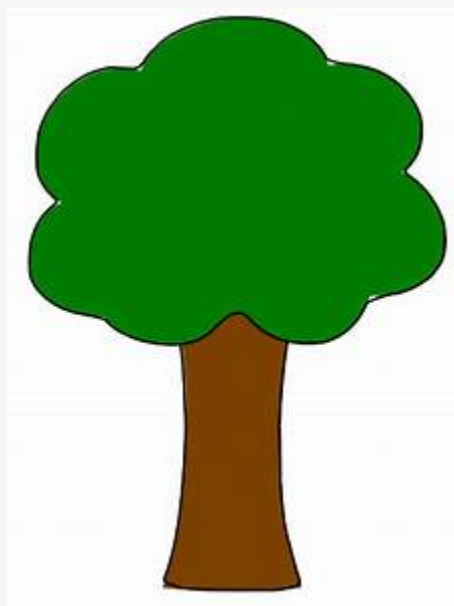


# **The National High School Climate Forum**

***March 2021 Newsletter***



**Inspirational Quote of the Month**

*"Of all the paths you take in life, make sure a few of them are dirt."*

- John Muir

## What is the National High School Climate Forum?

*If you have been a part of the forum awhile, there is no need to re-read this section. We simply like to include it for our newer member schools. This portion is the same as the February 2021 Newsletter.*

For those of you reading this who may not be familiar, here is a little recap on what the mission of The National High School Climate Forum is, who we are, what we do, and what we hope to accomplish in the future.

The National High School Climate Forum was established in 2020 to increase environmental awareness amongst high school students and to foster an exchange of community and school-based sustainability and climate-action initiative ideas between student environmental leaders across the country. We accomplish our mission in three main ways:

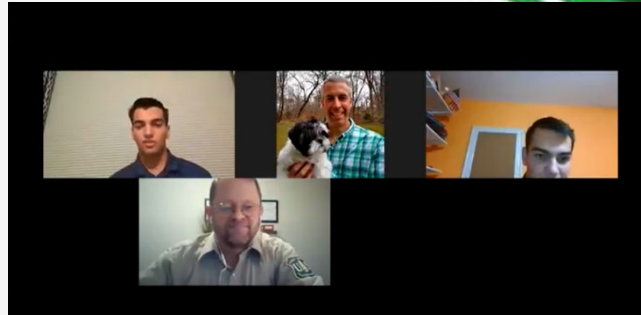
1. **Communications:** Our communications are a primary way through which we strive to facilitate the exchange of ideas between schools across the country. These communications include our monthly newsletters, like this one, articles posted on our website, [nhsclimateforum.org](https://nhsclimateforum.org) (Check it out!!), and our monthly committee meetings between student environmental leaders at our member schools. Each newsletter going



forward will feature information on specific schools' activities and initiatives, as well as ways the rest of us can help out. In addition, student environmental leaders have the opportunity to discuss and learn from each other at our monthly committee

meetings. Finally, our website provides updates on what is happening in the forum, as well as articles written by students, like you, on important environmental topics.

2. **Speaker Events:** In addition to our facilitation of an exchange of ideas between students, the forum also believes that education is a fundamental aspect of making a difference in our society and that knowledge truly is power! With this in mind, we hold several speaker events throughout the year, each focused on specific topics, with the goal of educating our members on environmental events, issues, technology, etc. These speaker events provide students the opportunity to ask their own questions of our guests and to learn about many of the most important topics in environmental fields right now and going forward.



*Our Webinar, "Wildfires: An Inside Look at 2020's Hottest Environmental Issue", took place on December 9<sup>th</sup>, via Zoom.*

3. **Annual Summit:** The last way in which we hope to foster an exchange of ideas in our forum is through our annual National High School Climate Forum Summit. This summit will provide students at our member schools the opportunity to present the work of their group in a live format, answer questions, and inspire others to pursue similar work. In addition to this, we hope to host a variety of speakers at our annual summits, exposing students at our member schools to many unique perspectives on the environment, as well as to prominent individuals in climate-related fields. Our annual summit will occur each year around Earth Day in either April or May and all associated schools are invited.

