

# Duke Carbon Offsets Initiative

## 2020 Annual Report



Bass Connections Field Trip (February 2020)

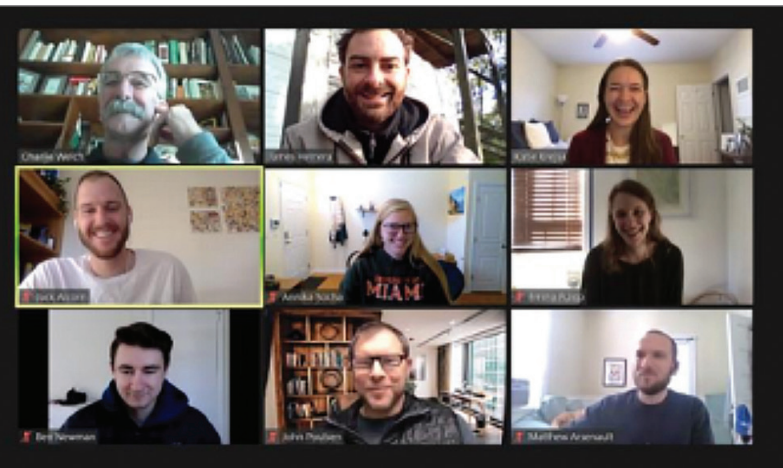
### Background

#### History

In 2007, Duke University set a target of achieving climate neutrality by 2024. Even after being aggressive with reducing emissions on campus, Duke is expected to have to offset up to 82,000 metric tons per year of carbon dioxide in 2024. The Duke Carbon Offsets Initiative (DCOI) was created to help Duke University reach its climate neutrality goal. Since its beginning in 2009, it has developed a variety of innovative carbon offset programs in swine waste-to-energy, energy efficiency, solar, and urban forestry.



Tree planting in old north durham with DCOI in February 2020.



Meeting with the students and co-clients of the Madagascar Master Project via Zoom.




Purchased and planted

# 420

trees throughout Durham

#### Mission

- To develop and implement the University's strategy for identifying, creating, and purchasing carbon offsets.
- To implement the strategy in a way that provides educational opportunities for students and faculty.
- To prioritize local and regional offsets that provide significant environmental, economic, and societal benefits beyond the benefits of greenhouse gas reduction.
- To facilitate and catalyze high-integrity, unique offset projects by serving as a resource for other institutions.



Purchased

# 2,000

credits from Guinea Bissau avoided deforestation project

### Projects to Highlight

- **Bass Connections** - DCOI and the Duke Environmental Law & Policy Clinic teamed up to lead the second year of the Regenerative Grazing to Mitigate Climate Change Bass Connections class. The students of this class represent four local universities and are continuing the effort to unlock the potential for regenerative grazing to reduce GHG emissions in North Carolina.
- **Duke Lemur Center Masters Project** - DCOI partnered with the Duke Lemur Center to serve as clients for a Nicholas School masters project. The students are conducting research that will serve as the foundation for a future carbon offset project in the SAVA region of Madagascar where DLC is engaged in conservation activities.
- **Pocosin Restoration** - DCOI along with the Duke University Wetland Center continued to develop a wetland restoration project in Hyde County, North Carolina. The project will restore up to 10,000 acres of agricultural land to its natural wetland state. Because of the scale of this project, significant effort has gone into the planning of the project however 2021 will likely see the project's physical implementation.



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Student volunteers planting trees in Old North Durham in February 2020.



Co-led a Bass  
Connections class  
that had students  
from **4** different  
universities

## Presentations

- **2/25:** DCOI served as a guest speaker and client for the undergraduate class 'Sustainability Theory and Practice'.
- **10/14:** DCOI and representative from the University of California system led an AASHE webinar titled "Developing University Initiated Offsets and Using Peer Verification".
- **10/22:** At the virtual 2020 AASHE conference, DCOI presented "The Offset Network: Campus-driven Carbon Offset Projects" along with Hamilton College and Second Nature to discuss how peer verified offsets can be applied to university climate goals.



Bass Connections students analyze soil sample on January 30, 2020.

- **11/19:** DCOI took part in a panel discussion hosted by Northern Arizona University, called "The Bumpy Road to Net Zero".
- **12/7:** Led a Ivy+ Best Practice Sharing webinar about carbon offsets for Ivy+ and Listening Post schools.

## Other Events

- **Purchase Strategy document** - DCOI formalized the university's carbon offset purchasing strategy for 2024 in its Offset Purchase Strategy guide. This report projects how many offsets Duke will need to achieve carbon neutrality in 2024, calculates how many offsets the university will have by then, and describes the plan by which it will purchase additional offsets from the voluntary carbon market.
- **Offset evaluation tool & RFP** - As a part of the offset purchasing strategy, DCOI has begun developing an offset evaluation tool and offset RFP. The evaluation tool will help the university solicit and compare offsets from the carbon market to make sure purchased offsets meet DCOI's standards for high-quality projects.
- **Tree planting** - Led a tree planting event in Old North Durham with Keep Durham Beautiful and City of Durham, engaging approximately 60 volunteers.
- **Offset Network peer review** - Piloted the Offset Network protocol review process by asking experts in the field to evaluate our Urban Forestry carbon offset protocol.
- **SD Strategic Plan** - Worked with our Sustainable Duke colleagues to help create a three-year plan that will serve as a roadmap to help us create the impact we are dedicated to achieving. The plan identifies goals and strategies that will support Sustainable Duke's continued growth and accelerate Duke's impact in sustainability.



Created the **1st**  
peer-reviewed protocol  
on the Offset Network



**Duke Carbon  
Offsets Initiative**  
DUKE UNIVERSITY

For more information, visit  
**[sustainability.duke.edu/offsets](https://sustainability.duke.edu/offsets)**