SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS TRANSCRIPT Updated January 2025

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is Olivia Wiebe. I am the Sustainability Manager in the Office of the President, and I'm here to talk more about sustainable solutions on campus at the University of Idaho

So what is sustainability? We can define it as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. We see it as a commitment to our shared future through an integrated and comprehensive approach to education, research, thought, and practice. It is our responsibility to our students, our communities, and our state to foster efforts to understand and improve on our social, environmental, and economic goals.

The Moscow campus lies within the Palouse Prairie, an ecosystem characterized by lush native bunch grasses, pine woodlands, seasonal wetlands, and acres of vibrant wildflowers. Only about 1% of the native Prairie remains and the University of Idaho recognizes our responsibility to restoring and enhancing native habitats and biodiversity.

U of I Moscow is located on the homelands of the Nimiipuu, Palus and Schitsu’umsh tribes. We extend gratitude to the Indigenous people that call this place home since time immemorial. U of I recognizes that it is our academic responsibility to build relationships with the Indigenous people to ensure the inclusion of tribal voices.

The Office of Sustainability includes Dr. Sarah Dawson, our University Director of Sustainability, myself, the Sustainability Manager, and Madison Dougherty, a doctoral candidate and Environmental Science Research Assistant. All of our emails are available here and the U of I sustainability e-mail will contact all three of us.

A brief history of sustainability at the university starts at 2005 with the signing of Tallories Declaration related to energy and greenhouse gas commitments. In 2006, U of I Sustainability Center was founded and funded by student fees. In 2010, a Climate Action Plan was drafted that announced a carbon neutrality goal of 2030. In 2019, we submitted our first Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System submission and earned a Silver rating. In 2020, we installed our first solar array on the Integrated Research and Innovation Center. In 2021, the Sustainability Working Group was formed and drafted a presidential white paper for sustainability that's publicly available on our website. In 2022, we submitted again to STARS and received another Silver rating and hired our first University Sustainability Director. In 2023, the Office of Sustainability was founded within the President's Office. The Campus Pollinator and Campus Tree committees were formed and we received recognition through Bee Campus USA and Tree Campus in Higher Education. In 2024, we launched a composting program on campus, we started our undergraduate sustainability certificate, and we were able to achieve Gold when submitting to STARS, our highest rating yet. In the future, we hope to achieve STARS Platinum, which is the highest and most elite rating through the system. We hope to complete the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf to improve the sustainability of our golf course and work together with our community to create a water conservation plan that will aim to manage and conserve the available groundwater in the Palouse region.

Areas of focus for our office and this presentation include academics, operations, and engagement.

ACADEMICS

Starting with academics, the University of Idaho has over 150 interdisciplinary degrees programs and certificates that relate to environmental, social, and economic sustainability so that every student can engage in sustainability inclusive education.

There are several opportunities for sustainability research at the University of Idaho including, but not limited to, working with the Center for Resilient Communities, the UI Experimental Forest, the Taylor Wilderness Research Station, Semester in the Wild, the McCall Field Campus, the Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Rinker Rock Creek Ranch and Kimberly Research and Extension Center.

Existing certificates that relate to sustainability in the undergraduate form include Sustainability, Remote Sensing of the Environment, Restoration Ecology, Tribal Natural Resources Stewardship, Climate Change, Geographic Information Systems, also known as GIS. Graduate certificates include Fire Ecology Management and Technology, Remote Sensing of the Environment, a certificate in Environmental Education and Science Communication, Natural Resources and Environmental Law, Climate Change and Nuclear Criticality, Safety, Decommissioning, and Used Fuel Management and Technology Management.

The Sustainability certificate is new this year and it's a 12 credit undergraduate certificate that encourages students to select from a range of classes from every college. Students will need to take one core integrative course, one ecological course, one social course, and one economic course that totals at least 12 credits. These foundational courses introduced used to the breadth of sustainability as a concept involving ecological, social, and economic processes.

