

# *The National High School Climate Forum*



## **January 2022 Newsletter**

**“The Earth is what we all have in common.”**

**- Wendell Berry, Novelist and Environmental Activist**

### **What is the National High School Climate Forum?**

The National High School Climate Forum was established in 2020 to foster an exchange of ideas between student environmental leaders at high schools across the country. We accomplish our mission through our communications, speaker events, and our annual NHSCF Youth Summit which takes place in May of each year. Our monthly newsletters represent our primary communications related to fostering an exchange of ideas. Each NHSCF newsletter contains sustainability tips, information related to extracurricular environmental programs, links to interesting environmental articles, and, most importantly, written descriptions of the various initiatives taking place at our member schools. In addition to these newsletters, we host monthly Delegation Meetings dedicated to discussing environmental issues in a live setting. The National High School Climate Forum is committed to climate education, as well, and, as such, we host speaker events on different topics twice a year. Our two 2020-2021 events were dedicated to wildfires and sustainability on college campuses, respectively. Finally, our annual youth summit provides students with the opportunity to present their work for the rest of the forum and concludes each NHSCF year. With this in mind, we are excited to have you and your school in the forum this year and can't wait to see what we can accomplish!



# January 2022 Sustainability Tips

## Theme: REFUSE, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Plastic is everywhere. Plastic is also not biodegradable, meaning it could last hundreds of years on Earth. 500 million tons of plastic are produced annually, only around 8% of the plastic that gets discarded is recycled, and, by 2050, more plastic could exist in the ocean than fish. The only way to avoid plastic pollution is to refuse plastic, especially single-use plastics, not only to reduce, reuse, and recycle.



- Avoid single-use plastics! Bring a reusable water bottle and small pouch around with a reusable set of cutlery and drinking straw to cut your consumption of single-use plastics.
- Change your food storage system! Instead of plastic ziplocks and wraps, use glass reusable containers and silicone stretch wraps for lids. Also, bring your own containers to restaurants to avoid plastic (or styrofoam) takeout containers.
- Sustainable bathroom supplies: find a razor that you only need to replace the blade instead of the entire razor. Make the switch from plastic toothbrushes to bamboo or even other alternatives.

- Bring your own reusable shopping bags as one plastic bag takes about 1,000 years to degrade.
- Buy in bulk instead of multiple packaged products and reduce packaging waste.
- Choose cardboard over plastic bottles and paper over plastic bags.
- Avoid cosmetics that contain microplastics as they make their way into our water systems!
- Bring your own cup to a coffee shop to reduce your plastic footprint.
- Stop chewing gum! Most gum contains plastic, so make the switch to natural chewing gums.
- Use matches instead of plastic lighters or even buy a refillable metal lighter.
- Most importantly, teach others the importance of refusing plastic! The more that others start following your example, the more plastic can be cut out of our lives : )





# Outside Environmental Programs



## Join STOP (Students Take on Plastic)

Do you want your school to ban single use plastics?

STOP works to teach students how to talk to and encourage your council members to ban plastic bags and bottles through the organization of an event in your school or community. After informing the rest of the school, along with neighboring schools and the public, about the plastic issue, schools must follow six steps to continue to spread the message, outlined by STOP. STOP also provides other advice on how to approach lawmakers and reach larger audiences.

## Sustainable Summer: “From Being Green to Leading Green”

Sustainable Summer offers summer programs that teaches students how to become environmental leaders while leading a sustainable future. They offer programs under different topics such as global challenges, international development, policy & government, business & entrepreneurship, and conservation to name a few. Learn More: <https://sustainablesummer.org/>



## NHSCF Announcements

1. On Wednesday, February 9th, at 7pm EST, the National High School Climate Forum will be hosting our Winter Speaker Event, titled “Climate Intelligence: AI and Technology in Action”. The event will feature Dr. Stacey Gifford of IBM’s Future of Climate Initiative and Ms. Bonnie Lei of Microsoft’s AI for Earth Program.
2. The deadline for the NHSCF Sustainability Competition will be in April - it is never too early to get started and download the competition booklet from the “Dashboard” page on the website!

If you are not a member of the Writing Subcommittee but are interested in contributing something to our November Newsletter, please reach out to Alex at [abnoviello23@lawrenceville.org](mailto:abnoviello23@lawrenceville.org).



# January 2022 Sustainability Initiative Spotlights

Thank you to all of those who contributed!

