



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Office for Sustainability

Office for Sustainability and Environmental Wellness

Fall 2021

Office for Sustainability

Western Michigan University

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Introduction

The WMU Well-Being Wheel describes environmental wellness as the following:

Environmental Wellness: Occupying and improving safe, healthy, accessible, and sustainable environments. Contributing to environments that are inclusive and free from harassment and discrimination.

WMU's Office for Sustainability (OfS) fits into this category as we seek to increase sustainability and wellbeing at WMU. Our mission statement is as follows:

The mission of the Office for Sustainability is to guide and assist the Western Michigan University community in fulfilling and growing its sustainability commitments. Through building a diverse and flourishing learning community around sustainability, we will continually explore and develop new opportunities to create a culture of sustainability and improve quality of life for all.

This mission guides the organization and our work with campus community.

Sustainability and Environmental Wellness

Sustainability is “to create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations,” as defined by The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This means that the actions of the people today are only sustainable if they do not negatively impact the quality of life of the planet or people now or in the future. So, what exactly does this mean and how does it fit into Environmental Wellness?

First, it should be noted that sustainability is a complex and broad topic that expands multiple definitions and disciplines. One area the Office for Sustainability focuses on is sustainability in terms of personal behavior change.

Here are some questions to ask students when considering how they will choose to look at and address sustainability both in their lives and at WMU.

- How do my actions affect my personal wellbeing?
- How do my actions affect others' wellbeing?
- How do my actions affect the wellbeing of all living things?
- How do my actions affect the wellbeing of the planet?
- How will my actions affect myself, others, all living things and the planet in the future?



These questions can guide a student to begin thinking outside of themselves and begin to understand the connectedness that is essential to living a sustainable life that benefits themselves and the world. In other words, these questions encompass **environmental wellness**! This may sound daunting, but this journey is personal and begins with one small step. Below are ideas that involve personal changes that can be made to develop a persons' environmental wellbeing.

Behavior Change Ideas for Environmental Wellbeing

Waste: buy less, buy used, compost, reuse, and recycle (check out the *WMU's Guide to Recycling* (pg. 10) attached in this packet)

Transportation: drive less, use public transportation, use nonmotorized transportation (e.g. bike, skateboard, etc.)

Food: buy local, eat more plants, compost food waste, buy seasonal foods

Nature: plant native species, spend time outdoors, pick up litter, support local parks and trails

Justice: learn about environmental justice, join activism movements, listen to those affected, and speak up

Reflection...

- Which of the behavior changes do I already incorporate into my life?
- What are other behavior changes that are not mentioned above?
- What behavior changes would be the most realistic and beneficial for me to incorporate into my life?

Students should know that this list is not all inclusive, but it is a great start. These tips can be found in greater depth in our *Local Sustainability Brochure* (pg. 11) and the *Kalamazoo/WMU Opportunities and Resources* (pg. 8) document which are attached in this packet. The brochure and document are WMU and Kalamazoo specific so please share with your students.

The Office for Sustainability also offers many programs and projects to support students' environmental wellbeing. Please read the detailed *OfS Programs and Projects* (pg. 9) document attached in this packet and share with your students. All of the OfS opportunities are free to students and occur regularly!

If you and your students would like to stay updated with OfS happenings, please subscribe to the newsletter: <https://forms.gle/KKTyR29r6XNUy5yKA>

If you would like the OfS Communication Team to give a presentation about our programs and projects. Please email wmu-sustainability@wmich.edu.



Activities

Recycling How-To

Video: [WMU Recycling Mayhem](#) (a humorous introduction to the do's and don'ts of recycling)

Handout: *WMU's Guide to Recycling*

Game: Recycling Sorting Game provided by request from the Office for Sustainability (an interactive sorting game that can be played as a class)

External Resources:

- [NatGeo Recycle Roundup Game](#) (a simple, but informative game that could be played individually or as a class)
- [WMU Recycling for Students](#)
- [MI EGLE Recycling 101](#)

Reflection...

- What was one surprising thing you learned about recycling?
- How does recycling benefit your environmental wellness?

Nature Appreciation

Video: [All Bodies on Bikes](#) (a body inclusive look into movement, nature, and cycling)

Activity: Explore a local nature trail or take a walk on campus and answer the reflection questions below.