The Palouse Project is an annual curriculum workshop for faculty interested in integrating sustainability into their courses. It's open to all faculty from all disciplines and departments and it provides step by step instruction for incorporating sustainability from a transdisciplinary perspective/ The revised courses as a result of this workshop can be submitted for inclusion in the Sustainability certificate and all participants receive a $300 cash stipend.

The Office of Sustainability has created a series of 10-slide presentations, or mini-lectures, on various campus sustainability topics. These are available on the sustainability website for download and they can be used independently or integrated into existing presentations or lectures. These are great for introductory courses student group orientations or departmental professional development opportunities.

OPERATIONS

Moving on to operations. In this section, we'll talk about energy, water, waste, transportation, food, biodiversity, landscaping and the built environment.

Starting with energy, the University of Idaho is dedicated to reducing greenhouse gas emissions generated on campus our commitments include the Tallories

Declaration and our 2010 Climate Action Plan.

So why is this important? Carbon dioxide, also known as CO2, is the most abundant greenhouse gas and it contributes to a steady warming of our global climate, which puts our ecosystems and public health at risk. Locally, climate change contributes to a change in water availability and an increasing number of forest fires. Even though much of our local electricity is generated via hydropower through Avista, our utility provider, we still depend on fossil fuels to power our lives. In 2023, nearly 40% of our CO2 emissions came from purchased electricity alone, amounting to 12,722 tons of CO2.

This section will cover our energy commitments, the IRIC solar array, the district energy plant, the steam microturbines, and our greenhouse gas inventories.

U of I’s energy commitments include the Talloires Declaration in 2005 that declared a commitment to environmental sustainability and higher education and included a 10-point action plan for incorporating sustainability and environmental literacy into academics, operations, and outreach. The 2010 Climate Action Plan outlined steps to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, carbon neutrality referring to the balance between the emitted carbon and the absorbed carbon from the atmosphere in carbon sinks or offsets. This focused on minimizing the energy footprint of new buildings and increasing the efficiency of our existing buildings, as well as other priority areas like transportation, solid waste, purchasing, and food.

The IRIC solar array sits on top of the Integrated Research and Innovation Center. Tt has a total of 368 panels that were purchased by 120 donors including our student government, the ASUI, and the Office of the President. These panels have a potential to produce a maximum of 132.2 kilowatts, which is nearly 15% of the IRIC’s electricity demand.

The District Energy Plant, also known as the Steam Plant, provides our heating and cooling needs on campus through three large boilers for heating and three campus chiller plants for cooling. The plant was converted from using coal as fuel to a woody biomass in 1986 and these wood chips in the biomass are sourced from local timber industry waste. According to the EPA, biomass is a renewable resource that is considered carbon neutral since the amount of carbon released from the combustion of the wood chips would have been equal to the amount of carbon taken up by the trees during their life cycle. Steam, chilled water, and compressed air are distributed through a network of underground tunnels throughout campus.

Three steam turbines that are capable of producing electricity were installed in the energy plant in 2022 to catch the steam generated from the heating and cooling processes. In 2023, these turbines offset the campuses electrical demand by 8%. The District Energy Plant is the first carbon negative building on campus, which means it produces more electricity than it consumes.

The Office of Sustainability works with several partners on campus to complete Greenhouse Gas Inventories each fiscal year. These inventories measure greenhouse gas production in Scope 1-2 and 3 categories. We use these for benchmarking, planning and climate action to reach our carbon neutrality goals and each annual report is available on our sustainability website.

How can we help? You can take steps to reduce emissions and energy consumption on campus by turning off lights in empty rooms, unplugging unused appliances and devices, turning on energy saving features on your electronic devices, adjusting your thermostats (set temperatures higher in the summer or lower in the winter), washing laundry in cold water and limiting your use of dryers, taking alternative transportation to campus and helping to educate others.