## Important Reminders for Committee Members:

**The National High School Climate Forum cannot run without the input of all of you, our fellow student environmental leaders! If you ever have any ideas to improve the forum or any initiatives that you believe the forum could help you with, don't hesitate to reach out. As always, you can contact Alex Noviello at [abnoviello23@lawrenceville.org](mailto:abnoviello23@lawrenceville.org) or Andrew Noviello at [acnoviello23@lawrenceville.org](mailto:acnoviello23@lawrenceville.org). Thanks!**

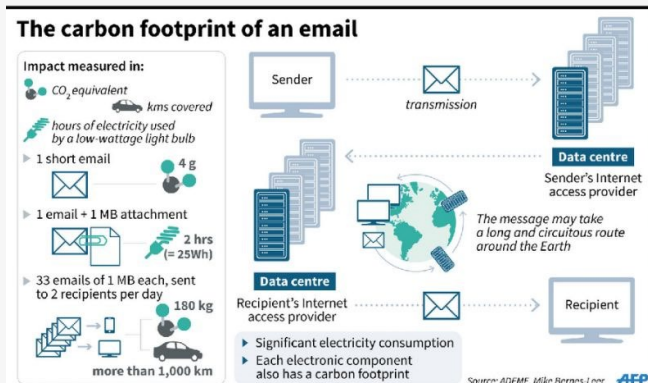
**Please keep your eyes out for emails regarding our March Committee Meeting, as well as the speaker event on campus sustainability that we will be hosting in late March. Let us know if you have any questions regarding these upcoming events!**



## Sustainability Tips from the National High School Climate Forum

Thanks to those schools who gave us these great ideas!

1. **Tidy Up Your Inbox** – Although it might seem highly unlikely, sending and receiving



emails actually has an impact on the environment. One email alone can emit up to ten grams of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). To avoid this, you should unsubscribe from any unwanted mailing lists, so these organizations are not sending you any unnecessary emails while releasing harmful toxins into the atmosphere. If you want to learn

more about this unique problem, you can read about it here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/green-living-blog/2010/oct/21/carbon-footprint-email>

2. **Don't Judge Food at First Glance!** – When was the last time you went to the grocery store and bought any vegetables or fruits with bruises? Probably a fairly long time ago, or simply never. Instead, do you purposefully search for the fruits and vegetables that are in the best condition? If so, then you are contributing to a serious issue in food waste. For example, up to 45% of the fruits and vegetables that are produced are simply wasted, often as a result of the small imperfections mentioned above. While it is certainly understandable for one to search for the best items, in order to get their money's worth, it is important to recognize that these bruised fruits and vegetables still contain the same nutrients present in more desirable items. Try buying a bruised fruit or vegetable the next time you go shopping and simply cut off the bruised parts when you get home. You won't taste a thing and will be helping cut down on food waste!



### 3. *Rethinking the Stapler??* –

While we may not think about it often, wasted staples are common everywhere: at school, in the workplace, and even in homes. Although one small staple is not enough to make a serious impact, they can collect and actually contribute to a significant amount of metal waste. What is the alternative you might ask? Stapleless staplers work just like normal staples, attaching paper, but without the staples themselves. They work by folding paper together and can also help people save money, in addition to helping the environment. Stapleless staplers are a one-time cost and don't require any trips to office supply stores to actually buy staples. In addition, when removing paper, attached with a stapleless staple, staple removers are not required either, making it all the more helpful to the environment.



You can check out more tips here: <https://17globalgoals.com/slightly-weird-and-wonderful-ways-to-live-more-sustainably/>

## Summer Opportunities Spotlight

Each month we will feature a few different opportunities for summer internships in environmental science or conservation. Here are the two internship opportunities for this month.

