LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Through its scholarship, teaching, practice, and power to convene, the Yale School of the Environment (YSE) is a leader in the development and implementation of sustainable practices locally and globally. The school creates new knowledge in the science of sustainability and new methods of applying that knowledge to environmental management and sustainable development, including the restoration of degraded environments.

On the Yale campus, the school has stepped up as a model in the sustainable use of resources and materials and has helped develop strategies and programs to achieve sustainability goals campus-wide. In 2016, Yale committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2050. The university formed a task force to review and propose ambitious goals for reducing emissions, with a specific charge to explore how Yale could achieve net-zero carbon emissions. YSE's Kroon Hall is a LEED platinum building. The Yale Carbon Charge, an initiative born in a YSE classroom and developed in part by YSE faculty and students, has grown into a first-of-its-kind campus-wide effort to reduce energy use through the use of internal carbon pricing.

In 2019, the university created a new multidisciplinary laboratory, the Yale University Carbon Containment Lab, which is developing and supporting innovative, scalable solutions to the climate challenge. In 2024, the CCL spun off from Yale University to become an independent nonprofit.

Yale's Center for Natural Carbon Capture, established in 2021 with a $100 million gift from FedEx, focuses on developing interventions that enhance the Earth's natural abilities to store carbon through biological and geological processes, and other methods that model natural processes. The interdisciplinary center is part of the university's broader Planetary Solutions Project.

Since its inception, the school has been working on the sustainable management of forests across the world—for biological diversity, for natural resource production, and, most recently, for carbon storage. For more than twenty years, the YSE-based Urban Resources Initiative (URI) has promoted community-based land stewardship, urban forestry, and green job training in the city of New Haven, planting more than 10,000 trees to help reduce heat island impacts and provide shade and green space. The Hixon Center for Urban Sustainability offers interactive tool kits—Climate-Ready City, Green City, Healthy City, and Built Environment—practitioners can use in adapting solutions to meet the challenges facing existing cities as well as those not yet built. "Animating the Carbon Cycle," an interactive platform developed by YSE and the Global Rewilding Alliance, presents quantitative estimates of the significant carbon drawdown potential of healthy wildlife populations and restored ecosystems. Each year, YSE students and faculty work with landowners in northeastern Connecticut to promote sustainable forestry practices as part of the Quiet Corner Initiative. Many YSE students work as research assistants at the Yale Office of Sustainability, on projects ranging from sustainable materials management to climate resilience, all of which directly support the university's Sustainability Plan 2025. Established in 1998, the Center for Industrial Ecology at YSE, which integrates many aspects of the circular economy and sustainability, brings together Yale staff, students, visiting scholars,

and practitioners to develop new knowledge at the forefront of the field of industrial ecology. Research is carried out in collaboration with other segments of the Yale community, other academic institutions, and international partners.

Classroom learning often extends into local communities, where students have helped officials with climate resilience and adaptation strategies, green infrastructure development, and sustainable land stewardship and resource management plans. Their work has addressed a sweeping array of complex environmental challenges from indoor air pollution in Ghana's Accra metropolis to the threats to Connecticut's urban coastal wetlands. Our alumni also continue this commitment to sustainability in all its forms through their leadership in academic research, major corporate initiatives, government programs, and the nonprofit sector.