In summary, the energy section had the key points of the IRIC solar array, the District Energy Plant that uses biomass from the local timber industry, the microturbines that turn steam produced in the heating and cooling processes on campus into electricity. This matters because despite Avista’s use of hydropower, we still rely heavily on fossil fuels to power campus. Using fossil fuels creates potent gases that trap heat in our atmosphere that warms the surface and alters our natural systems. You can conserve energy by turning off lights when they aren't needed, invest in energy efficient appliances and enable energy saving features on all of your devices.

Next up is water. The University of Idaho is dedicated to responsible water management and educating future leaders on water conservation.

This is important because every living thing needs water. We sit on the Grande Ronde and Wanapum aquifers, both of which are being pumped faster than they can recharge. The water levels in these aquifers have been declining since the 1960s, although recent management practices have slowed the decline moderately, the rate of pumping from these aquifers are still outpacing the recharge. Thick units of clay and large areas of impermeable surfaces like cement prevent surface water from entering the aquifer, also known as infiltration. Combined with our growing population, our region could face critical water restrictions in the near future. Keeping the streams free of pollutants and litter is also crucial to the conservation efforts across the Palouse.

In this section, we'll be talking about the Paradise Creek restoration project, our reclaimed water irrigation system, groundwater and stormwater management.

Before UI's ownership, Paradise Creek was rerouted from its original channel. In 2009, the Paradise Creek restoration project returned the creek to its historic channel. In partnership with federal, state, and municipal organizations, approximately 19,000 trees and shrubs were planted to stabilize the creek beds, improve water quality, and help restore the riparian vegetation corridor.

Our reclaimed water irrigation system involves a partnership with the City where UI uses discharge from the city's Wastewater Treatment plant to irrigate most of our grounds. Nearly 90% of our campus is irrigated with this reclaimed water. Benefits of this system include a reduced pressure on groundwater demand; it provides nutrient rich water for irrigation, which reduces the need for fertilizers, and reduces wastewater discharge points to the stream. This allows for better nutrient absorption by the plants, which reduces water pollution because these excess nutrients can cause algal blooms that reduce oxygen and negatively impact biodiversity.

Here we see a map of the irrigated zones on campus using the reclaimed water system. Reclaimed water here is indicated in pink and purple. Some of the only areas without reclaimed water that you can see in blue and dark blue here are watered with domestic water due to state regulations about watering near domiciles.

Groundwater management. The University of Idaho is an active member of the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee, also known as PBAC. PBAC is a collaborative bi-state consortium which monitors, analyzes, manages. and conserves the local groundwater supply. PBAC’s 1992 Groundwater Management Plan addressed the rapidly declining water table through monitoring and analysis guidelines, outreach and education, and municipal policy adjustments. This allowed the decline to drop from 1 foot per year to 0.7 feet per year.

The campus catch basins marked by this medallion here collect runoff and drain directly into our local waterways, including Paradise Creek and Hog Creek. What we spill or drop near these basins drain untreated into the streams. The university has worked to develop a publicly available Stormwater Management Plan that outlines measures to reduce pollutants, inspect catch basins, control our discharge, and provide education and outreach materials for public involvement. If you see any spills in the city or in the university, if you're off-campus please report them via the city stormwater hotline, if you're on-campus report them via the University of Idaho facilities line, and any spills that are emergent need to be reported to 911.

So how can we help? Well, we can reduce the amount of water we use in daily activities by taking shorter showers, only washing full loads of laundry, turning off faucets when not in immediate use, checking indoor and outdoor fixtures regularly for leaks. Homeowners can replace their lawns with native plants that do not need as much supplemental water. The City of Moscow hosts a variety of conservation programs related to water including the Wisescape Rebate program where replacing 300 square feet of previously irrigated lawn with drought tolerant plants can earn you back $150, a Fixture Rebate program, where swapping out inefficient old toilets with more efficient new toilets can receive up to $125 back per toilet, and the Conservation Device program, which provides free water-saving devices for inside and outside the home. Other ways you can help is to eliminate litter and chemical disposal near catch basins.

