Campus Sustainability Report 2023
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
“As a leading global public research university, we know the importance of environmental stewardship and what’s at stake if we don’t act swiftly. Our students, faculty and staff have long been committed to creating a more sustainable Carolina.”

Chancellor Kevin M. Guskiewicz
This year we celebrated three years of Sustainable Carolina. Housed within the UNC Institute for the Environment, our group aims to connect operations, research and academics at the University. Guided by the Carolina Sustainability Council, we strive to create partnerships and implement innovative strategies that advance Carolina’s sustainability goals. This report highlights the excellent work of students, staff and faculty during the 2022-2023 school year.

As Carolina’s hub for sustainability, we would love to hear your sustainability success story. The sustainability report is updated annually in the summer. Contact us to have your work included in a future report.
Sustainable Carolina’s annual GHG report breaks down campus emissions and illustrates the strides UNC-Chapel Hill is making toward its 2040 carbon neutrality goal. The report uses 2007 — the year Carolina began robust tracking of GHG emissions — as the baseline year.

Since that baseline year, greenhouse gas emissions are down 33%. In 2007, the University emitted 589,237 metric tons of MTCO2e equivalent and in 2022, Carolina emitted 398,739 MTCO2e.

### Improving Energy Efficiency

Carolina is continuously improving campus building efficiency. UNC Energy Management has made improvements to its energy dashboard, allowing users to select different timeframes and locations. This in turn gives users the power to make detailed usage charts. Proper energy conservation can reduce campus emissions by minimizing the amount of steam, chilled water and electricity used by campus.

### Exploring Renewable Energy

Carolina is increasing on-campus solar generation and engaging with partners around utility-scale renewables. The University prioritizes high-impact cost-effective projects and programs.

### Vehicle Emissions

Chapel Hill is fortunate to have a fare-free bus system, with three electric buses and eight more on the way. UNC Transportation and Parking’s Commuter Alternative Program incentivizes students, staff and faculty to commute using buses, and other alternative forms of transportation. By joining, participants can access free regional bus passes and discounts to local businesses.

For those driving electric vehicles, the University has six EV charging stations across campus, with more planned for installation in the coming years.

Through UNC Energy Management’s successful energy conservation management program and building optimization program, energy efficiency has increased on our growing campus. The University is also working to update building design guidelines to ensure new construction is as efficient as possible.

With more students, staff and faculty traveling to campus post-pandemic, commuting emissions increased in 2022. This increase is like the increase we saw prior to the pandemic, which resulted from more employees driving alone to campus.

### Improving Energy Efficiency

- 44% reduction in purchased electricity emissions.
- 18% reduction in electricity consumption, per square foot.
- 64% reduction in coal consumption.
- 14% reduction in fleet emissions.
- 24% increase in commuting emissions.
Optimizing Operations

Carolina’s operational units develop plans and implement projects to bring Carolina closer to its sustainability goals. This section explores activities and metrics related to campus greenhouse gas emissions, water sustainability and waste reduction.

Climate Action at Carolina

Sustainable Carolina published its new Climate Action Plan in 2021, after implementing 75% of the near-term strategies described in the 2009 plan. Carolina strives to achieve the energy efficiency goal set by Executive Order 80, a 40% reduction in energy use intensity (EUI) of state-owned buildings by 2025. Through the efforts of UNC Energy Management and construction of more energy efficient buildings, Carolina has decreased energy use per square foot of building space by 37% since 2003.

Champion Sustainability Fund

In summer 2023, UNC Athletics announced the first Champion Sustainability Fund project. Through a partnership with Sustainable Carolina, Carmichael Arena and Kenan Stadium received new LED lights and video boards. These features will enhance the game day experience for teams and spectators while also decreasing energy consumption and increasing the historic building’s overall efficiency.

This partnership with UNC Athletics grew out of networking by Carolina students in a capstone course. Throughout the course, students identified possible energy and water efficiency projects that aligned with the Fund.

The Champion Sustainability Fund is Carolina’s green revolving fund made possible by a $1 million gift from Hanesbrands’ Champion Athleticwear.

Emissions Tracking

UNC Energy Services and Energy Management use OWASA's AguaVista software to identify leaks and buildings using high quantities of water. This data can help the University improve water efficiency.

UNC Stormwater Program

The UNC Stormwater Program is housed in UNC Environment, Health and Safety. UNC-Chapel Hill has a stormwater permit issued by the NC Department of Environmental Quality, which regulates discharges on campus.