Article: [Nature and Attention Restoration Theory](#) (an article about how nature increases attention and reduces fatigue)

External Resources:

- [List and directions to local trails](#) (some trails are within a couple miles of campus)

Reflection...

- How did being out in nature affect your wellness, energy, or attention span?
- How can you commit more of your time to being out in nature?
- What ways can you honor your body and wellness in nature?
- How might spending time in nature positively impact your college career?
- In what ways may nature intersect with other areas of the Well-Being Wheel?

Sustainability Audit

Activity:

Daily Schedule Audit: Have students write down each thing they do throughout the day. This list should include things like brushing their teeth, what they eat, and how they get around. The students should then review their activities and



determine ways to make their life more sustainable. This may be as simple as using a reusable water bottle in place of a disposable water bottle or opting for plant-based meal options! Students should not feel shamed or discouraged. Have them focus on easy changes rather than stressing about things they can't do. Little things add up!

Handout: *Sustainability Audit Worksheet*

External Resources:

- [Sustainability Compass](#) (a useful graphic that summarizes the components of sustainability)



Sustainability Audit Worksheet

Time of Day & Task	How is this already sustainable?	How can it be more sustainable?
Morning		
Afternoon		
Night		



Kalamazoo/WMU Opportunities and Resources

Environmental Action Off-Campus

- Environmental Concerns Committee
- Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition
- Extinction Rebellion
- Citizen's Climate Lobby
- Vegan Kalamazoo
- Sunrise Kalamazoo
- Kalamazoo Earth Day Festival

Recreation Space

- Kalamazoo Nature Center
- Kzoo Parks
- Kalamazoo County Parks
- Asylum Lake Preserve
- Kleinstuck Marsh
- KalHaven and Kalamazoo River Valley Trail

Environmental Action On-Campus

- Office for Sustainability
- Students for a Sustainable Earth
- WMU Solar Car
- Landscape Services
- BioClub
- WMU Climate Change Working Group

Places to Shop*

- Sawall Health Foods
- Natural Health Center
- People's Food Co-op
- Kalamazoo Farmer's Market
- Market on Michigan Ave
- Rose Gold Coffee Company
- Kalamazoo Candle Company
- Thrift Stores (Goodwill, Salvation Army, Second Impressions, 360°)
- BeeJoyful

Permaculture and Education Spaces

- WMU Gibbs House
- Lillie House
- Community Gardens
- WMU Community Garden




Alternative Transportation

- OfS Open Bike Shop, Bronco Bikes, and Inclusive Bike Ride
- Open Roads
- PEDAL Kalamazoo
- Zoo City
- Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers
- Kalamazoo Metro

*Offers local and waste-free options. WMU and the Office for Sustainability do not endorse any of these companies.



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 wesustainwmu
 WMU.sustainability
 wmich.edu/sustainability

OfS Programs and Projects 2021-22

Student Sustainability Grant

The Student Sustainability Grant (SSG) exists to support student projects that promote a campus culture of sustainability. \$100,000 is available annually for student-authored proposals. WMU's Student Sustainability Grant Allocations Committee (SSG-AC) is 100% student led and includes representatives from all academic colleges, both undergraduate and graduate. The SSG-AC reviews proposals twice per year. Deadlines, applications, guidelines, and a complete history of allocations may be found on our [grants page](#). All funds from the SSG that are not allocated within a given fiscal year are rolled over to the Survey Implementation and Ongoing Projects Fund. Money for the Student Sustainability Grant is reserved from the Survey Implementation and Ongoing Projects Fund.

*Current projects include Anti-Collision Bird Tape Windows, BroncoBike Rentals, Solar Bench, and composting research.

EcoEssentials

In 2009, Western Michigan University created a novel waste reduction initiative. During the first few weeks of school, each incoming WMU student were given a free, high-quality, ISO-certified, 16 oz. stainless steel water bottle. This program—which has a variety of incentives associated with it—is designed to do much more than counteract disposable cup use on campus. It's an innovative model for introducing students to our campus' sustainability commitments and for stimulating long-term, meaningful behavior change.

