

Empowering UNI Changemakers

Learning about sustainability can be intimidating, especially in a time where there are two very divided sides when it comes to environmental health. Our social media and the web is saturated with alarming headlines to get our attention and make us take action. Though this can be helpful for quick support, viewing such negative environmental content repeatedly can be very overwhelming and demoralizing. I've noticed that it makes me feel worse to read this content and educate myself than to avoid news all together. But this leads people to be uninformed, and progress to be impossible.

One of my biggest takeaways from this class was that in order to create positive change, we need to communicate effectively to build group influence. Future generations will not get to enjoy our Earth as we do if we continue to argue with each other, exploit our resources, drown ourselves in negativity, and act selfishly. Our civilization thrives by connecting with each other, supporting those in need, using our resources consciously, and giving back to the Earth.

My goal for the Panther Ovation project was to share the positive side of environmental health and sustainability, while practicing my skills in digital advertising and design. I created two types of newsletters that vary in their content, but follow the same goal of providing engaging and informative content that is easily digestible in hope to empower and unify students to become local changemakers. One of the newsletters will be an ongoing project for the Panther Efficiency and Sustainability Team and the other is a short-term personal project that will be transformed into a blog with the content in the future.

Panther Efficiency and Sustainability Newsletter

Mission: Create a UNI community dedicated to helping our campus and Cedar Falls become more vibrant and resilient by informing others on PEST initiatives and sharing local environmental news.

Primary Content:

- PEST projects that promote environmental responsibility and resource efficiency
- Positive local industry news
- External opportunities to support the Cedar Valley community

Tone/Voice:

- Inclusive: Use language that welcomes diverse perspectives and backgrounds.
- Energetic and lighthearted: Use authenticity, optimism, enthusiasm to engage others and make heavy subjects more approachable.
- Informative: Share accurate, accessible information about sustainability and efficiency topics.

Themes:

- Educational development is necessary to create change and a resilient community.
- Conserving resources on a local level leads to big change.
- Sustainability is a combined effort that takes all perspectives.
- Support, influence, and innovation come from a strong community.

PEST Newsletter #1

Panther Efficiency and Sustainability Team NEWSLETTER

November 10, 2025



Organization and Optimism

PEST has hit the ground running this year with a rebrand and new motivation! With fresh faces, bold ideas, and a shared passion for sustainability, our team is ready to take environmental and social responsibility at UNI a step further.

This year, our three teams are channeling their energy into education, collaboration, and action to make sustainability approachable and impactful across the Cedar Valley. Together, we have the skills and dedication to move mountains and create lasting change!

Meet your 2025/2026 Exec Board that will be leading the charge on PEST initiatives!



2025/2026 Exec Board

President

Sophia Thompson
Major: Environmental Science
Year: Senior
Contact: thompsbsa@uni.edu

Vice President

Connor Doyle
Major: Environmental Science
Resource Management
Year: Junior
Contact: doylecad@uni.edu

Projects Lead

Olivia Merksick
Major: Environmental Science
Year: Graduate
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Events Lead

Lindsey Stabenow
Major: IDS & Psychology
Year: Junior
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Communications Lead

Jada Dachtler
Major: IDS
Year: Senior
Contact: dachtlej@uni.edu

Community Relations

Parker Scott
Major: Environmental Science
Year: Junior
Contact: scottpal@uni.edu

Campus Relations

Lauren Elrp
Major: Environmental Resource Management
Year: Sophomore
Contact: elrpl@uni.edu

New PEST Logo!



Want to make an impact? [JOIN OUR TEAM](#)

Upcoming Events & Reminders

Full PEST Team Meeting!

When: Thursday, November 13th at 3:30pm
Where: Sustainability Office, Lathan Hall 142

Reminders: Each team come with a list of initiatives you want to focus on for the next few months. We're making moves this meeting! 🐝

Motivational Interviewing Workshop

Great opportunity to practice your leadership and communication skills!

When: Wednesday, November 12th from 2:00pm-3:00pm
Where: Oak Room, Mauker Union

Iowa Waste Reduction Center Ethics Night

Join a discussion led by the IWRC about ethical decision-making when navigating environmental and social challenges.

We will have a few slides for this event so show up and represent PEST with us!

When: Tuesday, November 18th from 6:00-7:30pm
Where: CBB 225



IWRC Iowa Waste Reduction Center

[SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER!](#)

1

2

3

PEST Newsletter #2 (In progress)

Northern Iowa EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

PEST Newsletter

December 8, 2025



Helping to build a resilient campus through collaboration, education, and creativity



PEST JOINS NISG

PEST is in the process of becoming an organization under the Northern Iowa Student Government! This will give us opportunities to connect with more people, combine our resources, and build our influence. A great step in building our community and support system!



