

SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES NEWSLETTER SECOND EDITION

About the Sustainability Studies Newsletter

The Sustainability Studies Newsletter is exclusively available to students and alumni in UF's Sustainability Studies program. Published at the beginning of the fall, spring, and summer semesters, the newsletter provides information about sustainable resources and events in and around Gainesville and careers in the sustainability sector. Each newsletter also presents an interview with a Sustainability Studies student or graduate who is making exceptional contributions.

About the Sustainability Studies Newsletter & Alumni Coordinator

Jordyn Golden is a senior Sustainability Studies student who is getting a minor in International Development and Humanitarian Assistance and a certificate in Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems. She was born in Stuart, Florida, where she spent her childhood and graduated from Clark Advanced Learning Center in 2020. In this high school, Jordyn was involved with her UNICEF USA Club and is continuing her involvement at Gator 4 UNICEF. Her interest in sustainability stemmed from a young age. After adapting a pescatarian diet at the age of 11, she learned the environmental



effects of the agriculture industry. Since, she has become extremely interested in the subject of climate science and carbon balance. In her free time, Jordyn can be found exploring the nature trails in Gainesville with her rescue dog, Canela.

Sections

Local Shopping
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Job Opportunities
Gainesville Events

Interview

Career Opportunities

Paid Opportunities:

CFL Flooring: National Account Manager

Chattanooga, TN

Job opportunity for graduates and graduating seniors at Sustainability Studies alumnus's company. Contact jordyngolden@ufl.edu for listing.

Garden Gate Nursery

Gainesville, FL

Accepting resumes.

Gator Hydroponic (Good Grow)

Gainesville, FL

Good Grow offers both job and internship opportunities working with propagation, soil systems, etc. Internships include a monthly stipend.

Green Market Nursery

Gainesville, FL

Accepting resumes. Owned by Tom Thurston, who has years of horticulture experience.

The Repurpose Project

Gainesville, FL

Accepting resumes. Looking for people who are passionate about the organization's mission.

Unpaid Opportunities:

Many volunteer opportunities are available through different local companies and student organizations. Volunteer opportunities can be found [here](#).

Students who are looking for research opportunities that align with their career goals are encouraged to reach out to professors whose work interest them.

Local Shopping

The Repurpose Project

In Gainesville, businesses make it easy to shop with a sustainable mindset. Looking for plastic-free solutions, purchasing repurposed clothes and furniture, and seeking certifications such as fair-trade and B-Corp are all easy ways to shop with the environment in mind.

Main Location: 1920 NE 23rd Ave, Gainesville, FL 32609

Reuse Planet: 1540 NE Waldo Road, Gainesville, FL 32609

Hours: Tuesday – Saturday: 10 am – 6 pm & Sunday: 12 pm – 5 pm

The Repurpose Project is a non-profit organization that aims “to divert useful resources from the landfill, redirect these items to the public for art and education, inspire creativity, and help us all rethink what we throw away”. The organization began as a reuse store but has grown with various programs and even a second location. The Repurpose Project's main location, on NE 23rd Ave next to Satchel's Pizza, is filled with just about anything imaginable and is described as a “junkshop”. Recently, a second location, Reuse Planet, opened on Waldo Road, just less than a mile away from the original store. Reuse Planet primarily sells household items such as furniture, appliances, decor, etc.

For people not located in Gainesville, the Repurpose Project has items for sale on eBay and Etsy. Repurpose Project Partners to Zero Waste is an initiative to help allow everyone in the community reach zero waste. Partners will consult with different businesses and schools with goals to help reduce waste by 90%. Tips for businesses, schools, and individuals are available on the Zero Waste Initiative website to allow everyone to practice zero waste habits.

Local Eating

Plantology

Sustainable eating habits are formed by consuming local, vegetarian, or vegan options. Gainesville is fortunate to have numerous vegan and local restaurant options throughout the town.

Located in Midpoint Park and Eatery: 931 SW 2nd Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601

Hours: Monday – Saturday: 11 am – 7 pm & Sunday 11 am – 4 pm

Plantology is a vegan food truck that offers a variety of plant-based meat options. The truck is in Midpoint Park and Eatery, along with Mexi Cocina and Zen Asian Street Eats. It occasionally hosts events such as yoga and even The Florida Vintage Market. Plantology's menu includes burgers, mac bowls, chick'n options, loaded fries, and more. A fair amount of the food offered is made from scratch in-house, often using organic ingredients. New Sunday Brunch options have recently been added, including biscuits & gravy, breakfast burritos, donut hot chick'ns, and more.

