



SUSTAINABILITY SPOTLIGHT

June 2012

Campus Offices Recognized for Sustainability Initiatives

The KU Center for Sustainability recently recognized efforts by campus departments to reduce their environmental impacts. Eight departments were designated as “Green Offices” during the spring Earth Day celebration.

The Green Office Recognition Program helps raise awareness about sustainable practices in the office and fosters efforts to create more sustainable workspaces at KU. Participants in the program complete an application that identifies specific actions their offices are taking, including strategies for cutting energy consumption, reducing waste, and making environmentally-preferable purchases. Each action is assigned a point value, and an applicant’s total score determines their overall level of achievement, with Level 3 Green Offices reaching the highest level of recognition.

Departments that were recognized by the program include:

Level 1

- Center of Latin American Studies
- International Programs

Level 2

- Office of the Chancellor
- Policy Office
- Work Group for Community Health & Development

Level 3

- Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies
- Office of the Provost
- Recreation Services

Since the program was established in 2010, a total of 32 campus departments have been designated as Green Offices. For more information, visit the [Green Office webpage](#).

Disconnect and Reconnect

Recent research by faculty at KU has focused on the cognitive benefits of getting away from our technological environments and into the natural world. So we decided to move our May Sustainability Ambassadors meeting outdoors, exploring how elements in nature relate to the work we do.

I was personally drawn to the sound of the breeze, constant and calm, able to cut through the other “noises” and simultaneously tie them together. Our sustainability efforts must move forward in the same way; and becoming a part of everything we do at KU.

I was also struck by the creativity of the group as discussed how our work relates to nature. Genna Hurd, Ambassador for the Institute for Policy & Social Research shares her experience on Page 4.

Whether contemplating your own connection to natural systems, or just relaxing in the sunshine, I hope you all can enjoy some time in nature this summer!

Jeff Severin, Director
Center for Sustainability



New Green Offices include International Programs, Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies, Latin American Studies, and the Work Group for Community Health and Development.

Rain Barrel Auction Raises Funds for Rain Garden

KU Memorial Unions presented a check for \$1,625 to the Center for Sustainability on June 1 to help support the KU Student Rain Garden. The money was raised at an April 23 auction featuring decorated rain barrels as part of the KU Rain Barrels on Parade initiative.

The fundraiser was coordinated by KU Environs with support from the KU Bookstore, KU Dining Services, Student Union Activities, the Center for Sustainability and Coca-Cola. The barrels and conversion kits were donated by Coca-Cola to reuse and repurpose syrup containers, and the rain barrels were assembled and decorated by students, faculty, staff, and community members.

"We were extremely impressed by the creativity of those who donated their talents to decorating rain barrels," said KU Environs president Kim Scherman. "Not only will the rain garden benefit from the money that was raised, but community members are helping reducing storm water runoff and benefiting from the free water now collecting in barrels they bought at the auction."

The Student Garden Advisory Board, which oversees volunteer maintenance of the garden plans to use a portion of the funding to purchase new interpretive signage to help educate visitors about the native plants in the garden. The donation will also be used to purchase garden tools, equipment, and supplies needed for maintenance, as well as new plants for the rain garden.

Located next to the Ambler Student Recreation Fitness Center, the KU Student Rain Garden is a native garden that was designed by students and is sustainably maintained by volunteers. Water from the rooftop of the building is distributed through the garden instead of flowing directly into the municipal storm drain system. This provides an opportunity for the water to infiltrate into the soil and be taken up by the plants, which reduces flow to the storm drain and improves water quality.

The garden was constructed in 2009 with funding from Student Senate, Recreation Services, and a grant from the Kansas Department of Health and

Environment. However, the project does not have an ongoing source of funding. "This donation will go a long way in filling our current gap in annual maintenance needs at the garden," said Jeff Severin, director of the Center for Sustainability. "We are very grateful for the generosity of our community and the organizations that supported KU Rain Barrels on Parade:

Volunteer at the Garden

The KU Student Rain Garden is maintained using sustainable practices with volunteer support. If you would like to help, join the [Rain Garden Volunteers](#) group on Facebook, or email the [Center for Sustainability](#).



Sustaining our Planet

Biofuels and Climate Change: Farmers' Land Use Decisions

Alyse M. Zadalis, BACC:FLUD Project Coordinator

Two of the world's most challenging problems, the accelerating impacts of global climate change and the pressing need for renewable energy sources, are closely interwoven in terms of cause and effect. These issues are especially apparent in Kansas' agricultural sector and researchers here have taken notice.

