Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

April 2024

THE COMMONS

For alumni and friends of the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison

Introducing Earth Fest

A new celebration of the environment and sustainability takes over campus.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Kevin Berger, Graphic Designer
Anica Graney, Assistant Editor
Eric Klister, Web Editor
Chelsea Rademacher, Editor
Laila Smith, Staff Writer
Diane Stojanovich, Managing Editor

CONTRIBUTORS

Lauren Graves
James Jerden

DEAN'S OFFICE

Paul Robbins, Dean, Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies
Colleen Godfriaux, Interim Director of Budget and Financial Management
Anna Gade, Associate Dean for Research and Education
Diane Stojanovich, Distinguished Associate Dean for Communications
Shelly Strom, Assistant to Paul Robbins
Ann Swenson, Associate Dean for Advancement
Steph Tai, Associate Dean for Education and Faculty Affairs
Jenna Weidner, Associate Dean for Administration

CONTACT US

We'd love to hear from you! Send us feedback or questions about this issue, or share story ideas for future issues.

Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies
550 Science Hall
Madison, WI 53706
communications@nelson.wisc.edu

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We're reducing our carbon footprint! We hope you enjoy our digitally published magazine, sent monthly to Nelson alumni, students, and friends.

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From the Dean

Greetings, Nelson community,

If you noticed that this month's magazine sent on the 19th rather than the 15th … first, kudos for your observational skills, and second, you may be wondering *why*. Today is a big day at the Nelson Institute and UW–Madison: it's the first day of UW–Madison Earth Fest! Earth Fest is a weeklong celebration of all things environment and sustainability here at the UW–Madison campus and beyond. Created and hosted collaboratively between the institute and the Office of Sustainability (OS), Earth Fest seeks to unite our campus over the one resource and interest we all share: our world.

As you know, the institute has honored the Earth Day tradition founded by Gaylord Nelson throughout its history, acting as a convening site for a day of learning: a "teach-in" as it was originally envisioned. But the growth of interest, effort, urgency, and enthusiasm has far outstripped our old model. The challenges and opportunities have surpassed our traditional approaches.

In early 2023, a rockstar team of folks both from the Nelson Institute and the OS got together and started to think *bigger*. Their goal was to create something that would not only streamline our efforts around our Earth Day and OS's Earth Week (you can read more about that event's history on page 17), but also build a bridge between campus's varied environmentally and sustainability focused efforts, then connect that work with the larger community, thus demonstrating UW–Madison's commitment to creating a just, equitable, and sustainable world.

People are demanding community around these issues, and a chance to gather to do hands-on work (volunteering, action, engagement) and a far wider scope of topics and know-how. They want UW–Madison to draw on all its expertise, in every college and department, to go to work on building a better future. I've been amazed, impressed, and heartened by the repose. Every corner of campus is involved, and so are partners from around the city, state, and country. This got big, and fast.

In these pages, you'll get to read stories about some of the people behind Earth Fest's 50 — yes, *50* — fantastic events. I hope you're able to join us this week across campus (those reading from afar may be interested in this virtual opportunity). Your feedback is invaluable, particularly as we evaluate the success of this inaugural year. How did you first hear about Earth Fest? What did you like? What would you like to see next year? I encourage you to share your thoughts on Earth Fest with our events team.

Be well,

Paul Robbins
Dean, Nelson Institute

Meet You in the Arb!

One of the best spots on the UW–Madison campus lies … well, *off* campus. With more than 1,200 total acres, the UW Arboretum is one of the oldest and most varied ecological communities in the world. From prairies to forests to wetlands, you can explore multiple historic landscapes in an afternoon. Learn more about the Arboretum's history — and how it's protecting Wisconsin's ecological future.

Photo by by Bryce Richter / UW–Madison

Zeroing in on Sustainability Goals

UW–Madison recently launched a historic initiative for the environment and sustainability; learn about the initiative's five goals.

By Lauren Graves, Office of Sustainability; and Chelsea Rademacher

Participants present their projects during the poster discussion session of the second annual Sustainability Symposium. Photo by Bryce Richter / UW–Madison

For decades, the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies and the Office of Sustainability have tackled critical environmental and sustainability challenges in service of UW–Madison, the state of Wisconsin, and the planet. Now, both units are leading the way as the UW embarks on its most ambitious, comprehensive environmental sustainability initiative. Announced earlier this year by Chancellor Jennifer L. Mnookin, the cross-campus initiative will advance the university's research and education missions while also making campus a living laboratory for sustainable practices.

"This is a landmark initiative," said Nathan Jandl, associate director of sustainability. "UW–Madison has the opportunity to build on its legacy of environmental leadership and leverage widespread interest among its stakeholders — from prospective students and community members to Badger alumni — in creating a sustainable campus and helping to build a liveable world for all."

The initiative includes five unique goals: eliminating emissions and waste, increasing campus involvement, boosting sustainability research, and integrating sustainability into the curriculum. Many of the goals already have efforts under way; read on to learn about our progress so far.

1. Net-Zero* Emissions by 2048

UW–Madison is planning for climate action with the Wisconsin Idea top of mind: centering people, viewing our campus and outlying lands as a living learning lab that benefits students and researchers, and working cooperatively with the private sector, our neighbors, and local communities to honor the contributions of our alumni and inspire the leaders of tomorrow.

How We're Getting There

Our goal of 2048 coincides with the university's 200th anniversary while also aligning with recommendations from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as well as the City of Madison's 2050 goal and the Wisconsin Clean Energy Plan. UW–Madison has also set an interim target of 100 percent renewable electricity by 2030 — an ambitious yet critical step on the path to net-zero emissions.

*Net Zero refers to the state in which the greenhouse gasses going into the atmosphere are balanced by removal out of the atmosphere. At UW–Madison, we must:

- Reduce our **direct carbon emissions on campus** (heating and cooling, campus-owned vehicles and equipment, refrigerants, and chemicals)
- Reduce our **indirect carbon emissions from electricity** produced off-campus
- Reduce our **indirect carbon emissions from other sources**
- Increase **positive actions** that reduce our carbon footprint (carbon sequestration, carbon offsets, etc.)

2. Zero Waste by 2040

By integrating sustainable materials management practices, UW–Madison is taking a transformative approach to help build a circular economy.

How We're Getting There

UW Zero Waste is a strategic initiative for sustainable materials management at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The initiative utilizes cross-functional collaboration in order to achieve several outcomes, including:

- Minimize waste generation
- Promote sustainable purchasing
- Save financial resources
- Yield social benefits
- Create a culture of environmental responsibility across the university

*Zero Waste means achieving a series of targets related to sustainable materials management. Visit the UW Zero Waste website to learn more.

NET ZERO POINTS OF PRIDE

61MW

of renewble electricity procured by UW–Madison in 2023

45%

reduction in greenhouse gas emissions since 2007

ZERO WASTE POINTS OF PRIDE

650K+

pounds diverted from the landfill through Housing projects in 2023

100K+

pounds of food scraps composted at Gordon & Four Lakes Markets

A solar installer mounts a display screen inside a bus shelter on Engineering Drive, marking the completion of the 20th and final solar bus shelter installation of the summer. Photos courtesy of the Office of Sustainability (2)

3. Cross-Campus Involvement: Achieve STARS Gold by 2025

Shared knowledge and training, behavior change, and engagement from all corners of campus are essential in creating a culture of campus sustainability.

How We're Getting There

UW–Madison uses the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) to assess progress and use established metrics to ensure that sustainability efforts are reaching all corners of campus. STARS is a comprehensive sustainability rating system for colleges and universities that addresses the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainability. Sustainability efforts across campus are divided into four categories: planning and administration, academics, operations, and engagement. Each category includes secondary and tertiary categories for which sustainability efforts are measured and points are accrued. You can learn more about UW–Madison's current Silver rating on the sustainability dashboard.

