

FALL 2025

chirp



Sign up for quarterly releases

The Sustainability Office
Newsletter



Fall Sustainability Series 2025 Recap

From habitat restoration with the Snoqualmie Tribe to our Arboretum unveiling, we hope you enjoyed our Fall Sustainability Series. We'd like to thank all our guest speakers, attendees, the Student Environmental Sustainability Fund, and our partners and collaborators for making the series a huge success. We hope to see you at our future events! Here are a couple events we'd like to highlight.



Arboretum Unveiling

Bellevue College's Arboretum has gotten an update, and with new zonal and individual species signs! Our Arboretum has 5 zones with over 100 species spread throughout; each zone is distinct, and with a welcome sign along the walking path to provide additional information about the zone. There are also small species signs in front of individual plants with additional information. Special thanks to Pamela SeaMonster for providing Lushootseed translations for our signs. Stop by and enjoy the Arboretum!



Voices of Action

This was a powerful session where we engaged in meaningful conversations with community members, Bellevue College students, and staff about their sustainability work. Featured topics included climate, water quality, harmful algal blooms, ocean acidification, tire and road-wear particles, and conservation.

Many people know that carbon dioxide (CO₂) contributes to climate change, but fewer realize that it also alters the chemistry of the ocean. Ocean acidification is one of the most serious—but lesser-known—effects of climate change. About 30% of the CO₂ in the atmosphere is absorbed by the ocean, which decreases the ocean's pH and makes the water more acidic.

Even a small change in pH can have a major impact on marine life. Acidification harms shell-building animals by making their shells thinner, weaker, or unable to form at all. It can also affect the behavior and survival of other marine species.

The implications go far beyond individual animals. Clownfish help maintain coral reef health by eating small species that would otherwise overpopulate. Dungeness crabs are vital to coastal food webs and support local fishing economies. Their decline could be the end of entire ecosystems.



Hydropower Bike Tour

The Hydropower Bike Tour with the BC Wellness Center and Sustainability Office was a fun mix of learning about sustainability, connecting with fellow participants, and enjoying an afternoon bike ride with a great group of students.

The first part of the trip consisted of a tour of Woods Creek, located north of Monroe, which is home to a sustainability center and a food forest. A food forest imitates the structure of a natural forest ecosystem and features diverse plantings that benefit the environment—such as providing food sources, wildlife habitat, and air and water purification, just to name a few.

The Woods Creek Hydroelectric Project produces electricity for over 200 homes per year on average, and over 600 homes at full generation. It's co-located with the Snohomish County Public Utility District (PUD) Sustainability Center to provide education on renewable energy and the natural environment. We toured through the powerhouse and even got to see spawning salmon!



Public Transit Orientation

Wednesday, January 21st, 10:30 - 11:20 AM

SIGN UP HERE

Learn how to use public transit in our region! Join Hopelink for a short field trip; You'll take a short walk to the Eastgate Park & Ride, use an ORCA card (provided) and ride the bus back to campus. This is a great opportunity to learn how to ride the bus and receive a free, pre-loaded ORCA card (\$11 value)!

New Outreach Coordinator

Anne van Gessel joined the Office of Sustainability in November 2025 as the Outreach Coordinator. In this role, she will be supporting sustainability events and initiatives across campus and helping students engage more deeply in climate action.

Anne is currently studying Kinesiology & Exercise Science at Bellevue College. Outside of school, she works as a Life Coach, encouraging people to reconnect with their authentic selves. She was one of 12 lucky students selected for the Costa Rica Blue Zones trip—funded by the SESF and organized by the Wellness Center and the Office of Sustainability—where she explored the lifestyle and cultural attributes that make the Nicoya Peninsula one of the world's five "Blue Zones."

Anne enjoys staying physically active and being a devoted mom to two rescue dogs and a rescue cat. She is also the author of *Cruz Finds His Way*, a children's book about dyslexia. A lifelong learner, and someone who is part Taiwanese and neurodivergent, she advocates for people discovering their own unique strengths and figuring out their way in this world.



Bike Rack Rental

Bike racks are now available for rent! For \$30 a quarter you can have a car-mounted bike rack with a bike beam and a bike rack lock. A bike rack is an excellent way to transport your bicycle around! If interested, please contact transportation@bellevuecollege.edu.

Safe Space Heater Usage

Space heaters are a great way to supplement heat; however, they are energy intensive when not used correctly. The college-issued space heaters have two settings – the temperature and intensity. Both allow you to control the heat emitted and absorbed by objects through radiant.

Make sure the space heater is a safe distance from other objects. Radiant heat is absorbed by objects – any flammable material too close could start a fire!

If not in use, unplug the unit to prevent a continuous draw of electricity. Vampire units can contribute to up to 10% of energy consumption!

If your office feels colder or warmer than normal, submit a work order ASAP – unreported abnormalities can lead to higher energy usage and add wear and tear to the units.



Have a Project Idea to Implement on Campus?

The Student Environment Sustainability Fund (SESF) provides students, faculty, and staff a means to enhance Bellevue College's sustainability efforts and create positive social and environmental change on campus.

Fill out the paperwork and present to the SESF committee for the opportunity to get your project funded!

Get started here.

Please email the Civic Engagement & Sustainability Director at asgsocial@bellevuecollege.edu if you would like to be a committee member or join a meeting as an observer! The next scheduled meeting is January 28th at 1 PM; proposals are due January 26th for consideration at that time.



King County Water Works Grant

Bellevue College was awarded \$50,000 to fund Phase 1 of design and partial construction of the stormwater management system on Coal Creek Road. The goal is to redesign the road to include bioswales to slow down runoff while filtering the water through the ground to trap pollutants in the soil before the water eventually reaches East Creek. This project continues to improve stormwater treatment on campus in compliance with Salmon-Safe Certification.