Under the permit, UNC Stormwater participates in public education and outreach. The group has worked with Sustainable Carolina to arrange cleanups near stream outfalls on campus. The permit also sets standards for construction projects. Any project on campus that removes ground cover or exposes soil must follow best management practices to reduce erosion and prevent sediment from landing in surface waters. Once buildings are constructed, stormwater control measures must be implemented in these new spaces to improve water quality, control runoff and decrease flooding during rainstorms.

Campus Water Footprint

In 2022, Sustainable Carolina released a Water Plan, describing the University’s water sustainability accomplishments and goals. Source water management strategies implemented by the University minimize stormwater runoff pollution and improve water efficiency on campus. Sustainable Carolina collaborates with campus partners and our water utility, OWASA, to further best practices in water sustainability.

Potable water consumption per square foot has decreased 61% from the 2003 baseline. The University uses non-potable water for things like irrigation and toilet flushing, when possible. This non-potable water comes from OWASA's reclaimed water utility or Carolina's own underground cisterns, which capture water during rain events.

UNC Energy Services and Energy Management use OWASA's AguaVista software to identify leaks and buildings using high quantities of water. This data can help the University improve water efficiency.

Student-led initiatives at Carolina are supported by an array of sustainability funds. The Champion Sustainability Fund encourages students, faculty and staff to dream up sustainable solutions that benefit Carolina and the wider community. (Photo by Jeffrey A. Camarati)
Waste Recovery

The UNC Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling (OWRR) reports annually on the amount of campus waste sent to the landfill and the amount recovered (recycled or composted). Departments and organizations across campus continue to improve waste recovery.

Move-In Recycling Support
During move-in weekend, students come to campus with cardboard boxes of all sizes. OWRR makes loops of campus to let students know these cardboard boxes can be recycled. OWRR also assists in the breakdown of boxes and makes sure that there is enough room in recycling bins for boxes.

Residence Hall Waste
Plastic film, like grocery bags, can be recycled at the front desk of each residence hall. Carolina Housing residents can also check out a small, airtight compost bucket from their community. The small buckets are emptied into large carts; carts are emptied weekly, and contents are sent to a local facility.

Move-Out Donations
Carolina Housing partners with TROSA, Carolina Thrift and UNC OWRR to host “Don’t Ditch It, Donate It!” The annual program provides donation bins for clothes, furniture, school supplies, non-perishable food and more. In 2023, the program led to 13.5 tons of item donations and 160 pounds of food donations for Carolina Cupboard.

Eat Sort Win Dining Campaign
Carolina Dining Services (CDS) is Carolina’s chef led, student-focused dining operation. Through the Student Dining Board, CDS communicates with the student body, giving them a say in food purchasing, meal plans, budgets and more. With a full-time sustainability manager, CDS promotes consumer awareness and responsibility through food waste messaging. Programs like “Wipe Out Waste” and “Pick Your Portion,” encourages students to think before they take food from buffet lines. Additionally, every month CDS completes a composting and recycling audit in its main dining location to determine contamination rates.

Curricula

Carolina’s experiential education programs offer students structured, dynamic learning opportunities that invite them to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world environments.

College of Arts & Sciences
In 2022, Jim White became the inaugural Craver Family Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. White is an internationally-renowned expert in climate science, with approximately 200 peer-reviewed journal articles. He is a faculty member in the Department of Earth, Marine and Environmental Sciences.

Department of Earth, Marine and Environmental Sciences (EMES)
In 2021, the departments of geology and marine sciences, along with the Institute for Marine Science (IMS) became grouped under the new EMES department. Students can major in geology (earth science concentration or environmental geoscience concentration). They can also minor in geological sciences or marine sciences. The minor is open to any interested undergraduate student. Field work at the Institute for Marine Sciences is encouraged for the minor.

Environment, Ecology and Energy Program
Through the Environment, Ecology and Energy (EEP) program, students can major in environmental sciences (B.S.) or environmental studies (B.A.). Students pursuing a different major can pursue a minor in sustainability. The two environmental major options and sustainability minor option all incorporate natural sciences, social sciences and humanities to teach students how to manage resources in our ever-changing world. EEP also accepts graduate students (M.A., M.S., Ph.D.).

