

# SAVING THE PLANET: HOW OUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ARE WORKING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

## What is Climate Change?

**Luke Counce and Rico Morris**  
Hi-Times Staff Member

Talk of a climate crisis seems to be everywhere in the media now, but just how serious is it?

It has been one of the main points of the democratic primary debates, and 97% of Climatologists support the idea of climate change.

Climate change is so serious that much of the country of Australia, roughly the size of America, was ablaze with approximately 800 wildfires during the months of December and January. 24 people were arrested for Arson for setting the fires. Many experts say that the main contributor to the extent of the fires, the lack of ability to control them and the damage to the environment and wildlife is climate issues.

The Australian fires killed and injured an estimated 480 million wildlife and is estimated to have affected well over a billion animals all told.

It is also responsible for killing at least 25 people. The largest of the fires is three times larger than the largest fires in the California fires that ravaged the state last year.

### What is climate change exactly?

Climate change is formally known as a change from traditional climate. Contrary to popular belief, Climate change is not a bad thing. In fact, climate change has happened throughout history. The Ice Age is one example of climate change. What makes it seem bad now is that it's happen-

ing so quickly.

"The climate crisis is a very hot topic among environmentalists and politicians these days. Simply put, it is the long-term rise in the average temperatures on earth, primarily due to carbon emissions." Environmental Science teacher Laurie Bishop said.

"The EPA predicts that Mississippi is a southern state that will experience the worst effects of climate change." Bishop said. "Like the rest of the South, it is predicted to grow warmer in the next few decades, and both floods and droughts may be more severe."

### What is causing the global temperatures to rise more rapidly and causing the severe and unpredictable weather patterns?

Experts say that the cause is mostly due to an increase in our carbon emissions.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency has reported that transportation is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas (carbon) emissions.

Electricity is another major contributor to greenhouse gas (carbon) emissions.

"...I see our current and upcoming issues within a wider scope. Consumerism (buying things, especially things we don't need) is the biggest challenge to our current society and is absolutely negatively affecting the environment and contributing to our carbon emissions." Bishop said. "The carbon footprint (carbon produced by the activi-

ties of an individual, company, country, etc.) of Americans is higher than ever."

### What can we do to reduce our carbon footprint to help the climate?

"Going green" is one way which may seem hard but in reality there are very easy ways to do it.

"Being green is easy! There are so many ways to reduce your carbon footprint...stop buying plastic water bottles and purchase a reusable one, car-pool as much as possible, buy foods with minimal packaging, participate in 'Meatless Mondays', find ways to repurpose items, or use an item for its full lifetime before replacing it." Bishop said.

As far as carbon emissions there is not much we can do locally. In order for change to happen in the amount of CO2 that is being released in our environment, citizens would need to write to their Governor, Senator, or Representative about changing the emission regulations.

"Those are not even on state level, most of [the emission regulations are] regulated at the federal level." Shelton said.

So the number one contributor to the change in this issue is the federal government.

"There's no debating it. It's science it's not a matter of opinion. It's the entire global scientific community that researches and studies these issues as it's happening," Tupelo Mayor Jason Shelton said.

## There's a Club for that. AP SCIENCE CLUB: RECYCLING

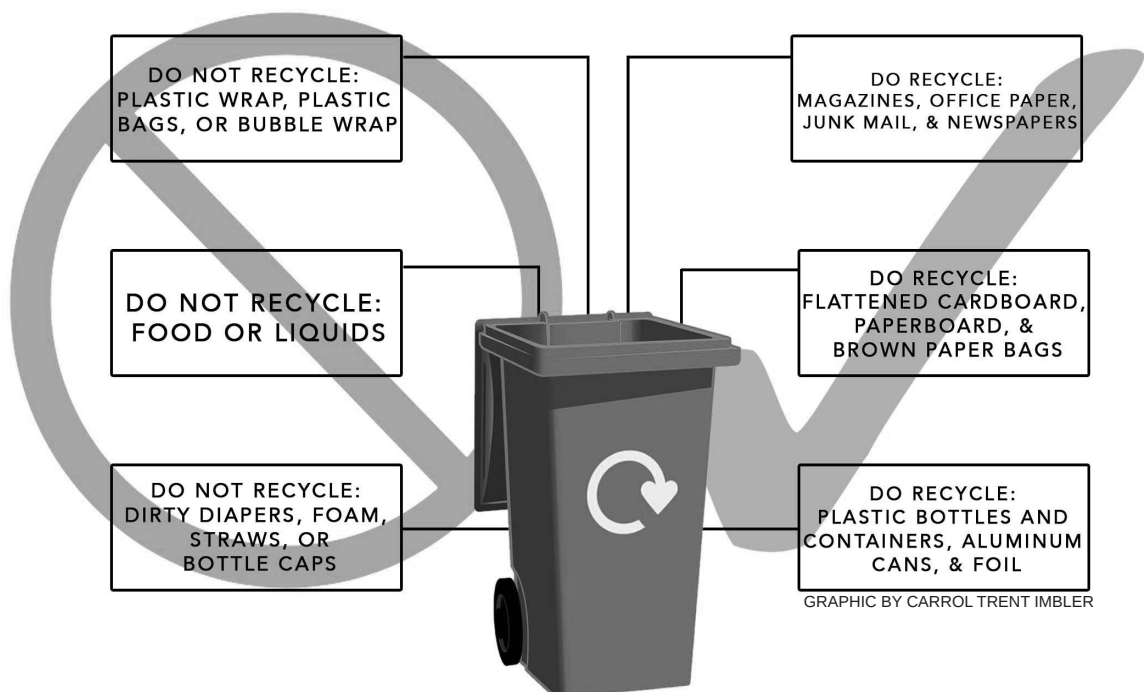
**What it is:** AP Science Club is open to all students who have taken or who are currently enrolled in any advanced placement science class. This club has taken on the role of heading up the recycling on campus.

