



# THE ENVIRONMENTAL EAGLE

## The Sustainability Newsletter of Boston College

November & December 2019

### FEATURED

Students Gather in Protest of Potential Koch Funding

Newton to Reclaim Webster Woods by Eminent Domain

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Nation's Youth Demand Change in Climate Politics

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### OUR TEAM

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Photos by Kayla Vidal

Student and faculty speakers protested the potential Koch investment in front of a large crowd at the rally hosted by Climate Justice at BC.

## Students Gather in Protest of Potential Koch Donation to Political Science Dept.

By Alex Capozziello

Roughly a hundred protesters gathered in the O'Neill Library Plaza on November 14 to protest an impending investment from the Charles Koch Foundation to the Boston College political science department. Organized by Climate Justice at BC (CJBC), the rally voiced student and faculty concerns over the ethics and academic integrity associated with a partnership between the department and Koch.

After the death of his brother David in late August, Charles became

the sole Chairman and CEO of Koch Industries, a multinational chemical manufacturing corporation with annual revenues of \$110 billion.

"They've funded hundreds of universities, pushing a right-wing libertarian agenda along the way," Carmen Chu, MCAS '22, said. "Their actions are self-interested, as they promote the deregulation of industries they have investments in, disregarding how oppressive and ignorant their practices may be."

According to history profes-

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## Newton to Reclaim Webster Woods by Eminent Domain

By Gennaro Covelli

On December 2, the Newton City Council voted unanimously to acquire the Webster Woods by eminent domain from Boston College. The history of the woods, however, started much earlier.

In 1916, Edwin Webster gifted a 100-acre parcel of wooded land to the city of Newton, in his namesake. Surrounded by 88 acres of forest, Webster Woods and Hammond Park make up the largest forest in the city of Newton.

The Congregation Mishkan Tefila bought 25 acres of this land from the state in 1954 after an unsuccessful lawsuit by the city of Newton. Roughly 10 acres of this land, closest to Hammond Pond Parkway, were developed with the construction of a synagogue and parking. When BC bought the land in 2016, the synagogue was converted into a space for auditoriums under the management of the Robsham Theatre Arts Center.

Residents of Newton and a number of BC faculty and students expressed concern over the development of this land. In 2018, Mayor Ruthanne Fuller of Newton announced plans to preserve Webster Woods. On November 6, Newton's Community Preservation Committee (CPC) held an initial public hearing regarding the possibility of using eminent domain to reacquire 17 acres of the 25-acre parcel purchased by BC in 2016.

Mayor Fuller approved \$15.7 million in funding from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) to be used for acquisition through eminent domain, with no effect on taxpayers in the area. A financial analysis by Dan Brody of the Newton Conservators

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## Potential Koch Funding Raises Ethical and Academic Integrity Concerns

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sor Prasannan Parthasarathi, who spoke at the rally, Koch Industries is one of the nation's biggest polluters, dumping chemicals into U.S. waterways and releasing toxins into the air. Despite being fined from the government repeatedly, Koch Industries continues its standard practices without adjusting the known environmental impacts.

An initial vote took place last spring within the political science department over whether to accept or deny the money on principle, which passed. A second vote held in early October approved a two-page vision statement of the program to be sent in a proposal to the Koch Foundation by the Office of University Advancement.

The Kochs' history of providing financial support to conservative groups and other organizations which promote environmental deregulation and climate change denial has raised concern over their intentions at BC. Other universities which have received similar funding from the foundation, including George Mason, have revealed that the Kochs' donations have bought influence in the hiring and firing of faculty within the departments and programs being funded.

"I don't want Boston College to be like George Mason University where undergraduates spent their

college careers fighting for donor transparency," Carli Brenner, EcoPledge Activism Director and MCAS '21, said. "It took 8 years for them to reveal with certainty that Charles Koch was guilty of undue influence on their education ... The money is not worth the risk."

