.ku.edu)

#### April 14, 11 AM-4 PM

12th Annual Earth Day Parade & Celebration  
Parade: Buford Watson Park to South Park  
Celebration: South Park

#### April 17, Noon-1 PM

Sustainability Ambassador Meeting  
Burge Union, Courtside Room

#### April 18, 7:30 AM-4:30 PM

Environmental Engineering Conference  
Kansas Union  
Register at [www.continuinged.ku.edu](http://www.continuinged.ku.edu)

#### April 19, 1-3 PM

SUA Earth Day Burger Grill-Off  
Kansas Union, Hawks Nest (Level 1)

#### April 19, 2 PM-4 PM

Rain Barrel Workshop  
Douglas County Fairgrounds, Building 1  
RSVP Required: [strabach@lawrenceks.org](mailto:strabach@lawrenceks.org)

#### April 23, 5 PM-8:30 PM

Our Campus, Our Community, Our Environment  
Kansas Union, Ballroom

#### April 23 & 24, 8:30 AM-5 PM

Environmental Security Conference  
Kansas Union  
Register at [www.continuinged.ku.edu](http://www.continuinged.ku.edu)

#### April 25, 4-6 PM

Environmental Geopolitics in the 21st Century Dr.  
Kansas Union, Jayhawk Room

#### April 25, 3:30-5 PM

Nature and Culture Seminar  
John McNeill, History, Georgetown University  
Hall Center, Conference Hall

#### April 28, 9 AM-6PM

Sowing & Reaping: Christian Perspectives on  
Food & Agriculture  
ECM Center, 1204 Oread Ave

For more information about these and other events, visit [www.sustainability.ku.edu/events/](http://www.sustainability.ku.edu/events/)

## Join Us

For more information about sustainability at KU, visit [www.sustainability.ku.edu](http://www.sustainability.ku.edu) or like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/KUSustainability](http://www.facebook.com/KUSustainability).

## Contribute

Is your department or organization contributing to a more sustainable KU? We'd love to hear about it and include your efforts in our next issue of the Spotlight! Send submissions to [sustainability@ku.edu](mailto:sustainability@ku.edu).