
Created By and For the Residents of the Eco-House
“The voyage of discovery lies not in finding new landscapes, but in having new eyes.” –Marcel Proust

The mission of the Plymouth State University Eco-House is to demonstrate environmentally sustainable technology in a residential setting, to provide hands-on experiential learning opportunities to PSU students and the surrounding region, to collect and disseminate information about sustainability, and to help others live in more sustainable ways.

About: The house has 9 single person bedrooms on the second floor along with two bathrooms and a common living room for communal bonding. Wireless internet and laundry facilities are other appealing features of the house. On the first floor is one large communal kitchen where residents experiment with home cooked meals for community pot lucks and various homesteading practices. Off of the kitchen is a student designed library where residents work on projects such as the bookcase which was made by residents with help from Josh Trought, director of D Acres the organic permaculture farm in Dorchester, NH. The bookcase is full of books on topics such as Permaculture, geography, and homesteading practices. On the other side of the first floor is where the EcoHouse Offices are located. There are three offices in the space which belong to Common Ground, PSU’s environmental awareness and social justice group, PSU’s Office of Environmental Sustainability, and Brian Eisenhauer, a director of the house. The meeting room in the space is utilized by campus and outside organizations to discuss current affairs and projects. Workshops like building Cold Frames have taken place in the EcoHouse Office space along with seminars like one from Local Foods Plymouth. In the backyard of the EcoHouse are Permaculture gardens providing perennial habitat and food, and space for students to grow their own vegetables, with the option of using a student built cold-frame. There is a
student built 3-bin composting system for all of EcoHouse’s organic food scraps and some of PSU’s coffee grounds to be composted and eventually used in the gardens. Also in the backyard is a storage unit known as the EcoShed built by PSU students in Steve Whitman and Bryan Felice’s Sustainable Structures class. There is a parking spot next to the shed which will be removed in the near future to expand the house’s garden space and to further emphasize the house’s sustainable living practice.

**Co-Directors of House:** Brian Eisenhauer and Steve Whitman

**Residence Director:** Eric Deely

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**Purpose of Contract:** This contract was made by and for the current and future residents of the house to ensure that each person recognizes their personal responsibility to protecting the environment around us by reducing our community ecological footprint. To become a more resilient global community, we recognize the importance of our small, yet significant actions in our own house and that they make a difference in the protection of all other species around us.

**What is Sustainable Living?**

“In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught”

—Baba Dioum

“Sustainable living” is a lifestyle that seeks to incorporate a balance between conserving the Earth’s natural resources, habitats, and processes with the way human systems and communities function. It embraces the benefits of “living lightly” in regard to the way we treat our environment as well as the benefits it has to community development (working as a group for a common cause). Those who commit to living sustainably consider the environment before acting, whether it be choosing the right mode of transportation or the way they eat.
What constitutes Sustainable Living at the Eco-House?

“The Earth is what we all have in common. It is what we are made of and what we live from, and we cannot damage it without damaging those with whom we share it.”

—Wendell Berry

As a resident of the Eco-House, we all agreed that there is personal responsibility attached to each person’s role in the house. We recognize that working collectively to learn, do, and then teach sustainable behavioral methods can potentially have a profound effect on the campus population as well as the wider town of Plymouth. The beauty of this house is that it’s a group of like-minded students coming together to live the way they believe is right. Below we have identified specific goals that are to be expected by each resident of the house to live in an environmentally conscious manner.

Residents try to conserve their personal energy consumption by...

• Turning lights off when you leave a room
• Unplugging appliances, laptops, etc. when not in use
• Biking or walking to class or to a friend’s over driving

Residents should practice conscious consumption and try to minimize their waste/dispose of it properly through acts such as...

• Recycling materials that can be recycled (glass, aluminum, etc.)
• Re-using items that don’t need to be thrown away
• Buying Local (whether it is organic food, from local farms or second hand clothes!)
• Composting food waste and other organics in the backyard compost bins
• Using a reusable water bottle and coffee mug!
• Understanding what you buy (food, cleaning products, products with excessive packaging, etc.)

Residents use water wisely by...

• Taking shorter showers.
• Shutting off the faucet when brushing your teeth.
• Saving water by only washing full loads of laundry rather than just a few items.

Residents value and appreciate nature because they...

• Hike! Rock climb! Ski! Etc. outdoor activities!
• Take walks through the woods. It’s amazing what solitude can do for the stressed out mind of a college student.
• Utilize the garden. Harvest food or flowers. Experiment with growing their own herbs.
• Do this with your friends, even if they don’t have experience in any of the above.
• They may find they value nature just as much as you do and understand your reasons in reducing your ecological footprint.

Residents are encouraged to always remember the reasons they chose to live here personally, as well as the common reason we all share as a group: We all value the natural environment around us and understand the need to protect it. Each resident is reminded to take advantage of the Eco-House, their fellow residents/friends, and the faculty involved with the project. It is an opportunity to experiment! An opportunity to be creative, think outside the box, and delve into what each resident may specifically be interested in. Whether it be holding a workshop, giving a tour of the house, or testing green building methods, residents have the chance to make this experience exactly what you want.

There can be no purpose more inspiring than to begin the age of restoration, reweaving the wondrous diversity of life that still surrounds us.

Edward O. Wilson