As documents have surfaced which prove the Kochs' influence on university selection committees, the foundation has updated its legal policies to ensure future appointments are not officially influenced by their funding. However, the New York Times later revealed that an academic dean at Arizona State University stated "A.S.U. will never hire someone that Koch doesn't approve" in a conversation with a former ASU administrator.

The Times estimated that the Koch Foundation benefitted more than 300 schools between 2005 and 2015, providing nearly \$150 million in programs frequently centered on capitalism and free markets. They estimate that roughly \$50 million of that amount went to George Mason.

Such influence over academia is viewed as inappropriate as it may pressure a university or its professors to produce bias programs and research. Such bias can undermine the credibility of an academic institution and compromise the education which students pay thousands to receive.

"BC is founded on Jesuit values like a holistic education, scientific



*Photos by Kayla Vidal*

**Students, faculty, alumni, and administrators attended the protest.**

inquiry, deep reflection, and service to others," Brenner said. "The Koch Foundation's values are in complete opposition to our own. The Foundation is not donating to support us, they are donating to support them."

Students like Brenner and Chu are concerned not just about the academic integrity associated with programming funded by Koch, but also raise an ethical question in the university's stance with a foundation whose actions and values stand in opposition to its Jesuit, Catholic mission.

"To deny that climate change exists, to deny that we are in the midst of an emergency, as the Koch brothers have done for so long, is to deny that people are suffering," Chu said. "It is a complete abdication of responsibility."

In response to these concerns, Gerald Easter, chair of the political science department, has stated that faculty within the department are considering creating an advisory board to oversee the potential program and ensure that academic liberty is maintained.

BC has not yet submitted the funding proposal to the Koch Foundation.

"This protest is part of a larger movement, one that spans the globe and generations," Brenner said. "It is not a fight between sides of the political spectrum because this is a fight for the sides of the political spectrum. It is a fight for humanity and the planet we walk on."

## City Council Unanimously Votes to Reacquire 17 Acres of Woods for \$15.7 Million

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also estimated that the potential purchase of Webster Woods would leave 90 percent or more of the CPA's fund available for other purposes.

"Taking a position in support of the city has been very exciting because of all the momentum behind the decision within the Newton community," Stevie Walker, EcoPledge co-President and MCAS '21, said. "The woods have served as a place of intellectual development for me and it has been a peaceful

place I know I can always escape to when I need a moment away from my crazy, busy life at Boston College ... Maintaining the continuity of the Webster Conservation Area is of the utmost ecological importance, and any decisions made by the Boston College administration to develop the property will result in irreparable damage and fragmentation to the last large natural area in Newton."

BC alumni have voiced concerns over the development of Webster Woods as well. Chris Joseph, former

member of EcoPledge and MCAS '19, expressed concerns regarding the vernal pools in the woods. Joseph conducted research on Bare Pond and Tarn Pond, located in Webster Woods adjacent to BC's salt storage facilities, in the spring of 2019. In measuring the water quality of the ponds before the completion of BC's salt facilities, Joseph and his research partner recorded baseline data which they hoped would be utilized by future students to review the effects of the facility on salinity levels and conductivity after installation.

"Where we once faced the challenge of keeping Bare Pond fresh, we now face the challenge of keeping Bare Pond at all," Joseph said. "The loss of [these] vernal pool[s] would be a great detriment to the area's wildlife."

Cara O'Connell, Armaan Tandon, and Grace Tregidgo, all alumni of the Environmental Studies department and MCAS '19, also performed research in the Webster Woods at the same time as Joseph. Their re-

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## Students & Newton Community View Woods as Invaluable Environmental Asset

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search, titled “Investigations of Campus Biodiversity for STARS Assessment,” focused on biodiversity through the use of the Sustainable Tracking Assessment Rating System, or STARS assessment.

“As a part of the Greater Boston Area, Boston College and Newton provide environmental resources that have been eliminated from more urban areas, further reason to preserve these spaces in order to maintain the environmental integrity of the larger region,” O’Connell, Tandon, and Tregidgo stated in their report. “The School must be open and transparent to its students, faculty, and shareholders on how it plans to move forward with the property.”