**Key Role at THS:** With over 50 bins in classrooms and workrooms around campus, each member of the club is assigned their own classroom and is responsible for emptying out that class's recycling bin every two weeks. The large recycling dumpster is located in the freshman parking lot.

**They said it:** "We began recycling efforts last year. We've expanded the program this year and now have bins in over 50 classrooms and work areas on campus," Mrs. Ware, club sponsor, said. "Each club member must earn 20 service points to participate in the field trip to the CDC in Atlanta this year," Ware said.

**Up Next:** It is the club's hope for every teacher and student to engage in recycling. "It is simple. Each bin has a sheet for what can and cannot be recycled attached on each bin," Marcus Davis, AP Science Club President said. "We are also planning to use the recycling items to engage in a community project," Eli Smart, senior member said. This project will include picking up trash from

# RECYCLE PLEASE



the Tupelo area. After gathering trash, the AP art class will build a sculpture using the recyclable items. This sculpture will be auctioned off with the money going toward buying a water filler station for the school.

## What is the City of Tupelo doing for the environment?

**Rico Morris**  
Hi-Times Staff Member

The government of Tupelo is doing a number of things to move to a more environmen-

tally friendly city.

“As far as regulations, it gets a little bit out of our control as a city, as a municipality,” Mayor Jason Shelton said.

Despite this lack of power, Shelton has shed light on what the city can do to help.

“Right now we’re having a litter campaign in the city of Tupelo #TupeloTrashChallenge. That’s part of the sesquicentennial efforts, 150th birthday efforts, of the city of Tupelo to really clean and beautify our city. [We’re trying] to get the schools involved, get the churches, get civic organizations get different people involved, different groups involved in cleaning up the city of Tupelo from the litter. It all adds up as far as an environmental impact. So even if it’s picking up trash, recycling, those types of things collectively make a big impact [on the environment]. It also makes our city more attractive to recruit people, businesses, new homeowners into the city.”

“We have through Public Works and Tupelo Water and Lights debris removal” which is used in the mulch program.

The city has been planting trees though the Tupelo Tree Farm and has added curb side recycling.

The city also has developed a Keep Tupelo Beautiful program.

“We [Keep Tupelo Beautiful] hold events throughout the year such as electronics recycling, tire recycling, beautification projects, etc.” KTB director Kathryn Rhea said.

As far as what students can do, Shelton says, “... it’s not too early, in my opinion, to think about future generations. Help with the education of the general public about how serious of an issue it is.”

Americans are more attracted to bigger vehicles which traditionally emit more CO2. Most, if not all, residents of Tupelo drive gas powered vehicles. While some hybrid or electric cars have gained popularity, the cost still makes them less popular.

Carpooling is one way that people can stop the spread of CO2 according to Laurie Bishop Environmental Science teacher. Tupelo also has Tupelo Transit for people who are interested in using public transportation.

People who are interested in more information about any of these programs should go to [www.tupeloms.gov](http://www.tupeloms.gov) for more information.

### Your Turn:

If you would like to contact Government officials about your concerns, you can use the contact information provided below:

**Governor Tate Reeves**  
Main Address: P.O. Box 139 Jackson, MS, 39205  
Phone Number: 1-601-359-3150 Toll Free: 1-877-290-948

**Senior Senator Roger Wicker** <https://www.wicker.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contact> for Wicker

**Junior Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith** <https://www.hydesmith.senate.gov/contact-senator> for Hyde-Smith

**1st District Representative Trent Kelly**  
<https://trentkelly.house.gov>  
Or call: (662) 841-8808

## Challenge Issued! Challenge Accepted!

**Tweet your pictures with the hashtag #TupeloTrashChallenge to show how you or your group are Keeping Tupelo Beautiful!**



Members of the Hi-Times staff, Rico Morris, Kyion White, Mario Watson and Ja-veonte Perry challenge other THS Clubs and organizations to participate in the #TupeloTrashChallenge. Trash bags can be picked up at City Hall.

**VISIT [WWW.THSCURRENT.ORG](http://WWW.THSCURRENT.ORG) TO LISTEN TO OUR RECENT EPISODE OF THE TUPELO TEA FEATURING MAYOR JASON SHELTON ON THIS TOPIC.**

### Keep Tupelo Beautiful TRASH CHALLENGE

#### WORKING TOGETHER FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Have you noticed the roadways becoming more and more cluttered with litter? Want to make a difference and help clean up our community?

#### HOW TO MAKE AN IMPACT:

**STEP 1**  
-Pickup litter along a roadway, near a business, in a park, or around your neighborhood.

**STEP 2**  
-Take a selfie or video and post to social media using the #TUPELOTRASHCHALLENGE Challenge 3 friends or businesses to do the same.

**STEP 3**  
-Discard trash in your garbage bin.

**EXTRAS**  
-Free trash bags can be picked up at City Hall.  
-Always remember safety first when picking up litter.  
Questions? [ktb@tupeloms.gov](mailto:ktb@tupeloms.gov)

