



THE ENVIRONMENTAL EAGLE

The Sustainability Newsletter of Boston College

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FEATURED STORIES

Pine Tree Preserve to Open to Public This Month

BC Launches Global Observatory on Pollution

EcoPledge Cleans Up Beach on Ocean Cleanup Day

Jeremy Shakun: Professor and Climate Historian

OUR TEAM

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

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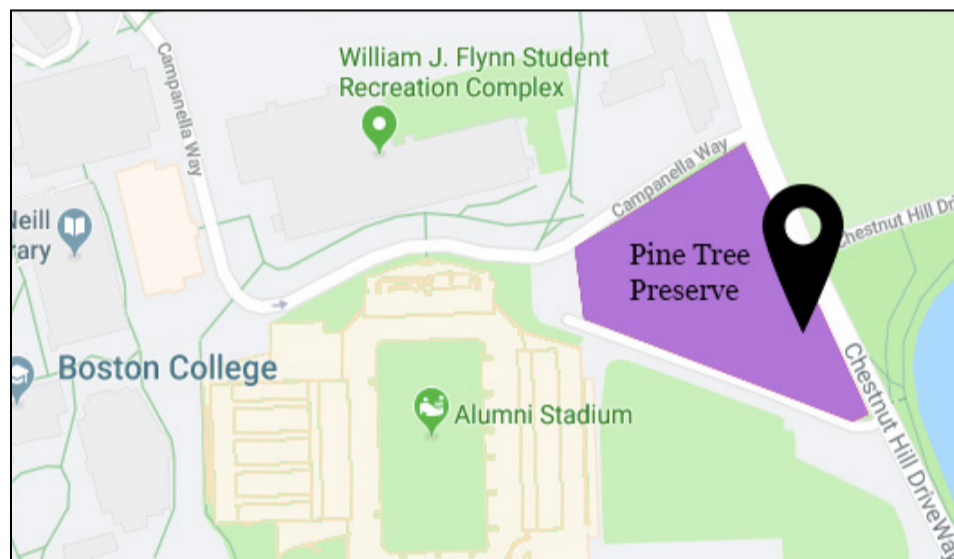


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Four-Acre Green Space Near Campus Will Open For Community This Month

By Alex Capozziello

The Pine Tree Preserve, four-acres of land located north of the Fish Field House and across from the Chestnut Hill Reservoir, will open to the BC community and the general public at the end of the month, according to BC News.

The land, which was previously fenced off and unused, will remain owned by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), but BC will perform the maintenance responsibilities. The University is currently in the process of removing dead trees and cre-

ating walking paths. Once the area is cleared, benches, streetlights, and paved walkways will be added, and the space will be officially open for recreational use.

"This agreement between the MWRA and Boston College will provide pedestrian access to a wooded area with scenic views of the reservoir for all members of the community to enjoy," Executive Vice President Michael Lochhead said to BC News. "It is an example of a successful partnership between the Commonwealth and the University that will provide benefits for all."

BC Signs Agreement with UN to Study Pollution and Health

By Chris Russo

Boston College has partnered with the United Nations to perform a study on the health effects of pollution in India through the recently-established Global Observatory on Pollution and Health. On September 24, Philip Landrigan, the director of the Observatory and a professor of biology, signed a memorandum of agreement with the UN Environment Program (UNEP) to launch the Observatory's first research initiative.

The Observatory will be headquartered at BC, with a close partnership to the Harvard School of Public Health, among others. Researchers will work to aggregate pollution and health data, analyze and interpret the data, and then publish reports on selected topics. The health and economic impacts of air pollution in India will be the first of several studies.

"Divestment is an issue worthy of serious consideration."

- Philip Landrigan, director of the Global Observatory on Pollution and Health

The University is providing financial support for the Observatory's research projects. The Observatory will receive support from other organizations on a proj-

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Global Observatory Will Show Link Between Pollution and Health Effects

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ect-by-project basis.

