



People and Nature: Our Future is in the Balance

National Wildlife Federation

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**Lewis & Clark College
Portland, Oregon
Spring 2002, Purchasing**

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Kyoto-Compliance Campaign

BACKGROUND

Campus Profile

Lewis & Clark College is a private four-year liberal arts college located in Portland, Oregon. About 1,700 undergraduates attend Lewis & Clark. In addition, another 700 law students attend the adjoining Northwestern School of Law. The schools have strong environmental studies and environmental law programs.

Group/Class Profile

This project was organized by members of Students Engaged in Eco-Defense (SEED) with the cooperation of student government, the Associated Students of Lewis & Clark (ASLC).

Contacts

Julian Dautremont-Smith
Graduation Date: May 2003
503-768-7157
julian@lclark.edu

Eban Goodstein
Associate Professor of Economics
503-768-7626
eban@lclark.edu

GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Short-Term Goals

The primary goal of this project was to raise annual student fees to make Lewis & Clark College the first college in the country to officially meet the specifications of the Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement that called for the United States to reduce its emissions to 7% below 1990 levels. Kyoto-compliance for the college would initially be accomplished through offset purchases and progressing with greater and greater on-campus emissions reductions.

Purchasing offsets are essentially providing funding to projects that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – green energy projects or tree plantings, for example – and subtracting the amount reduced from the offset purchaser's total emissions. A subsidiary goal in this endeavor was to inventory the college's current and 1990 emissions and to develop a process to easily estimate Lewis & Clark's annual emissions every year. Another subsidiary goal was to educate students about the danger of global warming, the college's contribution to it and options to reduce their personal contribution to global warming. Additional short term goals were to get media coverage and to inspire other colleges to take action and reduce their own contributions to global warming.

Long-Term Goals

The ultimate goal of this project is for Lewis & Clark to become climate neutral, i.e. having no net carbon emissions. In addition, we hope to unite with other colleges across the country to

form a coalition of climate neutral colleges to demonstrate to policy makers, business leaders and other colleges that climate neutrality is feasible, desirable and relatively inexpensive.

Accomplishments

Lewis & Clark's 1990 and 2000 GHG emissions were inventoried in the summer of 2001. The inventory showed that Kyoto compliance would require a reduction of approximately 3,250 tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂). We then investigated the offset market to find a supplier of high quality offsets at a reasonable price. We found the Climate Trust,¹ an organization based in Oregon whose offsets cost \$5 per ton of CO₂ reduced and currently come from a wind power project in Oregon, a landfill gas collection power project in Washington, a forestry preservation project with the Lummi Indian Tribe and the Northwest Indian College in Washington and a car pool matching program in Oregon. At this price, we calculated that, allowing for a reasonable increase in GHG emissions, Lewis & Clark could purchase enough offsets for Kyoto compliance with an increase of \$10 in annual student fees.



Julian D. Smith displays fluorescent light retrofits

We then gathered the 35 signatures necessary to place an initiative on the ballot and worked with ASLC to hold a special election to see if students would support such a fee increase. The election, held online over 3 days at the beginning of February, was publicized with at least 7 campus-wide emails from the student body president and a voter's pamphlet was distributed to everyone's campus mailbox. During the vote, members of SEED set up tables in various well-traveled areas of campus and encouraged people to vote by providing information and answering questions about the initiative and global warming in general. We also had a computer set up for people to vote on and we distributed stickers that said "I voted to help Lewis & Clark fight global warming today." In the end, the initiative was approved 83% in favor to 17% against with a voter turnout of 40%, the highest voter turnout in an ASLC election in recent memory.

Challenges and Responses

Unfortunately, actually getting the necessary funds after the student vote became quite a challenge. First, after approval from students, the fee increase proposal went to the Lewis & Clark Board of Trustees for approval. Despite a spirited defense by the student body president, the Board did not approve the fee increase. They were concerned specifically about the "earmarking" of funding to a specific expenditure. They suggested that offset purchasing should go through the regular chartering and budgeting process like all other expenditures. However, they did imply that that if student government comes back next year and asks for a regular \$10 fee increase that is not specifically tied to a particular expenditure they would approve it with no questions asked.