E3P Capstone Course
In fall 2022, Sustainable Carolina served as the client for E3P’s capstone course. ENEC 698: Analysis and Solution of Environmental Problems, taught by Léda Van Doren. Van Doren split the class into three groups to analyze data in three different areas: electricity, HVAC/steam/chilled water and water. Sustainability Analyst Melanie Elliott guided students through the process, explaining how to collect and analyze data, and locate outliers. Identifying outliers is a critical part to creating a more efficient campus. At the end of the semester, students were encouraged to submit proposals for the Champion Sustainability Fund, Carolina’s green revolving fund.
Sustainable Triangle Field Site
Mike Piehler, Toni Sebastian and Melanie Elliott led the spring 2023 Sustainable Triangle Field Site capstone course. The students titled their final project, Climate Hazards in Chapel Hill: Urban Heat Island Effect and Green Infrastructure Mitigation on Campus. Their work focused on three main aspects. Looking at the FedEx Global Education Center green roof, the group measured illuminance and temperature. At Battle Grove regenerative stormwater conveyance system, they examined water quality through a variety of instruments. Sustainable Triangle Field Site students out in the field taking water quality measurements of campus streams. In the coming years, Sustainable Carolina hopes to build a robust database to track campus stream quality.

UNC Department of Geography and the Environment
In 2023, the UNC Department of Geography became the UNC Department of Geography and the Environment, to better reflect the scope of its teaching and research. The department’s five concentrations include: earth and environment; geographic information science and geovisualization; nature and society; international development and globalization; and culture, space and identity. A group of students from Associate Professor Javier Arce-Nazario’s class created the Carolina Cartography Collective, to contribute to mapping research. Geovisualizing Vieques, the group’s first major project, examined how the Puerto Rican landscape has evolved throughout the past 150 years. UNC Hussman School of Media and Journalism
At the prestigious 2023 Society for News Design International Student competition, two student teams tied for first place in the digital storytelling category. Living Galapagos, created by students in MEJO 584: International Projects, takes viewers to the Galápagos Islands to explore different topics, including sustainability. Students from the 2022 Carolina Photojournalism Workshop traveled to Asheville, Black Mountain and surrounding communities to examine tourism, eco-villages, economic development and more in Western North Carolina.


UNC School of Data Science and Society
Launched in fall 2022, the UNC School of Data Science and Society will launch its first degree program, an online master of applied data science, in January 2024. Ultimately, the School will allow undergraduate, graduate and professional students to pursue data science degrees. Utilizing a human-centric approach with an emphasis on ethics, students will have multiple avenues to incorporate data science courses into their respective degrees.

“We are beginning to understand more about the realities of how biology works, the realities of how waterways are intersected with our energy supply, that they are intersected with our ability to grow sufficient food to be able to thrive. To understand how our gut microbiome might be affected by our ability to grow that food. All these things are data. That makes data a particularly potent metaphor for reality.”

Gillings on the Ground
Hannah Lineberger, director of the Gillings on the Ground program says she thinks people are “recognizing that disasters are becoming an increasing threat and want to be proactive in their response.” The Gillings on the Ground Program is a free, two-semester training program that teaches participants about volunteering in disaster situations, creating disaster preparedness plans and more. The program runs September through April every year. In fall 2022, more than 100 participants from schools and community organizations across the state and beyond completed the training. In addition, 24 participants went through the hands-on hazardous materials (hazmat) training from the Duke Healthcare Preparedness Coalition in spring 2023.

Walking Tours
Sustainable Carolina leads sustainability and stormwater tours regularly. These tours are open to interested individuals as well as entire classes. In 2022 and 2023, Sustainable Carolina partnered with UNC Exercise and Sports Science to lead students taking the Lifetime Fitness (LFIT) course down the Campus-to-Garden Trail for a nature walk. During the walk, Sustainable Carolina team members identified invasive species and discussed stream ecology with students.
Experiential Education

Carolina’s experiential education programs offer students structured, dynamic learning opportunities that invite them to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world environments.

The EcoStudio
The EcoStudio, a partnership between E3P and the UNC Institute for the Environment, matches students with internships at the University and in the local community. Students explore energy, sustainability, environment, policy, planning and more through research and projects at their placements.

In spring 2023, a Sustainable Carolina intern created a computer-based video game to promote sustainability on campus. Users play as Rameses, learning about energy efficiency, recycling and water conservation. Along the way, players complete challenges while a snyth version of “Hark the Sound” plays in the background.

