

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

The REC seeks to contribute to the practical solutions of pressing environmental challenges through research and engagement with the private, public, and non-profit sectors.



REC TEAM UPDATES

GREEN CONSULTING

Pierce Sanderson CMC '25, Maya Forgue SC '25, Anna Carrel CMC '28, Jay D'Ercole CMC '27, Asha Luszuk SC '28



The Green Consulting Team undertook two projects this year. The first involves collaborating with The Nature Conservancy to evaluate the Kids in Nature program, which provides 7th graders from the Lompoc Unified School District, near Santa Barbara, with opportunities to visit the Jack and Laura Dangermond Preserve and learn about science and conservation. To date, the team has gathered data and is conducting a comprehensive review of environmental education literature to inform the final report.

The second project involves partnering with the Pacific Crest Trail Association to research environmental assessment models and study the trail's impact on local communities. Through continuous collaboration and strategizing, the team has worked to define the specific needs of its clients, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to support environmental initiatives. Ultimately, the team seeks to expose underserved students to science and conservation, while highlighting the value of natural amenities such as the Pacific Crest Trail.

The Renewable Energies team has been primarily collaborating with Tradewater, a carbon offset project developer. Focusing on developing innovative structures to secure the company's revenue streams, the team has built a comprehensive dataset on long-term carbon offset agreements in the market. Currently, they are applying the knowledge gained from the previous semester to educational institutions, analyzing how to tailor carbon offset products to this sector.

This work requires a challenging combination of interdisciplinary skills, including carbon accounting, finance, marketing, and data analysis. By leveraging each team member's strengths, the team collaborates effectively to produce well-rounded deliverables that address the evolving demands of the carbon offset industry.

RENEWABLE ENERGIES

Hannah Vestring CMC '25, Calli O'Neal PZ '25, Diana Alimzhan CMC '26, Abhinav Ganesh CMC '26, Zubin Khera CMC '27



MARINE SCIENCE & CONSERVATION

Alexa Potter PZ '25, Lilly Chertock CMC '25, Cahal Connolly CMC '26, Alejandro Bedoya Norena CMC '28



This year, the Marine Science and Conservation team has been engaged in two exciting projects, both focused on the conservation of pelagic species. In the fall, the team worked with the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary to assess the effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas in conserving highly migratory pelagic species in Southern California. This spring, they are working with the Reef Environmental Education Foundation to explore non-invasive methods for determining fish length in species with limited data, as well as the potential for citizen science to contribute valuable data for fisheries management. Both projects involve research on data-poor topics and have required significant creativity, persistence, and resourcefulness to identify relevant studies. By collaborating, utilizing library resources, and navigating trial and error, analysts have developed effective strategies for using scientific databases and refining search terms to uncover sparse information. These projects are part of a larger initiative to advance marine ecosystem management and conservation, with the potential to make a lasting impact on how we monitor and protect marine species.

Last semester, the Sustainable Business Practices Team developed deliverables for two clients, Kanop and Symbrosia. For Kanop, the team researched the competitive landscape and engaged with key players in the Corporate Sustainability Reporting (CSR) market to compile a report on potential partnerships. For Symbrosia, they analyzed capital allocation patterns among impact-focused venture capital (VC) funds, with a particular focus on investment rates in female-founded startups.

This semester, the team is continuing its work with Symbrosia by conducting qualitative research through direct meetings with specific VC funds. The goal is to submit a white paper for peer review, contributing to the growing body of research on the role of DEI initiatives in venture capital.

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

Annika Johnson CMC '26, Evelyn Mineo PO '25,
Mia Balonick CMC '27, Maile Stoutemyer
CMC '27, Caren Ensing CMC '27



POLICY & OUTREACH

Talia de Beer CMC '25, Jiyeon Kim CMC '26, Aidan O'Connell CMC '27, Hailey Stuben CMC '27, Caleb Rasor CMC '28



The Policy and Outreach team is engaged in two exciting projects this semester. Under the guidance of So Cal Edison, the team is evaluating the energy savings, benefits, and costs of tree canopy as a strategy for mitigating urban heat islands. Additionally, in collaboration with Virtú, they are analyzing the multifamily housing solar installation at Barham Villas, examining key enabling conditions and barriers while comparing actual performance data against initial projections.