¹ The Climate Trust was formed in July 1997 after the passage of an Oregon law, House Bill 3283, which requires all new fossil fuel energy facilities built in the state to avoid, sequester, or displace a portion of their previously unregulated carbon dioxide emissions. A plant developer may choose to do this through the purchase of offsets from a "qualified nonprofit." The Climate Trust meets the requirements of the law and is classified as a qualified nonprofit. Details on the Climate Trust and its offset sources are available at <http://www.climatetrust.org/>.

Fortunately, as a backup plan, I had already submitted a request for funding to the Chartering and Budgeting Commission (CBC). I testified before the Board and explained the circumstances and requested that, given the wide student support, they try to make room within their existing budget (i.e. without the fee increase) to fund Kyoto compliance. I also promised them that we would seek a general increase in student fees next year so the sacrifice necessary to provide full funding without the fee increase would be for this year only. After deliberations, they decided to allocate the full \$17,000 necessary for Kyoto compliance.

It still was not over however. Upon hearing that Kyoto compliance had been allocated \$17,000 from the existing budget, a number of student groups who had not received as much money as they would like became upset. ASLC organized a forum and many student group leaders came to voice their concerns. While many claimed to support Kyoto compliance, they felt that, because of Kyoto, their groups had received less money than they would have otherwise. They requested that another student body vote to take the money away from Kyoto and give it to the General Allocations Board (GAB) for distribution to needy student groups. After much debate, ASLC voted not to hold another vote and to allow Kyoto to keep its money. They did this for several reasons:

- 1) The people on CBC stated that they had budgeted Kyoto last, after everything else had received what CBC felt to be a reasonable budget.
- 2) Had Kyoto not applied for funds, the funds that were allocated to Kyoto would not have gone to the student groups who were upset.
- 3) No group received a budget cut because of Kyoto, at best (even if #2 above is untrue), they just didn't receive as big of an increase as they would have liked. This is because the Yearbook applied for \$11,500 less than last year and many expensive club sports also did not reapply for money.
- 4) Even if the decision was a bad one, CBC's budgeting process was done correctly and therefore it should stand. CBC saw each budget request and heard each group defend their budget and thus they knew how to best allocate funds.
- 5) If another student vote were held, the issue would be presented unfairly as student groups vs. Kyoto, despite the above 4 points.
- 6) It would be bad precedent to allow a general student vote to supersede the budget decisions of student government funding bodies. It opens the door for challenges anytime someone is unhappy with the budget.

Unfortunately, this logic did not pacify all of the student groups and someone filed a petition with enough signatures to force a student vote on the issue.

After much thought, we decided to give the money allocated to Kyoto to GAB in order to avoid another vote. I did this because another vote would be divisive and, even if we did win, we would probably lose support in the long term for Kyoto compliance. Not content to wait until next year when we actually get a fee increase, we have endeavored to raise the full \$17,000 necessary to purchase the offsets and meet Kyoto in fall 2002.

When progressive filmmaker and author Michael Moore came to campus, we used the opportunity to do some fundraising. Since the event was paid for with student fees, students were allowed free tickets while non-students were charged \$5 per ticket. We came up with a

plan to get as many free tickets as possible as students and then to scalp them at the door. We worked with the event organizers (who were okay with the idea) and by selling slightly marked up tickets and asking for donations we were about to raise about \$1,500 towards Kyoto compliance.

Our second fundraiser was an Earth Day concert/bake sale asking people to donate the \$10 they had voted to pay but weren't allowed because of the Board of Trustees vote. On Earth Day, we had 3 student bands play for 3 hours in the middle of campus. We also had vegan treats to give away for whatever donation people could afford. Lastly, Dean of Students Jon Eldridge "boffed" with students for \$5. "Boffing" is a game in which two combatants hit each other with padded weapons. The Gaming Society was kind enough to loan us their boffing equipment. In the end, and we raised about \$2000 which will be matched with a grant we were able to secure from the GAB.