Sustainable Tar Heels Internship Program
Sustainable Carolina launched its Sustainable Tar Heels internship program through EcoStudio in spring 2022. The fall 2023 group includes a communications intern, two research translation interns, a Commuter Alternative Program intern and a Green Office intern. Through their internship work and opportunities to connect with students through tabling events, the interns will gain professional skills and a better understanding of how university sustainability initiatives work.

Microplastics Research at Highlands Field Site
Sophie Hall won the Excellence in Sustainability prize at the 2023 Celebration of Undergraduate Research. Her research examined microplastics in the Highlnds, where she first spent a semester in 2021. Through a Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF), she returned in 2022. Hall collected water samples from the Cullasaja River and its watershed during storm events. This study aims to determine if there are microplastics in rainfall itself or if they are coming directly into the river from other sources.

Algal blooms, landfill leachate and King Tides at UNC IMS
In fall 2022 at the UNC Institute of Marine Sciences (IMS), 11 students completed independent study projects. Three students worked on projects related to water sustainability; Two worked with the Paerl Lab on projects related to algal blooms. Algal blooms release harmful chemical toxins and impair water quality. Meg McCartney ’23 looked at whether leachate from landfills may cause algal blooms. Meanwhile, Madison Milote ’24 examined a strategy for curbing algal blooms after they happen. Another student, Caroline Chen, worked in the Noble Lab studying the impact of extreme tides, known as King Tides, which overwhelm and impact stormwater discharge systems in Atlantic Beach.

UNC Research team travels to the Highlands Field Site
UNC Institute for the Environment is one of 13 research centers and institutes within the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research. UNC Research Communications conveys the value of research at Carolina; the group publishes an online magazine, Endeavors. In January 2023, the UNC Research communications team made their way to the Highlands Field Site to report on the unique work of researchers and students there. They published four stories from the trip exploring big brown bats, the Blue Ridge two-lined salamander, Carolina hemlock trees and rodents.

UNC Institute for the Environment Field Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Field Site</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Concentration Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Highlands Field Site</td>
<td>NC Mountains</td>
<td>Ecology and environmental infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Outer Banks Field Site</td>
<td>NC Coast</td>
<td>Decision making and environmental infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Morehead City Field Site</td>
<td>NC Coast</td>
<td>Ecology, Earth system science, environment and health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Sustainable Triangle Field Site</td>
<td>Urban NC</td>
<td>Sustainability and environmental infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Urban/Tropical</td>
<td>Energy, environmental infrastructure, sustainability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kristina Hefferle looks for the male Blue Ridge two-lined salamander under a footbridge in the botanical garden of the Highlands Biological Station (photo by Andrew Russell).

Mice are one of the most common animals researchers capture and tag to assess wetland mitigation and rehabilitation impacts on small mammals. (photo by Andrew Russell).
Research & Innovation

As one of America’s top research universities, Carolina conducts more than $1 billion in sponsored research annually. Sustainability is a theme throughout much of this research, which pushes North Carolina, our country, and the world forward in mitigating the causes and effects of anthropogenic change.

Ackerman Center For Excellence
Kenan-Flagler Business School broke ground on Steven D. Bell Hall in fall 2022. It will eventually house the Ackerman Center for Excellence in Sustainability (ACES). The building will meet LEED Gold standards by incorporating solar panels, open-air terraces, large windows, green spaces and energy efficient lighting.

In spring 2023, ACES celebrated Earth Week by honoring awardees in three categories: distinguished business, distinguished alumnus, and distinguished entrepreneurial venture.

Energy Transition Initiative
Launched in 2022, the Energy Transition Initiative is a partnership between the UNC Institute for the Environment and UNC School of Law’s Center for Climate, Environment, Energy and Economics. In 2023, ETI interim director Alex Hopkins, along with the Sustainable Carolina team, joined UNC Student Government Undergraduate Executive Branch for the first-ever Energy Transition Town Hall. The event gave students an opportunity to ask about the University’s greenhouse gas emissions, Climate Action Plan and work toward a smooth transition to more renewable energy.

Environmental Finance Center
For 25 years, the Environmental Finance Center (EFC), within the UNC School of Government, has worked to address the financial aspects of environmental protection and service delivery. The systems EFC focuses on – drinking water, wastewater and stormwater – require daily upkeep and larger renovations throughout their lifetimes. Paying for these services impacts everyone, from governments to communities to individuals. This year, Project Director Hope Thomson and Graduate Research Assistant Delia Wegner examined the challenges individuals face in paying for their water. They looked at Customer Assistance Programs, which help customers afford basic utilities, like water. They assessed programs across the country to learn what other states are doing to increase transparency and affordability for customers.

