



MASSACHUSETTS ENVIRONMENTAL THON

Fall Workshop: Tuesday, October 6th 2026

UMass Lowell, Meehan Student Center, 100 Meehan Way (220 Pawtucket St), Lowell, MA 01854

9:00

Registration Begins

- Registration table will be located on the second floor of Meehan Student Center.
- Light breakfast/snacks will be provided.
- Student can participate in a networking engagement activity.

9:30-9:40

Welcome Remarks

Tionge Nakazwe, Operations and Communications Assistant, Rist Institute for Sustainability and Energy

- The session will be recorded.
- Held in Meehan Student Center 260.

9:40-11:10

Session I (Attendees will be divided into groups)

Soil on Trial and the Food Forest Design Studio – Led by Jasmina Burek and Joy Winbourne, UMass Lowell

This interactive session invites students to explore urban soil health and use a food forest design app to create a food forest and action plan for New England. Through hands-on activities, students will connect soil health, agricultural stewardship, biodiversity, and community needs with real-world food forest planning.

- The session will be recorded.
- Held in Meehan Student Center 260.

Plastics in Agriculture: Reimagining Sustainable Alternatives - Led by Meg Sobkowicz Kline, UMass Lowell

Participants will have the opportunity to visit North Campus' Emerging Technologies and Innovation Center and observe a demonstration of chemical synthesis of a bioplastic from plant starch, followed by a tour of plastic processing labs and discussion of how to make agricultural mulch films.

- Walking tour to Saab Emerging Technologies and Innovation Center.

11:15-12:00

Session II (All Attendees)

The Next Generation of Climate Leaders: An Early Career Panel– Moderated by: Devon Milisci, UMass Lowell

Hear from recent graduates and early career professionals from diverse academic backgrounds who are working in sustainability, renewable energy, and climate solutions. Panelists will share their academic and career journeys, discuss their current roles, and offer advice on gaining experience and preparing for a career in the environmental field. Students will have the opportunity to ask questions and learn about the many pathways available for building a more sustainable future.

- The session will be recorded.
- Held in Meehan Student Center 260.

Envirothon Coaches Session – Led by Crystal Johnson, Assistant Secretary of Environmental Justice, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

This session is designed specifically for Envirothon coaches to learn more about the program, expectations for the year, and resources available to support your team. Coaches will have the opportunity to ask questions, connect with other mentors, and share best practices for guiding students through research, preparation, and competition. Whether you're a first-time coach or returning with years of experience, this session will provide valuable insights to help you and your team succeed.

- The session will be recorded.
- Held in Meehan Student Center 490.

12:00-12:40 Lunch at Fox Hall Dining Hall (100 Pawtucket St., Lowell, MA)

All attendees will walk to and from the dining hall together with UML staff and students as guides.

12:45-1:30 Session III (Attendees will be divided into groups)

Stormwater Management: Supporting Healthy Soils and Resilient Communities - Led by Emily DiFranco and Emily DiFranco, Weston & Sampson

In this hands-on session, students will explore how soil health and green infrastructure can help manage stormwater, reduce flooding, and strengthen community resilience. Through an interactive design activity, participants will create their own resilient landscape using strategies that support healthy soils, absorb rainfall, and protect the surrounding environment.

- The session will be recorded.
- Held in Meehan Student Center 260.

Managing Green Spaces for Healthy Soils and a Sustainable Campus– Led by Kevin Block, UMass Lowell, and Tess Clarkin, Mill City Grows

Explore UMass Lowell's East Campus on a guided walking tour focused on the sustainable management of campus landscapes. Students will learn how decisions about trees, grass, irrigation, soil health, and selecting the right plant for the right location contribute to healthier, more resilient green spaces. The tour will include a stop at the Urban Agriculture Greenhouse to explore growing plants from seed and the role of healthy soils in plant growth.

- Walking Tour starting at Fox Hall and ending at Meehan Student Center.

1:30-1:40 Closing Remarks

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

- The session will be recorded.
- Held in Meehan Student Center 260.