

## Category 10: Other Initiatives

1. Have any of your school's students effected positive environmental change on a campus, state, or national level? If so, please describe. (To nominate a specific student for greater attention in our coverage, please email [cool.schools@sierraclub.org](mailto:cool.schools@sierraclub.org) with his or her name, accomplishments, and contact information.)

Yes, many students have had a campus, state, or national impact. We provide a few examples below.

Tamer Hassan ('11) received a \$10,000 grant from Projects for Peace. Hassan's project involves continuing his work on a documentary series about "intentional communities" in the United States. Intentional communities hold communitarian values as the guiding principles in living practices, providing alternative systems of interaction, both interpersonally and on a larger scale. He will continue his work alongside Armand Tufenkian '10 with whom he has already assembled two short documentaries about the communities of Twin Oaks, VA and Earthaven Ecovillage, NC. Both Hassan and Tufenkian will travel to Seattle over the summer to shoot footage at the Emma Goldman Finishing School. The films are designed to raise awareness of alternative and sustainable models for peaceful and resilient communities.

Michelle Russell ('11) has been active in influencing state toxics policies through an internship with the Environmental Health Strategy Center, a nonprofit organization in Portland, and additional volunteer activities. She was one of several students who participated in a course that contributed to the successful passage of a first-in-the nation "kids safe products law" in Maine. She was recently interviewed by Maine Public Broadcasting and a regional newspaper regarding her efforts. Michelle was given the 2009 Ninetta Runnals award, which is awarded annually to a woman with high scholastic standing, well-defined educational objectives, and active participation in campus affairs.

Blair Braverman ('11) is an award-winning writer who has written for numerous national and international publications. She recently received honorable mention in an environmental writing competition in *The Atlantic Monthly*, she was awarded a scholarship to travel to Chile to an international conservation finance meeting for an essay on the Iditarod dog sled race, and she has been published in environmental magazines and *Gargoyle*, the prestigious international literary journal. In the summer of 2009 Blair was awarded funds to support an internship at The Aspen Center for Environmental Studies.

Emma Gildesgame ('10) took a leadership role in launching Colby's first Eco-Rep and Green Orientation programs. The ES program initiated a green orientation program to educate incoming students about sustainability issues and personal actions needed to reduce environmental impacts. The ES program and the Office of Campus Life have since partnered to continue the sustainability efforts with a campus wide Eco-rep program for the resident halls aimed at increasing student participation in sustainability efforts.

Stephen Erario ('10) was responsible for writing the third biggest Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant in Maine, awarded to the cities of Waterville and Winslow. The senior environmental studies major helped to organize the organization Sustain Mid-Maine, and the grant is expected to stimulate around a dozen jobs in the community. Steve has also had the following impacts: his efforts led directly to the development of the city's first Sustainability Committee and the development of new energy and waste policies, he contributed significantly to the development a new emissions inventory program for municipalities as part of the Governor's Carbon Challenge. For these and other efforts Erario was awarded a prestigious Morris K. Udall Scholarship.

Jamie O'Connell ('08) developed the emissions audit now being adopted by Colby. Her thesis was influential in convincing the administration that carbon neutrality was a possibility.

Alaina Clark ('08) wrote a thesis that resulted in Colby implementing the College's first "Green Graduation" and helped elevate campus sustainability efforts to a new level.

Sarah Hoskinson ('06) organized a Green Campus Summit attended by colleges from Maine and Canada.

Emila Tjernström ('07) wrote a first-authored publication in *Ecological Economics*, a highly respected environmental economics journal on differences in national climate change policies.

2. Have students participated in environmental challenges or events such as the Solar Decathlon, environmental design contests, or environmental debates? If so, which events and how did they do?

Environmental Studies students at Colby regularly contribute to and participate in national and regional events. Recent examples include:

Two Colby Environmental Studies majors, J. Sarah Sorenson ('11) and Zach Ezor ('10) were awarded first prize in the poster competition at the conference "Climate Change 21 -- Choices for the 21st Century (CC21)", held at the University of Maine in 2008. Their poster, "Colby College's Greenhouse Gas Inventory: A Guide to Carbon Neutrality," was submitted in the category for campus initiatives related to climate change (won first place award). Becky Lipson '09 and Peter Graham '12 Also presented a poster entitled, "Sustainability Initiatives at Colby College." The competition judging team was led by internationally-recognized climate scientist Dr. Paul Mayewski, Director, Climate Change Institute, The University of Maine.

Colby students were recently awarded the Best Undergraduate Poster award at the Maine Water Conference. The poster described their research investigating the nutrient status and remediation recommendations for China Lake, Maine.