4. Sustainability Research and Innovation

UW–Madison is working to solve wicked problems in sustainability by advancing foundational and applied research, making campus a living lab, building innovative partnerships, and leveraging funding resources.

How We're Getting There

Nearly half of all academic departments and more than 320 faculty members at UW–Madison participate in sustainability-related research, making major contributions to scholarship in air quality and energy, global health and climate change, and environmental justice and food systems, among other topics.

To support innovative, large-scale, cross-cutting sustainability research on campus and beyond, UW–Madison launched the

CROSS-CAMPUS POINTS OF PRIDE

50+

environment- and sustainability-related student organizations

6,100+

staff engaged in the Green Office certification program

RESEARCH POINTS OF PRIDE

326

UW–Madison faculty engaged in sustainability research

400+

attendees at the second annual Sustainability Symposium

Sustainability Research Hub in spring 2024, which will make the university a preeminent destination for environmental sustainability research and education.

5. Immersive Sustainability Education Opportunities by 2030

Extensive curriculum integration helps create a culture of sustainability where classroom and hands-on learning opportunities educate a generation that has their eye on the future.

How We're Getting There

UW–Madison offers an array of sustainability education opportunities, from certificates and courses to experiential learning in the form of Green Fund projects and internships. By using a campus-wide sustainability literacy assessment and incorporating feedback from prospective and current students as well as employers on the value of sustainability education, the university will expand its offerings until all interested students have access to immersive sustainability educational opportunities.

Project partners gather in celebration beneath a newly completed solar bus shelter by the Walnut Street Greenhouse.

EDUCATION POINTS OF PRIDE

13,983

graduates from programs with a sustainability learning outcome

96

students who participated in the Green Fund process in 2023

Track our Progress: Sustainability Dashboard

The Office of Sustainability uses a transparent and collaborative process to assess and document university sustainability progress. This dashboard tracks progress using metrics included in the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) assessment.

The dashboard is organized around the four main categories of the STARS framework: academics, engagement, operations, and planning and administration. You can view these categories to explore data on a wide variety of campus sustainability efforts, or you can jump to specific data tracking progress against the chancellor's sustainability goals here.

Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin introduces sustainability initiatives during a UW Board of Regents meeting hosted at Union South in February. Photo by Althea Dotzour / UW–Madison

The Sustainability Research Hub: Catalyzing Interdisciplinary Collaboration

A new research effort from the Nelson Institute aims to position UW–Madison as a destination for environmental sustainability research and education.

By James Jerden, Sustainability Research Hub

The Sustainability Research Hub (the Hub) is breaking down barriers to collaboration. Launched as a project of the University of Wisconsin–Madison Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies and the Office of Sustainability, the Hub provides administrative and grant writing supports for large interdisciplinary projects rooted in sustainability through help with interdisciplinary team building, proposal writing and editing, data visualization, budget preparation, submission coordination, and more — all free of charge. The long-term vision for the Hub is to make UW–Madison a preeminent destination for environmental sustainability research and education. The Hub team is working toward this future by catalyzing collaboration and supporting innovative, cross-cutting sustainability research on campus and beyond.

In her February 8, 2024, address to the Universities of Wisconsin Board of Regents, UW–Madison Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin described the Hub as a "center of excellence intentionally designed to build on our long tradition of working across [disciplines]." Chancellor Mnookin envisions the Hub as a catalyst for transdisciplinary research, ensuring that "... every researcher in every discipline on campus has the opportunity to engage in sustainability research if they wish. We want to break down barriers and tear down silos!"

The Hub team has hit the ground running. Within the first few months of coming together, they have started transforming Chancellor Mnookin's vision into reality and has provided various levels of support for a range

of sustainability-centered projects targeting funds from several forward-looking federal programs, including:

- Frontier Research in Earth Sciences, National Science Foundation (NSF)
- Environmental and Social Sustainability in Engineering Education, NSF
- Earth Action: Community Action for Equity and Environmental Justice, NASA
- Land-Cover and Land-Use Change, NASA
- Responsible Design, Development, and Deployment of Technologies, NSF
- Transformative Approaches to Graduate Education, NSF
- Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants Program, Environmental Protection Agency
- Sustainable Regional Systems Research Networks, NSF
- Resiliency Innovation Engine (Water/Energy), NSF
- Energy and Emissions Intensive Industries, Department of Energy

In January, the Hub provided editorial and research administrative support for a project led by senior scientist Feng He of the Nelson Institute's Center for Climatic Research. He's project team includes researchers from Japan, New Zealand, Canada, the NSF National Center for Atmosphere Research, and other U.S. universities. This interdisciplinary group looks to develop transformative Earth system models that accurately simulate past and future glacial cycles, sea-level fluctuations, and climate change. This work would revolutionize climate modeling for future ice sheet and sea level projections by providing open-source modeling tools that account for interactions among ice sheets, atmospheric processes, carbon dioxide levels, ocean circulation, and geologic processes within the solid Earth.

The Hub is also providing grant writing, budget preparation, and research administration services for a transdisciplinary community change project led by Jessie Conaway, faculty associate for Native Nations Partnerships at the Nelson Institute. This effort is a continuation and scale-up of the already successful InterTribal Lake Winnebago Wild Rice Revitalization Project, a collaborative effort between Tribal Nations, university researchers, community partners, and government agencies. The work integrates water quality data from Western scientific methods within a holistic framework of traditional ecological knowledge to restore wild rice to harvestable levels in Lake Winnebago waterways. The project also educates communities about the ecological benefits of wild rice.

The Hub team has also been building opportunities for on-campus connections around sustainability. For example, they are working to expand the UW–Madison Sustainability Experts Database for researchers seeking collaborative opportunities. The database currently has 187 participants and continues to grow. All campus researchers who are interested in sustainability are encouraged to join, as the database will be used to identify potential project teams and build networks across campus.

Feng He, senior scientist, Center for Climatic Research, Nelson Institute

Other recent outreach included hosting a brainstorming meeting that brought together an interdisciplinary group of researchers around an important Department of Energy (DOE) funding opportunity. The meeting was attended by 15 faculty from various departments who discussed collaborative opportunities in the DOE focus area of energy- and emissions-intensive industries. This Hub-prompted discussion included researchers from the Nelson Institute and the Departments of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Chemistry, Mechanical Engineering, Biological Systems Engineering, Soil Science, and Materials Science. The Hub plans to continue catalyzing collaboration through future brainstorming sessions that will bring together interdisciplinary teams around unique funding opportunities.

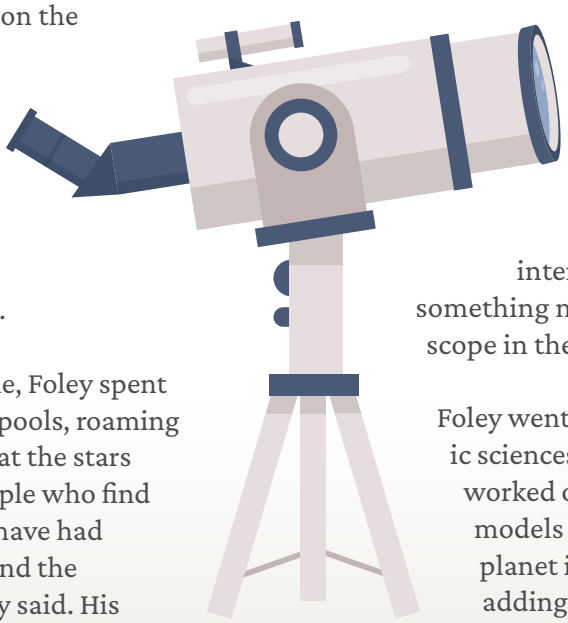
Jonathan Foley Moves Climate Solutions FORWARD

As he spearheads climate solutions across the nation, Jonathan Foley's career is the embodiment of the Wisconsin motto.

