

# SDSTATE SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

April 18, 2017



## Upcoming Earth Day Events

**4/1-29** Spring Cleaning Donation Drive, Habitat for Humanity ReStore

**4/3-29** Spring Clean-up, City of Brookings

**4/8** City Paint Exchange, Brookings Landfill

**4/20** Spruce Up SDSU Day Kickoff, 5 pm, SDSU Student Union

**4/22** Earth Day, Larson Nature Center, 10 am-12 pm

**4/26** SDSU Arbor Day Tree Planting, 10 am, University Arbor Day Park

**4/27** Green Drinks "The Truth Behind the Bee Problem," 6 pm, Wooden Legs

**4/28** Arbor Day 5K Run, 6:30 am, SDSU Performing Arts Center

**4/28** Arbor Day Tree Planting, 12:15 pm, East boulevard in front of Brookings Activity Center

## Earth Day is Every Day at SDSU

Roses are red, violets are blue, but did you know that campus landscaping is green, too? While April is host to Earth Day and national garden month, SDSU's Facilities and Services looks at the sustainability of our landscaping year round. In fact, 2017 is SDSU's 9th year in a row to be recognized as a "Tree Campus USA". This national organization recognizes universities that establish and maintain a healthy tree community.

It's not just trees that add to the campus landscaping ecosystem. Look across campus and you are bound to spot a native or pollinator plant. These plants are chosen for their longevity and positive benefit as wildlife habitat. Both maintain a functional ecosystem by offering food resources or habitat to insects, birds, or mammals. You'll notice, too that campus landscaping is covered with a thick layer of mulch, created from campus trees that had to be cut down. Not only does the mulch help reduce weeds and minimize water needs, but it also adds nutrients back to the soil as it slowly decomposes.

Furthermore, campus landscaping includes 4 bioswales and bioretention areas. Some of these areas look like general landscaping on the outside, but underneath they provide a natural way to remove pollutants from rain water prior to entering storm sewer systems. Other areas appear as sunken turf and allow rainwater to collect, slow down, and infiltrate to a certain extent. The benefits of these storm water best management practices include: trapping coarse litter

from entering waterways, slowing water velocity, reducing overall flow volumes and rates to storm sewer systems, creating unique ecosystems for plant and animal life, and removing particulate pollution from the storm sewer system.

With multiple bioswales, over 6 acres of garden beds, and around 2,500 trees on campus, SDSU finds sustainable landscaping a benefit not only to our campus but also the surrounding ecosystem priceless. We hope as spring comes around and flowers are in bloom, you can enjoy it, too. You are welcome to come and join SDSU in celebrating their Tree Campus USA recognition at campus' annual tree planting event April 26th 10am in the University Arbor Day Park.

### Did You Know?

In the spring, Facilities and Services protects our waterways by sweeping up all the sand that is laid down in the winter. That sand is then reused by the Brookings Regional Landfill as a cover material.



Figure 1: SDSU sand pile

## Dumpster Diving!



Figure 3: Sustainability Specialist, Jennifer McLaughlin, and students, McKinley Lain and Jenny Dailey, sort waste during last week's waste audit.

The Sustainability Specialist along with 4 student volunteers recently conducted campus' second waste audit. The purpose of a waste audit is to assess how well our campus recycles. To do the study, trash and recycling was collected from different buildings across campus. The recycling was then sorted through and all trash items are put to the side. This shows how much contamination (or trash) there was in the recycling. Too much contamination causes recycling to be sent to the landfill. Next, the trash was sorted through and placed into separate piles

for trash and items that could have been recycled. Adding the recycling piles together and then the trash piles together shows what campus' recycling rate could be if all products had been recycled properly.

**The results:** we currently have high contamination rates. However, if we all recycled correctly we could have a 30% recycling rate - nearly double our current recycling rate!

Common items that were found in the trash that could have been recycled included:

- Plastic bottles
- Paper bags
- Cans
- Paper

## Help SDSU Reduce Waste by Picking up Trash

It's time for the 8<sup>th</sup> annual *Spruce Up SDSU Day!* This year not only will participants be able to help beautify campus, but they can also help collect data to reduce the total waste generated on campus. How? A new app, Litterati, maps where litter is found and helps assess commonly discarded items. All participants have to do is take a picture of each piece of trash as they pick it up, tag it, and upload it. Knowing the place and type of litter found on campus could help us reduce the total amount of litter all year round.

Download the app today and help us keep campus clean!

Anyone or any group of students, faculty, and/or staff can participate in Spruce-Up Day. Trash bags and gloves are provided by Facilities & Services. Proper disposal of litter is clarified to all participants at the event kick-off according to the latest Facilities & Services rules.

**Brief kick off gathering: 5:00 p.m. Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup> (rain or shine) at Union Market Place**

For any further information or questions about this event, please contact:

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Figure 4: Students pick up trash north of Crothers Engineering Hall during last year's Spruce-Up SDSU Day.

### Sustainability Tidbits

#### Help Improve Campus Biking

The SDSU Bike Committee is looking for feedback regarding how to improve biking on our campus. Here is the link to a quick survey.

<http://sdstatebikesurveyp2017.questionpro.com>

#### RecycleMania Results

SDSU just finished competing in RecycleMania, a nationwide competition between colleges and universities to see who can recycle the most and reduce the most waste over an 8-week period. SDSU placed 73 out of 245 schools in the per capita category by recycling 14 lbs. per person during the competition. SDSU placed 86<sup>th</sup> out of 214 in the total recycling category by recycling 182,713 lbs.!

#### Book Recycling Available!

##### Students

Place books in one of the drop off boxes located in Rotunda Breezeway, the Union, and Larson Commons.

##### Faculty & Staff

Follow directions on:

[www.sdstate.edu/sustainability/miscellaneous-recycling](http://www.sdstate.edu/sustainability/miscellaneous-recycling)

#### Get Involved

Follow SDState Sustainability on Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram @SustainSDState.

Contact the Sustainability Specialist at 605-688-6821 or via [e-mail](mailto:).