The Biofuels and Climate Change: Farmers' Land Use Decisions (BACC:FLUD) project has brought together an inter-disciplinary team of researchers from The University of Kansas, Kansas State University, and Emporia State University with the purpose of developing a deeper understanding of the factors influencing farmers' decisions to grow crops as feedstocks for renewable energy production, and their responses to climate change. From academic perspectives as

varied as anthropology, engineering, and economics, the project examines how farmers understand and interpret science-based information about changing climate patterns and explores how farmers in Kansas make multi-faceted decisions about land use.

To do this, the team is conducting a series of surveys and in-depth interviews that examine farmers' perceptions of sustainability; the use and availability of water across the state; the presence and quality of social networks; farmers' values and histories; government policies that promote or restrain certain land uses; and economic factors, such as food crop prices and biofuel crop prices. These data sets will be integrated with data from other sources into a rich, longitudinal database on land use decisions that reflects both the human and the

environmental dimensions involved. Researchers at the Kansas Biological Survey are also working to integrate a variety of spatial remote sensing data into an in-depth land use/land cover database that will give a nuanced picture of how crop land in the state is being utilized. Taken together, these data will constitute a rich and varied look at the factors framing farmers' cropping decisions and their responses to changing climate patterns.

Understanding farmers' decisions is essential if we are to develop policies that respond to changes brought on by global warming and the growing need for renewable energy sources. The results from this project have the potential to facilitate more accurate policy scenarios and predictions of regional land use; they may also be used to better understand the potential impacts of climate change on the national agricultural sector and to give strong guidance to policy makers in this arena.



Researchers from The University of Kansas, Kansas State University, and Emporia State University are collaborating on the Biofuels and Climate Change: Farmers' Land Use Decisions (BACC:FLUD) project.

The BACC:FLUD project is embedded within the larger Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) Research Infrastructure Improvement Award (EPS-0553722), which is a National Science Foundation program designed to promote scientific progress nationwide. At the University of Kansas, this project is housed within the Center for Environmental Policy at the Institute for Policy & Social Research.

Ambassador Update

Listening to Nature

Genna Hurd, Sustainability Ambassador
Institute for Policy & Social Research

Editor's Note: The May 2012 Sustainability Ambassador meeting was held at the Dance Pavilion at Potter Lake and focused on "nature-based facilitation."

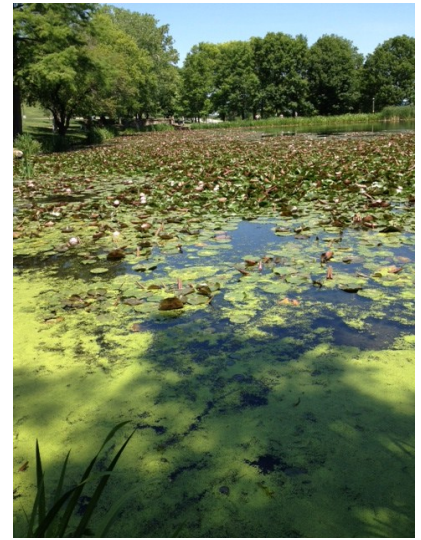
Walking around Potter Lake, particularly in the springtime, always brings me peace and I can't help but go back down memory lane. I think about going to the lake as an undergraduate in the 1970's to relax, think, toss the Frisbee, and de-stress from school work.

On this particular day in May 2012, my "assignment" was to walk around Potter and see what natural element struck me

personally and how that element related to my workplace.

The sounds of nature spoke to me and reminded me that in my job as a researcher at IPSR, I do a lot of listening when facilitating a focus group or conducting an interview. It is important for me to listen to all the different voices and recognize their perceptions and experiences. I must listen carefully with an open, objective mind to pick out themes and determine critical issues.

So, I slowed down and really listened to the different sounds that day at Potter – the birds' songs, the wind in the trees and



A view of Potter Lake from the sediment detention basin on the SW corner.

grasses, the insects' chirps – and thought what beauties nature provides if we truly listen.

Greening the Crimson and Blue

KU Recycling & the Center for Sustainability would like to send a big "thank you" to everyone who made the 2nd Annual Office Supply Swap a success. Because of the great response from people who donated extra supplies and those who came to pick them up, we are estimating

that \$1170 worth of office supplies were swapped!