On November 25, the City Council voted to give preliminary approval to the CPC’s funding recommendation for the Webster Woods. A final approval on the proposal passed on December 2 to reacquire the woods from BC at the city’s valued estimation of the property for \$15.7 million. Now, the university has announced it will continue to challenge the decision in court.

“It’s important that [Boston College] maintain a positive relationship with their neighbors as Boston College should strive to maintain a positive reputation in the community, and reflect its mission to be global citizens, living for one another,” O’Connell, Tandon, and Tregidgo stated in their report.



Both undergraduate and graduate BC students attended the Newton City Council public hearings over the decision to protect Webster Woods from development.

## Boston College Successfully Hosts Sustainability Student Leaders Symposium

By Alex Levine

Students from Boston College, Boston University, Brandeis, Bowdoin, Champlain College, and Tufts gathered at BC’s Connors Family Retreat and Conference Center to share their perspectives on environmental stewardship and education with one another as BC hosted the Sustainability Student Leaders Symposium (SSLS). The SSLS, an annual half-day environmental conference hosted by one of the participating schools, seeks to engage students in a series of presentations, workshops, and round-table discussions. Students are encouraged to share valuable insights, concepts, and ideas with one another that they may not have considered on their own to initiate on their respective campuses. Eco-Pledge and the Office of Sustainability worked in collaboration to host the event.

The program was conceived in 2009 at Tufts University under their Sustainability Program Director, Tina Woolston.

“At Tufts in 2009 we were interested in starting a program and so decided to have a symposium so we could learn from other schools,” Woolston said. “I taught a class with a graduate student and as part of the class we organized the symposium.”

“Our Green Soul” was the theme of this year’s conference, encouraging students to reflect on their environmental passions and how

these interests can be translated into sustainable actions. The event opened with an introduction to the Connors center and an overview of the day, which included lunch, two sessions of speaker breakouts with a dessert in-between, and then the afternoon concluded with a student panel and networking event.

“The Symposium at the Connors Retreat Center provided a spectrum of sustainability topics, informative conversations, and collaboration between students from across New England,” Bruce Dixon, head of the BC Office of Sustainability and Sustainability and Energy Management Specialist, said.

The first session of presentations was comprised of four discussions set up throughout the Connors Center. Topics included “The Student Role in Affecting Change on Campus Through Food,” “Integrated Science Building LEED Certification,” “Live App Testing & Discussion to Inspire Sustainable Food Choices,” and “Making Sustainable Events.” The conversation on food sustainability was led by BC Dining’s Sustainability Manager, Juli Stelmaszyk, alongside sustainability interns Veronika Lin, MCAS ’21, and Molly Funk, MCAS ’22. They shared on how BC Dining works to be sustainable and how students can support its efforts in hopes of inspiring dining sustain-

Photo by Alex Levine



BC Dining Sustainability Manager Juli Stelmaszyk led a discussion on food sustainability.

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## Students Inspire Peers by Sharing Green & Sustainable Passions with Attendees

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ability efforts at the other universities in attendance. In the “Making Sustainable Events” conversation, led by Tufts student Elyssa Anneser, Anneser brought tote bags for the audience to decorate after learning about ways to create school-wide events that promote sustainable choices—making the presentation itself a fun, interactive sustainable event.

The second session included another four discussions, which included “Gaining Sustainability Skills for a Greener, Cleaner Campus,” “Morality as a Tool for Climate Change,” “Project Green Challenge,” and “Professional Panel: Green Success Stories.” Kyle Rosenthal, CSOM ’21, led the discussion on morality and explained the legal and moral ramifications of environmentalism and how participants should approach challenges like climate change. Brandeis

students led the Greener, Cleaner Campus talk while students from Champlain encouraged their audience to participate in the national Project Green Challenge.

