



April 22, 2022

Dear Lumberjacks,

With an urgency that I am confident will be sustained by our university's sense of purpose, I hereby declare a climate emergency at Northern Arizona University and commit to heightened investments of the university community's time, talents, effort, and resources to securing the conditions needed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

I make this declaration on Earth Day 2022, informed by our university's impressive legacy of leadership on environmental issues and inspired by the effective advocacy of our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other important friends, supporters, and stakeholders. Together, our engaged community understands that when it comes to advancing climate solutions with regional applications and global reach, NAU must lead the way.

Furthermore, I make this declaration with a clear understanding that the last time NAU made a bold commitment to carbon neutrality, with the target date of 2020, we came up short. In making this declaration today, I realize that we risk receiving criticism for invoking rhetorical arguments that are not immediately backed by new funding for specific projects championed by the many individuals and groups at NAU who for years have proposed ideas to further our work in these areas.

So, I ask that today's proclamation—symbolic as it is at this moment in time when viewed against the backdrop of the Tunnel Fire raging in our backyard and the years of pent-up demand for action—be received as a concrete foreshadowing of the thoughtful, purposeful, and intentional work required to bring it to fruition.

Specifically, as we finalize **our Strategic Roadmap** and enter the summer months, we will accelerate the development and implementation of an actionable Climate Action Plan that responsibly achieves carbon neutral operations by 2030 and provides educational, research, and community engagement opportunities for our students, faculty, and staff. To be credible, this plan must and will include timelines, milestones, concrete action steps, and the requisite financial considerations and investments.

The road to 2030 will not be an easy one and we will have to make difficult choices along the way, but as we all know, when it comes to NAU's Lumberjacks, together we are boundless.

In moving this important work forward, we will build on our long and distinguished legacy of climate research, leadership, and solutions. We will enhance our world-renowned forestry, health science and health equity, and environmental science programs, among others. We will sharpen our focus on our region, being better stewards of the Colorado Plateau and the largest contiguous ponderosa pine forest in the world. We will deepen our support of Native American communities facing disproportionately adverse health risks due to the contamination of their land, water, and air. We will leverage our recently announced **Sustainable Smart Campus Master Plan** effort to build momentum toward our 2030 goal. And we will benefit from the pro bono consulting of **Second Nature**, specifically as it relates to our efforts to shift to more sustainable power sources for our operations.

The magnitude of the challenge, of course, is daunting. But inaction is not an option, as each and every one of us has been, is, or will be vulnerable to the perils of climate upheaval and unchecked environmental injustice.

Thank you to the Associated Students of Northern Arizona University, the Faculty Senate, our Regents' professors, Green Jacks, the NAU Green Fund, and the Environmental Caucus, among many others, for voicing the need for meaningful action to address the climate crisis.

Let's get to work together—now.

In partnership,



José Luis Cruz Rivera
President



Twitter



LinkedIn



Instagram