2025 BOARD MEETING



On April 25, the Roberts Environmental Center gathered to share their work with the REC Advisory Board and celebrate the research and deliverables of all REC students. Key accomplishments from all projects were highlighted, showcasing the impact our teams are making on campus, domestically, and internationally.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

FIELDWORK PROTOCOL



Natalie Owen, SCR '25

This past semester, Natalie has been engaged in carefully editing the the REC fieldwork protocol document to ensure it is ready for publication. The REC looks forward to incorporating the protocol into Claremont McKenna's guidelines for field safety in the near future and building a framework for fieldwork that encourages safety, accessibility, and fun in the field.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND OUTREACH



Daisy Alvarez, SCR '25 & Ivanna Morales Mercado, CMC '25

The Sustainable Food and Outreach team ended the year excited with the assurance that a permanent composting system will be implemented at Collins Dining Hall this summer. Additionally, their work to introduce reusable mugs at the Hub Cafe and Grill came to fruition in April 2025. They also supported the Weigh the Waste project at Collins Dining Hall to foster awareness around food waste when dining. Overall, the team looks forward to see the future progress of dining sustainability at CMC, especially regarding composting and food waste.

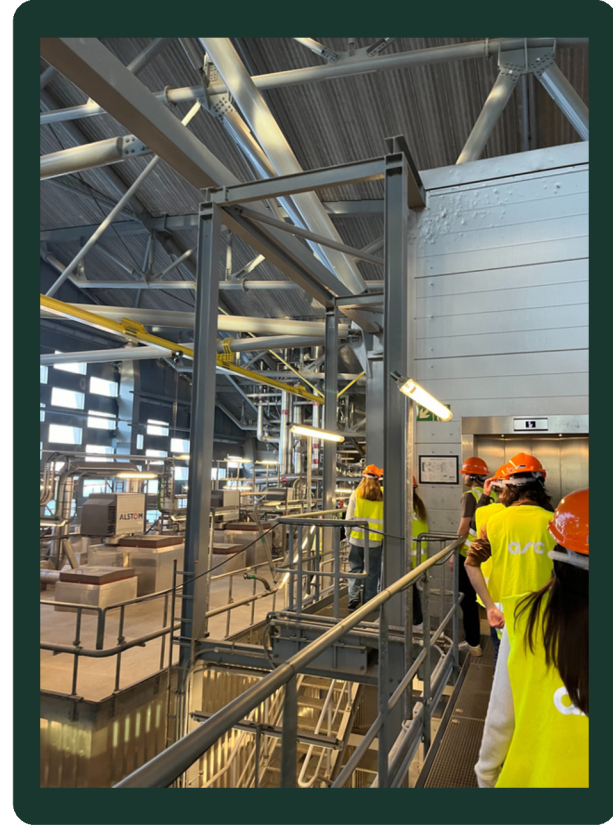
STUDY ABROAD SPOTLIGHT



One of the many exciting aspects of environmental education is getting to apply one's learning as a student in the real world. CMC and other colleges in the Claremont consortium offer many opportunities for students pursuing an environmental education to study abroad and learn through immersive, place-based experiences. Alyssa Wong is a rising CMC senior and an analyst on the REC Policy and Outreach team. She studied abroad in Copenhagen, Denmark during the fall of her junior year. When asked why she chose this particular location and program she had some insightful input. "The program that I was a part of was DIS Copenhagen and the reason why I chose this particular program and place was due to the wide variety of courses offered related to my major. As an Environment, Economics, and Politics major, I loved how many different classes were offered that were specifically unique to the place I was studying in. A big part of the DIS program is the emphasis on field studies and place-based learning, which gave me the opportunity to connect my academic interests with real-world experiences. For instance, in my Sustainable

Food Production and Consumption class, we spent five days in Barcelona and five days traveling around Denmark, visiting farms, markets, organizations, and speaking directly with experts. Being immersed in the local culture and seeing sustainability practices firsthand offered a much deeper understanding than I could have gained from a traditional classroom experience.” Alyssa’s time in Denmark also exposed her to a number of innovative sustainability efforts that reflect the country’s deep commitment to environmental responsibility. As Alyssa shares, “It is mandatory for everyone in Denmark to sort their waste in up to ten different categories including food waste, plastic, cartons, glass, cardboard, electronics, metal, paper, textiles, and residual waste. The residual waste is sent to Amager Bakke - an industrial waste management and energy production site located in the heart of Copenhagen. As part of the EU’s goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, the facility incinerates only non-recyclable residual waste to produce electricity and heat for thousands of homes. Beyond its environmental function, Amager Bakke, also known as ‘Copenhill’, has been turned into a tourist attraction featuring a ski slope and hiking trails on its rooftop. I had the opportunity to tour the facility and see firsthand how Copenhagen integrates sustainability not only into infrastructure but also into daily life.”

Building on her experience, Alyssa offered the following advice to other environmental majors considering studying abroad. “Take the opportunity to study abroad! You’ll gain invaluable insights by learning how other countries approach environmental challenges. There’s so much happening beyond the United States and experiencing different perspectives can transform the way you think, and problem solve.



