

HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The School was established in 1900 as “The Yale Forest School” with a founding gift from the family of Gifford Pinchot, B.A. 1889, LL.D. 1925, a pioneer in the conservation movement who would later become the first head of the U.S. Forest Service. Through Pinchot’s vision and the work of the Forest School, Yale led the way in creating a new model of forest management and natural resource conservation, educating many of the nation’s first foresters — a vanguard of professionals who shaped our modern understanding of conservation, environmental education, and public lands. In fact, during its first four decades, the School would produce the first four U.S. Forest Service chiefs.

Over the past century, the School has grown from a more narrowly focused forestry program to an international institution with a diverse array of students from across the world graduating each year. In 1972, in recognition of its increased scope, the School changed its name to the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies.

Then, on July 1, 2020, the School again changed its name to the Yale School of the Environment (YSE) to better reflect its established role as a leader in environmental scholarship and practice.

At the same time, the School established the Forest School at the Yale School of the Environment in recognition of its founding mission and because the teaching and study of forestry and forest science remain a core strength of the School. YSE students learn the principles of natural resource management through the innovative research and sustainable practice occurring at the nearly 11,000 acres of actively managed forests that constitute Yale Forests.

In addition to forest science and management, research and teaching at the Yale School of the Environment cover a broad range of environmental disciplines, including ecology, ecosystems, and biodiversity; environmental justice; environmental management and social ecology in developing societies; green chemistry and green engineering; global change science and policy; health and environment; industrial environmental management; policy, economics, and law; urban science, environmental planning, design, and values, among others.

The School has more than 5,500 living alumni who are working across the globe on a range of environmental challenges. They work in NGOs, government, business, academia, law, public health, and communications, among numerous other sectors.

Over the past two decades, the School has strengthened its connections within the wider Yale community and with external partners, introducing joint programs with Yale Law School and with the Yale Schools of Engineering & Applied Science, Management, Public Health, and Architecture, as well as with partner universities including Pace Law School, Vermont Law School, and Tsinghua University in China.

During the 1990s, YSE established and invested in a range of new centers, programs, and initiatives to expand its work beyond faculty research and classroom learning. Today, they number twenty and serve as dynamic foci for outreach to alumni, wider

professional audiences, and community organizations on critical issues such as climate change, environmental justice, tropical forestry, environmental communication, industrial ecology, and urban ecology, among others.

In 2017, YSE unveiled an ambitious new Strategic Plan. Among the plan's goals was the development of new curricula that track current and evolving strengths; increased programs and hiring to address environmental equity and diversity issues; a new emphasis on research and training in environmental communication; and expanded interdisciplinary research. Since then the School has adopted a new curriculum for the Master of Environmental Management program, which places more emphasis on subject specialization while maintaining its signature flexibility; introduced the Yale Center for Environmental Communication; and created the Yale Environmental Dialogue, an initiative that has engaged environmental leaders from a wide range of disciplines and sectors to inject new ideas and fresh energy into the national conversation on environmental policy. The School also is continuing to develop and strengthen strategic initiatives focused on environmental data, urban science, and environmental health and justice.

YSE's faculty and students have also become more diverse and representative of the wider world, convening from a range of professional, cultural, and sociological backgrounds. In 2020, the School welcomed to the faculty Dorceta Taylor and Gerald Torres, two of the country's preeminent scholars in the field of environmental justice, and Yuan Yao joined the faculty as an assistant professor of industrial ecology and sustainability systems. In 2023, Sparkle Malone, an expert on disturbance ecology and ecosystem dynamics, and Paulo Brando, an internationally recognized expert in tropical ecosystems, joined the faculty.

In 2021, a \$100 million gift from FedEx to Yale helped to establish the Yale Center for Natural Carbon Capture (YCNCC), which focuses on developing natural solutions for reducing atmospheric carbon. Liza Comita, YSE professor of tropical forest ecology, co-directs the Center, along with David Bercovici, the Frederick William Beinecke Professor of Earth & Planetary Sciences. Professors Malone and Brando, whose positions are supported by YCNCC, also serve on its Scientific Leadership Team, as do YSE faculty Mark Ashton, Mark Bradford, Peter Raymond, and Julie Zimmerman.

In 2022, the Yale School of the Environment partnered with the Three Cairns Group to launch the Three Cairns Climate Program for the Global South, a transformative initiative aimed at supporting the next generation of environmental leaders. Established with a historic gift from the Three Cairns Group, the cornerstone of the program is the Three Cairns Scholars program, which allows YSE to meet 100 percent of the demonstrated tuition need for qualified master's students from the Global South who are committed to combatting climate change in their home countries and regions. The Three Cairns Fellows program expands access to YSE's highly regarded online certificate programs. The gift also will support the development of two new certificate programs—one on urban climate leadership and one on environmental data science for climate solutions, both with a focus on the Global South.

In 2023, the Center for Green Chemistry and Green Engineering at Yale directed by Paul Anastas, Teresa and H. John Heinz III Professor in the Practice of Chemistry for the Environment, launched a U.N.-backed initiative, the Global Greenchem Innovation and

Network Programme, that will greatly accelerate research, development, and training in green chemistry in Indonesia, Jordan, Peru, Serbia, Uganda, and Ukraine.