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2-27-2007

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University Relations, "Plan-It-Green re-set for March 31" (2007). *Campus News Archive*. 947.
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Plan-It-Green re-set for March 31

Summary: Area fifth and sixth grade students will have an opportunity to discover that it IS easy being “green” during a new hands-on program called Plan-It-Green set for March 31.

(February 27, 2007)-Area fifth and sixth grade students will have an opportunity to discover that it IS easy being “green” during a new hands-on program called Plan-It-Green. The event was rescheduled from its original date of February 17 and will now be held from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 31, in the Science building at the University of Minnesota, Morris. Volunteers from the University of Minnesota, Morris and the surrounding community will share their expertise in sustainability and environmental issues and invite students to discover ways in which they can shape their own green future. The Plan-It-Green “sustainability festival” is supported by a grant from the Jeffers Foundation.

“Young people are smart. Many of them already understand that their generation is going to face some really tough problems: they watch TV, hear things at school, and see reports on the Internet that worry them,” said Troy Goodnough, campus sustainability coordinator, who secured the grant and helped to coordinate the Plan-It-Green event.

“Plan-It-Green wants to help students put some of those issues in context, so they can think about how they can reduce and eliminate those problems.”

The program is funded in part by a Jeffers Foundation Partnership Grant Program. UMM and the Morris Area School District, along with only 11 other schools and agencies, are among the first in the state of Minnesota to receive Partnership Awards from the Jeffers Foundation.

“We appreciate the commitment of the Jeffers Foundation to educating young students about sustainability,” said Goodnough. “Many kids know that they need to be responsible environmental citizens so they can have breathe clean air, drink clean water, have abundant energy resources and pass something good on to the future. We want them to keep these beliefs in their hearts and minds as they grow into adults.”

Activities will include:

- Wind Energy Extravaganza, Jim and Nancy Barbour, USDA Soils Lab
- Are Greenhouse Gases Green? Sylke Boyd, UMM physics faculty
- Biomass -- there's energy in there! Cory Marquart, West Central Research and Outreach Center
- Carbon dioxide in water: it puts fizz in soda and acid in the ocean, Jennifer Goodnough, UMM chemistry faculty
- Sustainability can be fun! Len Keeler, UMM physics faculty
- Trash or Treasure? A Brief History of Trash, Marynel Ryan, UMM history faculty
- Words, Wonder and the Natural World, Vicki Graham, UMM English faculty
- Biodiversity Buddies, Peter Wyckoff, UMM biology faculty

“Many students are way ahead of their adult friends and family on environmental issues. Young people often react viscerally when they hear that we have lost another species of plant or animal,” explained Goodnough. “It bothers them that there might not be any polar bears left in the wild in their lifetime. It bothers them that the temperature of the Earth

seems to keep heating up and little is happening. Many children have not become cynical. Adults benefit from being around that energy and compassion, and sometimes it reminds us how important it is to see things from the unfiltered and untainted perspective of the young.”

“We are also reminded that all of nature is interconnected,” added Nancy Carpenter, UMM professor of chemistry and co-planner of Plan-It-Green. Carpenter, who coordinates the biennial Super Saturday Science program at UMM, added that the program is not only about science. Nor is it designed for girls only as is the highly successful Super Saturday Science event. It is expected that Plan-It-Green will be offered during alternate years with Super Saturday Science.

“We want students to understand that they are a part of the natural world,” said Goodnough. “We want them to learn about some of the problems that scientists and citizens are studying and worried about today: loss of diverse plant and animal life, ocean acidification, depleted natural resources, what to do with all this waste we generate and global warming. They need to know that there are things that they can do today to help turn these problems around. Young people want to act, and we want to help them to act.”

Participation in Plan-It-Green is free, although a \$10 deposit, which will be refunded upon participation, is requested at the time of registration. Registration is now open and participants are encouraged to register no later than Monday, March 26. Only 40 participants can be accepted, so early registration is encouraged. To register, contact Dr. Sharon Papeirnik at (320) 589-1711 or download a registration form at [Plan-It-Green](#) and return with the deposit to:

Dr. Sharon Papeirnik
USDA-ARS
North Central Soil Conservation Research Lab
803 Iowa Avenue
Morris, MN 56267

Students will receive confirmation of their registration. The science facilities at the University of Minnesota, Morris are fully accessible to students with disabilities and additional accommodations can be made upon request. Contact Nancy Carpenter at (320) 589-6337 for further information.

For more information about the program contact Troy Goodnough, (320) 589-6303 or [Troy Goodnough](#) or Nancy Carpenter, (320) 589-6337 or [Nancy Carpenter](#).

Jeffers Foundation was made possible through a bequest by the estate of Robert W. Jeffers, a long-time Prior Lake, Minn., resident. In March 2005 Jeffers Foundation was formed with the following purpose: to provide for direct primary education and the development of primary education principles, models, and curricula aimed at teaching young persons the value of wise stewardship of natural resources, the need to maintain a balance between population and the resources available to sustain and nourish it, and the means and methods which will ensure conservation and preservation of natural resources for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.