In summary, this section we learned about the Paradise Creek restoration project that restored the creek to its historic channel, we learned about our reclaimed water system that waters most of campus and water conservation efforts including our groundwater management plan through PBAC and the stormwater management plan. This matters because our aquifers are declining the rate of 0.7 feet per year, which will likely lead to water restrictions in our region without conservation efforts. Keeping our waterways free of litter and pollution will also help preserve our riparian habitats. You can conserve water by using it wisely, fixing leaky fixtures or faucets, and reducing irrigation needs. You can also protect our local waterways by eliminating litter and reporting potential pollutants.

Next up is waste. The University of Idaho is dedicated to creating sustainable waste systems through innovative practices and promoting active participation across campus.

Let's talk about waste. It includes solid waste, recyclables and compostables. Solid waste includes any single use material that can only be disposed of in a landfill or incinerator often leading to air, soil, and water pollution. Through composting and recycling we can reduce our solid waste volumes by nearly 90%. Recyclable items are ones that can be collected and processed back into usable materials, reducing the need for new resource extraction. Accepted materials can change based on your location, but all recycling must be clean, dry and properly sorted in order to be recycled. Compostables are items that are organic materials that can be broken down and added to soil to improve productivity. By composting our food scraps, bioplastics and certain paper goods, we can also reduce emissions in landfills and incinerators.

Why is this important? On average, people in the United States produce 4.9 pounds of waste per day. The production and disposal of goods and irresponsible waste management leads to water, air, and soil pollution. At the University of Idaho, our waste is transported to Oregon to be processed and landfilled. This transportation is carbon intensive and adds to the emissions produced by disposal. Reducing waste and recycling materials can reduce negative environmental and human health consequences caused by raw resource extraction in the production transportation and disposal of goods.

In this section we'll talk about our Vandals Recycle program, compost ,and ways to reduce and reuse materials.

The Vandals Recycle program is the Moscow campus’ single-stream recycling program. It relies on the diligent sorting of recyclable and non-recyclable materials. Non-recyclable materials or normally accepted materials with food or drink residue are considered contamination. Our contamination rates must stay below 5% of our total recycling to keep our contract with our waste provider.

Accepted materials in the single-stream include mixed paper, newspaper and cardboard, screw-top plastics with a resin code on the bottom of #1 or #2, and aluminum and tin cans. Materials that are not accepted and contaminate the bins include glass, cartons, paper and plastic coffee cups, plastic bags or clamshells, or any material that has food or drink residue. All materials must be clean dry and free of food or drink residue.

You can help make our program successful by reducing your single-use material consumption and reusing items to reduce the total waste stream volume. You can mindfully dispose of items to help eliminate recycling contamination and you can educate yourself and others by becoming a recycling ambassador through our website.

More than half of our waste stream is comprised of compostable materials. Composting turns waste into a nutrient-rich soil additive and decreases the production of methane, a potent greenhouse gas that is produced in landfills. There are several different methods for composting, including backyard composting piles, countertop composting bins, large composting barrels ,and passive bays such as the ones open to the public at the PECI Nature Center or the yard waste collection base at the Moscow Recycling Center.

We have recently installed a new biodigester to help with composting our food waste on campus. This food waste is added to wood chips provided by local arborists to create the proper mix for a healthy, productive compost.

The key part of waste management is to reduce and reuse materials. Offices, classrooms, departments and units can help reduce waste generated on campus by limiting their printing by using electronic document sharing services, utilizing electronic devices for note taking, sketching and other office tasks, purchasing only 100% post-consumer recycled paper, shopping the university surplus for items you need and reselling items you no longer use, and using reusable mugs, dishes and utensils.

How can we help? We can bring our own reusable mugs, dishes and silverware, we can bring reusable water bottles to fill at the refill station, we can avoid all products packaged in single-use plastic, we can collect our compostable food scraps for a compost bin or backyard pile, we can stay informed on the best recycling and composting practices, we can be conscious about items that can be reused or donated, we can reduce our consumption of single-use items and we can research how to dispose of potentially hazardous waste properly.

