



THE ENVIRONMENTAL EAGLE

The Sustainability Newsletter of Boston College

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FEATURED

Pine Tree Preserve Adds Flare of Green to Lower Campus

Environmental Studies Department Expands Major

Spotlight: Intense Wildfires Continue to Devastate Amazon

Official Spotlight Announcement on Global Environmental Politics

OUR TEAM

This newsletter is a monthly publication by EcoPledge of Boston College.

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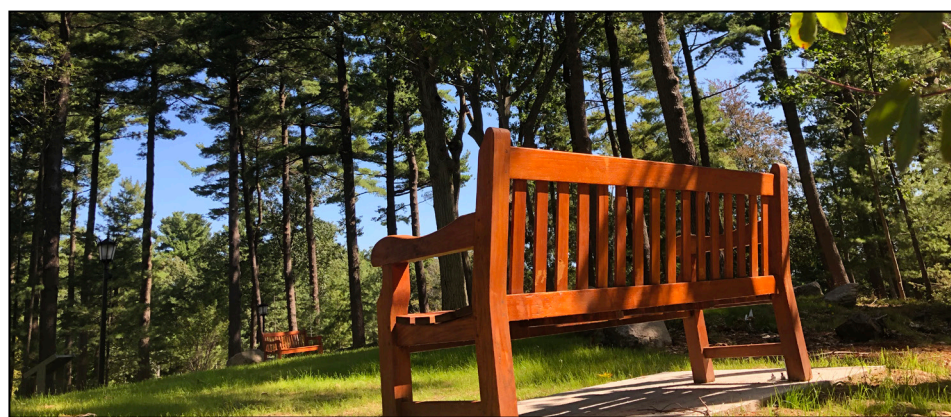
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Scenic shots of the recently completed Pine Tree Preserve.

Pine Tree Preserve Officially Opens to BC Community and General Public

By Gennaro Covelli

The Pine Tree Preserve, a four-acre green space nestled between the Fish Field House and the recently opened Margot Connell Recreation Center, has officially opened to the public. Previously fenced off and unused, the land is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts but since 2002 has been maintained by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Boston College entered into a public access and management agreement with the MWRA in 2018 to oversee future maintenance of the land and

open it to the public.

BC has since revitalized the space for recreational use, first by clearing much of the excess debris and shrubbery and then installing walkways, benches, and lights throughout the preserve. Various species of trees and new shrubbery have been planted throughout the parcel as well, including flowering trees such as dogwood and witch hazel, BC News reported.

Completed as of the fall semester, the Pine Tree Preserve now provides scenic views of both the reservoir and Lower Campus for the BC community and the general public to enjoy.

Environmental Studies Major Expands with Four New Concentrations

By Eva Laxo

The Environmental Studies (ENVS) department has created four new concentrations for students pursuing the major this fall: Environmental Health, Environmental Justice and Policy, Environmental Entrepreneurship, and Biodiversity Conservation. These four concentrations will join the two current offerings, Climate Change and Societal Adaptation and Food and Water Sustainability, to give prospective students six overall paths to choose from when considering the major and subsequent career paths in the environmental field.

The department, which is directed by Professor Tara Pisani Gareau, is relatively new but growing fast as student interest continues to increase. Currently, the department accepts between fifteen to thirty applicants for the major each year, but has hopes of expansion. As the department grows, it seeks to expand its offerings with more diverse and interdisciplinary themes to reflect the complex nature of environmental studies.

“The Environmental Studies Program provides students with an understanding of the issues facing our planet as we strive to develop paths toward a sustainable future, from perspectives in the social

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New Interdisciplinary Concentrations Expand Range of ENVS Studies

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and natural sciences, arts, and the humanities,” the department’s website states.

According to Pisani Gareau, based on feedback from students, the department recognized a growing interest in more interdisciplinary offerings that would better reflect the various paths students could pursue within environmental studies. The Environmental Health concentration allows students to pursue public health while considering the environmental ramifications of the field. The Environmental Justice and Policy track gives students considering environmental law a solid foundation in environmental policy while also considering ethics, equality, and human rights. The Environmental Entrepreneurship track provides students with a background in economics and business and could lead to a

career in environmental consulting. The Biodiversity Conservation track allows students with a greater interest in ecosystem services and conservation biology a chance to pursue the biological side of the field. In all, the six concentrations provide students a wide range of interdisciplinary courses to experience in their career discernment in environmentalism.