The symposium concluded with a student panel of BC students, including Eva Laxo, MCAS ’21, Veronika Lin, MCAS ’21, Jenna Mu, MCAS ’22, and Kyle Rosenthal, CSOM ’21. Each panelist spoke on their environmental pursuits at BC and what constitutes their “green souls” while answering questions presented by Stevie Walker, EcoPledge co-president and MCAS ’21.

“I was so impressed by our presenters, especially our student panelists,” Alex Capozziello, EcoPledge Outreach Director and MCAS ’21, said. “Seeing so many students who can speak passionately about their environmental interests and readily able to share their talents and green souls gives me hope that our future is in good hands.”



Photos by Alex Levine

Breakout sessions were led by students, faculty, and professionals.

## Nation’s Youth Demand Change in Climate Politics in “Juliana v. United States” Case

By Alinda Dersjant

“The youth movement is rising up,” Julia Olson, head legal counsel of Juliana v. the United States and founder of Our Children’s Trust, said at Boston College as a part of the Climate Justice Lecture Series. Olson leads Juliana v. the United States, a court case where 21 young individuals sued the U.S.



Photo Courtesy of Climate One

government for violating their Fifth Amendment rights to life, liberty, and property in regards to climate change.

“A fossil fuel energy [system] is unconstitutional,” Olson said. “We need to transition this system to line it up with the Fifth Amendment.”

Olson founded Our Children’s Trust in 2010 when she realized that climate change posed the biggest threat to her children’s future. The trust elevates the voices of youth and future generations for climate justice, protects human rights, proposes legally binding science-based climate recovery policies, and works globally to maximize its impact.

Olson argued to the court that climate change is a state-created danger to personal security and that the government violates its duty to protect resources vital to human life. U.S. policies discriminate against children in regard to their right to a climate system capable of sustaining

human life.

The twenty-one youth plaintiffs fighting alongside Olson powerfully illustrate the effects of climate change through their stories. The youngest plaintiff, Levi Draheim, age twelve, lives in fear of seeing his barrier island home, a strip of land lying off the east coast of Florida that is roughly three feet above sea level, sink into the ocean permanently in the coming decades. Another plaintiff, Jayden Foytlin, age fifteen, still cannot return to her home in Louisiana which has flooded several times in the past two years due to the shifting climate. A third plaintiff, Zealand Bell, age fifteen, speaks on behalf of the community of Eugene, Oregon, who have seen decreasing snowpack levels endanger the freshwater supply.

“It is essential that young people are these plaintiffs,” Olson said. “They are much more vulnerable and until [they] are eighteen

[they] have no legal voice.”

Olson believes the age of her plaintiffs is their strength. They also add faces and personal anecdotes to the case which reach people’s hearts more quickly than scientific reports do, Olson added. She hopes that the efforts and concern expressed both by her plaintiffs and others will help catalyze the movement to decarbonize energy by mid-century and sequester carbon dioxide to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide levels back below 350 parts per million, the standard advised by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

While Olson and her plaintiffs wait to hear back from the courts, she continues to raise awareness for climate change and its consequences through lawsuits and campaigns on the local and regional level.

“There is a lot of hope in this case,” Olson said.

## Environmental Racism Tour Highlights Inequities Amongst Boston Residents

By Carli Brenner

As a reaction to an incidence of racism on Boston College's campus in 2018, student organizations challenged each other to incorporate more inclusive and educational structures into their agendas in a "Race Against Racism." In response, EcoPledge created a new committee in Political Activism. As a part of the committee's programming, members of EcoPledge attended an Environmental Racism and Classism tour of Boston, led by a small non-profit called Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE).

Run by members of the Roxbury community, ACE tackles various projects in the area to achieve environmental justice. They aim to empower communities of color and lower-income communities to fight for their right to a healthy environment. Pursuing systematic change, ACE hopes to eliminate the root causes of environmental injustices. A key component of their programming, ACE-guided "Toxic Tours" aim to educate people about what environmental racism and classism are through real examples.

