

University of Oregon Environmental Issues Committee 2013-14 Annual Report

During the 2013-14 academic year the Environmental Issues Committee (EIC) met monthly beginning in December and concluding in June. We did not hold a meeting in November due to ASUO's delay nominating student members. Agendas and minutes for each of our meetings are available on the committee website. Below you'll find a specific recommendation for action related to protecting the Agate Hall chimney for Vaux's Swift migratory habitat, a summary of our remaining activities, and plans for 2014-15.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Issue: In April 2014 the EIC was asked to review a draft motion to permanently protect the Agate chimney for Vaux's Swift migratory habitat.

Recommended Action: By unanimous approval of voting members in attendance during the June 2014 meeting, the EIC recommends that the University Administration fund a study to determine remaining seismic bracing needed to bring the Agate Chimney up to current code requirements. This study is estimated to cost \$2,500 which includes construction drawings for repair. (See Appendix C for complete background and discussion.)

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Climate Action Plan update process: The University of Oregon became an early adopter of the American College and University President's Climate Commitment when former president Dave Frohnmayer signed in 2007. By June 2014, 684 institutions signed the commitment. In 2010 the Office of Sustainability completed a comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CAP), which was reviewed and supported by the EIC and signed by then-President Lariviere. Now that the short-term goals have been achieved, the EIC has been convening meetings with campus staff to identify the next set of emissions-reduction projects to recommend for implementation.

During the 2013-14 academic year, the EIC invited staff from Campus Operations to discuss a "Campus as Living Lab" grant and award program and a comprehensive approach to managing HVAC and lighting loads in campus buildings.

We also met with senior staff from the UO Foundation to learn more about its investment strategy and response to calls for divesting from fossil fuel linked investments. The most notable finding was that of the 200 companies listed on 350.org's divestment list, the UO Foundation is only invested in one.

Our findings are documented in our monthly meeting minutes. Recommendations for actions leading to additional emissions reductions will be included in the Climate Action Plan update due out in 2015.

Environmental Policy: We note that the EIC's recommended major update to the Environmental Policy was approved by the faculty senate and President during the 2013-14 academic year. We expect to review and comment on specific implementation plans during the 2014-15 academic year.

Athletics: In order to encourage better information sharing between UO Athletics and the broader campus community on environmental issues, the EIC recommended and the Faculty Senate confirmed the addition of a new ex-officio position on the EIC. It will be filled by the Associate Athletic Director for Facilities or his/her designate. During our April meeting, Athletics updated the EIC on its work integrating principles of sustainability into policy and practice.

2014-15 PLANS:

As mentioned above, our major projects include completing the Climate Action Plan review work and the review of draft plans called for by the updated Environmental Policy. There was also a request to consider changing the EIC name to distinguish it from EH&S (Environmental Health and Safety). We will look into this as well.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Environmental Issues Committee – Charge and Responsibilities

The Environmental Issues Committee shall:

- 1) Consider, analyze and report, in the form of advisories or recommendations on environmental issues that affect the quality of life and health of the University community, as well as on those issues about which the University should act as an educational resource. These reports shall include a financial impact statement for each recommendation as well as an informative, impartial summary of the topic that outlines its effects, the issues discussed at committee meetings, and any relevant background information;
- 2) Recommend development of rules or policies directly related to environmental issues affecting quality of life and health to be adopted by the University administration and/or University Senate on behalf of the University community. Such recommendations shall include a financial impact statement for each recommendation as well as an informative, impartial summary of the topic that outlines its effects, the issues discussed at committee meetings, and any relevant background information;
- 3) Recommend, facilitate and/or implement educational programs, training sessions, forums or workshops on environmental issues which could be offered to members of the University community and/or the general public;
- 4) Recommend ways to inform the University community about environmental issues;

In 2007 the University of Oregon became a signatory to the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. As a result the University of Oregon is participating in an aggressive effort to address global warming by neutralizing greenhouse gas emissions and accelerating research and educational efforts to equip society to re-stabilize the earth's climate. This commitment will be one relevant principle in guiding the committee's discussions and recommendations.

MEMBERSHIP:

Membership of the Environmental Issues Committee consists of:

- 3 - 5 faculty;
- 3 students who represent a cross-section of students with environmental interests;
- 2 Officers of Administration;
- 2 classified staff members;
- Director of the Office of Sustainability (Ex-Officio non-voting member);

Associate Director of Environmental Health and Safety (Ex-Officio non-voting member);
AVP for Campus Planning and Real Estate or designate (Ex-Officio non-voting member)
Associate Athletic Director for Facilities or designate (Ex-Officio non-voting member)
ASUO Student Sustainability Coordinator (Ex-officio non-voting member)

STAFFING:

The Office of Sustainability shall provide logistical support for the committee including scheduling meetings, maintaining the EIC listserv and webpage, inviting guest speakers, and generating and distributing meeting minutes. The Director of Sustainability shall work directly with the Chair of the Environmental Issues Committee to develop meeting agendas and brief the committee as needed.

