

Campus Sustainability Guide

*Leading the way to achieve
a carbon-neutral campus.*



OES

PSU Office of Environmental
Sustainability

Plymouth State University

Here at PSU we have a strong commitment to fostering sustainable behavior within our institution and beyond. The University's Climate Action Plan outlines PSU's plan to become carbon neutral by 2050. However, to achieve our campus goals and create a more sustainable society we must work together to improve our everyday choices both on and off campus.

When deciding to live more sustainably one must make conscious, thoughtful decisions about a wide variety of choices and behaviors, but knowing the "right choice" can be challenging. This guidebook was created to be a resource to assist members of the greater PSU community in living a more sustainable lifestyle by providing a "quick reference" source in order to assist in making daily sustainable choices in our community.

This guide is useful when considering environmentally friendly choices:


*In your home,
In your work space,
In your community,
For yourself.*

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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OES

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Did you know?

Plymouth State University is the only designated Tree Campus USA University in New Hampshire, and there are more than 150 diverse species spread throughout the campus grounds.



1. RECYCLING

While PSU departments collectively discard tons of material each year, our campus is committed to handling the material in a responsible way by reducing and recycling waste whenever possible. By recycling the materials are kept out of landfills, which conserves energy and natural resources, reduces pollution, and supports the market for secondary materials, which reduces waste disposal costs for PSU.

Recycling should be seen as the last attempt to recover waste, however. Recycling materials still requires energy and results in additional greenhouse gas emissions. Best practice is to follow the age old adage: **REDUCE, RESUSE, RECYCLE** in that order.

CAN RECYCLE

Paper:

- Newspapers & magazines
- Office, fax & copy paper
- Junk mail & envelopes
- Brown paper bags

Containers:

- Glass bottles & jars
- Aluminum cans
- Clean foil
- All Plastics #1-#7

Cardboard:

- Brown corrugated boxes
- Gray boxboard– cereal boxes
- Clean pizza boxes



Did you know?

Approximately 40% of recycling efforts are lost due to contamination. Plymouth State students, staff, and faculty can help fight recycling waste by being aware of what can be recycled and what should go in the trash and reducing their wastes in general.

Reducing your waste will save money in the long and short term.

What's better than coffee? Less expensive coffee! Most businesses, including local staples like Café Monte Alto and even Dunkin Donuts chains, offer discounted prices if you bring in your own refillable mug.

What's better than beer? A gallon of beer! Purchasing a growler through local breweries can get you discounted refills.

Common reusable products:

- Water bottle
- Coffee mug
- Metal food container
- Grocery bags



Did you know?

The energy to produce a single 1-liter plastic bottle is equivalent to charging your phone for 60 hours straight. The amount of water required to produce the bottle is double that of what it contains.

2. Energy

At Plymouth State University we encourage energy conservation, and the University continues to explore alternative energy sources. In the 2018-19 academic year, the cheapest sourced electricity on campus was from the solar panels on top of Hyde Hall. This renewable technology allowed Plymouth to generate electricity for 20% less than the next cheapest electric source. Additional solar plans include the implementation of a solar pavilion outside the Office of Environmental Sustainability and the possibility of a large scale array on top of the PE center. All of this contributes toward Plymouth State's commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, but action starts with the individual. Here are some ways that energy costs can be mitigated by the individual, whether you are on campus or leasing your own apartment

Tips to Conserve Electricity:

- Turn off lights when not in use
- Turn off & unplug electronics when not in use— computer, TV, toaster, ect.
- Place your electronics and other devices strategically, so you can put them on a power strip— making it easier to turn them all off at once
- Change power management features on computers to an energy efficient setting
- Unplug phone & battery chargers when fully charged
- Use task lighting, desk lamps, when possible, and shut off overheads
- Don't use decorations that require electricity
- Use compact fluorescent lights, or LED bulbs in light fixtures
- Place work space near windows to take advantage of natural light
- When purchasing, choose energy efficient models like Energy Star

Resources for Energy Conservation:



3. TRANSPORTATION

Driving, one of the most common forms of on campus transportation, puts a tremendous burden on our environment. In addition, by walking and biking to class you can avoid the need to purchase a campus parking pass or racking up expensive parking violations.

Cutting Down Our Reliance on Fossil Fuels

Public Transportation

PSU Shuttle Service: The PE Center, Ice Rink, Langdon Woods, Center Lodge, Lamson Library and Prospect Hall & Weekend trips to Walmart.

Concord Coach: Provide bus trips from Plymouth to Concord, Manchester, Boston, South Station and Logan Airport.

Bicycling: Rhino Bike Works, next to the Common Man, has an extensive line-up of bikes and cycling gear, as well as rentals. Plymouth Ski and Sport sells new bikes and cycling gear.

Walking: Sidewalks run from Highland St all the way to the Hatch Plaza, where you can find Hannaford, Marshalls, Next door is Burger King and CVS. You can also get to the Hatch Plaza by venturing through the woods behind the Langdon Woods Res Hall. All shops downtown are walking accessible. Sidewalks run on Main St. from the rotary down to Rite Aid.