By Anica Graney

Even after 16 years away from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, Jonathan Foley can't quite shake the lasting impact the university has had on him. Starting as a student and ending as a professor, Foley remembers his time at UW–Madison as being remarkable and exemplary. "Madison is a very special place. It can compete with the Harvards and Stanfords of the world any day of the week on the things that really matter," Foley said. "And the students come well prepared. They're super smart and have a dedication to service."

While Foley's career started at UW–Madison, he has gone on to advance the university's mission throughout the country — including developing the University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment, running a science museum in San Francisco, and heading up a climate solutions nonprofit. Foley attests his prolific career to his time spent at UW–Madison, but his start in life can be found in a completely different part of the country.



Growing up in a small town in Maine, Foley spent his childhood plucking around tide pools, roaming the northern woods, and gazing up at the stars on a clear night. "I think a lot of people who find themselves in environmental work have had a deep connection to the outdoors and the environment since childhood," Foley said. His love of the outdoors was matched by his enthusiasm for science and figuring out how things worked.

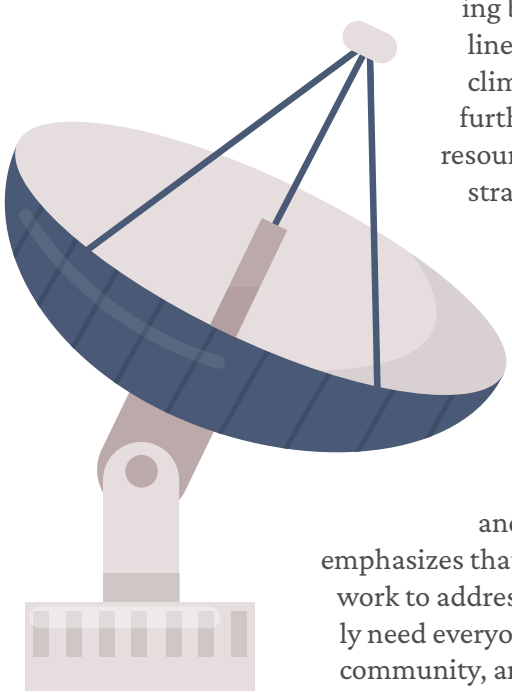
These passions led him to UW–Madison where he originally majored in astronomy and physics, as he was fascinated at how other planets worked. Foley enrolled in a few meteorology courses to help him with his studies after he had the opportunity to analyze early photos of Jupiter's cloud patterns taken by Voyager 2. Met with an exceptional atmospheric science department, Foley realized that the other planets in the universe would be fine, but ours was the one that was in trouble. "It finally dawned on me that I could connect my interest in science with my interest in the environment and do something more practical by turning that telescope in the other direction," Foley said.

Foley went on to earn his PhD in atmospheric sciences from UW–Madison where he worked on building sophisticated climate models that simulated the future of our planet inside of a computer. He focused on adding biological elements of the planet

into the climate models and worked out how the atmosphere and life on Earth would interact together in the future. Once finished with his PhD, Foley accepted a professorship with the university, splitting time between the Nelson Institute and the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences.

"Madison was a wonderful place to work because there were not only great meteorologists, oceanographers, and climate scientists, but there was also many of the best ecologists, foresters, soil scientists, and every possible discipline you can think of at Madison," Foley said. "I was like a kid in a candy store."

During his 15 years of teaching at UW–Madison, Foley launched the Climate, People, and Environment Program (CPEP), founded the Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment (SAGE), and served as the first Gaylord Nelson Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies. His role in developing CPEP and SAGE with the Nelson Institute has created a cascading effect of environmental and sustainability advancement across campus and the wider community as the programs brought on additional faculty, including Greg Nemet, Tracy Holloway, and Jonathan Patz, among many others. "It's a legacy that I think is in the spirit of the Nelson Institute — doing great environmental scholarly work, but also making sure it connects to the real world and does some good," Foley said.



Foley left UW–Madison to start the University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment, using what he learned at the Nelson Institute to establish an even broader reach for environmental impact. After six years there and making sure the program was steady on its feet, he left to become the CEO of the California Academy of Sciences located in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. Foley moved to the West Coast to help the academy — which is also a planetarium, aquarium, and natural history museum — pivot from talking about the Earth's past to motivating discussions about the sustainability of life into the future. "Including topics like climate change, food systems, biodiversity, water, and all the big sustainability challenges that our planet faces," Foley said.

After five years with the museum, Foley wanted to get back to doing more hands-on work and was approached to spearhead Project Drawdown, a climate solutions nonprofit that started from the bestselling book *Drawdown*. The book outlines a series of different solutions to climate change, which the nonprofit furthers by being the world's leading resource to guide climate solutions and strategies. Foley now works with businesses, governments, communities, investors, philanthropists, and other nonprofits all over the world on finding the most effective sustainability solutions for them.

With a wealth of knowledge and experience from his career, Foley emphasizes that every person in every career can work to address climate change. "We desperately need everyone. We need a lot more diversity, community, and different disciplines," Foley said. "And that's where the Nelson Institute is so critical because it gives students depth in one area while developing a breadth of connection and communication in those other fields."

Meet Jonathan Foley during Earth Fest

Achieving Drawdown: A Hopeful, Science-Based Plan to Address Climate Change

Thursday, April 25 | 4:15–5:15 p.m.

Learn more

earthfest.wisc.edu

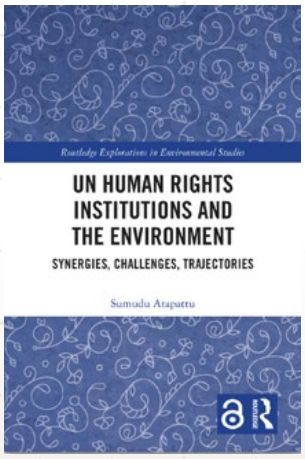
Protecting the Environment, Protecting Humanity

Sumudu Atapattu's recently published book takes a closer look at how environmental issues affect our human rights.

By Laila Smith

As issues like climate change, sustainable development, and depletion of natural resources become increasingly important topics to address, leaders, scholars, and lawyers worldwide are wondering how these environmental issues impact our human rights. UW–Madison faculty member and Nelson Institute affiliate Sumudu Atapattu, an expert on environmental law and human rights, dives into these issues in her new book, *UN Human Rights Institutions and the Environment: Synergies, Challenges, Trajectories* published by Routledge in 2023.

Atapattu completed her law degree in Sri Lanka, her home country, before completing a master's degree in international law and a PhD in international environmental law, both at Cambridge University in England. She then became a law professor, teaching both at the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka, where she introduced environmental law into the curriculum, and at the UW. In addition to teaching at the UW Law School, Atapattu is the director of the Global Legal Studies Center, the executive director of UW–Madison's Human Rights Program, and holds an affiliation with the Center for South Asia. She also is a four-time United Nations Climate Change Conference attendee, including COP21 where the Paris Agreement was adopted.



The cover of Atapattu's most recent book, *UN Human Rights Institutions and the Environment: Synergies, Challenges, Trajectories.*

What first piqued your interest in environmental law?
I was pursuing my master's degree at Cambridge shortly after the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident and was wondering why nobody brought a claim against the USSR after heightened radiation levels were detected in the atmosphere. This was the first major environmental issue that was being discussed at an international level, and there was a lot of talk about how environmental issues should be addressed internationally. The field was relatively new at the time, so when I completed my PhD, I was one of the first people to specialize in international environmental law.