The Water Institute
The Water Institute’s UNC Water & Health Conference has been running for 13 years, with the 2023 conference set for October 23-27. Every year, policymakers, practitioners and researchers gather to think about how to improve old approaches and develop new approaches to expanding water, sanitation and hygiene access and services.

Department of Geography and Environment
In 2023, the Department of Geography added environment to its official name, emphasizing the department’s focus on the most pressing environmental issues. Its researchers are examining things like how sea level rise will impact the Florida Keys and the disproportionate impact climate change will have on those living in poverty.

Amanda DelVecchia, assistant professor and Voit Gilmore Fellow, spoke at Sustainable Carolina’s April Sustainability Research Symposium. She talked about her lab’s work to understand greenhouse gas flux in streams, a process that can emit greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Department of City and Regional Planning
In 2022, North Carolina Sea Grant funded Miyuki Hino’s work on chronic flood hazards in coastal communities. The research takes place at Carolina Beach and explores the drivers of flooding, captures water levels in flood prone areas, established an early warning system for flooding and collaborates with community members to define flood mitigation strategies.

Hino is also the contact for the Department of City and Regional Planning’s unique certificate in national hazards resilience.

Carolina Sustainability Council (2022 - 2023)
Chancellor Guskiewicz established the Carolina Sustainability Council in 2020. The Council paved the way for the creation of Sustainable Carolina.

Faculty Members
- Mike Piehler, Chief Sustainability Officer and Director of the UNC Institute for the Environment
- Elizabeth Havice, Professor, Department of Geography
- Nikhil Kaza, Associate Professor, Department of City and Regional Planning and Environment, E3P
- Jeff Mittelstadt, Professor of the Practice of Strategy and Entrepreneurship and Executive Director, Ackerman Center for Excellence in Sustainability
- Jonas Monast, Distinguished Assistant Professor and Director, Center for Climate, Energy, Environment and Economics, UNC School of Law
- Natalie Murdock, Murdock Anderson Consulting and Senator, North Carolina General Assembly
- Aaron Salzberg, Distinguished Professor and Director, Water Institute, Gillings School of Global Public Health
- Julie Jacobson Vann, Clinical Associate Professor, UNC School of Nursing

Student Members
- Ileana Fenwick, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Earth, Marine and Environmental Sciences
- Ideniya Khismatova, Co-Chair, Renewable Energy Special Projects Committee (RESPC)
- Ella Feathers and Jacob Crawford, co-directors of department of environmental affairs
North Carolina Collaboratory

Water system infrastructure not only ensures residents have clean drinking water, but also protects our natural environment, especially rivers and streams. The North Carolina Collaboratory teamed up with the UNC Environmental Finance Center to create the Highly Treated Wastewater program. The program is currently providing funding to five rural towns in North Carolina so that they can update their water infrastructure. The program also aims to improve the water quality of effluent leaving plants and entering rivers and streams.

Leibfarth Lab

Frank Leibfarth, assistant professor in the Department of Chemistry, studies polymers, specifically – polyolefins. Within this group of plastics are those that are used to make plastic milk jugs and bags. Leibfarth and his lab are developing reagents to effectively recycle these types of plastics. Instead of downcycling, Leibfarth aims to make plastics more valuable than they were in their milk bottle and plastic bag forms.

Applied Physical Sciences

Louis D. Rubin Jr. Distinguished Professor Jinsong Huang leads a research team at Carolina that’s working to improve the performance of perovskite solar cells. The team strengthened the composition of the solar cells and tested indoors, employing tools to imitate the sun’s rays. The lab is currently working on outdoor testing of perovskite efficiency.

BeAM Makerspaces

Sustainable Carolina partnered with BeAM to introduce a new, sustainable 3D printing filament. The filament, allPHA, is made up of polymers; each of the polymers are created via fermentation by bacteria. Because of this, the material is biodegradable. This is a big deal because 3D printing creates a lot of waste. In the future, BeAM hopes to purchase a grinder to mechanically break down failed allPHA projects. This would jump start the decomposition process.

