



Office of  
**Sustainability**  
Princeton University



## APRIL 2023 SUSTAINABILITY NEWS



### Dark Sacred Night

On Monday, April 17th, the Office of Sustainability, in collaboration with the [Department of Astrophysical Sciences](#), hosted a screening of 'Dark Sacred Night' and Q&A session with [Professor Gaspar Bakos](#) at Frist Campus Center, followed by lunch and further discussion in the Eco-Lounge (Frist 118).

In Princeton, New Jersey, where Bakos lives and works, he dreams of a park set aside for dark sky viewing, where all surrounding lights are muted and properly shielded. By setting a good example, he hopes other communities will be inspired to do the same.

As Bakos teaches, light pollution is a problem that impacts far more than astronomical research and stargazers. New studies show that excessive amounts of outdoor lighting contribute to a range of human health problems, squander energy, and have a dramatic negative impact on wildlife, particularly birds and insects.

"Dark Sacred Night" is a special storytelling project of the Princeton University Office of Sustainability, and is now available to watch on [YouTube](#).



## Sustainable Events Recap

### Farmers Market

On Wednesdays from April 5th through May 3rd, the [Office of Sustainability](#) and the [Office of Community and Regional Affairs](#) is hosting a farmers' market at the Chapel plaza. Vendors include Catalina Empanadas, Coffee Club, The Granola Bar, Judith's Desserts, Little Star Foods, Nutty Novelties, OM Champagne Tea, Picklelicious, The Soupeteer Sprouts Flowers, and Terhune Orchards.



Questions? Email [farmersmarket@princeton.edu](mailto:farmersmarket@princeton.edu).



### Scrap Lab Ribbon Cutting

On Tuesday, March 28th, Princeton held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to formally reintroduce the West Windsor and greater Princeton University community to our food scraps composting project, the [Sustainable Composting Research at Princeton \(S.C.R.A.P.\) Lab!](#)

During the pandemic, the S.C.R.A.P Lab project was relocated from Princeton to West Windsor Township.

Since 2018, it has converted over 100 tons of food scraps into ready-to-use compost, providing the

University with a nutrient-rich soil amendment for enhancing soil health. Ceremony attendees received a tour of the facilities and had the opportunity to win a home composting system.

## Compost Support at Princeton

On Thursday, March 30th, the [School of Engineering and Applied Science](#) hosted a Student/Faculty Mixer at the Louis A. Simpson International Building. Eco Rep Leader Ezekiel Akinsanya '26, pictured right, provided compost support services for the event. This was just one of several events where compost support was provided by the Office of Sustainability in collaboration with departments and student organizations across campus.



Interested in having compost support for your event? Fill out our [Compost Support Request Form](#) or email us at [sustain@princeton.edu](mailto:sustain@princeton.edu).



## Diverse and Sustainable Supplier Fair

In partnership with the [Office of Procurement Services](#), the Office of Sustainability hosted an event in Frist Campus Center on April 21st to highlight the importance of using diverse and sustainable suppliers for gear purchasing, catering, and other event support services.

Representatives from dozens of student organizations and staff from academic and administrative departments attended a presentation by [SWAGGER](#), an organization that focuses on sustainability across their operational footprint, to discuss some of the challenges and opportunities when committing to sustainability and diversity during the event planning process.

Participants were encouraged to consult with the Office of Procurement and the Office of Sustainability for future events to minimize waste and broaden opportunities for BIPOC and women-owned businesses at Princeton.

Interested in a consultation? Email us at [sustain@princeton.edu](mailto:sustain@princeton.edu).

**Get Involved in Sustainability**



# JOIN THE **GREENING MOVE OUT** VOLUNTEER SUPPORT TEAM

- HELP COLLECT AND SORT DONATIONS, DIVERT WASTE FROM THE LANDFILL
- ITEMS WILL BE SOLD BACK TO STUDENTS AT REDUCED COST IN FALL 2023
- SIGN UP FOR ONE OR MORE 2 HOUR SHIFTS, TRAINING PROVIDED



**UNDERGRADUATE MOVE OUT**  
MAY 15-19, 10 AM - 4 PM

**SENIOR MOVE OUT**  
MAY 30-31, 9 AM - 4 PM

[VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION LINK](#)

Office of Sustainability | | | EcoReps

# CLOTHING SWAP

May 6 2023 | 11AM - 3PM | Frist MPR

***DONATE*** 4.21 - 5.5

Drop off **gently** used or **new** clothing & accessories!

