

CAMPUS CONSERVATION NATIONALS: RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS REDUCE ENERGY

By Brandon Bishop

This February marked the 3rd Annual Campus Conservation Nationals (CCN) at UCCS. Campus Conservation Nationals is a month-long conservation challenge that encourages students living in the residence halls to decrease their energy and water use. During the campaign, our residence halls had an overall electricity reduction of 3.19%. That is 1.12% increase from last year's reduction. In terms of electricity, students reduced use by 8,771 kilowatt-hours, which is equivalent to averting roughly 15,947 lbs. of CO₂ from entering our atmosphere. All in all, the combined efforts of our students helped save \$831 in electricity costs for the campus.

This year Residence Life, the Resident Hall Association, the Green Action Fund, and the Office of Sustainability worked together to put on a month of programming in conjunction with CCN. This consisted of events like UCCS Unplugged, Less is S'more, Upcycle It!, and Energy on Your Plate.

UCCS Unplugged: The kickoff event of CCN is a no-mic, no electricity night that brings the campus community together to perform a variety of music, poetry, and other expressive performances. During this event, students participated in campus conservation trivia and won sponsored prizes provided by the Green Action Fund.

Less is S'more: This event focused on unplugging from electronics and socializing with friends over s'mores and board games. The night provided students with an opportunity to socialize and learn about opportunities to get out and get active.

Upcycle It!: This event hosted one of Colorado Spring's first B-Corp organizations, Who Gives a Scrap. Their organization demonstrated how items can be upcycled into new and exciting things, such as turning old t-shirts into reusable bags. Students had the opportunity to make crafts from items that would normally be thrown away. Who Gives a Scrap also provided educational material on upcycling and their organization.

Energy on your Plate: The closing CCN event focused on the energy that goes into producing various food items. There was also a component discussing health benefits in various food options. UCCS's Flying Carrot, SWELL, and a dietitian from the Recreation and Wellness Center participated in bringing education and food samples to the event. A bike blender, always a big hit, was also used to produce fruit smoothies. Student developers of the new smartphone app "HitSpot" were present, as well as a student representative from the OZZI reusable to-go container program.

With this programming, CCN continues to serve as a tool to engage students and promote conservation behavior, while enhancing the experience of our students. In addition to

conservation, CCN provides us with a way to educate students while working to reduce our utility use and carbon emissions. This program directly engaged 120 of our resident students, many of whom are freshman. Through events like CCN, there is an opportunity to enhance our living-learning community while promoting campus identity through a conservation competition. As the campus looks forward to next year's CCN, this year will serve as a stepping stone to something even better.