Grant Spotlight: Islands in the Sky

In 2022, Carolina Drone Lab (CARDNL) received a UNC Center for Faculty Excellence/Lenovo grant to map and assess Carolina’s eight campus green roofs. The project, in partnership with Sustainable Carolina and EcoStudio, shines a light on innovative installations, promotes green infrastructure and tests drone technology as a way to monitor plant health.

Green roofs promote sustainability and energy efficiency on campus. The plants on our campus green roofs retain some of the rainwater from storms. Additionally, the green roof systems route some rain from the green roofs into cisterns beneath the ground. The efficiency of the green roofs is directly related to the health of the plants. Traditionally, plant health is measured through stem counts, soil nutrient analysis, above ground biomass and root biomass. This project introduces special cameras, which can see beyond visual light into the monitoring mix. In fall 2023, the CARDNL team will offer in-person and virtual outreach opportunities.

Peggy Mullin, a research assistant with Carolina Drone Lab, talks with her intern about one of the drones during a Free Fly Friday.

Erik Alexanian, Frank Leibfarth, Eliza Neidhart and Austin Miller strike a pose in the lab (photo by Jon Gardnier/UNC-Chapel Hill).

Glen Walters holds a spool of the sustainable filament in BeAM Murray’s room of 3D printers.

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Campus Drinking Water Safety

The 2022-2023 school year brought the unwelcome news that lead was discovered in multiple drinking fountains across campus. UNC Environment, Health and Safety turned to Rebecca Fry at Gillings School of Global Public Health to gather student volunteers to help test thousands of sinks and drinking water stations across campus. UNC-Chapel Hill adopted a “no lead tolerance policy,” in which fixtures that were found to have lead in them were deemed out of order until replacement parts were installed. Testing wrapped up during the spring 2023 semester.

Erik Alexanian, Frank Leibfarth, Eliza Neidhart and Austin Miller strike a pose in the lab (photo by Jon Gardnier/UNC-Chapel Hill).
Ambitious, sustainability-minded undergraduate and graduate students take on organizational leadership roles across campus. Their dedication of time, energy, and problem-solving skills are instrumental in moving Carolina toward its greenhouse gas emissions, water sustainability and waste reduction goals.

CompostMates
CompostMates got its start through Carolina Center for Public Service’s Robert E. Bryan Fellowship in 2020. The group partners with other student organizations such as Vegans for Peace, UNC Wesley and APPLES Service Learning to provide free food scrap pick-up to UNC-Chapel Hill students living off-campus.

It also promotes sustainable and environmentally conscious practices within the broader Chapel Hill community. CompostMates supports local organizations, like the Giving Garden and Carolina Community Garden through advocacy, publicity and food scrap donations. Compost donated to gardens is used to grow fresh produce for communities in need. CompostMates diverts thousands of pounds of waste every year.

Vegans for Peace
Based on nonviolence, love, mercy, equality and justice for living things, Vegans for Peace encourages veganism. At the University, the group participates in tabling events and partners with local community organizations, including Vegan Outreach, Dojo Fresh and Earth to Us. Vegans for Peace also spends time at animal sanctuaries twice a month.

Meantime Coffee Company
Meantime Coffee is a student-led nonprofit dedicated to professional development, community reinvestment and sustainability. The shop, located in the Campus Y, sources its coffee from Carrboro Coffee Roasters. This school year, Meantime formed a partnership with B3 Coffee to improve disability allyship within the café.

More than half of the money made at the shop goes to social justice initiatives. Meantime also emphasizes waste diversion; during the 2022-2023 school year, it diverted 4,512 pounds of waste from the landfill. Meantime saw 162% increase in reusable mugs. Remaining 60% of profits to Campus Y social justice initiatives.

Epsilon Eta
Epsilon Eta Environmental Honors Fraternity connects students with the environment through academics, community building and service. During the 2022-2023 school year, Epsilon Eta recruited 95 students, hosted speakers and seminars, participated in community outreach and provided students with networking opportunities. Community service projects this year included trash cleanups, invasive species removal, campus gardening and compost cleanups.

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2022-2023 food waste diversion = 2,653.31 pounds
All-time food waste diversion = 7073.49 pounds

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UNC Student Government Dept. of Environmental Affairs
Collaborating with Chief Sustainability Officer Mike Piehler, Department of Environmental Affairs Co-Directors Ella Feathers and Jacob Crawford hosted the University’s first Energy Transition Town Hall. Held in January 2023, the event focused on the University’s Climate Action Plan, renewable energy, the future of the cogeneration plant and more.