Ryan Strandjord opened the business during the pandemic with hopes “to present an accessible menu of vegan food that has something for everyone, while also telling a nuanced story about the food, it's connection to the earth, and how we can create global change through what we choose to put on our plate.” Plantology has partnered with the University and will be serving their delicious plant-based menu in the Reitz Union for Meatless Monday from 11 am to 3 pm until the end of the semester. The restaurant is available for private catering events and occasionally attends Critter Creek Sanctuary's Farmers “Moo-ket”.

Campus Event

8th Biennial UF Water Institute Symposium

The University of Florida has many sustainable initiatives on and around campus. UF's Office of Sustainability regularly updates its website with sustainable tips and events.

Location: J. Wayne Reitz Union

Dates: February 22-23, 2022

Cost: \$125

The UF Water Institute is hosting the 8th Biennial Symposium. This year's event "will focus on innovative science, technology, education, policy, and management advances" addressing pressing water issues, including "Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Impacts of Ecosystems and Communities". Scientists, lawyers, and other professionals come from across the state to attend this event. The keynote speaker for 2022 is Margaret Palmer, a professor at the University of Maryland. Palmer is the founder and director of National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center (SESYNC). The symposium will contain sessions on Historical Perspectives on Climate Change, Analysis of Environmental Flows, and Relationship Between Flow and Ecosystem Vitality, Climate Change and Sea Level rise Impact on Water Resources, and more. This is a great opportunity to build connections as the event usually sees about 400 attendees. Make sure to [register](#) by February 15th to ensure a spot at this exceptional event.

Student Organization

Ethnoecology Society

The University of Florida has many different student organizations that have an environmental focus. In each newsletter, one organization will be chosen for its mission and practices. To find more student clubs, visit orgs.studentinvolvement.ufl.edu > log in > organizations > find an organization.

Located behind bathhouses (left of Field & Fork)

Meet: Wednesdays 5 pm – 7 pm & Sundays 10 am – 12 pm

The Ethnoecology Society is a student organization that maintains and sustains the ethnoecology garden on campus. Ethnoecology is the study of indigenous plant species. The society meets directly behind the bat houses, sharing some resources with the Field & Fork Garden. Members volunteer by helping with weeding, watering, planting, etc. There are also occasional events throughout the semester. In the fall, events included plant-based tie dyeing, a lecture and tea tasting with Dr. Rick Stepp, pumpkin carving, and a mid-autumn festival.

The society was founded in 1993 by Dr. Hugh Popenoe and a group of UF students. The idea of the garden was thought of shortly after Dr. Robert

Schultes, a distinguished ethnobotanist and Harvard professor, visited the campus.

"Schultes remarked that the mild, subtropical climate in Gainesville and the robust botany, anthropology, geography, and agricultural departments made UF a favorable location for ethnobotanical studies". Since then, students have been growing and harvesting a variety of indigenous and native plant species.



Local Events

Freezing Food Safely – UF/IFAS

\$25 Registration

Alachua County Ag Auditorium

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Sunset Hike & Paint

\$25 Registration

Center for Outdoor Recreation and Education (CORE)

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

5:00 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.

7th Annual UF Climate Communications Summit – The Power of Listening

Free Registration

Reitz Union Auditorium

Thursday, February 3, 2022

3:30 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Gainesville VegFest

Free; No registration required

Depot Park

Sunday, February 6, 2022

10 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Miracle Market with The Florida Vintage Market

Bo Diddley Plaza

Sunday, February 6, 2022

11: A.M. 4:00 P.M.

Showtime Concert

Free; No registration Required

Bo Diddley Plaza

Friday, February 11, 2022

7:00 P.M. 9:00 P.M.

The Florida Vintage Market

Free; No registration required

4th Ave Food Park

Sunday, February 13, 2022

12:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Dion Dia Showcase

Free; No registration required

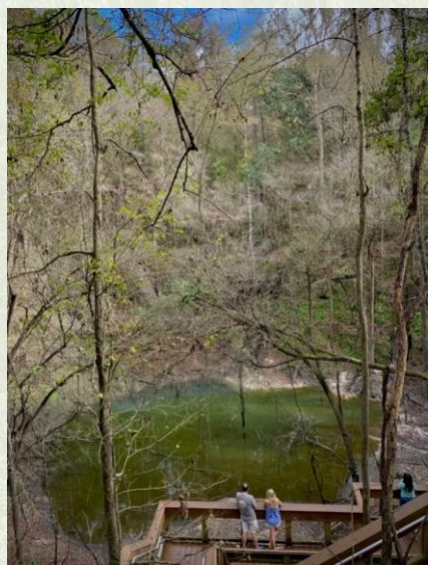
Bo Diddley Plaza

Thursday, March 17, 2022

6:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.