In October 2017, Landrigan worked on The Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health, which published a report about the effect of pollution on public health. The report was deemed a major success, as it had over 2 billion readers and garnered large media coverage.

The Lancet Commission made some staggering discoveries, including that pollution kills nine million people around the world

each year—three times more than AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined. It also concluded that pollution is inequitably distributed around the world, and there is a clear intersection between pollution and social injustice.

“The Global Observatory on Pollution and Health is basically intended to carry on the work of that commission,” Landrigan said. “It’s time to delve down into greater detail on various aspects of the problem.”

Landrigan said that thankfully, pollution is a problem that

can be fixed. Developed countries have been able to curb pollution in recent decades. For example, the United States cut air pollution by 70 percent since the Clean Air Act was passed in 1970. Landrigan believes that developed countries have formed strategies to reduce pollution through law, policy, regulation, and new technology.

“We think that it’s a blueprint that’s been well-enough worked out that it’s ready to be taken to global scale, and it can be done so cost-effectively, and that it could be adopted by countries around

the world,” Landrigan said.

Landrigan also believes that efforts to curb pollution should be made at a local level—including by universities invested in fossil fuels.

“Divestment is an issue worthy of serious consideration,” Landrigan said. “I think every sector of society including the academic sector—universities—has an obligation to minimize our emissions of pollutants and of greenhouse gases. To do so would be very much in keeping with Pope Francis’ teachings in the encyclical *Laudato Si.*”

EcoPledge Participates in International Ocean Cleanup Day at Revere Beach

By Eva Laxo and Alex Capozziello

On September 15, eighteen members of EcoPledge celebrated International Ocean Cleanup Day by working alongside 4Ocean, an international organization committed to the removal and proper disposal of trash in the world’s oceans, at Revere Beach in Salem, MA. Six hundred twenty seven volunteers participated, making the event 4Ocean’s largest community clean-up to date.

Volunteers at the event donned special 4Ocean gloves and blue shirts, collecting all sorts of beached trash. By noon, a total of 3,235 pounds of trash had been collected, including bottle caps, straws, and microplastics, as well as larger objects used in fishing, such as nets, ropes, and lobster traps. The trash was collected into a massive pile by volunteers and then rinsed and

sorted through in order to ensure correct removal and disposal. Of the collected garbage, 244 pounds was recyclable.

To date, 4Ocean has pulled over 1.2 million pounds of trash from oceans and coastlines. The organization employs full time captains and crews around the world, as well as focusing on education efforts to individuals, corporations, and governments on the harmful impacts plastics have in the oceans.

The company also produces bracelets from recyclable collected trash, which are then sold to help fund the expansion and awareness of future beach clean-up events. Through these efforts, 4Ocean has created a new headquarters in Bali, Indonesia, where the company plans to continue brand expansion, further spread awareness of ocean pollution, and encourage action toward ocean restoration.



Photo Credit: Stevie Walker

UGBC and EcoPledge Provide a Green, Sustainable Reminder with Succulents

By Mira Begovic

After a successful first event last year, “Succulents on the Quad” was brought back this fall in a collaboration between EcoPledge and the Undergraduate Government of Boston College (UGBC).

Four hundred succulents were given to students who had reusable

water bottles in an effort to encourage students to reuse rather than consume plastic. The goal of the event was to encourage students to think sustainably in their everyday lives, with the succulent in their dorm as a constant reminder. In addition, EcoPledge provided students with a custom care sheet that outlined how to best care for their succulents.



Photo Credit: Mira Begovic

From Rolling Hills to the Heights: Shakun Studies Climates Past and Present

By Chris Joseph

Jeremy Shakun, a professor of earth and environmental sciences at Boston College, grew up enjoying the rolling hills and boundless forests of upstate New York—it's no wonder he became a lifelong environmentalist. Today, Shakun is still exploring the Northeast as a paleoclimatologist, gathering data on past climates and studying the way our planet changes. He's also brought his unique perspective on environmental issues to the classroom, where he has inspired hundreds of students—science and non-science majors alike.