Carolina Outing Club
Founded in 2021, the Carolina Outing Club seeks to make the outdoors accessible, inclusive and equitable for UNC-Chapel Hill and the wider community. With 500 active members and 20 e-staffers, or troop leaders, the group went on several overnight trips during the 2022-2023 school year. Highlights include Jockey’s Ridge in the North Carolina Outer Banks and Grayson Highlands State Park in Virginia.

UNC Student Government hosted the first Energy Transition Summit in January 2023.

Carolina Outing Club welcomes anyone who enjoys being outdoors (photo by Carolina Outing Club).

Student Leadership Highlight: Renewable Energy Special Projects Committee
The Renewable Energy Special Projects Committee (RESPC) is Carolina’s student-run organization that manages the money collected through Carolina’s Student Renewable Energy Fee. The table below describes the projects funded during the 2022-2023 school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Sustainability Benefit</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2022</td>
<td>Ultra-low temperature freezers for labs</td>
<td>$103,536.34</td>
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<td>Jan. 2023</td>
<td>ENEC 490 supply chain class</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>Energy education</td>
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<td>March 2023</td>
<td>Feasibility study: Memorial Hall solar panels</td>
<td>$9,856</td>
<td>Renewable energy</td>
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<td>April 2023</td>
<td>Efficient Freezer Rebate Program renewal through spring 2028</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
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<td>April 2023</td>
<td>200 kW solar panel system on Rams Head Recreation Center</td>
<td>$633,728</td>
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<td>April 2023</td>
<td>Green certification scholarships</td>
<td>$6,991</td>
<td>Energy education</td>
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<td>April 2023</td>
<td>3 EV Chargers in Morehead Lot</td>
<td>$24,999</td>
<td>Renewable energy, energy education</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2023</td>
<td>2 Haven Solar Picnic Tables</td>
<td>$49,400</td>
<td>Renewable energy, energy education</td>
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Community Engagement

As part of the Town of Chapel Hill, the University strives to create a positive impact outside campus boundaries. We engage with Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Orange County around sustainability issues to create a better society and a stronger future.

Orange County
Orange County is working to update its solid waste master plan, titled Road to Zero Waste. The plan has a goal of zero waste by 2045 and will identify a sustainable business model for managing waste. Orange County Solid Waste Management Department has engaged with community members, including students, through focus group sessions and advisory group meetings. The department has an app called Orange County NC Recycles, which reminds residents when to bring their recyclables to the curb. The app also has a tool that shows residents whether certain items can be recycled.

Orange County held its second annual Creek Week in March 2023. The event celebrates the streams, lakes and rivers that connect our human and non-human communities. During the weeklong celebration, residents can participate in a litter cleanup challenge, paddling trips, art workshops, invasive plant removal, scavenger hunts and more.

Town of Chapel Hill
The University and the Town of Chapel Hill have a history of working together and drawing on each other’s strengths to build a stronger community. Chapel Hill’s sustainability team has expanded in recent years, from a team of one to a team of three. In spring 2021, the University and town demonstrated their joint commitment to climate action through the release of complementary climate action plans. Chief Sustainability Officer Mike Piehler and Chapel Hill’s Community Sustainability Manager John Richardson talked about this partnership on an episode of the Sustainable Carolina podcast.

In fall 2023, the Town of Chapel Hill launched its Stream Team program, a volunteer water quality monitoring program. The Town will provide training, equipment and support to 10 teams. The teams will be assigned to monitor a stream in the area and record measurements at four times throughout the year.

UNC Transportation and Parking
UNC Transportation and Parking hosts two big events every year: Cycliclicious at the start of the school year and May the Wheels be With You at the end of the school year. At these events, those on campus can learn about the Commuter Alternative Program (CAP). The program provides incentives to students, staff and faculty who live off campus and use sustainable transportation to get on to campus.

This year, UNC Transportation and Parking made biking more accessible through the second iteration of the Tar Heel Bikes program.

Center for Public Engagement with Science
At this year’s Sustainability Research Symposium, Megan Lane gave an overview of the work that the Center for Public Engagement with Science (CPES) does. The team is currently helping with a NASA-funded project called Lake Observations by Citizen Scientists and Satellites. The project connects research from the UNC Department of Earth, Marine and Environmental Sciences with CPES and seeks to understand how the volume of water changes in lakes over time. Citizens who walk or paddle past the project’s lake gauges are invited to text measurement data to the project.