Studying under professors with different educational backgrounds broadens your mindset and helps you approach issues with fresh, global perspectives. Plus, you’ll meet people you might never have encountered otherwise, making it an incredible opportunity for both personal and academic growth.” Alyssa’s experience in Copenhagen highlights the power of studying abroad to deepen environmental understanding and expand global perspectives.

Through hands-on learning, cultural immersion, and exposure to innovative sustainability practices, she gained tools and insights that will continue to shape her academic and professional journey. Her story serves as an inspiring reminder of the value stepping beyond the classroom and beyond borders, to engage with the world’s most pressing environmental issues.

2025 GREEN CAREERS CONFERENCE

The Green Careers Conference consists of presentations by 5C alumni in the green industry to highlight the opportunities and challenges facing green jobs today in environmental law, policy, tech, finance, media, and more. The GCC gives students a broad perspective of the careers available in the environmental field, and starts conversations that provide guidance for students looking to break into the industry.



Non-Profit Organizations Panel

Carter Rubin, Director of State Transportation Advocacy, NRDC

Nate Huntington, Resilience Associate, Greenbelt Alliance

Erin Ristig, Marine Resource Protection Program Coordinator, California Marine Sanctuary Foundation

Scott Sawyer, local Food Systems Expert

Energy Panel

Jim Baker, Lawyer, San Diego Gas & Electric Company

Andy Van Horn, Director of Energy Policy and Markets, GreenFire Energy Inc

Drew Johnstone, Sustainability Officer, Burbank Power

Alex Seidel, Transit and Energy Grid at Via, Master's student at UCLA School of Public Policy

Athenaeum Keynote Panel

Todd Sax, Assistant Division Chief, Mobile Source Laboratory Division, California Air Resources Board

Sara Guiltinan, Pacific Regional Tribal Liaison

Patrick Atwater, Innovation Program Manager, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

"Innovation in the Climate Economy" Panel (Co-Sponsored with RLCIE)

Ryan Bellissimo, Founder and CEO and VC, Progression and Private Family Office

Kele Mkpado, Manager of Operations, TransparentSea Farm

Robert Owlett, Director of Origination, Pathway Power

Ari Polychronopoulos, Head of Product Management & ESG, Research Affiliates

Sustainable Transformation Panel

Lily Simon, Account Executive, Afresh

Alexander Landau, Sustainability Consultant, Agendi

Adam Rush, Principal, Meridian Consultants, LLC.



2025 GREEN CAREERS CONFERENCE

HIGHLIGHTING ALUMNI PANELIST

ALEX SEIDEL (PO '18)

Alex Seidel, a panelist on the GCC this year, is currently pursuing a Master of Public Policy at UCLA and will graduate this spring. She graduated from Pomona College with a degree in Environmental Analysis in 2018 and started her career at a consulting firm specializing in energy efficiency. After the first few years, she decided to change jobs. Seidel describes wanting to help her community, which led her to work at a tech company focused on microtransit and paratransit for the public. She compares this to Uber Pool, a ride share service where riders can split the cost of an Uber. Feeling stuck in the program implementation space and being constrained by new policies, Seidel made another pivot. She returned to school, excited to delve deeper into the world of public policy and sustainability. She explains by asking the question, "How do we create, craft, and implement better policy to then trickle down to people like me who are implementing programs on the ground?" Seidel later notes that while she loves public sustainability policy, it can feel very removed from its real impact on communities.

When asked how her experience at the Claremont Colleges impacted her journey to the workforce, Seidel responded warmly, explaining that at the 5Cs she was able to try out many different fields to discover the areas in which she really wanted to work. This started by taking Environmental Economics, which opened up Environmental Analysis (EA) as a potential major and career path. She highlights both the opportunity at the 5Cs to study a plethora of subjects, as well as her study abroad in Copenhagen.

When asked about the impact of her work, Seidel responded that "Energy efficiency, which is never flashy, or a glamorous thing, but at the end of the day, these small improvements can add up to a really big impact" specifically pointing out the impacts that her team's work had on clients when their energy bills decreased. She adds, "These services [micro and paratransit] that we were implementing were getting people to the doctor and getting people to the movies". She discussed people often forgotten by society, such as elderly people, who expressed gratitude for affordable and accessible alternatives to driving. Especially in times of environmental and economic uncertainty, Seidel's work is making a direct difference in people's day-to-day lives. When asked what keeps her motivated, especially now, seeing the recent policy changes and budget cuts, she expressed concern about the changes, but refused to give up. "I think it's easy to get sucked up into the doom and gloom of it all... like, our careers in environment and sustainability are over...I just feel so much more fired up and motivated to keep fighting and keep pushing". Her words speak volumes to the value of environmental justice work in an ever-changing climate.