The ENVS major consists of a minimum of 43 credits, which is equivalent to 14 three-credit classes and a one-credit seminar. At least 27 credits must be unique to the major, while the other 16 credits can be shared with other departments for students looking to fulfill requirements for another major, minor, or university core courses. Prospective students for the major can apply at the end of their freshman year, while all students can declare the minor at any point.



Graphic courtesy of the Office of Sustainability

UPCOMING EVENTS

Harvest Week: Night Market, Harvest Fest, and More!

Night Market

Wednesday October 23

Location: Outside Corcoran Commons

Harvest Fest kicks off with the annual Night Market outside of Corcoran Commons. Students can enjoy live music, local foods, and hot chocolate. Students also have the opportunity to paint their own pumpkins and play games.

Harvest Fest

Friday October 25

Location: Stokes Lawn

Celebrate the fall harvest with the BC community on Stokes Lawn! Students have the opportunity to taste samples of local organic products from several local vendors and also explore various club tables offering a variety of activities.

Rotten Docu-series Screening

Tuesday October 22

Ever wonder where your food comes from? The Netflix docu-series Rotten investigates where our everyday food is sourced from, which turns out to be just the start of an intertwined story on the food supply chain that gives way to food waste and corruption.

Interested in Environmental Journalism?

Join Our Team!

Email us at ecopledge@bc.edu for more information

POLITICAL SPOTLIGHT

World Struggles to Breathe as Amazon Wildfires Rage On

By Laura Kain

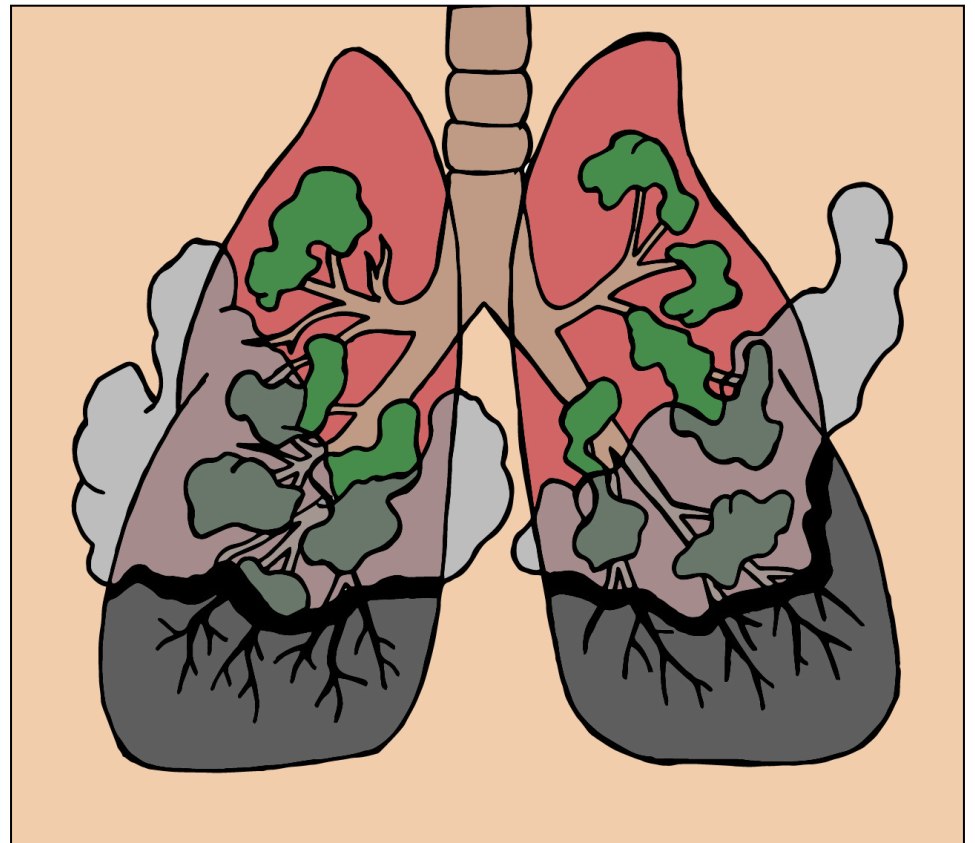
Current wildfires in the Amazon are intense enough to be seen from outer space, according to NASA. Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE) reported a record 72,843 fires this year—an 80 percent increase from last year. In São Paulo, Brazil's financial capital and the Western Hemisphere's largest city, toxic smoke and darkness from the fires clog the air, posing serious environmental and health safety concerns.