**Student Conservation Association: National Crews:** This is an opportunity to spend 2-5 weeks doing conservation work at national and state parks, across the United States. The program is open to



student  
conservation  
association  
[thesca.org](http://thesca.org)

high school students ages 15-19 across the United States, but admissions are highly selective. Also, application deadlines are fast approaching (and vary depending on project), so, if you are interested, you must complete your application soon. Please check out this link for more details: <https://www.thesca.org/serve/national-crews>



**Environmental Studies Summer Youth Institute:** The ESSYI is a two-week, college-level program for students entering their Junior or Senior years of high school. During the program, students will explore many current environmental challenges in a variety of disciplines, including science, economics, politics, and more. The program is hosted by Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Please see this link for details: <http://essyi.hws.edu/>

## Member Schools Sustainability Initiatives Spotlights:

*In order to fulfill our mission as a forum and truly foster an exchange of ideas between each of our member schools, we will be featuring the work of the members of the Writing Subcommittee in each of these newsletters, in addition to on our website. Please take time to read through these sections and learn about what other schools in the forum are working on. Perhaps you might even get an idea for your own, similar project!*

### ***The Trinity School – New York, NY***

***Author: Caitlin Tam '21***

The Green Team, Trinity School's environmental club and service group, consists of four branches: Awareness Raising, Green Spaces, Interschool Outreach, and Middle School Connection. Each branch is independent and has its own leader and group of team members working on individual initiatives. However, during February and March, the committees come together to work on planning Earth Week.

This year, Awareness Raising will be sending out daily emails related to various environmental topics, including veganism, current climate events, environmental racism, and spotlighting what other organizations are doing about the climate. Many students at Trinity face the issue of not knowing where to look for accurate information, or simply do not have the patience to weed through the millions of articles available. The Awareness Raising branch hopes to present easy to digest information during Earth Week to provide a comprehensive update on current climate change topics. The emails will be brief, but packed with information so that students will be open to reading them.

The Middle School Connection Committee usually works to unite the high school and middle school Green Teams to create an even more powerful and influential sustainable task force in the student body. However, for Earth Week, the students on Middle School Connection will be focusing on daily sustainability challenges. This includes keeping track of how many single use plastic items are used in a day, making a vegetarian meal, saving water by taking quicker showers, finding nature around you and taking a picture, turning off the lights when they are not being used, donating to an organization if accessible, and using only reusable products for a day. Students will submit evidence of their challenges with the chance of winning a sustainability related prize, such as a water bottle, bamboo toothbrush, reusable bag, or reusable food containers. This element of Earth Week strives to introduce sustainable habits that students can adopt for themselves in the future.

The Green Spaces Committee will be hosting various activities throughout the week to encourage active participation within the community and create spirit around sustainability. During lunch periods, there will be free screenings of documentaries focusing on sustainability and climate change. During the morning break period, fun events such as trivia on Kahoot with sustainable prizes for winners will be available. A fun debate around environmental policy will



also be hosted during this period, led by the debate team and monitored by a Green Team member. This activity is meant to spark positive and productive conversation around current issues. The entire school will be able to observe the debate. Lastly, a speaker will be introduced during the school-wide community time to discuss ESG investing – a topic that is rising in importance, yet many people in younger generations possess little understanding of what it is.

Finally, the Interschool Outreach committee will continue its work connecting with other schools through the joint green link Instagram page. These students will also be leading park cleanups after school to make positive change in the community. They are hoping to continue this action after Earth Week in parks across the city.

### ***Pingry School – Basking Ridge, NJ***

***Author: Daniela Karnaugh '24***

Over the course of the past month, Pingry has been meeting as often as possible to discuss initiatives regarding sustainability, facilitating events that fight the health of our Earth and spread awareness to the entirety of our community! One initiative we implemented back in early February was our composting project - Pingry has had our own composting bin for a number of years, but recently we teamed up with an outside-of-school company that composts even larger amounts of food waste, and also is involved in a new and more efficient recycling program. As a result, the students are getting more involved in controlling what they do with their waste, and instead are putting it towards a better cause!