"There are several UN human rights bodies whose mandate does not include environmental protection, but they're increasingly making pronouncements on environmental issues."
— Sumudu Atapattu

How are environmental law and human rights issues intertwined in Sri Lanka?
Although human rights law and environmental law issues were intertwined, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) didn't necessarily work with each other. The environmental NGOs in particular didn't look at the overall impact environmental issues had on people. For example, there were national parks they wanted to protect, but didn't pay attention to the people who depended on the forest. Overall, these NGOs were very siloed in their approach, when it would have been beneficial for them to work together with other groups.

Is this an issue that's particular to Sri Lanka?
Since I've been working on human rights law and the environment for quite some time, I also see this siloed approach at the international level — people are only working in either environmental law or human rights law. When I attend conferences, people ask me if I'm an expert on human rights or the environment, and it makes me think, "Does it matter?"

Top: Atapattu (front left) presenting for the Global Alliance of Universities on Climate at the COP 28 conference. Below: Atapattu (right) and PhD student Nova Tebbe (left) at the COP 28 conference. Photos courtesy of Sumudu Atapattu (3)

What inspired you to write *UN Human Rights Institutions and the Environment: Synergies, Challenges, Trajectories*?
One day I was reading Australia's Country Report on Human Rights Practices, which was issued by the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. The report had extensive comments related to climate change, even going to the extent of calling upon Australia to ban future coal power plants. I thought it was interesting how a *human rights body* was making comments about climate change. None of the UN human rights bodies' mandate includes environmental protection, but they're increasingly making pronouncements on climate change, sustainable development, pollution, and other environmental issues. I wanted to investigate whether there was any coherence between their principles and what different human rights bodies are saying. I originally wanted to write an article about this, but soon realized that there was enough material for an entire book.

Where can people find your book?
UN Human Rights Institutions and the Environment: Synergies, Challenges, Trajectories was published by Routledge, and the publisher was able to make it open-access. If you visit the Routledge website, you can read the entire book for free!

Where do you think environmental law and human rights law are headed?
A couple of years ago, the United Nations General Assembly recognized the right to a healthy environment. This effort was in the works for several years, and it took the international committee almost 75 years since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to recognize this right. I think this will be especially beneficial for marginalized groups, such as Indigenous people, who can use this as a tool to call upon states to provide a healthy environment for people. While the recognition is important, there's still a lot of work to be done regarding defining what it means and how it can be used by lawyers and environmentalists proactively, not just reactively.

Science and Symphonies

Michael Bell's work as a professor and researcher inspires his musical side to create a "report" that can be heard as well as read.

By Anica Graney

Bell with his new symphony, *Regeneration: A Pentalogy*. Photos courtesy of Michael Bell (3)

A typical scientist may publish their research in a journal or present their findings at a lecture. Michael Bell, UW–Madison professor of community and environmental sociology, is not your typical scientist. Bell translates his research into musical compositions, offering a new way to experience environmental sociology. "[Music] gives me a way to communicate my work that your average academic publication just doesn't," Bell said.

"We want to make sure that when we do climate smart agriculture, that the labor conditions are also getting better. It's not good enough if we do things which are more climate friendly, if it's worse for the people who have to do it."

— Michael Bell

His latest composition is a symphony entitled *Regeneration: A Pentalogy*. Three movements will be performed in collaboration with Kanopy Dance Company, a resident modern dance group of the Overture Center for the Arts. Five performances of the collaboration will take place on Earth Day Weekend, April 19 to 21, at the Overture Center as part of Kanopy's upcoming concert, ConFluence: A Prelude. The show will celebrate the power of connecting to our natural world, with original choreography by Kanopy's co-artistic directors, Lisa Thurrell and Robert E. Cleary.

The symphony's central theme revolves around a concept Bell calls ecological dialogue: "viewing the world as an ongoing conversation with life, both human and more than human," he explains. Through its five movements — birth, youth, career, crisis, and realization — the symphony aims to inspire in listeners a sense of human and ecological community. "It's hard to encourage that kind of caring in your average academic publication," Bell said. Through music, he hopes to encourage "love and care for each other and our world."

Raised in a musical family, Bell has been writing and performing music since he was eight years old. He plays the mandolin, guitar, banjo, and piano, and he gravitates toward folk, world, and classical music. A member of several bands and musical groups, Bell has won multiple awards throughout his career, including ones with the "class-grass" group, Graminy, as well as with his father-daughter "folk cabaret" duo called The Elm Duo.

In school, Bell gravitated toward geology, forestry, environmental studies, and sociology, but music has always been a part of his life. It encouraged

him to seek an interdisciplinary way of thinking about the world. "I find that sticking to one discipline can be very monologic and confining," Bell said. "You just don't get the opportunity to appreciate the interactive possibilities of renewal, surprise, and possibility that comes from bringing voices together. I've tried to do that in my own work and studies, but also as best I can in how I approach my own life."

"[Music] gives me a way to communicate my work that your average academic publication just doesn't."

— Michael Bell

Now a faculty member in both the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Bell's diverse thinking carries into the classes he co-teaches. "I love interdisciplinary teaching — I just get so much out of it," Bell said. He teaches an undergraduate lecture class and a graduate seminar every year with Nelson colleagues from other departments.

In addition to teaching, Bell also leads the Soil, Health, and Agroecological Living Lab (SHALL), where he works to improve farming techniques that promote a more equitable and sustainable food future for all. One of the lab's newer projects, called Centering Justice in Climate Smart Agriculture, centers on native food sovereignty as well as labor conditions and standards for farm employees. "We want to make sure that when we do climate smart agriculture, that the labor conditions are also getting better," Bell said. "It's not good enough if we do things which are more climate friendly, if it's worse for the people who have to do it."

Like the rest of his work, this project inspires Bell's musical side. "At some point I'll try to turn the results of that work into music," Bell said. As he weaves his passions for ecology and music together, Bell proves that scientific reports can come in many different forms — even symphonies performed by live orchestras and dance companies.

Kanopy Dance Company is a modern dance company and resident of the Overture Center for the Arts. Photo by Shawn Harper

