



FALL 2025

ANNUAL REPORT

OSU's Office of Sustainability

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Cowboy Conservation

INSIDE OSU'S SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES
KATIE BEITZ - SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR

In my last Annual Report, I talked about how much I loved the traditions of OSU. Not just the history of the buildings or the grounds, but also about the things we do around here that have become a part of our DNA. This year, I noticed several evolving and new traditions and displays.

The Fanfare of Lights has been a long tradition on our campus with seasonal orange lights, wreaths, garlands, and a light show. This year, Landscape Services added the coffee cup planters at the Student Union and Whitehurst. Not only are these a festive addition to our holiday displays, but they are also completely made of reused and recycled materials. The “cup” is made of reused planters, the “handle” is reused fertilizer piping, and the straw is recycled PVC pipe wrapped in red tape. The plants are propagated in their greenhouse.

Starting in 2019, Landscape Services began providing the plant backdrop elements for graduation, and this service has grown into our plant rental program. The abundance of plants used at graduation not only looks great, but they are also reused for multiple events and, in many cases, are then planted in the overall landscape of the university. Not only does this provide a continual reuse of the materials, but most of the plants have been propagated and split over the last five years, creating more plants to be used in the program.

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Oklahoma E-Waste

In October, our office had the chance to partner with the Oklahoma Recycling Association to discuss e-waste at the Oklahoma State Capitol. As a part of the Advocacy workgroup, a cross-section of the team presented to the Oklahoma House Government Modernization and Technology Committee on an interim study #24-075 – Addressing Oklahoma’s Solid Waste Management Challenges: e-waste, waste characterization, and waste diversion. This study, sponsored by Rep. Trish Ranson of Stillwater, focuses on addressing critical issues such as electronic waste (e-waste), battery recycling waste characterization, and strategies for landfill diversion.

Since this conversation, a new bill has been introduced to focus on battery recycling, a bill requiring battery sellers to take back and recycle batteries sold to the consumer. This will assist OSU when it comes to our battery recycling and lowering the costs moving forward.



Photo by Oklahoma Recycling Association

Thanks to Rep Trish Ranson for sponsoring this very important study, and thanks to the presenters: Patrick Riley, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, Katie Beitz, Oklahoma State University Office of Sustainability, Jerry Schuber, City of Broken Arrow - Municipality, Traci Phillips, Natural Evolution, Inc. Robert Pickens, American Waste Control

“We are living on this planet; if we had another one to go to, we’d be on it right now.”

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH



Photo by OSU Landscape Services

**“The
greatest
threat to our
planet is the
belief that
someone
else will
save it.”**

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Earth Day 2025

This year, our office and the Student Government Association Sustainability Committee hosted the annual Earth Day event, where over 20 student and local Stillwater clubs handed out prizes and offered a variety of interactive activities at their tables.

Earth Day is like a big magnifying glass on all the things we do on campus. Working with Energy Services, Landscape Services, and others to do good things for the environment. There is always room for improvement, but I love seeing the progress we make, and every year we do just a little better.



Photo by OSU Landscape Services

Times Higher Education Impact Rankings

The results from the 2024 Times Higher Education Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) rankings are in! We are holding strong at number 10 in the USA, down from 9, overall. Our highest SDG is our focus on #2, Zero Hunger, at number 30 in the world rankings.

[See our full rankings here.](#)



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Photo by OSU Landscape Services



Three Pillars of Sustainability

The past academic year was full of research, events, and initiatives that focus our eyes on the sustainability on campus. From microplastic research to wellness walks, to helping homeless youth, OSU is blazing trails in sustainability on campus, in our community, and around the world.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

Very notable in the research realm was the opening of a new sustainability lab by CEAT, a learning environment designed to foster new innovation within their students. Research happening on campus is broad and includes civil engineering research on microplastics in human tissue, Dr. Tyler Ley's concrete research and the idea that it can be used on 3D-printed housing to helping address Oklahoma's affordable housing crisis, and OSU researchers' development of an optimization framework for electric and hybrid-electric aerial vehicles. While in alumni news, Marten Hillen was named CEO of start-up company fighting "forever chemical" crisis.