Additionally, the Pingry Green Team has been perpetrating an Earth Day Clothing Swap to educate the community on the impacts of fast fashion. Here, we will be conducting an interactive event for both online and in-person students, where kids can bring in their own clothing to trade and/or donate under our Covid-19 protocols. The students can make deals to swap with one another and give a piece of clothing to receive a piece of clothing, showing how much fun sustainable fashion can be and how it helps the environment too! Students are also given the opportunity to donate clothing to charities, such as our local program Bridges Outreach. On top of that we are also making our own newsletter, where monthly we reach out to the students and anyone can submit their own Earth-related or sustainability-related segment - this can be anything from a vegan recipe to a report on the Pingry Outing Club's most recent hike! Aside from that, we are also planning on joining the Green Schools Alliance, to further build up or interconnectivity with other schools and continue to share initiatives with one another. At Pingry, we are doing all that we can to implement projects and proposals that benefit our environment in the best way possible - we want to educate our students and take care of our Earth, doing so one step at a time!

## ***Castilleja School – Palo Alto, CA***

***Author: Amanda Cheng '22***

The Castilleja Green Team is constantly seeking to connect with other schools to share expertise and find new ways that campus sustainability can be improved. This year, Green Team has found ways to connect with other schools virtually: in addition to connecting with independent schools all over the United States through the National High School Climate Forum, Green Team has networked with Bay Area public and independent schools through the Students for Green High Schools conference and set up joint movie nights and opportunities to listen to speakers.

Green Team's regular activities include planning activities and initiatives for Earth Week, which this year will be in both in-person and virtual formats. They also send out a newsletter every meeting that educates the student body on current environmental news from the local to the international level and notifies recipients about climate action opportunities.

After being inspired by a group of independent schools in the Bay Area, Green Team has largely focused their attention on divesting the Castilleja endowment from fossil fuel companies. Correspondence with this coalition of independent schools has proved extremely helpful in learning how to communicate effectively with the administration.

Castilleja's current net exposure to fossil fuel companies is about 2.5% of the endowment, which is quite significant given its scale. Features of divestment would include educating teachers on where their investments are going and giving them the option to select environmentally beneficial investment options for pensions. Additionally, Castilleja would shift their focus on investing more of the endowment in lucrative sustainable companies. Although the school is currently taking on large initiatives like improving the sustainability of the campus, divestment would be a great way for Castilleja to create a sizable environmental impact beyond the Palo Alto community. Though this project will most likely take many months to complete, the Green Team is extremely excited to take on their first initiative of this scale.

## ***Albuquerque Academy – Albuquerque, NM***

***Author: Ariana Pohl '21***

This semester was the start for the Climate Action club at the Albuquerque Academy. Began by two 8th grade students the club now has students from 8th to 12th graders, all interested in educating and motivating the students at Academy. The club is currently working on rough ideas on how they can inform their peers about climate change and will hopefully be able to work with their community in the future. Some ideas the students have proposed where making a video to share with their school to help educate their fellow students and teachers, they are also interested in starting a composting bin for the students who eat the lunch provided at school during in person days.



Due to covid there is limited action that the students at Academy can do but through advisories they plan on sharing an informative video about climate change and hope to encourage students and their advisors to have a brief discussion on the topic once they have watched the video. Currently the video is in the outline stage and the club hopes to finish it around the end of April and the beginning of May. The club currently has two ideas as to what they want their video to be about regarding climate change. The first idea was to create an informative video that outlines climate change and its causes as well as ways in which students can help reduce their carbon footprint by practicing sustainability. Another idea they had was to interview students about climate change, asking questions such as "What ways do you and your family practice sustainability?" and "What does Earth Day mean to you?". At the end of either video idea, the club wishes to bring the students attention to the Count Us In project and possibly get students involved through it. The Count Us In project is a goal setting initiative that allows individuals and organizations to track the steps they are taking to lessen their carbon footprint such as flying less or reducing the amount of meat they eat. By sharing this information and sharing the progress that the school can do together the Climate Action club hopes to encourage students to talk more about climate change and begin to implement changes into their daily lives to reach a more sustainable lifestyle not only within the community but as individuals.