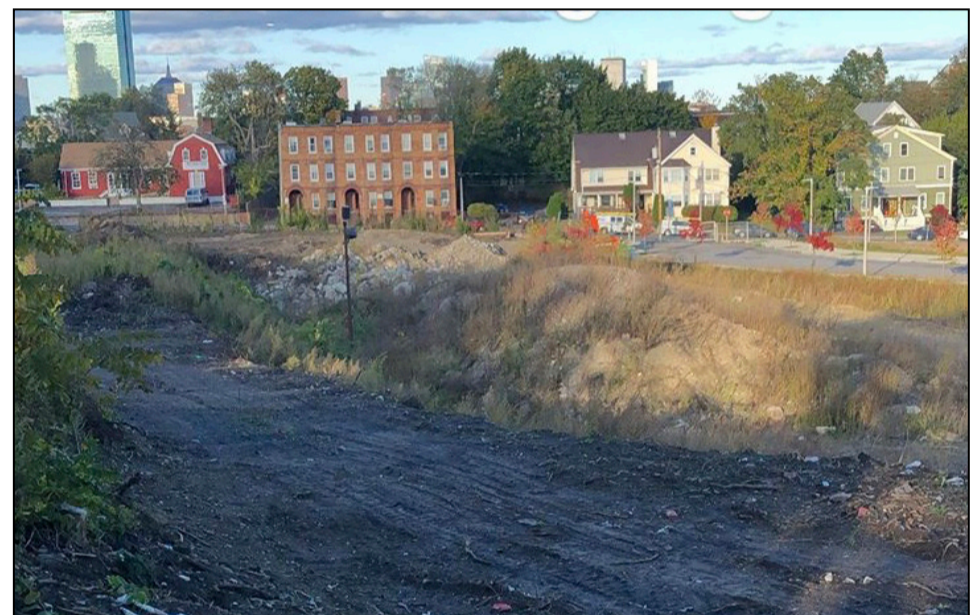
Stuart Spina, an employee of the T Riders Union (TRU), led the tour during EcoPledge's visit. Spina, who is knowledgeable on the history of Boston and specifically environmental racism in Roxbury, began the tour at a brownfield. He explained that the land used to be developed with apartments and stores, but due to redlining and "white flight" it became rundown

and is now undeveloped. Where functioning roads once existed is what now looks like an abandoned parking lot overgrown with dead plants and weeds. The Boston Redevelopment Authority is considering building a "mini Prudential Center" at the location despite community opposition, as many community members could not afford to shop there.

Spina then guided the group to a former-MBTA bus stop where 200 buses used to sit idle with their engines on for hours every morning. Neighboring homes would be covered in soot and the air quality poor, especially on hot days. As a result of this pollution and heavy traffic cutting through the area, Roxbury has an asthma rate that is six times higher than the rest of the city. After several concerned citizens filed a legal complaint with the MBTA, the organization changed its practices and even created a sustainability department to prevent such occurrences from happening again.

The tour concluded with a visit to what used to be an asbestos pile, but is now a site for affordable housing. Before being redeveloped, waste and unneeded materials from construction sites were dumped here, covering the land with asbestos and lead pipes. Middle school children from the area would cut through the area on their way to school, unaware of the danger. Asbestos and lead also found their way into the soil as a result of rain and other weather events.

Roxbury is a heavily



Students attended the ACE-guided "Toxic Tour" which included a field visit to a former-MBTA bus stop where hundreds of buses sat idling for hours each morning (pictured above).

low-income community of mostly black and brown people. Few private companies want to invest here and the Boston Redevelopment Authority has not been responsive to the wishes of the community. As a result, they have had years of unresolved environmental issues which

negatively impact the health of the people and the environment. This case of environmental racism and classism is happening right here in Boston, and will not resolve itself until the wider community shows concern for all those living in the city and its boroughs.

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## A Final Act of Kindness: Students Donate Old Items Before Summer Move-Out

By Maryana Dumalska

A final act of kindness marked the last day of classes this past May as many students chose to donate their items during move out, simultaneously benefiting the community and the environment.