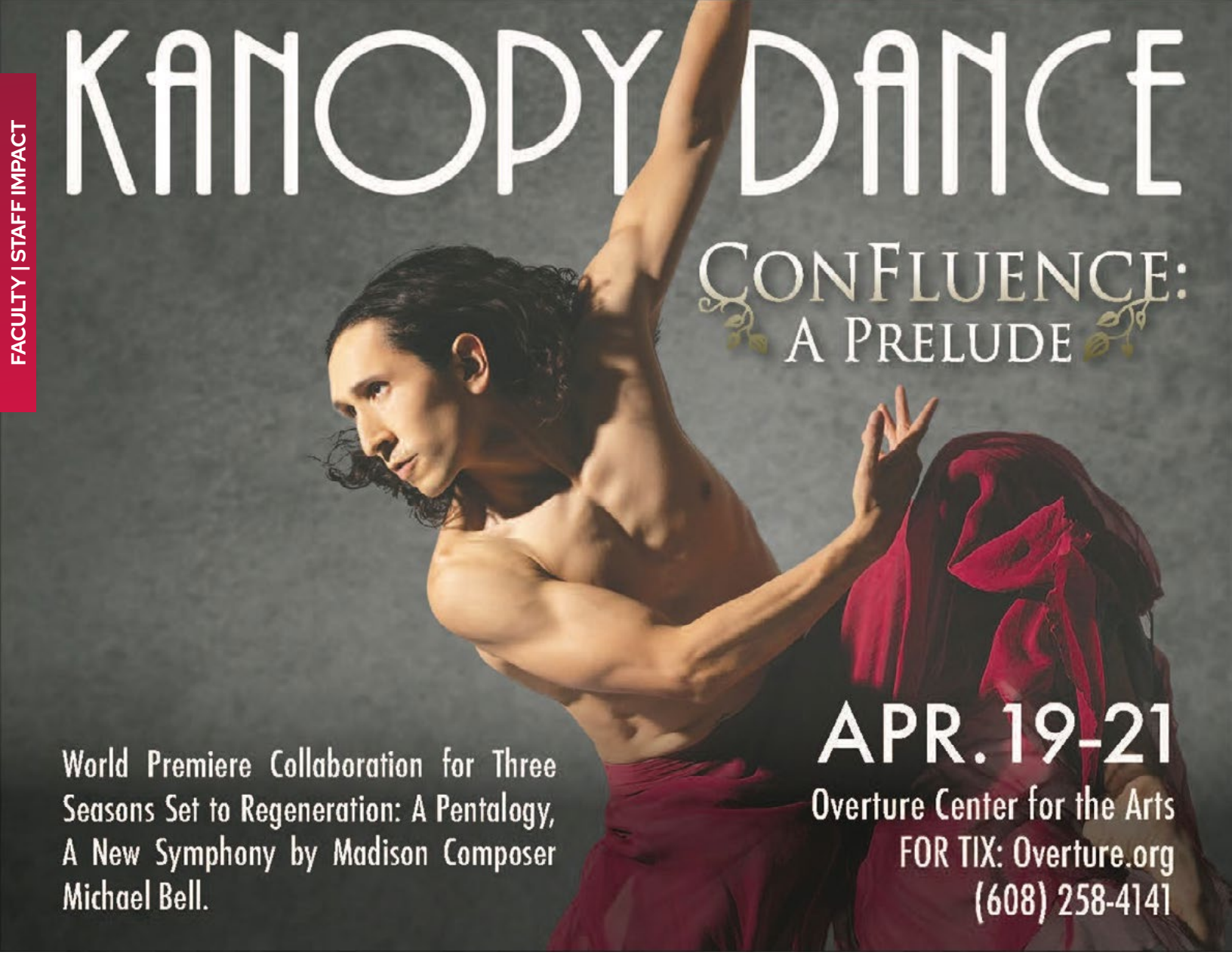


Photo by Shawn Harper

Hear *ConFluence: A Prelude* during Earth Fest

Earth Fest Kickoff Celebration

Friday, April 19 | 1:30–6 p.m.*

Learn more

**Performance at 2:40 p.m.*

earthfest.wisc.edu

From the Office of Sustainability

A monthly update from faculty, staff, and students in the Office of Sustainability - Education and Research. This month's column is from Nathan Jandl, associate director of sustainability.

Honoring Earth Week on the Eve of Earth Fest

Nathan Jandl

It will come as no surprise to many of you, but some of the best ideas for campus sustainability initiatives originate with our students. Here's one: in early 2018, I was approached by a couple of our student interns who had noticed a particular lack on campus that they wanted to remedy. Though there was the existing and prestigious Earth Day Conference run by the Nelson Institute, that event was held off-campus, over the course of a single, long day, which meant that students often had a hard time attending. So, our interns asked, what if we created our own celebration of Earth Day that was campus-based and campus-facing, with student events at its center?

It was, of course, very easy to say yes to this idea, and thus we launched Earth Week. A little research suggested that there had been one or two previous iterations of the idea, but that they hadn't lasted very long — all the more reason to create something special. From the inaugural celebration in 2018, which featured 10 events including a compost workshop, a discussion on race and class in environmentalism, and a documentary film screening, Earth Week leaned into an expansive breadth of topics and formats. By 2023, Earth Week featured over 20 events and as many partners, including student orgs like CLEAN and ASM Sustainability and campus units like the Lakeshore Nature Preserve and UW Arboretum.

Earth Week was not without its challenges and learning opportunities. We battled wacky weather — snow, rain, and wind were our frequent companions, despite or because of the late April timeframe — and learned event-by-event how to book spaces, arrange catering, print posters, develop our marketing, and partner with all manner of student orgs and campus units. Along with everyone else, we underwent the massive disruption of the pandemic and the corresponding move to virtual events. And we hosted events that dug into some sticky issues, like fossil fuel divestment, using Earth Week as an opportunity to foster evenhanded conversations about issues students cared about.

Now, on the eve of Earth Fest, I look back with fondness and gratitude for the work that so many interns, staff, and others across campus contributed to make our six years of Earth Week successful. Its DNA lives on within the thrilling framework of Earth Fest, and as importantly, the ideas, participation, and inspiration of students are absolutely central to the dozens of events that are coming up this month.

Director's Cut

The Nelson Institute's four research centers are proud to be hosting special events for Earth Fest! Read on to hear from each center director as they give an inside look at their Earth Fest offerings.

Center for Climatic Research

CCR

On April 22 from 12–1 p.m. at Memorial Union, the Center for Climatic Research (CCR) will host a discussion and book signing event featuring author Jeff Goodell and Professor Andrea Dutton of the Department of Geoscience. Goodell is the author of the *New York Times* best-seller *The Heat Will Kill You First: Life and Death on a Scorched Planet*. The book details the dangers to the environment from rising global temps associated with climate change, particularly the devastating effects on human health.

Then on April 26 from 2–3:30 p.m. at Union South, CCR will host the following panel discussion: Supporting the Vitality of Rural Communities Through the Wisconsin Rural Partnerships Institute (RPI). The panel will focus on the RPI, which supports the state's rural communities. Panelists will include Steve Vavrus, Wisconsin State Climatology Office director; Glenda Gillaspy, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences dean and director; Patrick Robinson, UW Division of Extension's Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Community Development associate dean; and Chris Kucharik, Wisconsin Environmental Mesonet (Wisconet) director. Following the panel, UW students from Ankur Desai's meteorological measurements course will demonstrate some of the standard measurements used in meteorology, including those related to Wisconet.

Michael Notaro, CCR Director

Join CCR during Earth Fest

The Heat Will Kill You First:
A Conversation on Climate Change
with author Jeff Goodell

Monday, April 22 | 12–1 p.m.

Learn more

earthfest.wisc.edu

Center for Ecology and the Environment

The Center for Ecology and the Environment (CEE) is proud to sponsor a talk by Min Chen on rising methane emissions in boreal-arctic wetlands. Chen is an assistant professor in the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology whose Global Change Research Laboratory is dedicated to understanding how climate change and human activities affect terrestrial ecosystems as well as their feedback to the human and Earth systems. In doing so, they develop and use a variety of tools including computer models, satellite observations, and model-data fusion techniques.

Chen's talk will focus on the importance of methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas, from wetlands in the boreal-arctic region and the impacts on our global climate. Our understanding of how these emissions change over the long term is still uncertain, but recently, Chen and colleagues analyzed methane emissions from boreal wetlands over two decades. They found an alarming increase in methane emissions that was particularly prominent during the early summer months and driven by warmer temperatures and increased productivity of wetland ecosystems. In 2016, a particularly warm year, they observed the highest annual methane emissions ever recorded for the region. Interestingly, current models used to predict methane emissions from wetlands failed to capture both the magnitude of these emissions and their increasing trend.

The CEE is proud to highlight Chen's research and the growing significance of methane emissions in climate change and emphasizes the need for improved understanding to better predict future emissions from these critical ecosystems. The faculty and students of the CEE are leading the charge in understanding how climate change is impacting species and ecosystems across the world.

