



People and Nature: Our Future is in the Balance

National Wildlife Federation

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Clemson University Clemson, South Carolina Spring 2003, Management

BACKGROUND

Campus Profile

Clemson is a public land-grant and research university located in a rural area in the northwest corner of South Carolina. It has an enrollment of approximately 17,000 students, served by approximately 1,200 faculty and 4,500 staff. Bachelors, through Ph.D. degrees are offered in a number of disciplines. The university emphasizes agriculture, architecture, business, education, engineering, natural resources, science and technology.

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GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goals

Two of Clemson's goals this year were to establish an environmental policy and to incorporate "green building" principles into the master planning process.

Accomplishments

Clemson's first environmental policy-requiring environmental among other things assessment-was passed by the committee. In addition, the Clemson Board of Trustees established three design principles to guide the campus master plan, one of which requires plans to "value sustainable design." The President of the university has said that, if at all possible, all new construction on the campus will meet LEED certification requirements.

Challenges and Responses

The major challenge has been to ensure meaningful participation by representatives of all stakeholder groups. It can be difficult to manage groups that include faculty, staff and students, as the interests and motivations for each group may vary widely; their level of knowledge and awareness and their time commitment can also be quite different. We have found that providing lunch aids in keeping attendance up.

ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT

Leaders and Supporters

The Clemson University Environmental Committee (CUEC) was established under the aegis of the Sustainable Universities Initiative; generally sentiment across campus appears to favor positive environmental action. As noted above, the President has a strong interest in green building. Also, Clemson University has identified the environment and sustainability as one of its eight university emphasis areas.

Funding

The Sustainable Universities Initiative has assisted with initial funding of CUEC, providing a staff member and an undergraduate intern who helps to manage the committee. Meeting staffing needs is being explored for the long term in ways that make funding needs minimal.

CLOSING COMMENT

Alan Elzerman, Director of Clemson's School of the Environment, notes, "The primary advantage of the CUEC is that it creates an opportunity for people who might not talk to each other to come together once a month during the school year to discuss mutual problems, interests and projects. Lots of new ideas hatch there, and the committee provides a mechanism for them to translate into action."