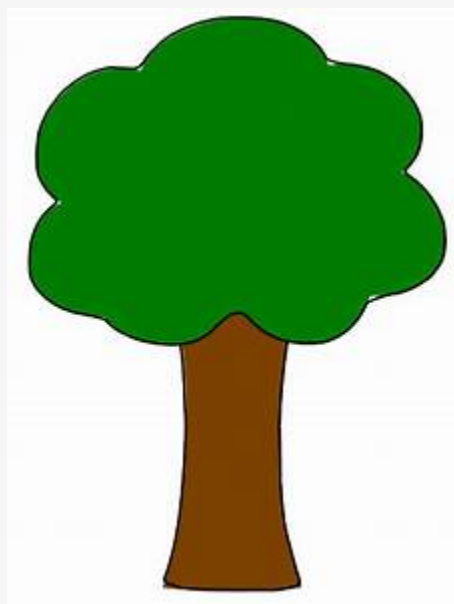


# The National High School Climate Forum

*February 2021 Newsletter*



## **Inspirational Quote of the Month**

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead , anthropologist, recipient of the Planetary Citizen of the Year Award in 1978.*

## What is the National High School Climate Forum?

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:

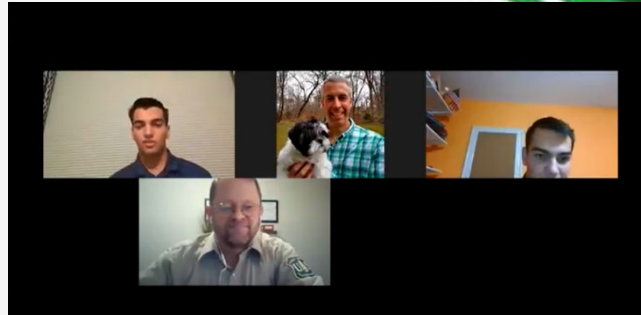
1. **Communications:** Our communications are a primary way through which we strive to facilitate the exchange of ideas between schools across the country. These communications include our monthly newsletters, like this one, articles posted on our website, [nhsclimateforum.org](https://nhsclimateforum.org) (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!**

**National High School Climate Forum Committee Members: Keep your eye out for emails regarding our February Committee Meeting. We are really looking forward to seeing you all again!**



## Sustainability Tips from the National High School Climate Forum

*Thanks to those schools who gave us these great ideas!*

1. **Use the EcoBreathe Face Mask** – “The world’s only fully recyclable disposable mask.”

In COVID times, we all use a lot of face masks and probably end up using the disposable masks at some point or another, even when we try our best to use reusable cloth masks or the like. Unfortunately, due to a variety of factors, including disease itself, regular



disposable face masks are not meant to be recycled and therefore can account for a tremendous amount of waste, especially when we are all using these masks everyday. By using

recyclable face masks, we can save a significant amount of trash and make a truly positive impact on the environment! Check out this link for more information:

<https://www.ecobreathe.com/>

2. **Stop Using Post-it Notes!!** – As if COVID weren’t enough, these times have been especially busy for many individuals. As a result, you probably need to set a lot of reminders for yourself and often turn to post-it notes and other paper reminders to accomplish this (let’s face facts – sometimes it is incredibly convenient to have a piece of paper just sitting there with your reminders!). Although it may seem small, your reminders and other notes add up. Next time you go to write yourself a note, think about it for a second and consider using a digital reminder of some sort. While sometimes having that post-it there is necessary, simply reducing the number of notes you use in half can make a big difference!



3. ***Get a Friend Interested in the Environment*** –

Although it may feel simple and seem like it is not directly helpful, getting a friend interested in the environment and taking them to a meeting for your school's climate club/organization can be incredibly beneficial. If each member of your school's environmental organization commits to bringing 3 new members to a meeting each year, your group's size could grow exponentially, thus drastically increasing the work you can accomplish. Who knows, perhaps you may even be able to inspire one of those other students to pursue environmental work in college and beyond!