Ben Zuckerberg, CEE Director

CEE

CHE

Center for Culture, History, and Environment

I'd like to say a few words to advertise the Center for Culture, History, and Environment (CHE)'s forthcoming panel for Earth Fest.

We don't always include the medium of sound in our academic studies of the natural world, and yet sound is crucial to the interactions of humans and of many other species with their surroundings. For Earth Fest, as part of CHE's Year of Environmental Art, we've assembled a panel of experts on music, sound, and the natural environment. Professor Gabby Cornish, a recent hire in the Mead Witter School of Music, will be sharing her insights into the soundscapes of the former Soviet Union with a talk on the Geiger counter as a means to experience the 1986 disaster at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant. She'll be joined by Elijah Levine, who'll address reggae music and "rehumanization" in post-independence Jamaica; by Caitlin Vitale-Sullivan, who'll discuss landscape as a "musical collaborator" in the kulning songs of Scandinavian herders; and by Allyson Mills, who'll consider the role of musical recordings in the creation of a "collective memory of now-extinct birds."

We hope you can join us — 1–2 p.m. on April 24 in Science Hall 140, for what promises to be a fascinating opportunity to explore the world of sound.

Will Brockliss, CHE Director

Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment

As part of Earth Fest, Nelson Institute's Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment (SAGE) will host Jon Foley. There are so many connections between UW–Madison, SAGE, and Foley that it takes an expert to untangle them!

The most important connection is sustainability. Earth Fest is about the environment and sustainability, which describes Jon Foley's whole career. After producing landmark scholarship on land use and land-use change, Foley is now the executive director of Project Drawdown, a non-governmental organization whose mission is "to help the world stop climate change – as quickly, safely and equitably as possible." This is right in the wheelhouse of sustainability!

The next connection is SAGE itself. Jon founded SAGE in 1999 only six years after graduating with a PhD in atmospheric sciences from right here at UW–Madison. He helped to bring many "SAGEs" to Madison and infused the center with a can-do attitude — a personality trait of Project Drawdown, as well.

The third connection is the Weston Roundtable, which will host Jon's public lecture during Earth Fest. Jon was the steward of a generous gift from Roy Weston (another UW alum!). This gift supports the roundtable lecture series, which is SAGE's main mode of public and campus outreach, including a lecture every Thursday both spring and fall.

There are more connections, to be sure. I encourage everyone to attend Foley's talk on April 25 and discover them for yourself!

Carol Barford, SAGE Director

SAGE

Join SAGE during Earth Fest

Achieving Drawdown: A Hopeful, Science-Based Plan to Address Climate Change

Thursday, April 25 | 4:15–5:15 p.m.

Learn more

earthfest.wisc.edu

Cultivating Sustainability Policy

Undergraduate Melina Nguyen is passionate about creating policy that supports sustainable food systems.

By Laila Smith

Nguyen picking apples at the People's Farm. Photo by Bryce Richter / UW–Madison

Melina Nguyen wants two things in life: a dog, and a vegetable garden. Being an undergraduate student interested in food systems and sustainability, gardening has been a constant in Nguyen's life. In her childhood, she would spend time tending to a vegetable garden with her grandma, continued to manage a garden throughout high school, and now works at the People's Farm. "Being able to connect with where our food comes from is an important step in caring for the environment, and it's a big reason why I'm interested in food systems," Nguyen says.

Nguyen also went camping and visited state and national parks while growing up, which furthered her interest in the environment. In high school, she took AP Environmental Studies. "It completely changed the way I thought about my relationship with the outdoors," says Nguyen. She also took part in political canvassing and campaigning in high school, which piqued her interest in political science. Now an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, Nguyen is double-majoring in political science and people-environment geography, with certificates in public policy and environmental studies. She also is a student intern for the Office of Sustainability.

While she doesn't have specific plans after graduation, Nguyen wants to prioritize her community engagement and have a fulfilling career. One career option she's drawn to is working in environmental policy for a small-scale government. "I think it's important to have a direct relationship with constituents and really be able to understand how my work on paper translates to the people and neighborhoods it's affecting," she says.

Within her field of study, Nguyen's focus is on policy change related to sustainability and environmentalism. She's also interested in how people can use policy to seek environmental justice, specifically how it applies to food security and food systems in different regions. Her background in geography helps her understand how different groups of people interact with their environment, and what this looks like on different spatial scales.

As an intern for the Office of Sustainability, Nguyen leads semesterly roundtable discussions* related to sustain-

ability on campus. These roundtable events began last fall as a collaboration between Slow Food UW and the Associated Students of Madison's Sustainability Committee to create a space for student leaders in sustainability to talk with each other, make connections, and share their work and resources. "It's really great to hear about all of the incredible work that's being done in sustainability, especially because this field can be full of so much climate anxiety," Nguyen says. The roundtables provide a fun and inclusive space for students and sustainability organizations to network and make connections.

This month, Nguyen is leading a roundtable discussion on food sustainability — particularly food access and waste on campus, which is a topic that Nguyen and her fellow organizers are particularly passionate about. "We all consume food — it's part of our day-to-day lives — but not a lot of people think about where their food is coming from and how it's being produced."

"We all consume food — it's part of our day-to-day lives — but not a lot of people think about where their food is coming from and how it's being produced."

— Melina Nguyen

"With population growth and the way our food systems currently work, it's simply not sustainable for people in countries like the U.S. to be consuming in the ways we are," says Nguyen. One of the biggest contributors to unsustainable food is the amount of food we waste. A lot of resources — like fertilizers, energy, and water — go into food production, but Nguyen says that a large percentage of food in grocery stores ends up in landfills. Not only is the food being wasted, but so are the resources that went into its production.

"Reducing waste helps with the circularity of sustainability," Nguyen says. "A lot of initiatives that combine food and sustainability focus on reducing food waste, whether that be reducing food scraps, repurposing food (such as composting), or increasing food security so people who don't typically have access to food can use some of the food that ends up wasted."

One way college students can prevent food waste is by taking advantage of — and destigmatizing — food security programs. Many college students don't have consistent access to food, and this isn't something they should be ashamed of. "Food insecurity is normalized in college," Nguyen says. "It's become so common for students to have an iced coffee for breakfast and ramen for dinner, but that's not healthy for any of us." By using food security resources on campus — like food pantries, recovery meals, and harvest handouts — college students can have more consistent access to food and help prevent food waste, achieving both food security and sustainability.

In addition to preventing food waste, college students can also be more sustainable by buying groceries and cooking for themselves instead of getting takeout. "I know that can be hard to do, sometimes I'll pick up food on my way home because it's exhausting to go grocery shopping after a long day of work and classes, but putting more time and thought into the things we eat can help us lead more sustainable lives," says Nguyen. Being more thoughtful with food consumption is one of the best ways to take care of yourself and the environment.

Nguyen also wants college students to know that the sustainability organizations and programs on campus welcome anyone, regardless of their current relationship with food sustainability or environmentalism. "We value anyone who's willing to show up, and I think it's really great to hear from people who aren't involved in environmental fields because they always offer a really unique perspective," she says. "I strongly feel like sustainability is something that fits into everybody's life, and I hope other people feel like it's something they can be a part of in any way that they can."

*Dates, times, and locations of the Office of Sustainability's roundtable events can be found on their Instagram page, @SustainUW.

Coordinating a Climate and Justice Teach-in

Two UW–Madison students work to develop the Wisconsin Energy Institute's Earth Day teach-in.