We still have a good supply of used manila envelopes for campus mail. Email the Center (sustainability@ku.edu) with size and quantity that you'd like and we'll get them delivered to you.

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.

Greening the Crimson and Blue

Bailey Hall Wins Lights Out! Competition

Twelve hard fought weeks have yielded a winner in the Lights Out! energy conservation competition held at the University of Kansas. The faculty and staff in Bailey Hall nudged out the victory by just 1.6%, fending off Green and Summerfield Halls in the closing weeks.

The friendly competition between the three buildings began the first week of February, and challenged the occupants to engage in energy-conservation behaviors. The faculty and staff turned off unnecessary lighting, made sure computers were in sleep mode or turned off, shut down office equipment in the evenings, kept doors and windows closed, allowed temperature set points to be adjusted, replaced

incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents, and helped identify hours when heating and cooling could be turned off.

In total, 228 individuals made a pledge to do their part to save energy, committing to adopt specific conservation behaviors during the competition. The result was a combined savings of 14.3% compared to the 2011 baseline energy consumption.

"While the savings certainly blew away our expectations, the real benefit was just how committed and competitive the participants were throughout the competition," stated Tim O'Kane, director of marketing for Energy Solutions Professionals.

"I think we're going to see a lasting impact from this effort. By the end, the conversations were as much about making changes because it was the right thing to do, regardless of whether it meant they would win the competition."

KU Center for Sustainability Director, Jeff Severin, was also impressed by the success of the pilot project and hopes to see similar results as Energy Solutions Professionals and the Center continue to work with additional buildings on campus. "Bailey Hall won the competition, but Green Hall and Summerfield Hall both put up a good fight," he said. "The Green Teams in both buildings worked together to identify opportunities for savings throughout their buildings and encouraged their fellow students, faculty, and staff to do their part. They helped create a great model we can use moving forward with energy conservation at KU."



CLAS Dean Danny Anderson celebrates as Bailey Hall takes the Lights Out! title.

Overall Adjusted Savings

Building	Overall Savings
1) Bailey Hall	17.2%
2) Green Hall	15.6%
3) Summerfield Hall	11.1%

Visit www.energy.ku.edu/lightsout for complete results.

Live Sustainably

Upcoming Campus and Community Events

June & July

June 10, 1:30PM

Talk on Women's Suffrage
Tom Mach, Author and Historian
Lawrence Public Library

June 12, 7-9PM

Kaw Valley Herbs Study Group:
Lavender and Mullein
Unitarian Fellowship of Lawrence, \$2

June 12, 6:30-8pm

Kansas Interfaith Power and Light
First Annual Dinner
Keynote by Karl Brooks:
Tickets \$35-\$50; RSVP by June 8 at
<http://kansasipl.kintera.org/annualevent2012>

June 16, 10-11AM

Downtown Architecture Walking Tour
Begins at the Lawrence Public Library

June 30, 1PM

Film: "The Day After," part of the
Prepared: Strategies for Activists exhibition
Spencer Museum of Art

July 10-12, All Day

Bike and Build (Lawrence Habitat for Humanity)
Visit www.lawrencehabitat.org for details

Ongoing

Tuesday-Saturday until June 30, 10AM-4PM

*Knowledge Grows: Student Experiences in the
Smart Choices Garden*
Watkins Community Museum of History

Daily until August 21, 9AM-5PM

Herblock Exhibit: *Political Cartoons on the
Environment,
Education, Civil Rights and Democracy*
Dole Institute of Politics

Tuesdays until October 31, 4-6PM

Lawrence Farmers' Market
10th and Vermont

Thursday, 11AM-8:30PM

Friday and Saturday 11AM-5:30PM

Kansas Paintings & Photographs
by Louis Copt & Mark Feiden
Copt/Feiden Gallery, 815 Massachusetts Street

Thursdays, 11:30AM-1PM

Veggie Lunch
Ecumenical Campus Ministries, 1204 Oread

Thursdays until November 1, 4-6PM

Westside Farmers' Market
4931 W. 6th Street

Thursdays until October 25, 4-6:30PM

Cottin's Hardware Farmer's Market
Cottin's Hardware, 1832 Massachusetts Street

Saturdays until November 3, 7-11AM

Lawrence Farmers' Market
8th and New Hampshire

Join Us

For more information about sustainability at KU,
visit www.sustainability.ku.edu or like us on
Facebook at www.facebook.com/KUSustainability.