

Sustainable Living in Davis

Created by the Graduate Group in Ecology Sustainability Committee

Introduction and Background



This pamphlet was put together to give incoming Ecology graduate students an introduction in how to live a sustainable lifestyle in Davis, CA. Information provided includes a brief description of sustainability, examples of events in Davis, ways to get involved in the University and in the Ecology Graduate Group, and how to incorporate simple lifestyle changes to live in a more sustainable fashion.

What is Sustainability?

Sustainability is the consideration of current and long-term effects of lifestyle and consumer decisions. Sustainability involves a conscious effort to reduce negative environmental impacts of such decisions, ensuring that resources are available and stable in future generations. In order for this concept to be possible, many factors should be considered, such as the local and global economy, the health of individuals and local environments, and societal needs.

Sustainability means building something that's *good for us now* and *good and useful for us later*.

Sustainability in Davis and the University

The sustainability movement in Davis began more than forty years ago with the establishment of the first bike lanes in the United States. There are many interesting and fun sustainability-related locations and activities to visit and do in Davis. For example, **Village Homes** is a community in Davis consisting of 242 homes on 60 acres in west Davis, built in the 1970s. Community gardens, fruit trees, greenbelts, bike paths, and a local co-op are all a part of this local example of a sustainable neighborhood. Moreover, early every summer Davis citizens gather for the **Whole Earth Festival**, a zero-waste festival that brings local artists, musicians, and food vendors together to celebrate the earth

and each other. A host of information regarding sustainability in Davis is available at the City of Davis website and Davis Wiki.



Potting workshop during ESC Green Week, April, 2009.

The newly formed **GGE Sustainability Committee (ESC)** is a student-driven group aimed at promoting sustainability in the GGE, UCD campus, and community. Current projects include making the Odyssey carbon-neutral, turning GGE events into zero-waste, sustainability 'Green Week', and more. Last year during Green Week, the ESC held a potting workshop, invited Allen Doyle to speak about incorporating sustainable practices in labs, volunteered in the Plant Sciences building's vegetable garden, and hosted a sustainable BBQ at the N-street co-ops. If you would like to get involved, please contact the ESC chairs or any ESC members.



The student chapter of the **Society for Conservation Biology (SCB)** also has some sustainability opportunities such as oak tree plantings, and involvement in campus-wide sustainability efforts.

UC Davis also hosts a local chapter of the **California Student Sustainability Coalition**. Current CSSC campaigns include the **Education for Sustainable Living Program** a seminar series which hosts guest lectures, and **The Green Initiative Fund** that would add \$4 to student fees to create a sustainability fund endorsing projects in areas reaching from education to physical structures on campus.

The Environmental Stewardship & Sustainability team at



UC Davis is involved in development projects on the UC Davis campus with the goals of promoting long-term sustainability of the campus' natural resources, design

and construction of environmentally appropriate campus projects, and managing the environmental review process required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for proposed development on campus. The Student Resource Center and Vet Med Instructional Facility are currently undergoing LEED certification.

Incorporating Sustainability in Every Day Life

There are multiple ways to incorporate sustainability into one's everyday life. The opportunities are endless and there are plenty of options for all types of lifestyles. The rest of this pamphlet summarizes some practical tips for doing just that.

Housing

There are several options for sustainable, community-type living in Davis. Some examples include the on-campus Co-ops, including: the Domes, Pierce Co-op, Davis Student Co-op, and Agrarian Effort Co-op. Off-campus Co-ops include the J Street Co-op, Sunwise Co-op, Village Homes, and N Street Co-housing.



Clara Elias gives an informative talk at the 1st annual ESC BBQ at N Street Co-housing, the oldest cohousing community in the country (above).



Logo for the White Mountain extended orientation trip, which will be carbon neutral for the first time in 2009 (left).

Food

A diet of local, organic produce, dairy, and/ or meat is the best way to eat sustainably in Davis. Fortunately, there are many options for finding sustainable food in the city. The Farmer's Market is open weekly and features local food from around California. On Wednesdays, the market is full of people sitting on the lawn enjoying dinner while local musicians and school groups provide entertainment. The Market is also open on Saturdays where there is a greater abundance of vendors. The Davis Food Co-op is another great place to purchase local and/or organic food products. They also have bulk food and biodegradable home care items. Residents can also purchase directly from farmers through community supported agriculture or CSAs.

The year-round growing season in Davis provides an excellent opportunity to grow or farm your own food in your yard, patio, or at a local community garden. Garden plots can be rented through the City of Davis, or through the Experimental College at UC Davis. Information about community gardens in Davis can be found on the City of Davis Website.



Chickens at N St Co-housing

The **UCD Student Experimental Farm** focuses on organic and sustainable agriculture. Researchers and students plant a variety of crops to investigate methods of organic farming including seeding, pest control, irrigation, sales, and marketing. Volunteers and interns are welcome.

The Associated Students of UCD runs an organization called **Project Compost**. This organization is focused on reducing and diverting food waste.

Transportation

Davis is an extremely friendly **bicycling** community and bike lanes run throughout the city. Bike maps are free from the City of Davis and are available online. Basic traffic laws apply to bicyclists. Bike shops are common because of the popularity of bicycling in Davis and bikes can be purchased locally or online. Additional information regarding bike shops can be found on Davis Wiki.