This will puts us at about \$5,500 of the necessary \$17,000. We plan to hold an additional fundraiser concert at the beginning of fall semester to raise some additional money. Through these fundraising efforts, I think we should be able to raise most of the necessary funds for Kyoto compliance. Then at the beginning of next year, I will apply to GAB for remaining funds necessary for Kyoto compliance. Since they now have an extra \$17,000 in their budget and it is highly doubtful that student groups will need it all, I think I should be able to get enough for full Kyoto compliance!

ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Stakeholder Engagement

Lewis & Clark's student government, the Associated Students of Lewis & Clark (ALSC), were very helpful in this project. In particular, the Elections Commissioner, the chair of the Chartering and Budgeting Commission and the chair of the General Allocations board all helped in explaining the appropriate procedures involved in putting the measure on the ballot and in receiving funding. The ASLC President also aided in publicizing the original student vote and in defending the fee increase proposal before the Lewis & Clark Board of Trustees. The Publications department was particularly helpful in doing publicity for the project. Residence Life, the Registrar's office, Facilities Services, Dean's Office and the Business Office all cooperated in and provided data for the GHG emissions inventory. The Student Activities Office and Students Organized For Activities provided support for fundraising events. In addition, a number of staff, including the President, the Provost and the Dean of Students made significant monetary contributions to the campaign. Finally, several faculty members provided advice, as well as both moral and monetary support.

Funding and Staffing

The original GHG inventory, performed over 2 months in Summer 2001, was funded with a student/faculty research grant from the college. The grant provided \$2,600 for the student and \$3,000 for the faculty member. Funding during the school year came from the Campus Ecology Fellowship Program. Further research to be carried out this summer is being funded by the Campus Ecology Fellowship Program, the Garden Club of America Award for Summer Environmental Studies and Second Nature.

Policies

No policies have been adopted yet. However, it is our hope that with the success of and obvious support for Kyoto-compliance, the College administration will make an official commitment to further GHG emissions reductions.

National Wildlife Federation's Campus Ecology Program

This project was funded in part by the Campus Ecology Fellowship Program. The funding was instrumental in educating the student body about global warming and the college's contribution to it and then mobilizing the student body to support the fee increase for Kyoto compliance. The wonderful Campus Ecology staff also helped in publicizing the project and in garnering national press coverage.

OUTREACH, EDUCATION AND PRESS

To educate students about the global warming and about why Lewis & Clark should take action we distributed several different informational flyers and wrote articles in *The Pioneer Log*, the student newspaper. We also organized a College Climate Response conference with the Green House Network. Over 70 people representing more than 25 colleges attended. We had a number of great speakers at the conference. Ross Gelbspan, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and author of *The Heat is On*, presented the keynote address, "Climate Change: Global Challenge, Global Solution." Mike Burnett, executive director of The Climate Trust discussed "The Emerging Carbon Offset Market" while U.S. Representative Earl Blumenauer focused on "Climate and the Political Climate." Finally, Jane Lubchenco, a professor of zoology at Oregon State University, gave an update on the current scientific knowledge about global warming. A great deal of information about campus greenhouse gas emissions inventories, on-campus emissions reductions opportunities and strategies for change was shared. The immediate outcome of the conference was the formation of an email listserve for all conference attendees to facilitate further sharing of strategies, success stories and more.

Both the conference and the student vote received a fair bit of media coverage and other publicity. After the Conference, District 3 Congressional Representative Earl Blumenauer issued a Statement for the Record praising the students of Lewis & Clark for their vote. The *Oregonian* ran a story on the conference as well as the vote. The vote was also mentioned in a piece in the *Los Angeles Times*. In addition, a Seattle NPR affiliate as well as KBOO radio broadcast stories about the vote. The campaign received regular and fair coverage in both the Lewis & Clark student newspaper, *The Pioneer Log* and *Campus Connections*, the College's online newspaper. We also worked with the Earth Day Network and the Kyoto Now! student movement to publicize Lewis & Clark's program and to encourage other students to start similar campaigns.

REVIEW AND REPORTING

Lewis & Clark's GHG emissions will be reinventoried every summer to determine how many offsets are required for Kyoto compliance.

CLOSING REMARKS

Find out what your student government can do and use it your advantage.