## 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.

***United States Youth Conservation Corps:*** This is an 8-10 week paid internship affiliated with the U.S. Forest Service. Youth ages 15-18 are eligible to participate and participants will work 40-hour weeks, engaged in conservation activities in some of America's most interesting national parks. Please check out this link for more details: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/youthprograms/ycc.htm>



***Paid Internships with the EPA:*** The EPA also offers internships for high school students in environmental science, research, engineering, conservation, and more. Many of these internships may be paid positions, while others will be volunteer. Once again, this is a fantastic opportunity to work for one of the most important government environmental agencies. Please see this link for details: <https://www.epa.gov/careers/student-internships>



## Current Environmental Event Spotlight:

### *COVID-19's Impacts on the Environment and the Economy*

Abby Sieler '21

The Lawrenceville School, New Jersey

With COVID-19 causing a worldwide shutdown and millions of deaths, the virus has devastated many facets of human life. However, the coronavirus has also had many unforeseen effects, particularly its environmental impacts. COVID-19 has had both positive and negative immediate effects on the environment, although the long term effects of the virus remain unclear.

Overall, some of the restrictions implemented in many countries to slow the spread of the virus also helped limit pollution around the world. Greenhouse gas emissions decreased; in the first half of 2020, global CO2 emissions decreased by 8.8% compared to the first half of 2019 ([source](#)). The greatest decrease in CO2 emissions was observed in ground transportation, resulting from very few people traveling to and from work with many working from home instead ([source](#)). However, the decrease in greenhouse gas emissions seems to be temporary, with most economies returning to emitting about the same amount of CO2 as they did before the pandemic ([source](#)). Thus, the positive effects of COVID-19 have been negated by the excessive waste generation the virus caused. Specifically, there were increases in biomedical waste, municipal solid waste, disinfectant application, and the haphazard disposal of equipment ([source](#)).

More specifically, the coronavirus has negatively impacted the surge in the clean energy industry, which includes jobs in fields such as renewable energy, energy storage, energy efficiency, and transportation. In New Jersey, the coronavirus has had a destructive effect on clean energy jobs. Before the pandemic, clean energy jobs were a rapidly growing job creator, with 57,130 people employed in clean energy jobs in New Jersey by the end of 2019 ([source](#)). As a result of the pandemic, 2,345 clean energy workers lost their jobs, which is fewer jobs lost than other states with larger clean-energy economies but a significant impact to the workforce nonetheless ([source](#)). In Governor Murphy's Executive Order 107, he declared: "all non-essential retail businesses must close to the public as long as this Order remains in effect," impacting all clean energy businesses, which were considered non-essential ([source](#)). The federal government implemented the CARES act, benefiting the clean-energy industry for the short term by allowing employers to retain their workforce, but sustaining the clean-energy industry for the long term requires more action ([source](#)).

After the recession brought on by COVID-19, US citizens are recognizing the opportunity for job creation in the clean-energy field. President elect Joe Biden, for example, announced, "When I think about climate change, the word I think of is 'jobs'" ([source](#)). The link between redeveloping the economy as it recovers from COVID-19 and the new jobs created by an expanding clean-energy sector is promising for unemployment in the country, reduction of greenhouse gases, and the economy.



## 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 plan on having our national summit in late April/early May timeframe this year and are exploring the possibility of having another speaker event before then (most probably in March). In addition to this, we are actively recruiting more schools for the forum and stabilizing the infrastructure of the forum, as the organization is relatively new. 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. With Joe Biden inaugurated as president only a short while ago, many of us are wondering what Biden plans to do for the environment. Here are some links that describe some of Biden's environmental goals and how he plans on achieving them. By educating ourselves on some of Biden's goals, we can make a more significant impact ourselves by aligning with some of these objectives.

Climate Change: <https://joebiden.com/climate-plan/>

Environmental Justice: <https://joebiden.com/environmental-justice-plan/>

You can also read about some of John Kerry's specific goals here:

<https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2021-01-26/kerry-aims-to-talk-us-back-into-a-lead-role-in-climate-fight>

2. At the end of his presidency, Trump decided to open millions of previously-protected acres in Alaska for oil drilling in an effort to boost the local economy. Unfortunately, this may have serious environmental consequences (Thanks Sarah DeFalco of the Hun School for bringing this to our attention!). You can read about the situation here:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/01/05/energy-202-trump-administration-opens-millions-more-acres-alaska-drilling/>



# ***Thanks for Reading!***



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