## **Katherine W. '22 - Buckingham Browne and Nichols School, MA**

"We have currently been working on bring composting back, as we were unable to last year because of COVID. We are also looking forward to our annual Eco Bash, which is a day in the spring entirely dedicated to environmental topics and action. We have student led workshops, speakers, and a variety of resources that we provide to the entire high school. It's a really great way to get everyone in the community involved and thinking about the environment."

## **Delicia L. '25 - Hawken School, OH**

"We started the year off with informing the student body about the harms of single-use materials, specifically water bottles. We have a somewhat Hogwarts-like house-based point system, where we can earn points for our respective houses. We incentivize the use of reusable water bottles with these house points. We plan on raising money to donate to help offset out carbon footprint through planting trees, as well."

## **Abby G. '22 - St. Mark's School, MA**

"Currently, we are working on coordinating meetings with students in leadership positions at our school in order to promote sustainability. In two months, we are having a joint meeting with BLU to talk about how climate change disproportionately affects minority communities, as well. Our ongoing initiatives and projects include school participation events (tree planting, 5k, etc), a plastic water bottle ban, work with the dining hall staff, work on sustainability in dorms, and coordinating a meeting with our school trustees about divestment."

## **Sabrina Y. '22 - The Lawrenceville School, NJ**

"It is currently sustainuary at our school, the month during which most of our social events are dedicated to sustainability and the environment. Throughout Sustainuary, we have organized flexitarian Fridays for lunch, promoting the available vegetarian/vegan food options, in addition to implementing a shorter shower competition in each house (dormitory). Finally, we are also working to bring reusable plates and silverware to each of the houses on campus."

## **Pippa '23 - The Urban School, CA**

"We have been doing terracycle for the last few years, are working on making Urban fully solar powered, and are also doing a bunch of events for earth week, including hosting speakers, creating succulent gardens, and organizing a clothing swap. During past Earth weeks, the school cafeteria has not served meat. Lastly, we are also preparing for the upcoming climate strike in March."



# Sustainability Initiative Spotlights Continued...

The NHSCF hopes that these initiatives will inspire you to emulate them with similar projects at your schools!

## **Sarah M. '22 - The Shipley School, PA**

"We are currently planning a presentation for an assembly on waste sorting. In the last few years, we have implemented compost and recycling into the cafeteria. However, we are continuing to remind people (especially new students/first years) how to properly sort waste. This is a big focus of our environmental committee; we are also working on a BIC recycling program for pens/school supplies and a water conservation project. In the future, we would like to host more environmental events, as was requested by a survey sent out to our entire school."

## **Chiara M. '23 - The Quarry Lane School, CA**

"We are currently collecting our school's compost and tumbling it into soil for our school gardens, after it is passed through a tumbler. We also working to educate the other lower/middle/high school students about recycling, trashing, and compost every friday, in a fun and engaging way. Lastly, we were also able to design and produce sustainable cotton bags to give to our community as a replacement for plastic shopping bags, in addition to distributing eco-friendly stickers with the words 'Say no to Plastic.'"

## **Elena M. '23 - Culver Academies, IN**

"Our main goal to build a greenhouse out of eco bricks for our school to use and enjoy, in order to raise awareness and build a community of sustainability. Another major project for us is green week, a whole week around Earth Day dedicated to sustainability, during which we host a variety of activities. In the past, we have had a movie night and presented a table of products that were zero-waste/plastic-free with the price next to them to give people an idea of the easy changes available. We are also planning a trash pick up, additional movie nights, and a speaker from the local community to get everyone more involved in activities related to sustainability."

## **Molly M. '22 - The Derryfield School, NH**

"We are currently working on a plastic water bottle ban across both our middle and upper schools. We have previously lobbied for climate change action in meetings with state representatives in NH via Zoom. In addition, we have instituted a newsletter similar to the Forum's in our school, most recently covering how to make the holidays more sustainable. Lastly, we may be joining a plastic-focused climate group called '10 Towns', in the future, as well."

## **Rosa S. '23 - Indian Springs School, AL**

"In the past, we have done several fundraisers for environmental organizations, including Tree Sisters and the Carbon Lighthouse Association, both of which we found particularly impressive. We also brought in a speaker from a local environmental justice organization, called Gasp, and are continuing our research on solar power and its integration with Alabama Power."



# Interesting Articles and Important Environmental Topic Links:

Update on Environmental Politics:

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/26/politics/house-democrats-climate-task-forces/index.html>

Manatees Dying at Record Rates in Florida:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/race-to-rescue-manatees-dying-at-unprecedented-rate-in-florida-131071045757>

General Recap of Events from TIME:

<https://time.com/6130470/climate-change-2021-build-back-better/>

Hope you enjoy these articles and find them interesting!



# Thanks for Reading!

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