Students donated through BC Clean, an initiative overseen by the Office of Residential Life in collaboration with Custodial Services and the Office of Sustainability. All donations were collected by local non-profit organizations, as well as BC's Montserrat Office.

A total of 5,029 books, 194 refrigerators, and 19,663 items of clothing were collected by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, an organization that offers tangible assistance to those in need on a person-to-person basis. Additionally, 6,548 household items, including appliances, electronics, and pieces of furniture were collected by Household Goods, a non-profit working to help people make a

home throughout Massachusetts. In contrast to previous years, however, Household Goods did not accept non-perishable food items. BC Clean was able to fill this void by finding other sources. Four trunk-loads of nonperishable food were donated to the Brookline and Centre Street Food Pantries, while three trunk-loads were donated internally to Montserrat, an Office in the Division of Mission and Ministry that provides students with access and support to all areas of student life not incorporated in a financial aid package.

"Thanks to the donations, we provided meals to students without a meal plan during two summer sessions," said Yvonne McBarnett, Program Director of Montserrat. "They were very grateful! We received many notes of appreciation expressing their gratitude for these efforts invested in them."

These donations, along with the positive changes they enable, would not be possible without BC's



Graphic Courtesy of the Office of Sustainability

generous student body, who embody one of the Jesuits' most deeply-rooted philosophies, "men and women for others." Chris Russo, CSOM '19, also commented on the initiative's success.

"The BC Clean Initiative is a great way for items that would otherwise be thrown out to be repurposed," Russo said. "College campuses in par-

ticular are a hotspot for items that get used for only a year and are in good condition to be passed on to those in need. It has the dual purpose of helping the community and helping the planet. The initiative was communicated well, as I overheard parents and students in the Mods debating whether to donate or keep items during move out."

### FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

## Professor Juliet Schor Offers New Lens on Climate Change

By Kayla Vidal

A variety of diverse, interdisciplinary program offerings provide students with a rich set of perspectives in line with the Boston College mission. In regards to environmentalism, courses not just in the Environmental Studies and Sciences departments but also the History, Sociology, and Economics departments offer new perspectives to approach modern environmental issues. Professor Juliet Schor devotes her time to environmental and social justice issues, which are highlighted in her course Planet in Peril: The History and Future of Human Impacts on the Planet, currently offered to freshman students.

Alongside her husband, Professor Prasanna Parthasarathi, Schor co-teaches the course, which educates students on the consequences of humanity's historical and modern influence on the environ-

ment, climate change, and the correlation between overconsumption, inequality, and increasing environmental issues. The pair believes that offering an environmental course which examines sociological, economic, and historical approaches to climate solutions can aid students in their considerations of broader, systemic climate problems and their potential solutions.

Schor has also written several books, the most popular being *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure*, *The Over-spent American: Why we Want What We Don't Need*, and *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture*. The latter two titles pertain to humanity's more recent shift toward overspending, overconsumption, and how some companies target children in their marketing schemes, convincing them to consume unnecessary products.

Schor has taught at other

institutions, including Williams College, Columbia University, and Harvard University. She was later drawn to BC's Sociology department for its emphasis on social economics and justice, and BC's mission to form "men and women for others." Outside of the classroom, Schor's research involves incorporating productivity and mindful behavior patterns into one's life in order to be more efficient, sustainable, and to combat overconsumption.

In her most recent project, Schor has spent eight years with graduate students researching a "sharing economy" and various different ways in which individuals trade with other individuals in a steady, corporate world. They have also examined for-profit and non-profit establishments, their varying rates of success, and how for-profits could be used to build a sustainable and candid social movement on consumerism.

Young generations, accord-

ing to Schor, must become increasingly active on climate issues, stating that the only way to accomplish effective change is to have everyone push for both change and increased awareness across upcoming generations.