Conservation Area

Devil's Millhopper Geological State Park



Gainesville is home to many beautiful parks and trails with unique geological factors. Many are within walking or biking distance from campus while others can be just a short bus ride away.

Hours 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Wednesday – Sunday

Address: 4732 Millhopper Road, Gainesville, FL 32653

Cost: \$4 for vehicles; \$2 for pedestrians

Devil's Millhopper Geological State Park is one of Florida's two Geological State Parks, and it is located only a fifteen minute drive from campus! The park consist of a deep, cover-collapse sinkhole that is 120 feet and 500 feet across. Clays and sands visible due to the collapse "were deposited during the Miocene Epoch between 5.3 and 23 million years ago." Visitors can access the sinkhole by using a staircase that descends to the bottom, as pictured to the left. For those who may have younger siblings or family members, the park will soon begin offering ranger-guided tours Saturday at 10 a.m. On the first Saturday of every month, instructor Maggie Rucker offers a beginners yoga course at the front of the park. This is a great experience for anyone who wants to build a better connection with themselves and the environment.

Alumnus Spotlight

Each newsletter, we will feature a current Sustainability Studies student or alumnus who is making great strides in his or her pursuit of sustainability. Our first Alumnus spotlight is on Maria Martinez Mason, a Sustainability Studies and Political Science alumnus who graduated in 2013. I interview Maria on November 17th about her experience working at both the Washington Office of Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and Breakthrough Energy.

Jordyn: Could you elaborate on your experience working at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)?

Maria: NRDC, at its core, is an advocacy organization. Their work expands to climate change, sustainable communities, clean energy, public health, wildlife, protecting oceans, and, generally, ensuring that clean air and water is accessible to everyone. It taught me a great deal about both the challenges and opportunities that we face in tackling climate change and what it means to decarbonize our economy. During my time there, I focused on making sure that Latin America as a region could meet the global climate change targets that they were setting for themselves and that those targets were strong. One challenge that developing countries face is that they do not have enough capital to realize all the projects that they want to accomplish. So, we thought: how do we set them up with finance mechanisms like a green bank or a green bond or these other ways to finance some of these green projects?

I also spent time working on international climate agreements. I happened to go, fortuitously, to the COP21 in Paris in 2015 and had a front-row seat to those climate negotiations. But when it was all over, I wondered, how do we make sure that all the pledges we're making today will be met? And as a result, I became very interested in subnational action, because as important as this global work is, it ironically made me realize that I was most interested in sub-national policy. That's where the real change begins to happen— when you're tweaking the levers of a federal and state policy. I spent a couple of years there and then applied to graduate school and moved to New Haven, Connecticut, for that. It was a great experience. NRDC was very formative for me as a professional in this field.



Jordyn: When you were special assistant to Commissioner of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), you implemented an executive order which expanded the scope of the Governor's Council on Climate Change. Could you explain what the executive order did in terms of setting and reaching climate goals?

Maria: The Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) has two goals. One is to assess and inventory greenhouse gas emissions for the state, basically to help calculate the state's carbon footprint and come up with strategies to reduce those sources of carbon across the economy in the state. And then in time, the governor realized, well, it's great that we have this inventory of emissions, and it's great that we're thinking about how to reduce future emissions, but we know that there's already a certain amount of climate change built-in, and as a coastal state, we already know we're going to have some level of impact. And so that's where the second goal of that Council comes in. This new executive order I worked on was to help prepare the state agencies and reduce the risk they faced from climate change impacts, like storms, hurricanes, and flooding. My role was to bring that group of people together, set the agenda, and formulate a plan with them. What's the best way to do this? How do we come up with a plan? And then how do we write out the plan and whose expertise do we need and let's do public comments, so citizens can be engaged too. It was a really neat and gratifying project to be a part of, not least because I had the opportunity to work with the brightest minds Connecticut had to offer.

Jordyn: What is the mission of Breakthrough Energy? Is that where you're currently at now?