In this section, we talked about our single stream recycling program depending on limiting contamination, that composting is a great option for disposing of food waste and non-recyclable paper products, and ways to reduce and reuse materials to decrease our overall waste generation. This matters because reducing the amount of waste that is generated in landfilled improves the water and air quality and reduces soil pollution. Reducing our overall waste allows fewer truck trips Oregon, lowering our carbon emissions. You can reduce our landfill waste by eliminating single-use packaging, following our recycling guidelines, reusing items when possible, and composting your food and paper scraps.

Next is transportation. The University of Idaho is dedicated to promoting alternative forms of transportation. Moscow campus has well maintained walking and biking paths as well as a SMART Transit system that makes it easy to get around without a personal vehicle.

Why is this important? More than half of our transportation emissions come from personal vehicles. Relying on traditional personal vehicles perpetuates our dependence on fossil fuels and accelerates climate change, but informed personal choices can help reduce the impacts of transportation. Walking or biking to work promotes environmental and personal well-being.

In this section, we'll talk about our walkable campus, the bike friendly features, the SMART Transit system, and various Break Bus opportunities.

Our centralized campus fits within a two-mile diameter and includes a scenic Paradise Path along Paradise Creek for a quiet and beautiful walk to campus. Our paved shared sidewalks are well-maintained in inclement weather, allowing for year-round walkability and our campus security provides a free Safe Walk service with no questions asked.

Some of the bike-friendly features on campus include our covered bike parking with racks, our bike-fix stations that have a collection of common bike tools to help with on-the-go maintenance, and shared sidewalks that allow for convenient navigation of campus and the surrounding area.

The SMART Transit system is our local public transportation. It has East and West routes and is fare-free. Both routes leave the transit center regularly between 6:40 AM and 7:00 PM Monday through Fridays and end at 4 on Saturdays and each bus leaves 10 and 40 minutes after the hour. There are several convenient stops throughout campus including Deacon and College, the ISUB, the Ag Sci building, and the Pitman Center.

Vandal Break Buses are chartered buses for students that provide low-cost safe and convenient transportation to Boise and Idaho Falls during the fall, winter and spring breaks. The Boise route costs $100 and the Idaho Fall route costs 150. You can reserve these online through parking and transportation and each bus departs on the Saturday morning after the last day of classes.

For regional travel options, Northwestern Trailways offers buses to Spokane during the breaks and Wheatland Express offers weekend and vacation express buses to Seattle and Portland. There is a Pullman-Moscow regional airport shuttle. It's a free, fixed schedule bus between campus and airport and opens several days before the start and end of fall and spring semesters. You can submit requests online prior to the trip and are picked up at the Pitman Center or the LLC's on Paradise Creek St.

By walking or biking to campus, you can help us reduce our carbon impact and contribute to a generally healthy society. When walking or biking is not an option, use public transport or carpool to reduce your commuting emissions. You can also utilize our buses and other shared transit methods during breaks.

In this section we talked about our centralized campus with well-maintained walkways, the convenient and free SMART Transit system and ample bike paths and repair stations that help make biking a great choice. This matters because transportation, especially in traditional single person vehicles, generate a large amount of our greenhouse gases. To meet climate commitments and carbon neutrality goals, we all need to find new ways to reduce carbon emissions. You can help by choosing low carbon methods of transportation like walking or biking when possible, otherwise utilizing ride sharing carpooling and public transport opportunities.

Next up is food. The University of Idaho is dedicated to reducing our food waste and emissions, combating food insecurity in our community, and sourcing more goods locally

This is important because sustainable food systems minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides, compost food waste for soil enrichment, conserve water and promote healthier ecosystems. Nearly one ton of food waste is produced in the dining halls on campus per day. Only taking what we can eat and finding creative uses for our food scraps can reduce the amount of waste we produce. We can help combat food insecurity on campus and in our community by donating time, money or usable food items to our local food pantries.

In this section, we'll talk about the Soil Stewards farm, Idahoeats and the Vandal Food Pantry.