The Center is also involved with the UNC Superfund Research Program, housed in UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health. Funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, UNC-Chapel Hill’s project aims to better understand the impact and risks of arsenic exposure on people.

Morehead Planetarium and Science Center
Morehead Planetarium hosts the UNC Science Expo every April. The event is part of the North Carolina Science Festival. In 2023, approximately 60 exhibitors from UNC-Chapel Hill and the wider community participated in the event. For the 2024 event, Sustainable Carolina is working with Morehead Planetarium to make the event more sustainable.

North Carolina Botanical Garden
The North Carolina Botanical Garden (N CBG) manages 1,200 acres of gardens and natural areas around campus. The garden’s Allen Education Center is a LEED Gold certified building; all systems and materials were designed to minimize environmental impact. Twice a year, N CBG publishes its Conservation Gardener Magazine, which talks about conservation in the gardens and ways people can incorporate native plants into their own gardens at home. The public can purchase native plants at the N CBG fall and spring native plant sales.

Carolina Tree Heritage
The Carolina Tree Heritage program gives second life to downed campus trees by transforming trunks and branches into furniture, sculptures and other creations. In 2021, the team installed a 5-foot wide, 400-pound table in the South Building’s rotunda. The table is made from a 251-year-old post oak tree that stood behind Old West on the edge of McCorkle Place until 2018.
Communications

Advancing Carolina's sustainability goals requires regular communication through different mediums. We not only communicate about our own initiatives but also those taking place within other departments and across campus.

**Monthly Newsletter:** Our newsletter is published every month and features updates, news, and events. [Subscribe to our newsletter](#).

Many of our campus partners have their own newsletters:

- Environment, Ecology and Energy Program Newsletter (E3P)
- NC Water News Newsletter (UNC Water Institute)
- Office of Sponsored Programs Newsletter (UNC Research)
- UNC Institute for the Environment Newsletter (UNC Institute for the Environment)

**Sustainable Carolina News:** On the news section of our website, we publish campus happenings, alumni stories and deep dives into our emissions data. [Visit our blog](#).

**Social Media:** Visit us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

**Monthly Podcast:** The Sustainable Carolina Podcast features Carolina staff and faculty involved in sustainability research and/or work. [Subscribe to our podcast](#).

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**Sustainable Carolina Podcast | Season 2**

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<td>UNC Eco-Concern Study Team</td>
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**Website Update**

Working with ITS Digital Services, Digital Accessibility Office and UNC Creative, UNC Institute for the Environment and Sustainable Carolina unveiled new websites in fall 2023. Our teams kept digital accessibility at the forefront of the redesign, to ensure those using screen readers, screen magnification software and/or other tools can navigate the sites.

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**Sustainable Carolina’s New Website Navigation**

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<tr>
<th>Menu Item</th>
<th>Sub-menu item</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About</td>
<td>About</td>
<td>History of Sustainable Carolina at the University; progress, goals and how success is measured/tracked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team</td>
<td>Photos and bios of professional staff and Sustainability Council members.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Framework</td>
<td>Sustainable Carolina’s mission, vision and goals/strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Links to our reports, plans, greenhouse gas data, along with a list of ways individuals can be sustainable on campus.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Areas</td>
<td>Climate Action</td>
<td>Climate dashboard; Climate Action Plan, history and stories.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Water dashboard; Water Plan, history and stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waste</td>
<td>Waste dashboard; waste history and stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research &amp; Academics</td>
<td>Sustainable Triangle Field Site information; campus-wide sustainability internship opportunities; sustainability course list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Engagement</td>
<td>Sustainability Coalition</td>
<td>Description of coalition and list of student organizations invited to be part of the coalition.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University Operations</td>
<td>Building design; green roofs; energy efficiency; Champion Sustainability Fund projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internship Programs</td>
<td>Sustainable Tar Heels internship program; Hanesbrands internship partnership.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Green Programs</td>
<td>Green Office and Green Labs programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>News</td>
<td>Blog featuring press releases, news stories and student work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>Sign-up and archive for monthly newsletter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Podcast</td>
<td>Podcast</td>
<td>Lists all episodes with descriptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>For those looking to write about Sustainable Carolina or sustainability at the University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Calendar</td>
<td>High level view of sustainability events happening at Carolina.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual Events</td>
<td>Describes fall and spring events put on by Sustainable Carolina and/or our partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>Describes special events related to sustainability happening at Carolina.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>