Maria: Yes, that is where I am now. In the simplest form, the mission of Breakthrough Energy is to help lead the world on a very rapid and very cost-effective path to transition to a net-zero economy by 2050 by supercharging innovation. We work with a variety of nonprofit and academic partners, private actors, and governments, to realize that objective. We want to make sure that we have enough clean energy to meet our future energy demand, but we also want to make sure that it's affordable for the whole world. Our founder, Bill Gates, is passionate about that because he spent a lot of time working on polio, vaccines, primarily in the developing world and realized many parts of the world still face extreme energy poverty and they will need to have access to clean energy sources if they're going to continue to develop sustainably.

Jordyn: You mentioned the technology at Breakthrough Energy. What type of technology is Breakthrough Energy supporting, and how so? Are you guys investing in that or if there are companies actively working on prototypes and stuff?

Maria: We're focused on *emerging* technologies, which just means, anything that's not at market scale yet. Wind and solar are not emerging. They're pretty mature, and they're great. What we need to focus on with those is continuing to build them as fast as possible. Technologies like direct air capture, green hydrogen, long-duration storage, sustainable aviation fuels, clean steel, which are key to decarbonizing major sectors of the economy are still emerging. I say "emerging" in the sense that they're neither cheap enough nor at scale enough to be available to the market right now. What me and my team do is focus on policy changes we need to lower the cost of clean energy technologies and make innovation go faster – so that they have a standing chance to compete with incumbent fossil fuel technologies.

Jordyn: Awesome. So, what are some of the policies that you are currently advocating for in terms of climate change solutions?

Maria: Sure. I'll just give you one example to put things into context. One of the things we care a lot about is making sure that clean energy is low cost. The term that we use to think about that is called the green premium, and the green premium is literally the difference in cost between a dirty technology and a clean one. To give you a very simple example, the fuel that powers airplanes today, which happens to be called Jet A, is about \$2.25 to \$2.50 a gallon, depending on the price of a barrel of oil. Meanwhile, something called sustainable aviation fuels (which have low or no carbon emissions) is about \$5 per gallon or up to \$8. So, when you're talking about paying two to three times more for clean fuel no one in their right mind is going to want to switch to sustainable aviation fuels, no matter how much you love the environment. And that's a huge problem because if clean alternatives exist but no one buys them because they're too expensive, we won't be able to reach net-zero goals fast enough to prevent a climate disaster. One of the policies I'm working on right now is creating a tax credit for clean jet fuels of about \$1.75/gallon so that airlines and companies that want to switch the clean fuels but can't pay that huge green premium have more of an incentive to do so.

Jordyn: So, what is the most beneficial experience that you've had throughout your work experience?

Maria: For me, it really wasn't one experience that was more important or beneficial than any other. The common thread in experiences that made me feel positive was having a good mentor in whatever that experience was. Finding yourself a good mentor in an internship or a job or whatever setting you're in is probably more important than whatever the work is. Because even in NRDC, even though I decided international work wasn't for me, I had an amazing boss there who invested in me and let me take chances and risks and gave me greater responsibilities overtime so that I could keep growing and expanding my skill set. My advice is: whenever you're thinking about an opportunity or a job or an internship, spend some time thinking about whether the who will supervise you will be a good mentor to you. And whether they're invested in you, and ask them questions in your interview to discern that! Such as what is your philosophy on mentoring? What do you feel as a supervisor is important? Working with someone who is invested in you is often so much more important than the substance.

Jordyn: Do you have any advice for current Sustainability Studies students who are about to enter the environmental sector?

Maria: Don't be afraid to explore before settling on what you want to work on. The environmental sector is an enormous one with lots of intersectional issues. The realm of possibilities of how you can do your part to advance a sustainable planet can feel almost limitless. Like me, you may be interested in how policies and government programs can be used as a tool to force the world on a more sustainable path. You might also be interested in making goods more sustainable, like clothing or technology or fuels like we've talked about. Or maybe you hate all of that and you're a lawyer and what you want to do with your life is defend the bedrock environmental laws like the Clean Air Act that every day through the decades have helped protect people on the planet from pollution. Trying and shopping is the best way to figure out what you like. And even if you do something like a one-year internship and you realize you hate it and it's miserable, that in itself is valuable because you learned something important about yourself. College and the first couple of years after graduation are the best time to do that. Don't feel like I have to graduate tomorrow, get a job, be there for ten years and become a director of something. It's a journey, not a destination, so enjoy the ride. You might not know what you really love until you try a couple of things.

If you have suggestions or contributions for future newsletters, please email Jordyn Golden at jordyngolden@ufl.edu.