The Soil Stewards farm is a student led organic farm that was the site of a major soil remediation effort that restored it to the vibrant farm that exists today. They provide organically grown produce and students an opportunity to learn more about sustainable food systems. They host harvest sales every Thursday from June to September and host a community supported agriculture, or CSA, program for community members that provide monthly subscriptions to fresh produce.

Idahoeats is our on-campus dining service and they have several sustainability commitments including serving Fairtrade, USDA organic, rainforest safe and locally grown coffee at multiple locations. They partner with How Good, a program that identifies best, great, and good recipes based on 8 sustainability metrics. They purchase goods from local vendors when available.

According to the US Department of Education, an estimated one in three college students experience food insecurity. The USDA defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life. This can be a temporary situation for a family or it can last a long time. Lack of access to food negatively affects academic performance, physical health, and mental well-being.

The Vandal Food Pantry aims to address this through an open format pantry space with perishable and nonperishable items. The pantries opened to students, staff, faculty and community members, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM and relies on donations from our campus community. The pantry aims to address short-term food insecurity while providing a sustainable alternative to usable food waste. The pantry partners with Idahoeats to recover food from marketplaces and takes the expired food that can be composted to the PCEI Nature Center, while all clean packaging is recycled. Nonperishable donations are accepted year round. Due to supply, non-vegetable donations are preferred. Other donations can be donated through the Food for Fines program that is provided through Parking and Transportation Services.

How can you help? You can prepare meals that creatively use food scraps from other recipes. The Student Sustainability Cooperative published a scrappy cookbook with recipes like carrot top pesto, broccoli stem chips, and more. You can shop locally for produce and other goods, reducing the carbon emissions from shipping as well as supporting regional economies. You can support the Soil Stewards farm, volunteer at the Vandal Food Pantry or organize a food drive in your classroom, department or unit.

In this section, we talked about how local organic produce is available from the Soil Stewards farm, that Idahoeats is continuing to improve the sustainability of dining services and the Vandal Food Pantry that's available to everyone and relies on our usable donations. This matters because growing our food responsibly has the potential to improve our water soil and air qualities. Food insecurity is common on college campuses and can be combated through donations of food, time or money to pantries. You can shop from local organic vendors and aim to prepare more efficient meals that minimize your food waste and when possible compost your food scraps and you can donate any usable food items to food and security organizations in your community.

Next up is biodiversity and landscaping. The University of Idaho is dedicated to preserving the natural beauty of our region through native landscaping and habitat restoration of our local ecosystem.

The Palouse Prairie is the most endangered ecosystem in the continental US but less than 1% of the native habitat remains. The native Palouse Prairie remnants are often only a few acres each and are scattered throughout the region. This creates a disconnected patchwork of land for our native plants, insects, and wildlife. The native ecosystem also holds significance for the Indigenous peoples of our region and supports an intricate network of native plants and animals.

Through sustainable landscape management and native habitat restoration, U of I has the potential to become a sanctuary for our native species to find food, shelter and sites for reproduction. Native plants also require less water, provide stabilizing root systems for soil and attract native pollinators, who are most effective at pollinating native plants. We rely on the biodiversity for many things including replenishing the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the soil that grows our food.

In this section, we'll talk about the native pollinator gardens on campus, Bee Campus USA certification, Tree Campus in Higher Education certification, the ACSP golf course program and our service-learning opportunities.

Through the Sustainable Initiatives Fund, the Student Sustainability Cooperative funded a student project to install a native pollinator garden along Paradise Path near the East end of Guy Wick’s Field. This garden is planted with multiple native wildflowers and grasses including Jessica's Aster, Idaho fescue and Western Yarrow, among others.

University of Idaho is a proud affiliate of Bee Campus USA, a conservation certification provided by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. As an affiliate, we established a standing Bee Campus committee to advocate for pollinators, we committed to creating and enhancing pollinator habitat on campus by planting more native plants, we published an Integrated Pollinator and Pest Management plan, or IPPM, that regulates pesticide use and enhances pollinator habitat on campus. We offered continuing education focused on pollinator conservation as well as service-learning projects through the Student Sustainability Cooperative that enhance pollinator habitat and we have begun to create signage focused on pollinator conservation.

In partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation, we also earned Tree Campus in Higher Education certification by establishing a Campus Tree Care Advisory committee, drafting a Campus Tree Care plan, hosting annual Arbor Day observance through engagement events and providing service-learning opportunities through the SSC.

We are pursuing certification through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf, which is a program that promotes environmental protection and preservation of natural heritage on golf courses. This certification addresses the following aspects of sustainable golf course management: environmental planning, which we have achieved, wildlife and habitat management, chemical-use reduction and safety, water conservation, which we have achieved, water quality management, and outreach and education.

Since 2006, the Student Sustainability Cooperative, or the SSC, has planted over 8000 native trees shrubs and grasses in partnership with local restoration organizations. The SSC has volunteer opportunities that every Vandal can join that focus on Prairie restoration and environmental stewardship.

So how can you help? You can volunteer with the SSC and other restoration organizations in the region, you can choose native plants by making landscaping decisions using our native plant guide, available on our website, you can provide nesting sites for native bees, birds and other wildlife when you're able to, and you can eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides in landscaping.

In this section we learned about Bee Campus USA, which symbolizes our commitment to rebuilding and protecting native pollinator habitats on campus, we learned about Tree Campus, it symbolizes our commitment to sustainable stewardship of our campus tree canopy, and our ACSP golf course certification that symbolizes our intention to restore native wildlife habitat and protect our water systems on our golf course. This matters because the native Palouse Prairie restoration is a priority for local, state and national conservation groups due to the critically endangered status of our region. it is our responsibility to create land management practices that enhance native habitats for plant and animal life. The most effective way to help with native habitat restoration is to volunteer with your local conservation organizations. If you have influence over land or property be sure to include native plants in your landscaping and eliminate your use of harmful pesticides or herbicides.

Next is built environment. The University of Idaho is dedicated to applying sustainable solutions in the built environment. How we source, construct and manage our buildings distribution systems, and infrastructure impacts our natural world.

Why is this important? Well, procuring materials, using equipment to build and operate buildings account for nearly 40% of the annual global carbon emissions. Building and maintaining spaces to live, learn and recreate requires material source from the natural world, which can lead to the destruction of vital habitats around the globe. Our built environment also contributes to water and soil pollution and produces construction waste. Buildings that are built sustainably are able to reduce their utility consumption, operational emissions, and are constructed using materials that require less energy to produce/

In this section, we'll talk about the university's LEED silver policy, our LEED Gold buildings and the ICCU arena.

LEED, also known as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a rating system that provides a framework for healthy, efficient, carbon and cost saving green buildings. In 2008, U of I committed to minimizing our environmental impact of new and renovated building projects and the building standards now require all new construction and major remodels to be certified as meeting or exceeding a silver LEED rating.

The university currently has 2 LEED Gold buildings on campus. The College of Education building was originally built in 1969 and renovated to fit LEED Gold standards including features like low-flow toilets, water bottle refill stations, natural lighting and other energy efficient features. The Integrated Research and Innovation Center was a new construction that was finished in 2017. It has features including the first photovoltaic solar array, a green roof with native grasses, and energy efficient fixtures that utilize natural light.

The ICCU arena was built in 2021 and made history with its stunning timber design and locally sourced construction materials. The wood was harvested from the UI Experimental Forest and made into timber beams by Idaho mills and laminators. Using wood decreases the carbon footprint in the building and required less energy to produce than steel or concrete. Using the local mills and sourcing also greatly reduced shipping emissions associated with the building.

How can you help? Increasing the efficiency of systems within your living space is the best way to promote sustainable buildings. Pursue fixture rebates after replacing high flow toilets through the City of Moscow and energy rebates through Avista utilities. You can refit your home with shower heads and faucets that use EPA's Watersense label to reduce your water usage and purchase appliances that are certified EnergyStar which meet the EPA strict energy efficiency requirements.