The Office for Sustainability has added two items to give to new students based on a student poll released in 2018. All students who pay the Student Sustainability Fee (SSF) are eligible to receive either one free EcoJug, a set of bamboo utensils or a canvas tote bag. WMU students, faculty, staff and members of the public can purchase an EcoJug or a set of bamboo utensils for \$5 and a canvas tote for \$4 at the Office for Sustainability during business hours. There is a limited supply left of the older version of EcoMugs. While supplies last, students who pay the SSF may buy EcoMugs for \$10 and community members may purchase them for \$14.

Student Sustainability Survey

The annually distributed Student Sustainability Survey is an anonymous survey that measures student opinions on campus sustainability projects. By taking the survey, students can directly influence how the sustainability fee funds are spent. This survey aligns the sustainability fee with students' priorities, while promoting a culture of campus sustainability. This is the sixth offering of the survey. The Student Sustainability Survey asks students to rank sustainability related projects by their importance and perceived benefits. Recent survey results signaled increased interest in healthy and affordable food options on campus as well as the desire for on campus



sustainable residential living options. Students have also indicated their desire for increasing WMU's renewable energy infrastructure, a campus composting system, and the implementation of an introductory sustainability course to fulfill general education credits.

OfS Bike Shop

The Bike Shop is by drop-off appointments only on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. during the fall semester. To schedule a drop-off, please complete the appointment form.

Visitors will have the opportunity to drop off their bicycles to be repaired by student mechanics free of charge. The length of the drop-off depends on the bike's condition. The student mechanics will try their best to look for used parts before purchasing anything new. Should the bike need new parts, visitors are expected to cover the cost of the new parts (tubes, chains brake, pads, cable, housing, etc.).

We also encourage visitors to learn basic bike repairs with our team by scheduling a personalized appointment. Tools and bike stands are available to use free of charge for visitors that want to fix their own bikes. Please email wmubikeshop@gmail.com and our mechanics will find a time to meet with you! *This semester Open Bike Shop is by appointment only. Visitors can schedule an appointment here: wmich.edu/sustainability/projects/bike-stable

BroncoBikes

BroncoBikes is the Office for Sustainability's low cost, campus-wide bicycle rental program. It serves as a convenient and inexpensive way to ride to and from classes and get around Kalamazoo. With a BroncoBike, there is no reason to pay for gas, pay for car repairs, or wait around in traffic. The Breezer Uptown 8 BroncoBike is available in both step-through and step-over styles and features durable construction, kinetically powered front and rear lights, fenders and a super-smooth internal 8-speed hub. The BroncoBikes are free for the semester, and they can make a person's commute to class or work more enjoyable and stress free. We have bikes available for semester long or short-term rental periods.

Inclusive Bike Ride

The Inclusive Bike Ride is a weekly bike ride that is catered to people of all experience levels. This weekly bike takes place on Fridays leaving from the Office for Sustainability promptly at 2:00 p.m. The ride takes place right after our Bike Shop. Participants are encouraged to schedule a tune-up if your bike needs some love! We will determine as a group how far and fast we ride each week. This opportunity is open to everyone and is meant to be relaxing and enjoyable. These rides will take place until mid-October and will resume again mid-March. For more information: wmich.edu/sustainability/projects/bike-stable



Gibbs Permaculture Research And Demonstration Site: Volunteer Hours

The Permaculture Research and Demonstration Site at the Gibbs House is run by the Office for Sustainability and serves as a living laboratory for students to implement their sustainable design solutions and projects. Located on Parkview Avenue adjacent to Western Michigan University's College of Engineering and the expansive Asylum Lake Preserve, the site features a developing permaculture landscape. Programming on the site enables students to conduct research and implement projects throughout the year and has included black soldier fly larvae, post-consumer food waste research, and a compost hot water heater to heat our hoop houses all year long. Volunteer hours are every Friday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Visitors can schedule their volunteer appointments here: wmich.edu/sustainability/projects/gibbs

Student Jobs

WMU undergraduate and graduate students are expanding research on campus, creating the green jobs of the future right now, and tackling world problems that require collaboration and global engagement. The Office for Sustainability offers a limited number of paid part-time positions and one Graduate Assistantship (GA) each semester. Undergraduate and graduate student employment is recommended for freshmen through seniors and requires a commitment of 12+2 hours per week. Interested in working with us? Check out our website: wmich.edu/sustainability/opportunities

Composting

Composting is the aerobic decomposition of organic materials (such as food waste and paper products) into a dark rich substance by microorganisms. The final product (often referred to as black gold) can be used as a natural fertilizer that is composed of rich nutrients. Not only is it healthy for plants, but it can decrease waste going to the landfill, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve water quality, save water, and even create jobs. Our current system at the office is looking to explore several different ways of composting as well as expand the program to be able to compost more of the waste throughout campus and give the compost to Landscape Services.