"I always loved the outdoors," Shakun said. "Camping, climbing mountains, getting in a canoe—stuff like that. I also always loved the weather. Like, if there was nothing on TV, I would flip on the weather channel—which I still sort of do."

As an undergraduate at Middlebury College, Shakun learned that he could pursue his interests fulltime as a climatologist, so he began studying past climates. Today his projects take him beyond the classroom to the mountains of New England.

Shakun is currently collaborating with geologists from the University of Vermont and Bentley University to

study the ice sheet that covered New England 15,000 years ago. They're hiking mountains across the region, from Monadnock to Mount Washington, and dating glacial boulders from base to summit. The completed project will show when and how fast glaciers disappeared in those areas.

Shakun's work might sound like good fun, but it's more than just a trip outdoors—it has implications for modern climate change.

"You hear about sea level rise these days," Shakun said. "How fast can the sea level rise? That's basically the same question as: 'How fast can the ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica collapse?'"

Shakun's studies of climate processes help scientists predict how our climate will change as a result of global warming, and his own background as a paleoclimatologist has given him a unique perspective on climate problems.

"The world is changing fast and in huge ways that are hard to imagine," Shakun said. "One advantage I have, coming from this field, is that my whole job is to understand different earths."

This perspective touches more than just Shakun's work. He brings these ideas to the classroom, where he encourages students to examine the



Photo Courtesy of BC News

Shakun went to Greenland in 2016 to study its ice sheet and learn about past climates.

deep connections between climate science and other disciplines, such as economics and politics.

"It's more than just 'recycle your soda can,'" he said. "There are deep threads here. There are big questions."

Shakun believes those big climate questions are most productive when brought before students who haven't considered them before. In fact, Shakun is most dedicated to communicating with students who haven't considered climate issues.

"How do I talk to people who are just complacent?" he asked. "Or those

who are saying, 'I don't know if I buy this?' I don't go tell them what to do. I just tell them: here's the scoreboard, so pay attention."

Whatever the challenges, Shakun remains committed to the effort of confronting climate issues as a researcher, a professor, and as EcoPledge's new faculty advisor. Beginning this semester, Shakun will work with EcoPledge to promote sustainability on campus and raise awareness for environmental issues. EcoPledge is pleased to welcome Professor Shakun and looks forward to working with him throughout the year.

'Think Globally, Act Locally': Seeking Solutions for Overfishing in the EU

By Mira Begovic

This year's EcoPledge theme, "Think Globally, Act Locally," encourages us to understand the impact local efforts have on a worldwide scale. It also asks us to critically think and engage with global issues related to climate change and other environmental issues. This year, we will examine how various countries are working to respond to environmental issues and the threat of climate change. We will investigate Europe's responses to these threats this fall. In the winter, we will focus on Africa and Asia, and in the spring we will learn more about the efforts in the Americas.

A specific event that has been of great concern for the European Union involves overfishing in the



Graphic by Alinda Dersjant

Baltic Ocean. The European Commission publishes an annual proposal that outlines the quota for the amount of fish that are allowed to be fished from the Baltic each year. This

quota has been too high for many years, significantly decreasing the existing cod population in addition to affecting the sea's food chain. This causes ripple effects that damage the

entire ecosystem.

Lasse Gustavsson, an executive of the non-profit Oceana, explains the devastating marine effects that overfishing has on the ecosystem of the Baltic Sea. Additionally, he emphasizes some of the potential economic benefits that can occur as a result of sustainable fishing practices, such as the creation of 92,000 jobs, proving it to be an intelligent economic and environmental decision.

These are just some of the potential economic benefits that can arise from the switch to sustainable practices and is a reminder that sustainability can in fact be a good economic decision in addition to an environmental decision. These initiatives will all be considered by the European Union in 2019 to mediate the problem of overfishing.