



SYNERGIES

The Sustainability Newsletter of The University of Texas at Austin

UT Water Recovery Program



UT has an active water recovery program, coordinated by Utilities and Energy Management. The program recovers an average of 3.5 million gallons a month, representing about 5% of the University's total water consumption and about 26% of the cooling water used for air conditioning. As of 2007, the water recovery program has recycled more than 1.35 billion gallons of water, for a total savings of approximately \$7.5 million! Water used in this program is composed of recovered groundwater, air conditioning condensate, swimming pool water, and cooling water from equipment throughout campus. The recovered water is pumped to the campus cooling towers where it displaces potable water in making up for evaporative losses. From 1982 to 1999, UT conditioned space increased by 2 million square feet, but water consumption dropped 200 million gallons, in part due to water recovery. Not only does this program conserve water, but it also reduces the volume of wastewater requiring treatment and reduces energy demand on water mains and pumps.

Sustainable Sites Initiative

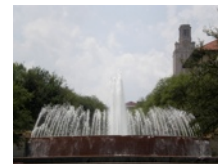


UT's Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center is collaborating with the American Society of Landscape Architects, and the US Botanic Garden on the Sustainable Sites Initiative, a new rating system for landscapes. They are working to establish sustainability standards for planned landscapes that will be applicable nationwide. This program is comparable to LEED standards that exist for buildings. The program addresses several issues including the creation of voluntary, market-based incentives for recognized sustainable practices including storm water management, biodiversity protection, pollution reduction and other types of stewardship. The Sustainable Sites Initiative is working with the U.S. Green Building Council, and the standards developed may ultimately be integrated into the existing LEED system. Planned landscapes, when improperly constructed or maintained, can have significant environmental impacts by contributing to pollution, and water and energy waste. For example, landscape irrigation comprises over a third of urban water use, and is the single largest use of water in cities. The Sustainable Sites Initiative is a five-year project, and pilots are will begin in 2010.

www.sustainable sites.org

<http://www.utexas.edu/oncampus/2008/03/02/sustainability101/>

Campus Green Teams Create Sustainable Workplaces



Green Teams across campus are creating more sustainable workplaces for UT employees. The School of Nursing Green Team is planning to work with the UT Nursing Student Association (UTNSA) on sustainability activities related to public health and environmental health promotion. Nursing Green Team leader Marian Morris gave a presentation at a national conference on their sustainability activities. The McCombs School of Business Green Team worked to expand recycling efforts, eliminate the use of Styrofoam cups in staff lounges, and created a Holiday Shutdown Checklist used by groups across campus. They also received a budget from the Dean's Office. On Earth Day, they gave away 100 tote bags, served local, organic foods and shared information about sugarcane plates and corn starch utensils for events. Over 13 departments on campus have formed Green Teams, and are leading the sustainability movement.

<http://www.mcombs.utexas.edu/greenteam/>

<http://www.utexas.edu/nursing/greenteam/>

Sustainable Development: To meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (Defined in the Brundtland Report)

Sustainability Tip of the Month: *Help conserve our water resources by using only what you need. Make sure faucets are turned all the way off and report any leaks at <http://www.utexas.edu/facilities/services/repairs.html>*

DSEMC Begins Water and Steam Retrofits



The Demand Side Energy Management and Conservation (DSEMC) program will begin in July upgrading high water using bathroom fixtures and nonfunctional steam traps to save water and energy. The water retrofits began with bathrooms and include upgrades to about 6,000 water efficient toilets, urinals, and faucets about about 200 shower heads. In addition, process water for labs and the UT irrigation system will undergo upgrades helping to save money and water resources. Furthermore, the DSEMC program will retrofit 10% of steam traps, which are part of the building infrastructure and help regulate hot water and heating. The DSEMC program will retrofit over 140 buildings for steam, water and energy efficiency on the main campus and at the Pickle Research Campus. These programs combined are expected to save UT \$2 million per year!<http://www.utexas.edu/utakecharge>

President's Task Force on Sustainability

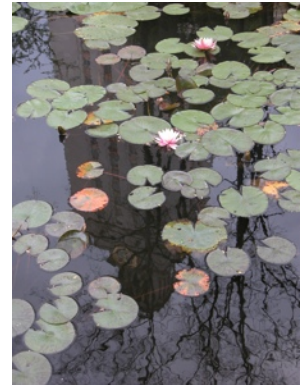
President Power's Task Force on Sustainability has been working diligently to advance sustainability at UT since it was created in spring 2007. Recently, the Co-Chairs, Dr. Pat Clubb, Vice President of Employee and Campus Services and Shere Abbott, Director of the Center of Science and Practice of Sustainability have been working with the administrative leadership on a governance structure to support the implementation of the Campus Sustainability Policy. In addition, the Task Force's Working Group on Energy and Water recently provided suggestions for "low-hanging fruit" in three areas: space and design standards and specifications, funding "greening" efforts in water and energy, and undergraduate and graduate research opportunities. The Task Force will continue to work with the Working Group, and the results of these efforts will be forwarded to President Powers as recommendations for near-term action. The group has also made suggestions about a process for establishing targets and timetables for GHG emissions reductions.

Join or Start a Green Team!



Green Teams are groups of people working together in an office or department on projects that make their workplace more sustainable. Working as part of a team, Green Teams make great strides in advancing the sustainability initiatives on campus. Existing Green Teams have helped to switch their offices to energy efficient light bulbs, 100% recycled paper, and to expand their building's recycling program. If you work in a building or department that does not currently have a Green Team, the Campus Environmental Center, the UTSN and other Green Team leaders can provide the resources to start new teams. Currently there are 13 teams on campus. New ideas and information for Green Team members are also provided at UT Sustainability Network meetings. For information about Green Teams, and contact information for existing leaders visit: <http://www.bleedorangethinkgreen.com/greenteams>

Up Coming Events



July 16, 12:00-1:30
The UT Sustainability Network will meet in the Texas Governors Room of the Union 3.116.

August 8, 12:00-1:30
The Green Horns and the UTSN will have a special joint meeting to discuss Green Teams around campus and how individuals can get involved with campus sustainability projects. The meeting will be in Texas Governor's Room of the Union 3.116. All are welcome--even if you're not part of a Green Team.