REPORTING:

The Environmental Issues Committee is responsible to the University Administration as an advisor to the Vice President for Finance and Administration. In addition this committee also reports to the University Senate through, at a minimum, an annual written report submitted by the Committee Chair to the Secretary of the University Senate no later than the final University Senate meeting in May. The committee may also make additional written or oral reports to the Senate

Appendix B: 2013-14 Environmental Issues Committee Members

Faculty/Staff

Erin Moore – Architecture (Chair)
Adam Jones – Environmental Health and Safety
Ron Lovinger – Landscape Architecture
Meg Mattson – Academic Affairs
Mark Reed – Geology
Bitty Roy – Biology
Michael Smith—Architecture and Allied Arts
Lisa Wemberley – Unclassified Personnel Services

Students

Samantha Neal
Caroline "Callie" Attanasio

Ex-Officio

Steve Mital—Office of Sustainability
Doug Brooke—Environmental Health and Safety

Christine Thompson—Campus Planning and Real Estate
Jeff Nunes – Athletics (added May 2014)
Emma Newman—Student Sustainability Coalition

Appendix C: Vaux's Swifts Background

Background: The Vaux's swifts (*Chaetua vauxi*) are small aerialist insectivore birds. They do not perch to rest, as songbirds do, but spend their entire day on the wing. They migrate from Central America to the Pacific Northwest in the spring (mid-April to mid-May) where they then set up nests in the forested areas. At the end of their summer breeding season, they gather again into migrating flocks and use the chimneys in the Fall as they prepare for the south-bound migration.

The use of the Agate Hall chimney has been observed and reported for only a few nights each migration and yet it is one of the top chimneys used by migrating Vaux's swifts. A total of 57,397 swifts were counted in only 15 evenings last fall. Agate Hall is one of the most highly used chimneys in the migration flyway. See the 2013 Agate Hall chimney data at: http://www.vauxhappening.org/WOR_South_2013.html

The Lane County Audobon Society, whose leadership includes UO faculty and staff request that the UO permanently protect the chimney for the Swifts.

Investigation: There was some confusion regarding the proper role for EIC given recent changes to the relationship between the Faculty Senate and UO Administration. Both Jamie Moffitt, Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Margie Paris, University of Oregon Senate President (2013-14) agreed that the EIC should discuss the draft Swift motion with relevant administrators and operations staff and incorporate that feedback into its final recommendation. Based on this direction, the following information from relevant campus units was collected:

1. **Campus Planning, Design, and Construction** notes that the University of Oregon already offers some long-term protection of the chimney. The University of Oregon's East Campus Development Policy (p7) states: *"The playground near 19th Avenue and the potential historic significance of Agate Hall should be taken into consideration when development occurs. In addition, the importance of preserving the Agate Hall chimney as a roosting area for the migrating chimney swifts should continue to be recognized."*
2. In 2013, **Campus Operations** spent approximately \$17,000 cleaning 30 years of accumulated Vaux's Swift guano from the chimney. Campus Operations estimates that annual maintenance going forward will be minimal and can absorb it within its existing budget.

3. **Environmental Health and Safety** says the swifts pose no risk to human health.

4. **Enterprise Risk** states that its 2007 review noted that the chimney is a seismic risk. Removal is its recommended mitigation to eliminate the possibility that collapse of the chimney during an earthquake causes significant damage to Agate Hall occupants. A review of documents and subsequent discussion reveals the following:

- a. The chimney does have some bracing. Mark Richards, structural engineer, did the design for the current bracing of the chimney in 1998.
- b. Mark Richards has since retired. His files are now in the possession of Matthew Galund, P.E. with DCI Engineers in Eugene. On May 15, 2014 in response to questions about previous bracing work, Mr. Galund wrote:

“I have had an opportunity to review the file on the bracing of the chimney at Agate Hall. The chimney was reinforced and braced in 1999. This included the installation of guy wires to laterally brace the chimney. The chimney was strengthened and braced to the code required seismic forces in effect in 1999.

I did take a moment to compare the lateral loads that would be required today if the strengthening were done today. There would be an increase in seismic forces by 11%.

In response to the 2007 assessment; the chimney has undergone seismic bracing to the forces required at the time the project was undertaken. If nothing had been done to the chimney prior to 2007 I would agree with the recommendation for removal. Since the bracing was completed the risk of collapse is not as great as if nothing had been done. Would I push for removal of the chimney at this time, that is a decision that that the University would have to make.

Is the possibility of collapse still present in an earthquake? Yes. One cannot claim that in an earthquake that it would not sustain damage, the bracing completed in 1999 has reduced the probability of collapse.”

- c. We asked additional questions regarding the engineering and construction costs to further strengthen the chimney to make it conform to current codes. On June 3, 2014, Mr. Galund wrote:

“If you would like we can do another analysis of the chimney with respect to the most current seismic design parameters and make recommendations on the additional repairs.

To analyze and make repair recommendations I would budget \$1500. If construction drawing for repairs are required will increase the amount by \$1000.

I would bill this project on a time expended method so the proposal above is a not to exceed.”

5. On June 3, 2014 **George Hecht, AVP for Campus Operations** wrote that if UO Administration wants to investigate this further, he can fund the engineering study mentioned above and possibly the subsequent construction work, depending on how extensive it is. This sentiment was supported by Darin Dehle, Director of Capital Construction, who a few weeks earlier stated that he assumed some remediation work would need to be completed and that “we can make it work” if that is the direction given.

Conclusion: We note that acquiring a technical report may create an obligation for action (either demolition or increased bracing) where none exists currently. However, in order to make an informed decision on the motion to protect the chimney for Vaux’s Swift migratory habitat, an estimate of the associated costs to make it seismically safe is needed.