Colby students participated in the Sustainable Training Institute Unity College last year. Here they learned how to serve communities that are striving to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and increase their energy security. One of the workshop leaders was Jamie O'Connell ('08), now working as a Regional Associate for ICLEI, an international organization that helps communities to plan for sustainability and form climate action plans.

Colby students, led by Sarah Sorenson ('11), have been very involved with the "Take Back the Tap" national campaign. Their efforts, in partnership with Dining Services, and the Athletic Departments have resulted in significant reduction in bottled water use on campus and increased awareness of the benefits of tap water.

RecycleMania is a nationwide recycling competition among colleges used to promote recycling programs and waste reduction programs. Each winter, beginning in 2005, Colby has participated in the 10-week competition.

In the winter of 2009, 30 Colby students took part in a historic national climate change summit, Power Shift 2009. These students were among 12,000 young people who converged on Capitol Hill to lobby elected officials to be accountable for rebuilding our economy and plan for the future with bold climate and clean energy policy. Colby Power Shifters stood in front of Capitol Hill demanding green jobs and climate legislation in what was the largest climate change lobby day ever. They returned campus energized and eager to work on being part of the solution here in Maine. Over 30 Colby students are participating in this summit again this year.

Emmie Theberge '08, organized a panel discussion at Colby to hear about the proposal from Plum Creek Real Estate Trust officials plans for development that could transform the North Maine Woods. Plum Creek, which owns almost a million acres in Maine, submitted plans for housing subdivisions, two recreational resorts, and rezoning of more than

400,000 acres in the Moosehead Lake region. Emmie led a group of Colby students to learn more about the issue and brought relevant parties together for a public discussion. The event drew over 150 people and led to a larger conference on the subject the following spring.

3. Has your school set aside part of its campus as natural habitat, stipulated limited campus development, or enacted programs preserving its land? If so, please explain.

The entire 714-acre Colby campus is a State Wildlife Management Area. Colby's Perkins Arboretum on the east side of the campus is a 128-acre wildlife refuge used as an outdoor laboratory and also has cross-country running and ski trails.

Colby-Marston Bog Preserve: The Colby-Marston Preserve is a 34-acre classic kettle-hole sphagnum bog located 20 minutes from campus. Biology, geology, and ecology classes use the bog, which is a National Park Service Registered National Landmark, for field teaching and research.

The Colby Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association operates a three-quarter-acre organic garden on Runnals Hill on Colby's campus, where members grow annual and perennial crops. The group's primary functions are giving produce to Colby's dining halls, educating the student body about sustainable agriculture, and providing members with knowledge and experience needed to grow their own food.

Colby, as part of its LEEDS applications, has agreed to restrict future development on portions of campus.

Colby College maintains and follows an official Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan to restrict and minimize pesticide use on campus.

4. Does your school adhere to an indoor air-quality policy (e.g., the mandated use of nontoxic cleaning supplies)? If yes, describe the policy.

Yes, we use green cleaning products and low VOC paints and adhesives. In the rare instance where work requires a higher VOC product, the work must be performed after hours.

5. Does your school offer outdoor- or field-based classes or academic programs? If so, please list and describe up to three. (To nominate a specific program for greater attention in our coverage, please email [cool.schools@sierraclub.org](mailto:cool.schools@sierraclub.org) with a detailed description and the program coordinator's contact information.)

Our Environmental Studies Program emphasizes a project-based curriculum that includes extensive outdoor activities in many of our courses, including the senior capstone courses for the Environmental Studies—Science and Environmental Studies—Policy majors, required ecology courses, and other field-based, environmental science courses.

The college offers JanPlan opportunities that emphasize environmental field studies such as Ecological Field Study in Belize or the Galapagos, Winter Ecology and Plants of the Tropics.

6. Does your school offer campus-sponsored, nature-based extracurricular activities to students and/or faculty? If yes, please list and describe up to three.

Since 1975, Colby has run the Colby Outdoor Orientation Trip (COOT) for all Colby incoming students. Beginning in 2007, the COOT experience is one which all first-year students participate. Since 1975 this college-run program has helped over 12,000 first year students navigate the woods and waters of Maine and the corridors and classrooms of Colby College. This program is managed by administrative staff with significant assistance and collaboration from numerous student leaders. Our collective goal is to provide an outstanding outdoor experience and combine this with an on-going mentoring presence on campus. All of our leaders must first successfully complete all training requirements to be considered an outdoor orientation leader.

The Colby Outing Club leads outdoor trips during the academic school year including fall, Jan Plan, and spring breaks. The COC maintains outdoor gear and make it available to members, provides weekly office hours at the COC office for gear rental and other business, offers outdoor-related volunteer opportunities, and maintains the COC cabin, renting it out to COC members and non-members in the Colby community.