*For the fall semester, we are collecting food scraps (eggs, veggies, fruit, coffee grounds) outside M-F from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Landscape Services also collects food scraps from Valley Dining Center (VDC).

Wesustain Internship

The Wesustain Internship Program is a semester-long, paid, and discovery-driven opportunity for ambitious students looking to gain leadership experience while exploring both on- and off-campus sustainability projects. The primary goal of the internship is to provide students from all academic backgrounds with the necessary skills to be well-informed and effective advocates for creating a sustainable future for all. The Wesustain Internship Program inspires a diverse cohort



of emerging leaders through experiential learning, weekly meetings, career development, and hands-on activities such as permaculture workdays and skill building workshops. Students should expect feedback and meaningful reflection throughout the course of the program.

*We plan to have the next cohort start in the spring of 2022. Applications will be due on Thursday, Nov. 4 by midnight.

Art Wall

The Art Exhibition Wall gives student artists the opportunity to engage with the environmental, social, and economic aspects of sustainability through art. The chosen works will be displayed from during the spring and the winners are given a small gallery opening.

Events

The Office for Sustainability hosts in-person and virtual Workshops and Sustainability Chats throughout the year. These events designed for communities to share knowledge related to sustainability. Workshops and chats are led by students with knowledge in the topic and are open to anyone interested coming in at any skill level. Likewise, two larger events, a Fall Celebration and Haunted Gibbs House, will be hosted at the end of September and October respectively. To stay up to date about these events follow our social media accounts.

Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition

The Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition mobilizes collective action to achieve immediate and drastic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and rapid adoption of renewable energy through a transition grounded in social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Carbon Neutrality Committee

Despite a delayed start due to Covid 19, WMU launched a new Carbon Neutrality Committee in February 2021. WMU is committed to carbon neutrality by 2065 and recognizes the growing urgency of climate change and the local-to-global impacts already underway. Provost Jennifer Bott charged the committee to align expertise and resources to evaluate WMU's existing climate commitments and make recommendations for future action.



WMU'S GUIDE TO RECYCLING



The Office
for Sustainability

SINGLE STREAM RECYCLING AT WMU*

GPM RECYCLING (glass, plastic, metal)

- Plastics #1-7 (bottom of containers)
- Plastic beverage bottles
- Aluminum cans
- Glass containers/ jars
- Empty aerosol cans



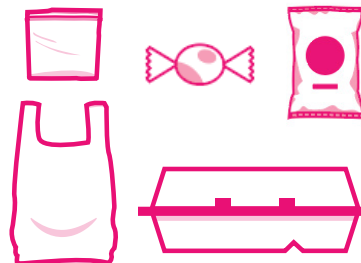
PAPER/CARDBOARD RECYCLING

- Printer and notebook paper
- Newspapers and magazines
- Flattened boxes



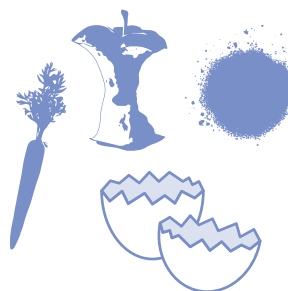
LANDFILL

- All plastic bags
- Food wrappers
- Wax coated boxes (frozen food boxes & drink containers)
- Food waste
- Pizza boxes
- Lids/ straws
- Dirty paper cups/ plates



COMPOSTING

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Egg shells
- Coffee grounds



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- All recyclables must be CLEAN of food and contaminants
- Polystyrene Foam #6 can be recycled at the Office for Sustainability
- A used aluminum can is recycled and back on the grocery shelf in less than 60 days
- If all our newspaper was recycled, 250,000,000 trees could be saved each year
- Americans use 2,500,000 plastic bottles every hour, most of which are thrown away
- Remember to Reduce consumption, Reuse items, and Recycle

*RECYCLING MAY BE PLACED IN ONE CONTAINER
AND DOES NOT NEED TO BE SEPARATED



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Overview

The Office for Sustainability (OFS) is driven to increase efforts, both on campus and in the community, that further a sustainable future and improve the quality of life for all.