Past Amazonian wildfires were thought to be linked to the amount of precipitation, but this year rain levels were not the cause. This year's fires are associated with a questionable spike in deforestation, which has left environmentalists pointing out the political agenda of Brazil's current president, Jair Bolsonaro. Elected in 2018, Bolsonaro has advocated to clear the trees of the Amazon to increase timber harvests and create more fields for soy plantations and cattle pastures—in other words, opening up the Amazon for business. According to the New York Times, one technique to clear the trees, driven by Bolsonaro's policies, is intentionally and illegally burning them. The fires spread rapidly and often out of control, resulting in major deforestation. According to Richard Black, a former

BBC journalist, the worst spikes in fires this year have occurred within Brazilian states governed by Bolsonaro's allies.

In August, Brazil rejected \$22 million in aid to help combat the fires from the Group of 7 (known as the G7), an international inter-governmental economic organization consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States—showcasing Bolsonaro's deliberate choice to ignore the environmental, political, and social concerns associated with the wildfires. The Times reported that Brazil's refusal to accept aid was meant to effectively tell the other nations “to mind their own business” while also citing Bolsonaro's verbal feud with France's President, Emmanuel Macron, as reasons the country has delayed accepting foreign aid. Brazil eventually accepted \$12 million in British aid, but not before the Amazon experienced over 26,000 fires in August alone.

Described as a cyclical system by National Geographic, the deforestation of the Amazon creates a drier region which subsequently creates a catalytic environment for even more wildfires. This downward spiral could reach the point of no return, transforming the world's largest tropical rainforest into an arid savannah and destroying the Amazon's famed biodiversity.



Graphic by Alinda Dersjant

The effects of these wildfires are not contained within Brazil and its neighboring regions, either. With the global threat of climate change looming, the devastating loss in tree coverage also means a drastic loss in one of Earth's primary carbon sinks. National Geographic states that protecting the Amazon and its ecological services is one of the most effective ways to mitigate the effects of climate change, as the Amazon's ecosystems absorb millions of tons of

carbon emissions each year and produce 6 percent of the planet's oxygen.

“Even if people were to re-plant half a continent's worth of trees, the diversity of creatures across Amazonia, once lost, will not be replenished for roughly 10 million years,” Robinson Meyer, a staff writer on climate change and technology for The Atlantic, said in a recent article. “And that is 33 times longer than Homo sapiens, as a species, has existed.”

ANNOUNCEMENT

Monthly Spotlights to Focus on Global Environmental Politics

By Alex Capozziello

Every passing moment moves us closer to a global climate disaster. While our individual actions in our local communities can encourage sustainability, it is our global community that must act in unison through accountable policies and subsequent action to earnestly make a difference in the battle against anthropogenic climate change. Sixteen

year old environmental activist Greta Thunberg has told us that “we must all do the seemingly impossible” to fight back on this climate crisis. As the (majority) of political actors on the global stage continue to do nothing about climate change, we must take accountability into our own hands and work together to show our leaders where our values lie and what needs to be done with the sparring amount of time we have left.

The Outreach team has chosen to feature a monthly spotlight on international environmental politics, where our members will choose breaking stories on the international stage to discuss in an effort to raise awareness in our BC community. Whether it be coverage of more hopeful events like the global climate strikes invoked by the world's youth to more somber stories like the raging fires in the Amazon, we hope to educate the

broader BC community on these very real issues and inspire students to learn more about the steps they can take to contribute to positive change.

We encourage you to join us as well. If you have a story you would like to share, a global environmental event you would like to see covered, or if you are interested in writing with us, please feel welcome to contact us at ecopledge@bc.edu.