Pick up **free** secondhand clothing! **5/6/23**

In collaboration with **MEND!**

**Personalize** your own project while being **sustainable!**



Scan here for  
bin locations



## News and Research



### Environmental Justice Implications of the Earthquake in Turkey and Syria

By Jayla Cornelius '23

On February 6th at 4:17 am, destruction hit both the south-central Turkish city of Nurdağı and the Syrian city of Jinderis. Tectonic plates stretching eleven miles underneath this city began moving side by side in opposite directions which, in

geological studies, is referred to as a strike-slip fault. The Arabian and Anatolian plates moved past each other and weakened the structural integrity of ten neighboring cities in the area. In the middle of the night, the fault yielded and the crust began to crack, releasing stored energy that was the equivalent of “roughly 8 million tons of TNT.” 23 million people have been directly affected and 7,000 of those residents have been declared deceased.

On February 15th, Sean Kivlehan, assistant professor of Global Health and Population at Harvard, spoke about his Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) and how shelter remains a huge concern in multiple areas of Syria which was already going through a separate humanitarian crisis. The health system was deemed fragmented and inadequate even prior to the earthquake and the level of aid required only skyrocketed further. The interruption of work and limited/nonexistent access to education force people to relocate to unknown and possibly more dangerous environments. These sensitive events surrounding Turkey and Syria have affected people all over the world and the uncertain future of both the infrastructure and economy leaves many people restless and worried.

As an environment-related blog, we hope to not only inform students about the events occurring all over the world but also emphasize the emotional toll that such events take on a number of us. The devastation ravaged on these Turkish and Syrian cities can be mitigated with more effective enforcement of building code regulations that require infrastructure plans to meet a certain standard before beginning construction. While we cannot change the past, we can learn from these events and require that both politicians and developers in cities all over the world provide an adequate level of diligence when attempting to sign off on plans that may not be up to standard for the area...[Read the full story.](#)

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## My Winged Compost Nemeses

By Katherine J. Wu, Staff Writer, Weekly Planet, The Atlantic

Last week, as my spouse and I were settling into our new home, we were dismayed to find a small cavalry of uninvited visitors in our kitchen. They raided the pantry and the fridge; they snuck into our bathroom. Every evening, we tried to shoo these invaders out the door, to no avail: The container of food scraps on our counter, waiting to be picked up by our local composting company, made the allure of our abode too strong for these fruit flies to resist.



Decomposition won't go well unless the nitrogen in food waste is balanced out by sufficient infusion of carbon from something dry and brownish. Wood chips and sawdust are common additives, but even newspaper or bits of paper bags can spike in the right chemicals. (A scoop of finished compost, if handy, works great too.) As a perk, those same ingredients tend to absorb liquid, cutting down on leakage and slime. The trick worked for me: Almost overnight, the population of bin-stalking fruit flies in my kitchen seemed to halve.

These tactics won't completely purge a kitchen of odor. **The occasional waft of decay, plus a bit of condensation, is inevitable, says Gina Talt, who oversees the Sustainable Composting Research at Princeton Lab.** In recent years, some retailers have taken to hocking super-pricey food-scrap collection containers with ventilated lids, fitted with carbon filters, that can cut down on some of the funk...[Read the full story.](#)

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## “A Century and a Half Worth of Stuff”: Princeton’s Energy Story in Transition

By Alex Norbrook '26, The Prog

Ted Borer invites me into his office nestled within the MacMillan



Building, a squat and slightly faded brick complex built in the early sixties. Posters and tchotchkes adorn his room: schematics of campus with colored lines connecting buildings; banknotes from China, Colombia, Dubai, Germany; a button declaring “I love microgrids;” a union bumper sticker from NJ Local 68 Operating Engineers; a photo of Einstein riding a bicycle.

Princeton is in the midst of a radical energy transition. All across campus, construction workers assemble the components of a net zero future, building out acres of solar panels, drilling thousands of boreholes in the ground and burying hot water pipelines with the goal of decarbonizing by 2046. For most of its history, Princeton followed national energy trends. Now it is leading them. I met up with Borer to get a walk-through of this transformative change.

“I think a lot of my job, or maybe even my calling,” Borer tells me, “is to explain really complex nerdy stuff in as simple a way as possible, so that the average person who’s not a nerdy engineer is like, ‘oh yeah, that’s pretty obvious.’”... Hidden between the West Garage and New College West, Princeton’s energy generation facility sprawls across four structures: the cogeneration building, the chilled water plant, a 2.6 million gallon thermal storage water tank, and a cooling tower stack. Despite the plant’s relative efficiency—up to 80% versus 35% of regular natural gas generation—its principal natural gas turbine is on track to be (mostly) replaced by a far more efficient, and carbon-free, geo-exchange heating and cooling system...[Read the full story.](#)

## Staff Appreciation



# Meet Ed

I love **camping** in my RV  
I am a **father** of 3  
I take care of **students** the same way  
I'd take care of my kids

I feel **respected** when...  
students **respect** one another

Custodian  
with Facilities since 2002



[sustain@princeton.edu](mailto:sustain@princeton.edu)

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