

SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER



Fall 2015

Volume 5, Issue 1

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Experiential learning opportunities at Loy Farm

Jessica Bilecki



Director of Sustainability Elaine Durr leads one of many solar farms tours at the Elon Environmental Center at Loy Farm.

About

Over 600 students, faculty and staff have toured the solar farm and the Elon Environmental Center at Loy farm this fall. You can still request a tour for your class or student organization, but here is a sample of how the space is being used to start discussions and educate people about the complexities of sustainability issues.

Solar Farm

The nearly 10,000 solar panels will produce about 4,500 megawatt hours of electricity annually; the equivalent of enough electricity to power 415 U.S. homes for a year, or about 10% of Elon's annual energy consumption. Due to existing laws and regulations, the electricity will be sent directly to the electric grid and purchased by Duke Energy. The panels will prevent about 2,100 metric tons of carbon emissions, equivalent to the emissions of 450 cars, from going in to the atmosphere annually. The farm is a perfect catalyst for discussion on how policies, economics and environmental concerns all impact each other. Plus classes will have access to weather and solar energy output data for analysis.

Responsible Architecture Studio

Designed and built by students, this space allows students to learn basic building skills but also challenges them to think about materials and spaces differently. They learn how 'waste' materials can be repurposed, question how much space we really need to live comfortably and better understand how altering the physical features of buildings can contribute to healthier people and environments.

Loy Farm

Currently this is an educational farm utilized by students conducting research, students in classes and students in the Peace Corps prep program. Students study and learn the methods and principles of biointensive agriculture and sustainable farming systems while helping to feed people in Burlington. Food harvested from the space is primarily used by Campus Kitchen.

[Volunteer with Campus Kitchen & Loy Farm](#)

[Request a tour for your group of 8 or more](#)

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Elon Sustainability



@SustainableElon

Phoenix Cup Energy Results for Fall 2015

This fall, teams of Elon students, faculty and staff conserved energy by participating in the Phoenix Cup Energy Competition. From Sept. 16 to Oct. 7, teams earned points for participating in and talking about different types of energy conservation behaviors. Bonus points were awarded for living or working in a building that consumed less energy than the week before. These are the winners!



Student Professional Development Center

Winning Faculty/Staff Teams:

Codegreen

Student Professional Development Center



Codegreen

Winning Student Team:

Oaks Apartment Managers



Oaks Apartment Managers

Team Participation Prize:

Tom Haverfords (Danieley B)

Non-Team Member Prize:

Matthew Moore

Buildings With Greatest Energy Reduction:

Danieley P

Oaks A

Staff Profile: Tom Flood busts popular landscaping myths at Elon

Joelle Halle

Tom Flood, Associate Director of Physical Plant and Director of Landscaping and Grounds, knows that there have been many myths circulating about how exactly Elon University maintains its flawless landscaping. After all, thebestcolleges.org lists Elon as the most beautiful college campus. So what is Tom's secret? Surprisingly, sustainability.

Flood has been at Elon for 13 years, pursuing a lifelong love for the outdoors after studying Landscape Architecture in college.

"I always say that my environmental claim to fame is that in the third grade I was president of the Revolution on Pollution Club before the Environmental Protection Agency even existed," Flood said. "I guess you could say I was green before it was cool."

Flood and his team work hard to make sure the 200 acres of grass on Elon's campus stay green- so green that many believe that Physical Plant actually uses dye to achieve this picture-perfect look. Flood believes this myth stems from practices used to make athletic field markings more visible after the first frost of the year.

"Some of us went to school to learn how to make the grass look that green!" Flood said. "In the past decade, we have never used dye outside of athletic fields." The dye that Physical Plant uses on the athletic fields is water soluble and helps athletes determine field boundaries.

"Some of us went to school to learn how to make the grass look that green!"

The flora at Elon is always blooming and changing, so it can be easy to assume that gardeners are working tirelessly to change out the flower beds every other week. Surprisingly, this only happens twice a year.

"We change out our beds two times a year, but we strategically design them to evolve as the seasons change," Flood said.

Physical Plant uses a mixture of plants to create a seamlessly transitioning landscape. But, in an effort to become more sustainable, they have not increased annual flower bed space in 12 years, favoring the use of perennials.

Many Elon students would also be surprised to learn that only about one third of campus is irrigated, and Physical Plant does everything but waste water in the process.

"About 90 percent of that water comes from reclaimed stormwater collected in the lakes on campus," Flood said. "And in response to the people who say we water the sidewalks,

irrigation is not an exact science. We do our best, and the majority of run off goes right back into the detention ponds"

Another sustainable feature of Elon's irrigation system is that it is controlled by computers.