Please note that WMU and the OFS do not endorse any of the mentioned companies.

Behavior Change

While we know that behavior change plays one piece in the puzzle, it is important to be aware of personal habits. This brochure focuses on ways to reduce one's own environmental impact in accessible and affordable ways. We will cover several topics such as transportation, shopping, food, and activism.

As always, this list is not exhaustive, and we highly recommend seeking out other opportunities that best fit your needs and lifestyle. Sustainability is a personal journey!



Wesustain Spring Internship at Pretty Lake

Get Involved

Our office offers many opportunities for students and community members to get involved with our programs, projects, and initiatives.

Each month, we offer a variety of programs and volunteer opportunities. To learn more, be sure to subscribe to our newsletter and follow us on social media.

Sign Up for Our Newsletter:



 @wesustainwmu

 @WMU.sustainability



Bloomed sunflowers spotted at the Gibbs House

Local Sustainability



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
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Transportation

Transportation accounts for nearly 30% of CO2 emissions in the United States. One easy way to reduce your impact on the planet is to drive less.

Ways to drive less:

- **Bike more.** Visit the OFS Open Bike Shop by appointment for free repairs and biking information.
- **Take the bus.** Your Bronco I.D. allows you free bus rides through Kalamazoo Metro Transit.
- **Carpool.** Offer or share rides with friends and family.
- **Alternative transportation.** If able, WMU and Kalamazoo are commuter friendly. Walk, scooter, skate, or find your own way of getting around!

Shopping

Fast fashion and big box stores can contribute to increased waste and CO2 emissions. However, there are ways to reduce these effects!

Ways to reduce consumer waste:

- **Buy used.** Shop second hand or through online platforms such as Facebook Marketplace.
- **Borrow and trade.** Plan a clothing, furniture, or item swap with friends or community members!
- **Buy in bulk.** Reduce single use plastic by buying in bulk. The People's Food Co-op, Sawall Health Foods, and Bee Joyful Shop offer bulk and plastic free options.
- **Get creative.** Make DIY cleaning or personal care items. Or challenge your friends to go without single-use plastics for a week. Find ways to make sustainability fun!



Vegetables harvested from the Gibbs House

Food

Agriculture and food waste are big contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and waste. Even little changes add up to bettering the planet! As always, balance is key to sustaining good habits, so be sure to eat what your body needs!

Ways to make your diet “greener”:

- **Buy local.** Buying from small, local farmers not only invests in your community, it also reduces CO2 emissions by reducing transportation from farm to table.
- **Go plant-based.** Eating fewer animal products is a great way to reduce your impact on the environment. Try cooking a plant-based meal with friends!
- **Reduce food waste.** Always start with small portions in order to reduce the likelihood of waste. Then compost your food scraps at the OFS's Gibbs Site or with the Bike Farm.
- **Stay in season.** Buying seasonal produce is more sustainable! The app Seasonal Food Guide is a great way to check what crops are in season in your community!

Activism

Calling for climate change justice and “green” policies are great ways to utilize your personal resources. Whether you are an artist, storyteller, or policy expert there is work for everyone.

Ways to get involved in local activism:

- **Join a group.** Sunrise Kalamazoo and the Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition are some local organizations that fight for policy change locally and nationally.
- **Volunteer.** You can volunteer at the Gibbs Site and help compost student food waste or grow crops. FOCUS Kalamazoo also works with local organizations and parks to bring volunteer opportunities to students.
- **Sustainable RSOs.** Many students groups, such as Students for a Sustainable Earth, focus on some aspect of sustainability. They are a great way to meet like-minded students pushing for change!
- **Start a project.** If you have an idea that is not already being implemented locally you can always start a group. Or apply for a Student Sustainability Grant to fund your green idea.