Although bicycling is very popular, Unitrans runs **buses** to UCD campus and throughout the city regularly. Check the Unitrans website for information and routes specific to your location. Shuttles and trains are available for transportation to major cities such as San Francisco, Berkeley, and Sacramento. These services are provided by campus Fleet Services and Amtrak. All information is available online.



California is also a great place if you own an **electric vehicle**, a viable and sustainable alternative to combustion engines. Both the City of Davis and UCD use them and charging stations are available throughout the city.

There are other programs on campus that work on issues in sustainable transportation. The **Institute of Transportation Studies'** main objectives center on research, education, and outreach related to interdisciplinary issues in transportation. The **Sustainable Transportation Center** looks at issues related to regional change, energy efficiency, paving, road ecology, and hybrid electric vehicles.

Energy Conservation

There are several ways to lower your household bills and save energy at the same time. Listed below are a few suggestions that are easy and of little cost to implement.

Minimize A/C use by taking a dip in a local community pool, heading to a campus building, or catch a flick in town.

Save Energy and Reduce Emissions from household appliance by doing laundry or running the dishwasher at off hours, either early in the morning or in the late evening. Also, use appliances with higher energy efficiency ratings.

Many housing and building units have **solar panels** installed. There are also dealers and installers in town.

Replace light fixtures with compact fluorescent bulbs and **turn off lights** when not in use.

Collect rain water in buckets for house plants and patio gardens.

Place a heavy brick in the back of the toilet to displace water and **save gallons** during flushing.

There are many locations on the web where you can calculate your **carbon or ecological footprint**, CoolCalifornia.org and Conservation International's website are two great places to start.

Recycling

From yard waste to energy and technology, both the city and community strongly support efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials. The most important step is to first **reduce** the amount of waste we create, then to **reuse** items such as paper and bags. **Recycling** materials is the next step and is easy in the City of Davis. Most recycling efforts within the City of Davis are handled by Davis Waste Removal, who also takes care of our garbage pick up. UC Davis handles its recycling through various units and student organizations such as R4 Recycling. The campus also participates in Recyclemania, a ten-week college recycling competition. For info on what can be recycled and how, visit the Davis Wiki page on recycling.



Recycling bins on UCD Campus

Some ideas for how to reduce, recycle, reuse:

- Collect furniture as a result of Freshmen Move Out Day (end of Spring quarter)
- Thrift Stores (buy or donate)
- Bring and use a reusable plate/cup/spoon for food or coffee
- Bring a reusable bag to the grocery store



Finally, don't forget to complete the cycle by purchasing recycled products and supporting organizations that help reduce waste.



Conservation and Ecological Restoration

Contributing to the **conservation** and **restoration** of natural resources is another facet of living a sustainable lifestyle. There are many opportunities to get involved in outdoor projects in the area. For example, UC Davis has a local student chapter of the **Society for Conservation Biology**. This chapter focuses on public outreach and education, local restoration projects, and sustainability issues.



Students at Mather Field vernal pools

In addition to the work of the UCD chapter of SCB, the UC system contains many University-owned and operated **natural reserves**. UC Davis's reserves include a multitude of habitat types and include: Bodega Marine Lab, Eagle Lake, Jepson Prairie, McLaughlin, Quail Ridge, and Stebbins Natural Reserves.

Recent News and Bulletins

The **John Muir Institute for the Environment's** recent public bulletin contains announcements for conservation and sustainability related events (<http://johnmuir.ucdavis.edu>).

The city of Davis is participating in a "**Low Carbon Diet: A 30 Day Program to Lose 5000 Pounds**", where Davis citizens can learn how to reduce their carbon footprint. A class will be offered from Sept 24-Oct 29. Information is available on the City of Davis website.

The **UC Sustainable Agriculture** website contains up-to-date scientific information on sustainable agricultural and food systems (<http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/>).

FreeCycle is a global online network of people interested in obtaining or giving away free stuff instead of creating more waste in the landfills (<http://www.freecycle.org/>).



Kevin Wolf - co-founder of N Street Cohousing, giving an informative talk on permaculture.

Sources and Contact Information

City of Davis - <http://cityofdavis.org/>
 Davis Wiki - <http://www.DavisWiki.org>
 Village homes - <http://lda.ucdavis.edu/people/websites/francis/vh.pdf>
 CSSC - <http://www.sustainabilitycoalition.org/>
 Farmer's Market - <http://www.davisfarmersmarket.org/>
 Davis Coop - <http://www.daviscoop.com/>
 Student Farm - <http://studentfarm.ucdavis.edu/>
 CSAs - <http://www.ecovian.com/s/davis-ca/csa-food-delivery>
 Unitrans - <http://unitrans.ucdavis.edu/>
 Davis/ Berkeley Shuttle - <http://www.fleet.ucdavis.edu/buses/shuttles/berkeley/schedule.php>
 Institute of Transportation Studies - <http://www.its.ucdavis.edu/index.php>
 UCD Reserves - <http://nrs.ucdavis.edu/index.html>
 SCB - <http://scb.ucdavis.edu/>
 Cool California - www.CoolCalifornia.org
 Conservation International - http://www.conservation.org/act/live_green/pages/default.aspx
 LEED certification info - <http://www.usgbc.org/> and <http://www.gbci.org/>

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