By Anica Graney

Photo by iStock / Nancy Anderson

> *"Communicating science or climate change can mean using a lot of big words. Breaking it down and making it accessible to the community is really important and is another aspect of science that we can be a part of besides just doing research."*
>
> — Lulu Fregoso

As part of UW–Madison's Earth Fest activities, the Wisconsin Energy Institute (WEI) will host a Climate and Justice Teach-in with the hopes of moving climate solutions forward in Madison. On April 22, the event will bring together students and the campus community to participate in two sessions on sustainability and climate justice. Driving this effort, including organizing, planning, and coordinating the climate and justice sessions, are WEI education and outreach student assistants, Lulu Fregoso and Katie Wenzel.

Both UW–Madison juniors with environmentally-focused studies, Fregoso and Wenzel have used their WEI internships to not only bolster their work experience and skills, but also make real change and improvements in the Madison community. Fregoso, while only having started recently, has already learned a lot — especially about science education and communication. "A big aspect of our job is communicating science topics to kids and getting them interested in the research that's going on at the UW," Fregoso said. "Communicating science or climate change can mean using a lot of big words. Breaking it down and making it accessible to the community is really important and is another aspect of science that we can be a part of besides just doing research."

Lulu Fregoso

Having started with the WEI last year, Wenzel has worked extensively on making the teach-in a reality. In addition to the April 22 event, Wenzel has reached out to a broad range of professors at UW–Madison with a request to include climate discussions in their classes sometime during the week of Earth Day. This initiative, called #MakeClimateAClass, is scheduled to have over 20 different courses participate which will reach an estimated 2,500 students.

After each class, students will be invited to join WEI at the Climate and Justice Teach-in where they will participate in two of three sessions offered. One of the sessions provides participants with the opportunity to learn about and assemble electrical Little Free Libraries (eLFLs) — "Kind of like building IKEA furniture," Wenzel explained. Powered by small solar panels, the eLFLs were designed by UW–Madison engineering students to provide free community access to clean electricity for charging phones or other devices. After double checking that each eLFL works, Fregoso and Wenzel will work to install them in Madison communities after the teach-in session.

The other two Climate and Justice Teach-in sessions include a speed-networking session where participants will connect with scientists, educators, and other industry experts and a panel on how experts and community leaders across disciplines work to implement sustainability in the Madison area. "The goal of the panel is to create a meaningful conversation around solving climate issues in Madison while providing a space for students to ask questions and further the dialogue," Fregoso said.

Katie Wenzel

Fregoso and Wenzel hope the Climate and Justice Teach-in will empower the UW–Madison campus and community to address climate justice and the association between racial, economic, and environmental justice. "We also wanted to engage those who aren't typically interested in climate justice or awareness while also making it as action oriented as possible," Wenzel said.

Meet Lulu Fregoso and Katie Wenzel during Earth Fest

Climate and Justice Teach-in

Monday, April 22 | 5:30–7 p.m.

Learn more

earthfest.wisc.edu

The Comprehensive Career of Jane Elder

With decades of experience in environmental policy, Jane Elder publishes her memoir recounting her career while adding her thoughts to current issues.

By Anica Graney

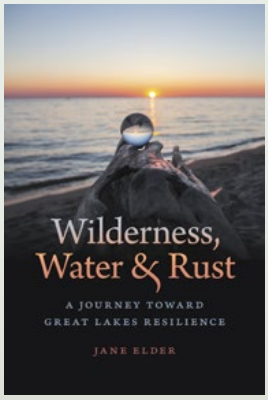
Elder working at the Sierra Club's Michigan chapter office in 1978. Photos courtesy of Jane Elder (7)

Jane Elder could fill a book with the knowledge she has accumulated over a nearly 50-year-long career ... and she has. From her beginnings at the Sierra Club to heading up the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, Elder's resume is no doubt impressive.

Released on April 1, 2024, *Wilderness, Water, and Rust: A Journey toward Great Lakes Resilience* follows Elder's life as she weaves memories from her time spent in the wilderness of the upper Midwest with her experience fighting for environmental protections throughout her career.

Organized into eight sections, Elder wanted to capture stories from the golden era of the environmental movement when she and her colleagues were making enormous change quickly. The book also lends Elder's voice to the rising chorus about the urgency of today's environmental challenges.

Elder's attitudes about the outdoors and spending time in nature were formed from her childhood growing up along a small lake in southern Michigan. She attended Michigan State University and graduated with a communications degree in 1976 (there were no interdisciplinary environmental programs at that time). However, Elder took as many environmental and political sciences courses as she could which aided her in her first job out of college: working at a statewide coalition to enact the Michigan Bottle Bill, one of the first efforts to restore deposits on bottles and beverage cans.



The cover art for Elder's new book.

"It was fast-paced, underfunded, and an amazing effort. I was one of two young staffers pulled in because we were cheap," Elder laughed as she recalled her $100 a week paycheck. Elder's job was to work on polls and surveys to learn about the public's opinion about the bill and then develop messaging around it. "And we won!" Elder said. "It was very exciting and that gave me an oppor-

tunity to look for other positions in the field once the campaign ended and they shut down the staff."

This opportunity led her to the Sierra Club where she was elected to the statewide executive committee for the Michigan chapter. Through that, she attended a week-long training in Washington D.C. where she met with federal agencies and members of Congress. "I came back from that really jazzed and knowing that I wanted to be more involved in environmental policy," Elder said, which inspired her to approach her Sierra Club chapter and convince them to hire her as their lobbyist. Her chapter agreed, and Elder became the first paid lobbyist for Michigan's Sierra Club and one of the few people in the halls of the state legislature who was in their early twenties and female.

"When I look at our current inability to act rapidly to stem crises such as climate change and mass extinction, along with the brokenness of our democracy, a rational person goes, 'it's hopeless.' But sometimes we have to be thoughtfully irrational and choose to take action anyway. And I'd rather be on that side."

— Jane Elder

While at the chapter, Elder helped pass the Michigan Wetlands Bill, repeal the state's coyote bounty, and worked on the early stages of what would become the Michigan Wilderness Bill. After a few years, Elder applied for an opening at the Sierra Club's Midwest office based in Madison. On the flight over to the interview, Elder sat next to a woman who told her, "Honey, if you get this job, you're never going to leave Madison." And so far, she's been right. Elder got the position and has lived in Madison since 1979.

Working as a field lobbyist assigned to cover the Midwest, Elder worked to organize grassroots activism in key congressional districts, and would also fly to Washington, D.C., to lobby there. Her new position meant that Elder had to be an expert on her region's environmental issues while also having great people skills and the ability to make connections. In the mid-1980s, Elder was promoted to head up the Midwest office where she established the Sierra Club's Great Lakes program and continued working on the Michigan Wilderness Bill, as Michigan was within her territory. And in 1987, after a 10-year battle, Congress passed the Michigan Wilderness Act and President Reagan signed it into law. It remains "one of the things I'm proudest about in terms of where I invested my time and career," Elder says.

Elder then enrolled in graduate school full time at the end of the 1980s while continuing to work half-time at the Sierra Club. "I don't remember much about that time other than that I took showers [and] dashed back and forth," Elder said. After graduating from UW–Madison with an MS in land resources, Elder left the Sierra Club but continued to work closely with the organization as a consultant.

Left: Jane Elder
Below: Jane Elder (right) with Biodiversity Project colleague Carol Saunders while visiting the Brookfield Zoo's biodiversity exhibit.

Left: Elder at the Michigan Capitol circa 1978. Below: Elder at the Sylvania Wilderness in Michigan, one of her favorite places on Earth.

In the mid-1990s, Elder became a parent and, soon after, joined the Biodiversity Project — a nonprofit that advocated for public awareness of biodiversity and its conservation. Elder spent 10 years as its executive director before transitioning back to working as an environmental consultant which gave her more control over her schedule and availability as a parent.

Rounding out her career, Elder became the executive director of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters in 2012 where she spent 10 years before leaving to focus on her book. "I finally gave myself space to finish this book project that I had begun working on in 2004," Elder said.

