



# March 2025 Newsletter



## Happy March from CS!

Now that Central Michigan University (CMU) has settled into the spring semester, there are many opportunities to make campus routines more sustainable. This month, Central Sustainability (CS) has been hard at work with projects, programs, and outreach around campus to help the CMU community with just that.

Read below to find out more!

## What has CS been up to?

### Outreach Presentations

CS coordinators presented to classes at Fancher Elementary to teach students about sustainability. These CS presentations highlight the importance of sustainability, what CS does, and how students can be more sustainable.

### Electronics Drive

From February 1st to March 2nd, CS hosted a campus-wide electronics drive outside of the CS office and in all student residence halls to prevent e-waste.

### Campus Race to Zero Waste (CR2ZW)

CS is facilitating CMU's participation in CR2ZW, a competition between universities to produce the least waste. CS has been collecting detailed waste data and hosting initiatives, such as the electronics drive, to compete.



## Student Sustainability Fee: How to Request Funds

The CMU Student Sustainability Fee Committee is a committee of up to seven students, elected by the student body, who oversee the optional \$5 Student Sustainability Fee. The committee's primary responsibilities are to collect, consider, select, and provide funding support for campus sustainability projects proposed by students. Students are able to propose projects through the "Student Sustainability Fee Committee Project Proposal - Spring 2025" form under the CMU Student Sustainability Fee Committee page on Engage Central. Proposal form requirements include a detailed description, budget, timeline, and acknowledgement of whether or not students consulted relevant CMU experts before applying. The form will be open this semester until **March 21st**.

If you have any questions, please contact the Student Sustainability Fee Committee at [ssfc@cmich.edu](mailto:ssfc@cmich.edu).



## Topic of the Month: The Origin of Treehuggers



### What is a “Treehugger”?

In the modern United States, the term “Treehugger” is associated with environmentalists, often in a depreciative or negative way.

### Where does the term come from?

The concept of Treehuggers comes from the 1730 Khejarli Massacre in the village of Khejarli, India. The Bishnoi people, a sect of Hinduism who traditionally protect and revere all living things, were slaughtered when the Maharaja of Rajasthan sent men to take trees from Bishnoi land to build a new palace. The massacre began when a Bishnoi woman, Amrita Devi, leapt in front of the first tree to protect it and was beheaded. Inspired by Devi, other Bishnoi began hugging the trees, but the Maharaja’s men beheaded all of them, killing 363 people. Hearing of the massacre, the Maharaja apologized and vowed never to cut trees there again.

This inspired the 1970s Chipko, “to cling/hug” in Hindi, Movement against foreign loggers in the Himalayan region. For years, women-led groups organized vigils to hug threatened trees until loggers relented, resulting in a 15 year ban of commercial logging. The movement then inspired similar protests in the U.S., spawning articles that gave “Treehugger” its negative connotation.

### Why does it matter?

It is important to understand the history of everyday words. The original Treehuggers were some of the first and most effective environmental activists, and though their sacrifice is overshadowed by a recent few, their story highlights one of the often-forgotten, essential contributions of women of color in the larger environmental movement.

#### Sources

- Source 1: [https://www.oed.com/dictionary/tree-hugger\\_n?tab=meaning\\_and\\_use&tl=true#17752537100](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/tree-hugger_n?tab=meaning_and_use&tl=true#17752537100)
- Source 2: <https://fore.yale.edu/World-Religions/Hinduism/Engaged-Projects/Chipko-Movement>
- Image: Illustrated by Jillian Gilliland. <http://womensearthalliance.blogspot.com/2013/04/the-original-tree-huggers-lets-not.html>

Want to make sustainability a part of your daily life?

Check out our Sustainable Living Guide and make the CMU Sustainability Pledge today!

Sustainability Pledge



CMU Sustainable Living Guide



## Sustainable Organization Spotlight: GreenTree Co-op Market



GreenTree Co-op Market is a community owned and operated grocery store in downtown Mt. Pleasant that is dedicated to providing healthy, sustainable food from local farmers and producers. They also provide information and education about the impact of people’s choices on their health and the environment. Anyone can shop at the store, and community members have the opportunity to participate as an equal owner in the democratic co-op that owns and manages the market.

For more information, visit the GreenTree Co-op Market at 410 W Broadway, Ste A or call them at (989)772-3221.

### Any Questions? Contact Us!

Stop by our office in Dow Science Room 275 or email us at [sustainability@cmich.edu](mailto:sustainability@cmich.edu).

Also check out our socials for more updates!

Instagram & Facebook @cmucentralsustainability