4. CONSUMER PRODUCTS

When cleaning it is very important to use sustainable cleaning products. Simply switching chemical-based products with environmentally friendly products is an easy step towards a more sustainable way of life. “Green” products have a bio-based content, opposed to harsh chemicals. These green products decompose much quicker. Keep in mind when purchasing goods that any product that you put down the drain may end up in your drinking water eventually, particularly with well systems.

For approximately a decade, Physical Plant staff have taken steps to help make cleaning techniques and products green at PSU. There was a re-vamp to the waste and recycle system, and now all cleaning products come from Genesan; they have a balanced pH, are biodegradable, made from all natural ingredients and are safe for people’s health. Reusable microfiber appliances and better water filtration have also been implemented to ensure a more environmentally friendly campus.

All Natural Benefits:

Cleaning Products

- As efficient as chemically based products
- Non-toxic & biodegradable
- Made of recycled plastics
- Prevent contamination of water sources
- Prevent release of chemicals & harsh fumes into living area
- Good for skin
- Multi-purpose uses

Laundry Detergents

- Prevent contamination of water sources
- Less detergent needed per load
- Cost efficient
- Prolongs lifespan of clothing

Organic Soaps

- Prevent contamination of water sources
- Made from all-natural, chemical free materials
- Packaged in recycled/post-consumer paper & plastics

Did you know?

There is a free database provided by Environmental Working Group for environmentally friendly consumer products. This database can give you feedback on thousands of products and even has an app for mindful purchasing. The data can be accessed at: <https://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>.



5. COMPOSTING

Composting allows us to reuse organic matter, as well as limit the amount of landfill waste. Composting produces nutrient rich soil which is great for gardening.

PSU currently composts lawn, leaf and garden waste. Each is composted separately and reused on a 1 or 2 year cycle. PSU does not compost kitchen waste, but will accept all other organic compostable materials.

How to Compost:

- Choose a location or container to compost organic material in. Containers are a popular choice because they retain moisture and keep out animals.
- Containers should have plenty of aeration space.
- Can be wooden, plastic, or wire mesh with sufficient ventilation.
- Choose a location away from living quarters that receives a fair amount of shade so the compost does not dry out.
- To begin composting: mix an equal amount of nutrient rich, fresh (green) natural waste with carbon rich (brown) natural waste.
- This can be as simple as fresh lawn cuttings and old leaves.
- Occasionally turn over material with fork or shovel for aeration. Keep compost moist, add water when necessary if it appears to be drying out.
- When individual items can no longer be recognized and compost has transitioned into rich, dark soil it is ready to be used!

COMPOST

Mason is now composting at Southside! We have partnered with an industrial composter that uses high heat to transform your food and paper waste into organic matter. This can then be added to soil to help plants grow. To help this effort succeed, please remove any recycling or trash items from your tray, and dispose of them in their bins nearby before using the dish return.



MEATS & DAIRY

FRUITS & VEGGIES



OTHER FOODS & NAPKINS

PLEASE DO ***NOT*** COMPOST THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:



RECYCLING

Aluminum Cans
Glass bottles
Plastic Bottles
Plastics #1-7



TRASH

Candy Wrappers
Coffee Cups
Chip Bags
P.B. Containers

6. CONSIGNMENT

Donating old goods is a great way to recycle these materials, and purchasing donated items is a great way to help eliminate over consumptive behavior. Items should be in good enough condition to still be usable; if you would give it to a friend, it can be donated. If you're not sure if the donation center will take, don't be afraid to ask!

Suggested Items to Donate:

- **Clothing and Accessories**
 - *Shirts, Pants, Hats, Pirate Costumes*
- **Furniture & Appliances**
 - *Chairs, Tables, Lamps, Coffee Makers*
- **Kitchen & Household Items**
 - *Silverware, Dishes, Pots & Pans, Mugs*
- **Hobby Items**
 - *Books, Board Games*
- **Sporting Goods**
 - *Ski & Board Equipment, Hockey Skates, Lacrosse Sticks*

Local Donation Centers & Thrift Stores:

Boomerang & Community Closet, 5 Main Street

Ladders Thrift, 16 Main Street

Off the Hanger, 103 Main Street

Plymouth Ski & Sport, 97 Main Street

Pemi Valley Habitat for Humanity, 583 Tenney Mountain Highway

Flipp'n Furniture, 612 Tenney Mountain Highway

Most of the proceeds from these stores go to benefiting local charities as well.

A much more AFFORDABLE and SUSTAINABLE option.

7. FOOD

Food is important when considering one's carbon footprint. The average American's carbon footprint for food is within the range of that for personal vehicle transportation. By choosing fruits vegetables and grains over other foods you can significantly lighten carbon footprints.

Why buy local?

According to statistics from the US Department of Transportation, Office of Air Quality, and EPA, the agricultural industry contributes to nearly 50% of the United States' carbon emissions when transportation is accounted for. By eliminating the trans-national distribution of foods, you not only cut down on your personal carbon footprint, but have a stronger control on supporting ethical practices and reducing chemicals that are ingested.