Photo Courtesy of the BC Sociology Department

## Slovenia Named Most Sustainable Country in the World

By Hannah Murphy

Situated in Central Europe, the small country of Slovenia is considered by many to be the most sustainable country in the world, and was named such by National Geographic in 2018. To the Slovenian government, addressing the current environmental crisis is not a matter of choice, but of necessity.

The country is a leader in sustainable tourism and was the first certified Green Country by the Green Destinations organization, which gave it an overall score of 96 percent over 41 criteria, including air quality, waste reduction, biodiversity, and green businesses. The Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism is a certification tool that encourages sustainable tourism through rankings of Gold, Silver, and Bronze awarded to destinations, accommodations, parks and travel agencies. Sustainable tourism not only helps the environment, but the economy as well—about 85 percent of tourists travel to Slovenia for the pristine nature.

60 percent of Slovenia is covered by forests, and over a third of these forests are protected by the Natura 2000 network, which is the network of protected lands in the European Union. Additionally, 50 percent of the country is part of a network of ecologically important areas which are taken into account during spatial planning and the development of the country. Slovenia is a model success story of a government taking the environmental crisis as a serious threat, and the next problem they are tackling is the economy.

The majority of economies in the world are linear, meaning that raw materials go from production, use (usually single-use), to waste. According to the World Bank, there are currently over 1.3 billion tons of municipal solid waste produced annually worldwide. By 2025, this number is expected to reach 2.2 billion tons. Of this enormous waste, only 13.5 percent gets recycled. A circular economy eliminates almost all waste as products are designed with the intention of being used repeatedly, re-

stored, modified, and then ultimately recycled.

The Roadmap Towards the Circular Economy in Slovenia, published in 2018, outlines the Circular Triangle model which the country is adopting. According to the triangle, Circular Economy (businesses), Circular Change (governmental policies) and Circular Culture (citizens) must work together in order to achieve change at a systemic level. Aware of the need for international collaboration, Slovenia is working within the context of initiatives set by the European Union for a European Circular Economy Package. By 2030, the European Union estimates over 600 billion euros will be saved and by 2035 170,000 new jobs will be created if countries adopt a circular economy.

Ljubljana, Slovenia's capital city, is an example of green initiatives and a circular economy being adopted at the local level and serving as an example for the rest of the country. Some initiatives include the Library of THINGS, which rents items just as a traditional library rents books, street cleaning with recycled water, processing the invasive species Japa-

nese knotweed into paper, a self-service bulk product vending machine named Bert, which dispenses detergents, shampoo, oil and other products into reusable containers provided by the customer, and the Repair Cafe where specialists such as electricians, seamstresses, and carpenters are available to mend products that may otherwise be thrown away.

A particular challenge facing Slovenia is that it imports 71 percent of its materials. 67 percent of municipal waste was sorted in 2016, but only 54 percent of this was recycled. Comparatively, the United States recycles only about 30 percent of the potential 75 percent of waste that can be recycled. Closing the loop of imports to waste is high on the agenda for Slovenia, and one company in particular is leading the way both in Slovenia and on a global scale in closing this loop.

Aquafil is a company that is revolutionizing how waste is viewed. Based in Slovenia, the company receives 40,000 tons of nylon waste, such as fishing nets, carpets, and textile scraps, from around the world. Nylon is particularly difficult to break down, and accounts for about

