



Contact: Brian McCullough, PhD  
Telephone: 206-220-8261  
Email: [mccullob@seattleu.edu](mailto:mccullob@seattleu.edu)  
[www.sportecology.org](http://www.sportecology.org)  
[@SportEcoGroup](#)

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**New inter-university research collaborative tackles sport, climate change, sustainability**

The Sport Ecology Group – Official Launch: Earth Day 2019

(Seattle, WA)(April 22, 2019) Earth Day 2019 on April 22 marks the debut of the Sport Ecology Group - eight sport scholars from around the country that have formed a research collaborative and public education forum for sport and the natural environment.

“We combine the expertise of sport practitioners and sport academics to understand the dynamic relationship between sport and the natural environment to leverage the power of sport to protect our planet and preserve our ability to participate and watch sport,” said McCullough. “We combine the practical experience of front-line practitioners with the growing body of research conducted by the leading academics in this space. This way practice and research can together inform and improve sport.”

The SEG is led by Co-Directors Brian McCullough and Madeleine Orr. The membership includes: Jonathan Casper, PhD (North Carolina State University), Sylvia Trendafilova, PhD (University of Tennessee at Knoxville), Tim Kellison, PhD (Georgia State University), Tiffany Richardson, PhD, (retired, University of Minnesota), Walker Ross, PhD Candidate at University of South Carolina, and Jamee Pelcher, MBA Candidate at Western Carolina University.

“When you think of the fact that we’ve seen more than 30 500-year floods in the last ten years, causing irreparable damage to golf courses and sport stadiums up and down the East Coast, or the low-snow winters that are crippling the ski industry in the North East and the Rockies, it’s easy to see that climate change will have significant impacts on the sport industry. It’s already happening,” said Madeleine Orr, co-director of The Sport Ecology Group and PhD Candidate at the University of Minnesota.

Orr continued that it’s not all doom-and-gloom: “The sport industry has a public platform unlike any other: if we can harness that energy and enthusiasm, and redirect some of it toward environmental awareness and action, we could move the needle on climate change. Our mission with The Sport Ecology Group is to make environmental information and research more accessible to the sport community so that we can advance sustainability efforts in this industry.”

The launch of the SEG represents a formalization of research partnerships and collaborations that have been driving sport ecology research for the past 10 years, according to McCullough, associate professor in the Sport Business Leadership program in the Albers School of Business and Economics.

The members of the SEG have been deeply involved in sport ecology research and initiatives for many years. For example, Tiffany Richardson, PhD, co-chaired the Sustainability Committee for NCAA Final Four 2019 and has been a leader in greening the MLB All Star Game over the past five years through her Sport Sustainability course at the University of Minnesota. Jonathan Casper, PhD (North Carolina State University), is the lead editor of *Sport Management and the Natural Environment: Research and Practice*. Brian McCullough, PhD (Seattle University), co-director of the SEG, and Timothy Kellison, PhD (Georgia State University), co-edited the *Routledge Handbook of Sport and the Environment*.

The SEG [website](#) features a database of all research that has been published on sport and the natural environment, including work on zero-waste campaigns, facility sustainability, college athletics sustainability, fan engagement and climate risk management. The research is presented in 'Cliff Notes' format, with just the highlights and none of the jargon.

Roger McClendon, Executive Director of the Green Sports Alliance, expressed his enthusiasm about this launch: "As the leading convenor of the sports greening movement, the Green Sports Alliance is thrilled with the launch of The Sport Ecology Group's research database. We look forward to collaborating on projects and valuable member assets in the future, providing rich resources to our nearly 600 members worldwide, in turn creating positive impact throughout the sports industry."

In a recent story about the SEG, GreenSportsBlog Editor Lew Blaustein comments: "If one wanted evidence of the maturing of the Green-Sports world, the launch of sportecology.org is a good data point."

**About the SEG:** The Sport Ecology Group is a collective of researchers who work at the intersection of sport and the natural environment. The SEG is dedicated to producing high-quality research with academic and public impact, and to serve as a catalyst for industry-academy knowledge exchange.

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For more information about this announcement, please contact **Brian McCullough** at 206-220-8261 or [research@sportecology.com](mailto:research@sportecology.com)