SOCIAL IMPACTS:

Not only is OSU a great place to send a student for an education, but Forbes recognized OSU as a 'Dream Employer'. Our bi-annual service day, OSU's State of Orange was named the outstanding service project of the year by ACUI for significantly contributing to its community. Another award was a bronze-level Bicycle Friendly University for our first time submitting an application in over 10 years. As for alumni news related to social impacts, two OSU Alumni are working in Colorado Springs to create a housing project to help homeless youth.

We had a couple of firsts this last academic year. It was a first for the Wellness Walk in the spring to bring awareness to mental health, and we had our first annual end-of-semester crunch time. A giant pile of leaves might not be the first thing that comes to mind when looking to take a study break from finals, but this event was different from most. It all started with a student idea that emerged on social media: combine all the leaves that landscaping collected on campus and create a giant pile to play in.

**"We don't
inherit the
earth from
our
ancestors, we
borrow it
from our
children."**

CHIEF SEATTLE



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University**

“The
environment
is where we
all meet,
where we all
have a mutual
interest; it is
the one thing
all of us
share.”

LADY BIRD JOHNSON

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Chief among the economic impacts of OSU is the news that OSU was ranked as a “Best Value” in Oklahoma. The Student Farm has been a highlight of many articles this year related to economic sustainability. Last August, they were a highlight with their partnership with Pete’s Pantry, and earlier this spring, they were put in the spotlight again when they rolled out their composting plans, incorporating waste from the farm as well as waste from a partnership with OSU Dining. Also in the past year, OSU launched the Ideal Graduate Initiative, designed to help our students be better prepared for the workforce, while a new funding campaign was started to support first-generation students.

Specifically, in our office, we saw students give back in so many ways. This year, during Spring Family Weekend and Move-Out, students donated 1,635 pounds of clothing, non-perishable foods, dorm decorations, and school supplies. These items were distributed to our own OSU professional clothing closet, as well as to local thrift stores.

Powering a Brighter Orange

Landscape Services worked with senior engineers in CEAT on their final project to increase battery charging capacity and prolonged power needs for our enclosed cargo trailer converted to support charging, storage, and landscape accessibility for battery-operated equipment while performing landscape duties on campus. Be looking for it on campus this year.

Special thanks to the CEAT team: Grayson Campbell, Anthony Migyanka, Emmy Pummill, Miguel Vergara, Greg Shildt, and Ana Gonzalez. Advising Professors: Nate Lanan and Laura Southard



Photo by Landscape Services



Contact Us:

We have covered a lot of news in this edition, and I'm sure we missed more. We appreciate all of you who have been involved in OSU's sustainability journey so far, and look forward to all we will accomplish in the coming years. If you would like to share information or suggestions with us, please reach out. If you would like to take the next step and join our Sustainability Committee, please send me an email.



www.fm.okstate.edu/landscape-services/sustainability



[@OSUgreen](https://twitter.com/OSUgreen)



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**“The Earth is
what we all
have in
common.”**

WENDELL BERRY

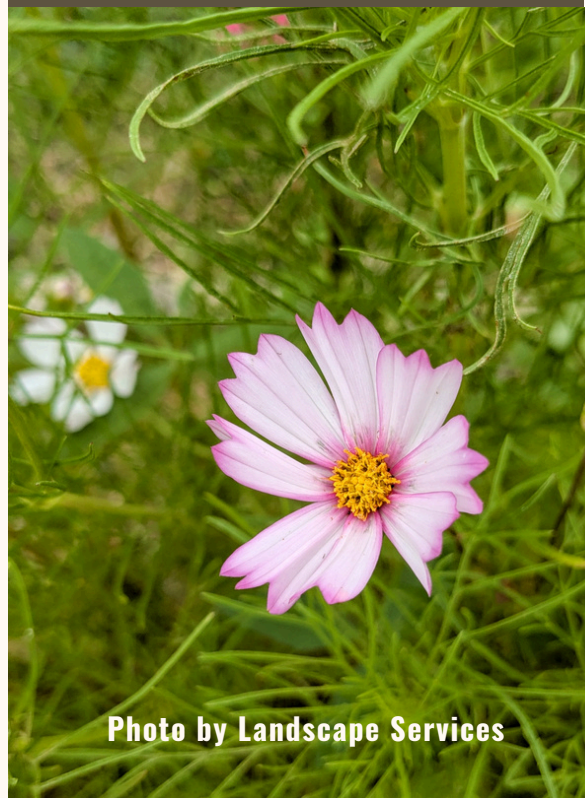


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