Iowa City Becomes a Sustainability Leader

The University of Iowa gets mentioned in the New York Times for their free bus system that lowers emissions from personal vehicles. Iowa City is on track to meet their climate action goal of replacing 55% of vehicle trips with sustainable alternatives!

[Read More](#)



Iowa Waste Reduction Center Ethics Night

PEST members attended the IWRC Ethics Night to gain tools for communicating about environment health and navigating controversial topics.

Key Takeaways from IWRC Ethics Night

- As sustainability leaders we are meant to educate, encourage, and support.
- To solve a challenges between people with opposing viewpoints, we need to have inclusive language, empathy, and understanding.
- Sustainable solutions often lead to cutting costs and simplifying processes. It's a win for everyone!

Want to Make an Impact? [Join Our Team!](#)

PEST Updates & Reminders

PEST x Destress Days: Garland Making Event

Date:

Time:

Info:

Next PEST Meeting

Date:

Time:

Want to receive more UNI sustainability content?

[Sign up](#)

WildWorld Newsletter

Mission: Provide resources for students to learn about environmental health and sustainability, take action, and deepen their appreciation for nature through interactive and engaging content.

Primary Content:

- Positive industry news (global and local)
- Plant quizzes and games
- Job board with unique “green” internships and fellowships
- Educational podcast or video

Tone/Voice:

- Inclusive: Use language that is digestible and simple to cater to different levels of environmental knowledge.
- Informative: Share accurate content from credible sources.
- Empowering: Use enthusiasm and passion to inspire action.


Themes:

- We can take care of the Earth just as it takes care of us.
- We all have the power to create positive change, we just need the will to act.
- All species are interconnected and depend on each other for survival.
- In order to create positive environmental change, we first need to learn about and connect with our Earth.

WildWorld Newsletter #1

WILDWORLD

Environmental Newsletter November 16th, 2025



NATURE'S BULLETIN


BIG MILESTONE IN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
Green sea turtles are reclassified from an "endangered" species to "least concern." Community-based efforts to support nesting females and their eggs have led to global awareness and action. Since the late 20th century, populations have increased around 28%! [READ MORE](#)

NEW INVENTION TO BATTLE MICROPLASTICS
Engineer from Essex created a filter that attaches to washing machines and industrial units to remove microplastics. As the water is pumped out, this product catches microplastic to save them from polluting the ocean and harming marine life! [READ MORE](#)

ILLINOIS GETS WILD
In August, 2025, Illinois' legislature passed the nation's first and only "Rewilding Bill!" On January 1st, 2026, citizens can convince the Illinois DNR to implement rewilding strategies into its conservation efforts. Let's get the word out there to our Illinois friends! [READ MORE](#)


STAY UP TO DATE ON THE BEST OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL INDUSTRY!

TRAIL TRIVIA



SUGAR PINE DOUGLAS-FIR WHITE SPRUCE
HINT: MINNESOTA
[CLICK TO REVEAL THE ANSWER!](#)

Protect the Wild



SIGN PETITIONS NOW!

GREEN GIGS (2026 Internships/Seasonal Positions)

Marine Science Education Intern With work students, snorkel, and kayak	Marathon, Florida	➤
Forestry Wildlife Technician Internship Survey sensitive wildlife and camp with the crew	Burney, California	➤
Arborist Trainee Intern Learn about tree climbing, chainsaw use, and plants	Lake Forest Park, WA	➤
Rocky Mountain Education Fellowship Develop and lead outdoor adventures	Estes Park, CO	➤

Experience Katmai's unique volcanic landscape that is home to thousands of brown bears.

BEST TIME TO VISIT
Visit in August for maximum daylight and bear activity. Make sure to book camp spots early!

NP SHOUTOUT
Katmai National Park
Alaska, USA



WILD WONDERS



Forest Bathing

Being immersed in nature while practicing mindfulness increases mental clarity and reduces stress!

1. **WANDER** in a secluded forest and find a spot that appeals to you.
2. **SIT** comfortably and relax your body.
3. **NOTICE** your breath patterns and begin to slow them.
4. **ENGAGE** your senses. What do you see, hear, feel, smell, and taste?

CHANGING THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY



FOR THE PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

CHALLENGE Forest bathe for a total of 25 minutes this week!