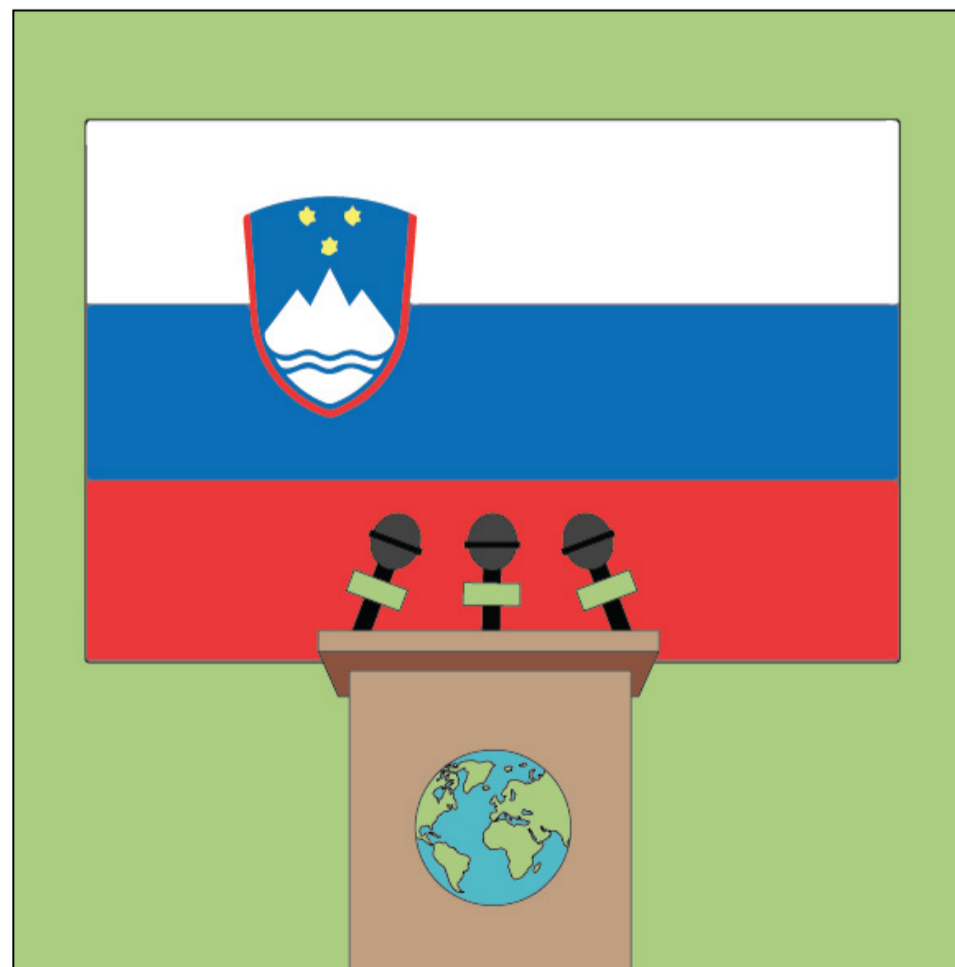
10 percent of all waste in the ocean, mainly through the form of fishing nets. Aquafil has been a leading nylon manufacturer for over 50 years, but has shifted focus as awareness of environmental issues has increased. In 2011 the company launched a new product called ECONYL, a nylon yarn that is created entirely from waste.

Transforming nylon to ECONYL follows a circular model, where the nylon is returned to its original, molecular form through chemical processes. This cycling allows the product to be continually recycled into new products, effectively closing the loop of product to waste.

Aquafil has partnered with brands such as Prada and H&M to provide more sustainable options. Prada's partnership with Aquafil hopes to transition from virgin nylon to 100 percent ECONYL by the end of 2021 through their Re-Nylon campaign.

Slovenia has also added the right to clean water to its constitution. The country has many pristine water sources, but is protecting water as a right for its citizens, rather than allowing big corporations to privatize it and sell water as a commodity. While Slovenia is not alone in guaranteeing freshwater to its citizens, it is notable that major industrial countries such as the United States offers no guarantee and protection to its citizens.

If Slovenia can continue to be competitive within the European Union in adopting a circular economy, it can serve as a template for other larger economies. Certifying destinations as green creates incentives for tourism to become more eco-friendly and sustainable in order to compete with other destinations. Ensuring that water is kept as a human right instead of a privatized commodity ensures that freshwater is not exploited for profit. While a country of two million cannot be entirely compared to a country of over 320 million, the United States could attempt to apply Slovenia's models in order to foster similar successes.



Graphic by Alinda Dersjant