



National Wildlife Federation®  
**CAMPUS**  
ecology®

**University of Florida  
Gainesville, Florida  
Spring 2008, Climate Action Plan**

**BACKGROUND**

**Campus Profile**

One of the nation's five largest universities, the University of Florida (UF) is a major public, land-grant, research institution. The state's oldest, largest and most comprehensive university, UF is among the nation's most academically diverse public universities. It has a long history of established programs in international education, research and service; it is one of only 17 public, land-grant universities that belong to the Association of American Universities.

In 1853, the state-funded East Florida Seminary took over the Kingsbury Academy in Ocala. The seminary moved to Gainesville in the 1860s and later was consolidated with the state's land-grant Florida Agricultural College, then in Lake City. In 1905, by legislative action, the college became a university and was moved to Gainesville. Classes first met with 102 students on the present site on September 26, 1906. UF officially opened its doors to women in 1947. The university currently has more than 46,000 students.

UF has a 2,000-acre campus and more than 900 buildings (including 170 with classrooms and laboratories). The northeast corner of campus is listed as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. The UF residence halls have a total capacity of some 7,000 students, and the five family housing villages house more than 2,200 married and graduate students.

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**GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**Goals**

The goal of this Campus Ecology Fellowship project is to help the University of Florida reach its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 by assessing the school's carbon footprint and providing education outreach to the student body.

**Accomplishments**

Focus the (Gator) Nation

Named after the popular Gator Nation branding campaign at the University of Florida, our Focus the Nation (FTN) event was highly visible on UF's campus, attracting many students who had never attended any kind of climate change event before. I (Campus Ecology Fellow Alison Erlenbach) served on the planning committee with a diverse group of students, faculty and staff.

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The schedule of events was as follows:

- January 30, 2008: Webcast – The 2% Solution
- January 31, 2008: Climate Change Awareness Fair and FTN Teach-in
  - Climate change displays, demos and tabling were conducted on the North Lawn of the Reitz Union. Student groups and operations at UF demonstrated solar technology, alternative fuel vehicles and offered materials activities and information about climate change. The Alachua County Schools Essay and Art competition finalists were displayed.
  - At a panel on the science of climate change, UF faculty members discussed the facts and figures of climate change; the session was followed by a question and answer session. Panelists included Dr. Steven Mulkey and Dr. Paul Sotkiewicz.
  - A political forum was held on Leadership for Climate Change. Local leader from Florida and UF discussed the challenges and opportunities for leading the way with climate change initiatives.
  - The Alachua County Schools Climate Change Competition winners were announced.
  - A mock Renewable Energy Debate was held with UF faculty to discuss the pros and cons of various energy sources, such as wind, solar and nuclear.

The main role in Focus the Nation was planning the webcast of The 2% Solution. In an effort to reach out to faith-based organizations, I approached the congregation at the Chapel House, a church one block from campus, to allow us to host the event in their meeting room. The event was a success, and approximately 30 people attended. Unfortunately, we were unable to watch the broadcast due to the servers being full. Despite this setback, we still enjoyed food, drinks and great company. We also watched “The Story of Stuff” and held an impromptu discussion on creative ways to reduce one’s impact on the environment.

#### 14th Public Interest Environmental Conference

This conference was hosted by University of Florida’s Levine College of Law. The conference was for law students and Florida attorneys, and topics focused on Florida's role in global issues on energy, land use, biodiversity and water. I presented in a forum about carbon neutrality on university campuses the main focus of my presentation was the student movement and ways that students were contributing to campus carbon neutrality.

#### Titusville High School Eco-Club

At the end of January 2007, I presented to the Titusville High School (THS) Eco-Club. Titusville, Florida, is my home town, and my younger brother is a sophomore at THS and a dedicated member of the Eco-Club. I was asked to their last meeting of the fall semester, and I made a 30-minute presentation about campus sustainability and the ways in which it could be applied to high schools, Most of my presentation was spent talking about climate change and how it was uniquely important to Florida. I also spent a large portion of my time explaining the need to reduce carbon emissions. At the end of my presentation, we discussed different ways that high school students could reduce their own carbon footprints. These included: a school-wide carpool system, turning off school computers and completing energy audits.

### State Student Government Annual Convention at Gainesville High School

I was invited to present on campus sustainability to groups from student government associations at high schools from across Florida. Since many of these students were close to graduation and planning to go to the University of Florida, I gave some details in my presentation about actions UF is taking in the sustainability movement, especially in the area of carbon neutrality. Like my presentation at THS, we discussed different ways that student groups could promote sustainability at their own high schools.

### Carbon Audit

As part of my fellowship, I assisted Mark van Soestbergen, founder and President of the International Carbon Bank and Exchange, with the UF greenhouse gas inventory. We implemented a tracking system for greenhouse gases so that an audit does not have to be redone every few years. Most of the major sources have been accounted for already, so my main job was to count emissions that are not always traditionally counted, namely, emissions from coolants used in air conditioning and water chiller systems, lab chemicals, air travel and fertilizers. The process of obtaining this information was time consuming and challenging, as many departments purchase these items on their own, and the data is not stored in one central place. One of the most difficult aspects of this portion of my fellowship was locating and contacting the correct person to obtain the needed data. Now that I have made and recorded many of the necessary contacts, it will be easier to continually track these emission sources in the future.

### Earth Day Music Festival

On April 20, 2008, the University of Florida Student Leadership Convergence hosted the 2008 Earth Day Music Festival. The Student Leadership Convergence is an organization made up of six University of Florida groups: Gators for a Sustainable Campus, Society of Conservation Biology, American Solar Energy Society, Ocean Aware, Wildlife Society and enVeg. As president of Gators for a Sustainable Campus, I served as the leader of the heads of these various groups for the planning of the music festival. It was a great success, and we hope to make it an annual event.

The event took place in the 100+ acres of the Alachua County Fair Grounds, located less than four miles from the University of Florida. The festival featured live music on two stages, food, alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages, games, raffles, educational booths and an ultimate Frisbee tournament.

Our sponsor, ClimateSafe®, provided free buses to the festival to limit emissions and give people an option other than driving.

The 2008 Earth Day Music Festival was climate neutral and environmentally sustainable. This was accomplished by producing minimal waste through the use of reusable materials and by offsetting our carbon emissions through our sponsor, ClimateSafe.

Attached are some fliers and the press release from the festival.

### **Funding and Resources**

This project was supported through a fellowship grant from NWF's Campus Ecology program.