"All the sprinklers are computer-controlled and connected to a weather system," Flood said. "That way, we can shut down in the event of a rainstorm, track evapotranspiration rates and use other control tricks to minimize our water use."

In addition to an advanced irrigation system, Elon utilizes a custom blend of fertilizer to keep campus lush and green.

"We strategically and sparingly fertilize campus twice a year at about 25% of the recommended fertilization rate," Flood said. "While many schools may use six to eight pounds per 1000 square feet, we only use two."

Although this unique blend of fertilizer is not organic, it is resistant to leaching and runoff, and is customized to Elon's soil.

When the landscaping work is done, Physical Plant brings all yard waste to Loy Farm, where it is ground up, windrowed and turned into compost.

"The end product is usually used as a soil amendment or turf dressing," Flood said. "Last year we produced over 766 cubic yards of compost."

Although they are not always well known, these are a few ways that Flood and Physical Plant utilize sustainable practices to ensure that Elon University remains one of the most beautiful campuses in the country.



Tom Flood, Associate Director of Physical Plant and Director of Landscaping and Grounds

Student Profile: Chris Grippo says every water bottle has a story

MacKenzie Conley

Chris Grippo, a senior environmental studies and economics major, has enjoyed the outdoors from a very young age. His love of nature was fostered by his involvement in Boy Scouts.

He became especially interested in sustainability after taking an advanced placement environmental studies class in high school. Grippo learned about the negative impact of using plastic water bottles and vowed to make a change.

Grippo has not used a plastic water bottle in five years. Now, he wants to challenge others to change their behaviors for the better.

While studying abroad in Australia, Grippo took a class called Australia Sustainability: Environmental Action. One of his assignments in this class was to design a campaign for social change. After the project was turned in and graded, Grippo realized that his hypothetical idea was actually very feasible.

This is how WABO was born. WABO, derived from water bottle, is a social media campaign promoting the use of reusable water bottles in order to eliminate plastic water bottle waste. It has a growing social media presence with over 2,300 followers on Instagram.

People love their reusable water bottles. Wherever they go, their water bottle goes and it collects stickers and memories along the way. Every water bottle has a story. Grippo's vision is to create an online community to share these personal stories about reusable water bottles.

When the account started gaining momentum, Grippo developed stickers to promote WABO and encourage others to post. Grippo says the stickers are very popular, and "have really helped to brand WABO as its own campaign."

People in the U.S. buy more than half a billion plastic bottles of water every week, which is enough to circle the globe more than 5 times. While some of these plastic bottles

are recycled, eighty percent of them end up in landfills. This is why WABO, and social impact campaigns like it, are so relevant and important.

Grippo is excited to grow WABO and make it as impactful as possible. At its core, WABO will always be a tool for sustainable social change. To find out more, visit mywabo.com and follow mywabo on Instagram.



Grippo has successfully turned a class project into a sustainable, social action campaign.

New Eco-Reps Office Space

The Eco Reps now have an office in the Moseley Student Center! Stop by Moseley 105H to meet your Eco-Rep, learn about sustainability initiatives on campus and get information about upcoming events!



Elon Initiatives: Landfill waste reduction through composting



Catering is Composting

As of October 1, 2015, Mill Point Catering offers compostable serviceware as the default option for catered events. All items are plantbased, instead of petroleum based. Although some of the cups and utensils may look like plastic, they are completely compostable!

Composting at Mill Point & Community Garden

Students, faculty and staff can now compost at the Station at Mill Point and the Elon Community Garden. Remember: food scraps only!

No citrus or animal products because they take too long to breakdown and can attract pests in this type of system.



Compost Leaders

Interested in compost collection in your residence hall? Compost Leaders work with the Office of Sustainability to educate residents, get a compost collection bin and work out a maintenance schedule. Email sustainability@elon.edu for more information on how to become a compost leader.



Compost Locations

Members of the Elon Community can compost food scraps at Winter Garden Café, Fountain Market, Daniel Commons and athletic or other special events with designated orange compost bins. In the dining halls, employees collect food scraps from food prep and returned plates for composting.

What's Coming Up

November 11

HOW TO GET A JOB SAVING THE PLANET: SUSTAINABILITY CAREERS IN BUSINESS, NGOs, & GOVERNMENT



DATE: November 11

TIME: 5:30 p.m.

LOCATION: McBride Gathering Space

EBAN GOODSTEIN, PhD

DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS (MS & MBA)
IN SUSTAINABILITY AT BARD COLLEGE

Sustainability Events Calendar

Sustainability Events Calendar - Learn about what's happening on campus!

STEP 1: Visit elon.edu/sustainability.

STEP 2: Click on the calendar icon on the left sidebar.

STEP 3: View the Elon Sustainability Events Calendar to stay updated on what events are coming up across campus!

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