By sharing the video through advisories, the club wishes to encourage advisors to spend the time set aside for their students to talk about their prior knowledge of climate change and what they have learned from the video and how they can implement new ideas into their lives. The club wants to start a conversation outside their meetings to widen their fellow students' perspectives and encourage them to discuss sustainability to one another. With more talk about climate change Climate Action Club is hopeful that by the next school year they will be able to accomplish bigger projects with their school.

(<https://www.count-us-in.org/> - Here's the Count Us In link in case other schools are interested in taking a look at it).

### ***Deerfield Academy – Deerfield, MA***

***Author: Joe Morsman '23***

At Deerfield, our main environmental group goes by the name 'Deerfield EcoReps.' As a team, we work to raise awareness and enthusiasm on campus around combating climate change and conserving our local and global environments, doing so through Academy-wide events, opportunities and projects for the entire Deerfield community, and small changes to the way our campus functions day-to-day. In addition to collective weekly meetings, members of the organization participate in small groups focusing on one initiative at a time. For example, five members of the team worked together over the winter to eliminate single-use plastic bags from our dining system, giving all on-campus learners reusable bags to bring along to the dining hall, thus eliminating a significant source of the community's waste.

Other initiatives we've worked on throughout winter term include a thrifting program, established through Instagram, and a biweekly film project. The thrifting program was set up by another small group of students, who engineered a system where members of the Deerfield community can have an Instagram post put up about a piece of clothing they'd like to sell or pass on, and takers can comment or message the account to claim it. Relative to the film initiative, four students--working with a teacher in the science department--have collectively come up with climate change/environment-related films to screen in different locations across campus, which they've worked to put on every other week. They plan to continue these screenings through the end of the year. Looking towards spring term, the EcoReps are planning to promote workshops and other (online) opportunities for all students, engineer several environment and climate-related events and occasions around Earth Day, and work with a local conservancy organization to clean up the Deerfield River and regrow the ecosystem within it. Of course, we'll also be encouraging our fellow students to attend NHSCF events to learn more about environmental issues around the country!

## The National High School Climate Forum Going Forward:

*As many of you know, we have big plans for the National High School Climate Forum going forward. We will be hosting our first annual summit on Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, from 2-4pm EST, in addition to another speaker event on March 25<sup>th</sup> at 7pm, focused on campus sustainability. In the future, many of our goals include forum-wide projects that all member schools could choose to participate in, such as federal legislative work or specific sustainability initiatives. As mentioned before, we welcome all ideas for improvement of the forum and are so excited to be continuing this journey to help our environment with all of you.*

*Sincerely,*

*Alex Noviello, Andrew Noviello, Holly Teti, Hope Jerris, Abby Weinstein*

*The National High School Climate Forum Founders*



## Links to Interesting Articles, Research, and More:

*Here are some links to interesting articles in topics related to the environment. Enjoy!*

1. Elon Musk recently announced a \$100-million contest for carbon capture technology. The competition will start on April 22<sup>nd</sup> (Earth Day) 2021 and last for 4 years. Here is the article:  
<https://www.nbcnews.com/science/environment/how-elon-musk-will-award-100-million-carbon-capture-contest-n1257084>  
Here is some more information:  
<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/01/31/carbon-capture-technology.html>
2. Wondering how animals are protecting themselves from COVID? Well, apparently a few are just as eager to get to the front of the vaccine line as we are. Nine Great Apes just got vaccinated in the San Diego Zoo: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/nine-great-apes-get-covid-vaccinations-san-diego-zoo-n1259726>
3. Here is a cool article on research discoveries surrounding sharks:  
<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/sharks-glow-dark-scientists-discover-luminous-deep-sea-predators-new-n1259252>
4. And, finally, an article that reinforces why fighting climate change is so important and the serious consequences of dangerous air pollution:  
<https://www.seas.harvard.edu/news/2021/02/deaths-fossil-fuel-emissions-higher-previously-thought>

# ***Thanks for Reading!***



***The National High School Climate Forum***