Eating Sustainably

- Eat less meat, especially beef. Per gram of protein, beef can require up to 17 times as much land as soy.
- Grains, fruits, and vegetables require less land, water, and are responsible for far less carbon emissions than meat products
- Reducing is just as important as eliminating. While a vegan diet may not be accomplishable for everyone, reducing meat products from the average American consumption levels greatly reduces carbon footprints.



Did you know?

The energy that goes into the production of a single half-pound hamburger is equivalent to running an air conditioner for 24 hours straight.

8. Wellness

Recently, there has been an increasing connection between wellness, healthy lifestyles and sustainability. Here are some resources and activities at PSU and the surrounding community that help to promote wellness and healthy lifestyles.

Outdoor Center: One of the benefits of attending Plymouth State University is its close proximity to the White Mountains and Lakes Region of New Hampshire. Picture the Outdoor Center as an on campus gear shop! Students who are currently enrolled in PSU classes can rent outdoor equipment from the Outdoor Center for FREE! Whether you want to float the Pemi in style, take a hike on icy trails in the spring, or tackle a new line at Rumney Rocks, the Outdoor Center has student staff on hand that can help outfit you for your next adventure.

Squam Lakes Natural Science Center: Through spectacular live animal exhibits, natural science education programs, an informal public garden and lake cruises, Squam Lakes Natural Science Center has brought people “Nearer to Nature” since 1966. The Science Center is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is the only AZA-accredited institution in northern New England.

Lakes Region Conservation Trust: LRCT was founded in 1979 to preserve and protect New Hampshire’s scenic landscapes and wildlife habitats. LRCT is dedicated to the permanent conservation, stewardship, and respectful use of lands that define the character of the Lakes Region and its quality of life. Through this, LRCT offers hundreds of local scenic hiking opportunities for the public to enjoy.

Fox Park: Located within walking distance of the University, Fox Park offers hiking, biking and cross country ski trails. In the winter, Plymouth Parks and Rec hosts a public outdoor skating rink. Bt66=

9. Get Involved

Interested in the environment, but don't know much about it? Interested in helping green efforts, but don't know how? Here are some ways you can get involved at PSU! Here are a few examples of sustainability efforts on campus:

Office of Environmental Sustainability: The Office of Environmental Sustainability works with students, faculty, staff, and surrounding community to achieve the campus' sustainability goals. The Office is directed under the supervision by Dr. Brian Eisenhauer and Steve Whitman in conjunction with Plymouth State University students across all majors. OES sponsors and leads events such as Earth Jam, Wild and Scenic Film Festival, and Dining Hall's Weigh the Waste program among much more. There is also a planned Student Resource Center where all resources on campus sustainability can be found, located across from Hyde Hall.

Common Ground: Common Ground is a student run environmental and social justice organization at PSU. They are heavily involved with the student body and host interactive events during Earth Week and throughout the year. For over 25 years, Common Ground, a student environmental and social justice organization, has been focusing on environmental issues through events and service projects.

Sustainability Minor: Sustainability science is an integrative discipline, sometimes defined as the union of equitable economic growth, social well-being, and thriving natural systems. The Sustainability Minor is an interdisciplinary program that provides students with many ways to be engaged learners, including experiences that use our campus as a "living-learning laboratory" to learn about energy issues and other dimensions of sustainability. The program of study is a multi-disciplinary approach that challenges students to develop a deep understanding of a diverse array of sustainability issues while energizing them to integrate those lessons into their lives in meaningful ways.



Did you know?

Plymouth State University has committed to sourcing all electricity from renewable resources and have a net zero carbon footprint by 2050.

10. Climate Action Plan

Concern over the relationship between humans and the environment has grown in recent years as the issues of resource depletion, fossil fuel dependence, and climate change have become acknowledged as some of the biggest challenges facing current and future generations. To address these challenges, changes are needed at both the individual and institutional levels, with innovation and cooperation as essential parts of successful efforts to decrease human impacts on the environment.

Plymouth State University has joined other institutions of higher learning in recognizing their important leadership role in efforts to address environmental issues. It strives to serve as an example of the ways institutions can work with their constituents to reduce environmental impacts. The university is trying to achieve these goals in many ways, including making a formal commitment to reduce the effects of its operations on climate change.

In 2007, with strong support from across campus, then President Sara Jayne Steen joined leaders from institutions of higher learning throughout the United States in signing the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. The commitment pledges that PSU will achieve carbon neutrality in its operations by 2050 and will serve as a leader in climate change adaptation. A presidential Commission for Environmental Sustainability was formed to develop the PSU Climate Action plan (CAP), which reports our Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and provides the campus with a road map for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. The plan also identified means for increasing the focus on sustainability across the curriculum and enhancing research and community interaction on environmental issues. Students can access the CAP on the Office of Environmental Sustainability campus webpage.

Sustainability begins with YOU!

Thank you

for helping us
make PSU more sustainable.

For further questions, please contact any member of the
Office of Environmental Sustainability.