The Colby Mountaineering Club brings together students dedicated to rock, ice, and alpine climbing. The CMC maintains the indoor climbing wall, open to students, faculty, and staff. Members lead outdoor rock and ice climbing trips and provide leader training. The climbing wall and all CMC equipment and resources are available to members upon completion of the free introductory climbing seminar. The CMC climbing wall and office are located in the field house.

The Colby Woodsmen's Team is a student athletic club that practices old-time logging skills such as standing-block chop, log rolling, sawing, pole climbing, and newer events such as axe throw and chainsaw.

7. What specific actions, if any, has your school taken to improve its environmental sustainability since spring 2010?

- Construction on a new biomass plant began in late 2010 and is anticipated to be on-line in Fall, 2011. It will replace about 1 million gallons of heating fuel with about 22 thousand tons of low-grade forest waste and debris including bark and treetops from sustainable forest operations within a 50-mile radius of campus. The twin 400-horsepower biomass-fueled boilers will produce steam for heat, hot water, cooking, and cogeneration of electricity. All wood will be harvested under the guidelines of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Forest Stewardship Council, or via a Master Logger with a certified harvest plan.
- Completed our ninth year of RESCUE program to collect and reuse items left behind by students in the spring.
- Rewritten the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan to (a) give preference to organic pesticides and (b) establish more rigorous standards to limit the use of pesticides on campus.
- Attained LEED Gold on two residence hall renovations
- Continue to replace windows as part of an annual program
- Replace exterior lighting with more efficient lighting
- Retrofitted controls on walk in coolers for dining hall and science buildings

8. Please use this space to address any other unique or interesting sustainability initiatives that have not been previously mentioned:

Colby's Organic Farming and Gardening Association has volunteered at several local farms as well as the annual Common Ground Fair in Unity, Maine.

Our student Environmental Coalition collaborated with Food for Maine's Future on hosting a lecture and film about food security and genetically modified seeds.

Green Graduation: In 2008 Alaina Clark '08 worked with Professor Cole to develop and implement a green graduation. Events scheduled and supported by the Office of Special Programs, Physical Plant, and Dining Services incorporated current and new green practices including minimizing the use of plastics, reducing electricity use, increasing composting, serving sustainable foods, using 100% recycled products, and reducing paper use, among other initiatives. Organizers encouraged receptions and events organized by departments to use these principles from the departments named above. A key feature of Green Graduation was the Green Team, a group of Colby students and employees who staffed information tables and assisted visitors with composting and other greening efforts at events throughout the weekend. Green graduations have now become the norm at Colby.

### Eco Rep Program

Colby EcoReps are student environmental leaders on campus, promoting sustainable living in their dorms and a culture of sustainability across the entire Colby community. The program was designed as part of a research project in the Environmental Studies Program during the summer of 2009 and launched that fall with 24 EcoReps responsible for every residence hall on campus.

A highlight of the recent accomplishments include:

- Had a visible presence in their dorms as a resource for sustainability. They answered questions, had discussions with residents, and were positive environmental role models.
- Created and posted signs encouraging sustainable habits in bathrooms, laundry rooms, and other places in the dorms.
- Created signs clarifying the recycling program and with "green energy tips."
- Collaborated with hall staff to plan dorm events in which residents of various residence halls decorated their own recycling bins.
- Created a Greensgiving pledge, which asked students to pledge to take various actions to reduce their environmental impact around Thanksgiving. Over 300 students signed this pledge.
- Worked with Colby ITS to reduce wasted paper from public printers.
- Planned trips to the Waterville Farmers' Market.
- Created collection boxes for reusable travel mugs provided by Dining Services and returned mugs and other dining hall dishes to the dining hall for reuse.
- Convinced the Colby Bookstore to stop stocking imported Fiji bottled water and to start stocking drying racks for laundry so students have easy access to an energy-efficient alternative to using dryers.
- Provided "loaner" drying racks to their residents.
- Hosted EcoRep week in Pulver Pavilion, which was visited by hundreds of students and included:
  - A free raffle for students who correctly answered questions about sustainable living, Colby's environmental programs, or global environmental issues. Prizes were donated by the Colby Bookstore.
  - Free stickers from consequence09.com.
  - Sign-ups to receive the EcoReps newsletter launched Spring 2010.
  - EcoReps available to answer student questions about sustainability.
  - Water bottle date-labeling to encourage long-term use of reusable water bottles rather than disposables.

- Promoted the Student Environmental Awareness Survey of the Environmental Studies Program. Over 400 students completed the survey.
- Started a pilot composting program in the senior apartments.
- Updated the "Green Living Guide."
- Daily Green Tips posted in the College's General Announcements.