Looking back across her career, Elder is glad she was able to follow her true calling. "I was able to keep my fingers in the environmental issues I cared the most about, which include the Great Lakes and the surrounding natural lands," Elder said. She enjoyed the camaraderie of working in the environmental policy field, sharing her passion for creating change, and winning the hard-fought battles that make the world a better place. "That was one of the greatest thrills," Elder said. "To do something that was good for people, the environment, and future generations."

Elder encourages younger generations to pursue their own environmental passions and advises them to understand that change can take years, decades, and sometimes lifetimes, but to never give up the fight. "When I look at our current inability to act rapidly to stem crises such as climate change and mass extinction, along with the brokenness of our democracy, a rational person goes, 'it's hopeless.' But sometimes we have to be thoughtfully irrational and choose to take action anyway," Elder reflects. "And I'd rather be on that side."

A photo slide from Elder's first trip to Washington, DC with the Sierra Club in 1977.


THE mackinac

MICHIGAN'S SIERRA CLUB

FEB/MAR/APR 1988

FOREVER WILD!

Ten area Michigan wilderness bill signed by President Reagan

The Michigan Wilderness Bill passed in 1987, a project Elder worked on for 10 years.

Meet Jane Elder during Earth Fest

Wilderness, Water & Rust Book Launch and Signing

Tuesday, April 23 | 6:30–8:30 p.m.

Learn more

earthfest.wisc.edu

* indicates in-person and online

Friday, April 19

Earth Fest Kickoff Celebration
- 1–6:30 p.m.
- Discovery Building

March Forth to Earth Day Gathering
- 4–6 p.m.
- East Campus Mall

Free Art Friday: Earth Day Celebration - Upcycled T-Shirt Bag
- 5–8 p.m.
- Memorial Union, Chart Room

Saturday, April 20

Ecological Restoration Work Party: Arboretum Grady Tract
FULL
- 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
- UW Arboretum Grady Tract

Engineering EXPO 2024
- 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
- College of Engineering

ASM Earth Day March
- 12:30–2:30 p.m.
- Library Mall

Garden Tour: Magnolias
FULL
- 1–3 p.m.
- UW Arboretum Visitor Center

Green Offices Go Outside
- 1–3 p.m.
- Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Fairy House Making Extravaganza
- 3–4:30 p.m.
- Allen Centennial Garden

A Just Transition Film Screening
- 3:30–5 p.m.
- Marquee Theater, Union South

Night Walk: Sky Dance
FULL
- 8–9:30 p.m.
- UW Arboretum Visitor Center

Sunday, April 21

Lend a Hand to the Land: Lakeshore Nature Preserve Volunteer Day
- 9–11:30 a.m.
- Picnic Point Entrance Kiosks

Sunday Stroll: A Community Nature Walk with the MSC and GSCC
- 11 a.m.
- Multicultural Student Center (Red Gym, second floor)

Nature Hike
- 1–2:30 p.m.
- UW Arboretum Visitor Center

Spring Fest
- 1–5 p.m.
- Eagle Heights Community Garden (The People's Farm plots)

Family Nature Program: Fabulous Frogs
- 1:30–3:30 p.m.
- UW Arboretum Visitor Center

Monday, April 22

Earth Day Meal
- 11 a.m.–2 p.m.
- Various dining hall locations

The Heat Will Kill You First: A Conversation on Climate Change with author Jeff Goodell
- 12–1 p.m.
- Memorial Union, Tripp Commons

Natural Dyes - Color from Plants!
- 1:45–3:15 p.m.
- D.C. Smith Greenhouse

How Good Food Goes Bad: Understanding and Preventing Food Waste
3–4 p.m.
205 Babcock Hall

Role of UN Human Rights institutions in Protecting Environmental Rights | Book Launch and Panel Discussion
4–6:30 p.m.
Room 7200 (Lubar Commons), Law School Building

The Big Splash: Aquaponics Open House and Hydroponics Workshop
4–6:30 p.m.
D.C. Smith Greenhouse

UW–Madison Climate and Justice Teach-In
5:30–7 p.m.
Wisconsin Energy Institute

Slow Food x Scan Design Earth Day Dinner
6:30 p.m.
The Crossing

Tuesday, April 23

Rising Methane Emissions from Boreal-Arctic Wetlands*
11 a.m.–12 p.m.
Virtual (Zoom)

Sustainable Facility Tour of Bakke Recreation & Wellbeing Center
11 a.m.–12 p.m.
Bakke Recreation & Wellbeing Center

UW–Madison's Utility and Energy Future: Campus Community Meeting
12:30–1:30 p.m.
Gordon Dining and Event Center (second floor)

The History and Future of Energy Research at UW–Madison
4–5:45 p.m.
1115 Wisconsin Energy Institute

Flocking Together: Evening Walk and Discussion with the BIPOC Birding Club
6–7:30 p.m.
Dejope Hall, Lakeshore Path, Picnic Point

Earth Day Trivia
6:30 p.m.
The Rathskeller, Memorial Union

Food Recovery Network Dinner
6:30–7:30 p.m.
The Crossing

Wilderness, Water & Rust Book Launch
6:30–8:30 p.m.
UW Arboretum Visitor Center

Wednesday, April 24

Green Fund Walking Tour
10–11 a.m.
East Campus Mall

How Sustainable and Healthy is Our Food? Global Food Production and Health Poster Session
10 a.m.–12 p.m.
3250 Helen C. White Hall

Fighting Fast Fashion: All Gender Clothing Swap
11 a.m.–2 p.m.
Location TBA

New UW-Madison Employee Sustainability Walking Tour
12:30–2:30 p.m.
21 North Park St., Room 6406

Music, Sound, and Environment*
1–2 p.m.
140 Science Hall

Plant Give Away
3–5 p.m.
Allen Centennial Garden

Sustainability Research Networking and Brainstorming
3–4:30 p.m.
Memorial Union, Old Madison (third floor east)

Food Sustainability: Roundtable Dinner
5:30–7:30 p.m.
The Crossing

Thursday, April 25

Lakeshore Nature Preserve Volunteering with ACSSC
4–6 p.m.
Lakeshore Nature Preserve

Achieving Drawdown: A Hopeful, Science-Based Plan to Address Climate Change*
4:15–5:15 p.m.
Room 1800, Engineering Hall

Roadmapping Sustainability in the Wisconsin School of Business
5:30–7 p.m.
3290 Grainger Hall

Friday, April 26

Zero Waste Workshop (Morning)
9:30–11 a.m.
280 Science Hall

Supporting the Vitality of Rural Communities Through the Wisconsin Rural Partnerships Institute*
2–3:30 p.m.
Union South, Agriculture Room

Plants for the Apocalypse
3:30–5 p.m.
D.C. Smith Greenhouse

Zero Waste Workshop (Afternoon)
3:30–5 p.m.
280 Science Hall

See the full lineup at earthfest.wisc.edu/schedule. Event details are subject to change. For up-to-date information (and daily event coverage!) follow us on Instagram @nelsoninstitute and @sustainuw.

Earth Fest kicks off on Friday, April 19, with panel discussions, art and performances, a keynote address by Tony Reames, and more!

Get ready for a week of engaging, hands-on, educational events. Dive into groundbreaking research or dig in the dirt as you pot your own plant. Sift and winnow the latest research or sort and filter recyclables. Make career connections for your future or master sustainable techniques for your home.

Earth Fest is for all members of the Badger community: from students to alumni, faculty to friends, and seasoned experts to future Badgers. See the full lineup of events for the inaugural Earth Fest.

Follow along with the Earth Fest fun! Head to your favorite social media platform and follow us.

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