In this section, we learned about all new campus buildings being built to LEED Silver standards or better, we learned about the two LEED Gold buildings on campus, the College of Education and the IRIC, and the ICCU arena, which was constructed using local timber mills and labor. This matters because building and maintaining our offices, classrooms and living spaces requires energy and valuable resources. Sustainable construction and maintenance helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, landfill waste generation, and the strain on natural resources. You can retrofit your home with water and energy saving devices, invest in EnergyStar appliances and build with natural or low emission materials in personal construction projects.

ENGAGEMENT

Next is engagement. This is important because everyone deserves access to environmental benefits. Voices of underserved communities are often excluded from conversations about sustainable solutions. Promoting access to environmental benefits means fair treatment and meaningful inclusion of all people. This will be achieved when everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards as well as equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn and work.

In this section, we'll talk about sustainability access and integrity, we'll talk about different ways you can get involved and a few volunteer opportunities in our region.

The University of Idaho is dedicated to creating equal access to food, housing, academic opportunities, employment opportunities, and healthcare as well as providing basic needs support programs. Sustainability includes making space for everyone to live healthy, productive lives.

A selection of support programs include our Vandal Food Pantry, the Bruce and Kathy Pitman emergency fund, that provides financial assistance to students who are experiencing emergent situations, Vandal Health Education, that provides free education on health and well-being practices, a Vandals for Recovery program, and host a Well Space, which is a quiet space for any Vandal to come and relax within the Student Recreation Center and the VandalCare report system that connects Vandals in distress with the right resources, including health counseling and basic needs services.

Let's get involved! The University of Idaho is dedicated to providing a plethora of opportunities to get involved with sustainability on local, regional and national levels. You can make a difference and engage with our programs, initiatives, service-learning and events.

The Student Sustainability Cooperative, or the SSC, is a student-fee funded sustainability organization within Student Affairs. A Sustainability Coordinator leads a team of students that work to provide sustainability related events, service-learning opportunities, and educational outreach materials. Volunteer opportunities include Get Rooted, where we plant native trees, Get Dirty, where we go to help organic farms, and Spruce the Palouse, which we provide general environmental stewardship. This was formerly known as the Sustainability Center.

There's lots of ways to engage with sustainability on campus including taking the Vandal Sustainability Pledge and motivating yourself to make positive changes, joining the EcoVandal ambassador program to help spread the word about sustainability programs on campus, applying for Green Event, Green Lab and Green Office certifications, nominating yourself or other for Sustainability Champions Awards, becoming a Recycling Ambassador, volunteering with the SSC, support sustainability-related student clubs through events and fundraising, and engage with our office for guidance, questions or suggestions.

How can you help? You can promote inclusion in sustainable solution conversations and implementation, you can donate or volunteer to support local organizations that elevate the voices of underserved communities, and you can stay informed about the new opportunities to get involved.

A selection of volunteer opportunities include: on-campus we have the Student Sustainability Cooperative, the Center for Volunteerism, the Vandal Food Pantry, and the Soil Stewards farm. In the Palouse, we have the Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute, Palouse Conservation District, Inland Oasis and the Palouse Land Trust and statewide we have the Idaho Conservation League, Idaho Fish and Game, the Sierra Club Idaho chapter and the Citizens Climate Lobby.

In this section we learned about the variety of support programs on campus that aim to help every Vandal succeed as well as several ways to engage with sustainability at U of I, find what works for you! This matters because making space for every Vandal to enjoy healthy, clean lives is a key component of a sustainable community. We can come together to advocate for better future and build lasting solutions. You can stay informed about current environmental issues and learn how to engage with the organizations that need your help. You can donate your time or funds to local organizations and when given the chance you can promote inclusion in any conversations regarding sustainable solutions.

CONCLUSION

We encourage you to reach out to us with any questions you may have or suggestions for adding to future training.

Please take the post training survey in order to complete this training and receive your certificate. Thank you for your interest in learning more about sustainability on campus and helping us advance our initiatives at the University of Idaho.