

Environmental Studies

newsletter



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ES in the field

Bio-Environmental Club In their second annual roadside cleanup of Rt. 30, students in GMC's Bio-Enviro Club picked up 31 bags of trash and 19 bags of #2 and #3 recyclables over a 2-day effort. Students hope their efforts will reduce the amount of metal and harmful chemicals leaching into soil and groundwater and, of course, improve the aesthetics along the road.

Some interesting finds of the clean-up, which stretched from Poultney to Castleton Corners, included a car door, fire extinguisher, life preserver, an original 1930's 7up bottle, propane tank, numerous hubcaps and car parts, and two syringes. The Bio-Enviro Club wants to thank all of its members who took part in the event, including student volunteers Christina Ouimette and Mary Elizabeth Franchi, and Williams Hardware of Poultney for providing participants with discounted reflective vests.

Ecology 35 General Ecology students have completed a restoration planting of native species aimed at helping absorb run-off between campus and the Poultney River. The new "rain garden," which is located in the corner of the soccer field behind the scoreboard, is strategically positioned for the restoration effort because the college's drainage system empties into the area.

Rain gardens are ecological adaptations of industrial catchment systems (for water run-off). Traditional industrial catchment systems remove water as quickly as possible from a specific area and drain it into a basin, where it will slowly dissipate into surrounding soils and waterways. The addition of wetland plants to or around a water catchment area increases water absorption and acts as a purifier.

Students worked in five different groups to execute the project. The design group planned the layout of native shrubs and trees to be used in the rain garden. While the design group planned, the rest of the class removed invasive species, such as reed canary grass, burdock, purple loosestrife, and wild parsnip. Undergraduate research assistant Pearl Wetherall selected plants native to Vermont that are also commonly found in Floodplain Forests.

upcoming event

Jim Merkel, sustainability coordinator at Dartmouth College, is scheduled to visit the GMC campus from November 30 and December 1. He will be speaking on Thursday, November 30 at 7:00 in the Gorge and he will also spend both days visiting classes.

ES coursesampler Spring 2007

Environmental Studies Core

- ENV 2093 The Environmental Professional (Coker and Steffens)
- ENV 2011 Public Policy & the Environment (Purdom)
- ECO 2003 Economics of the Environment (Hancock)
- BIO 1022 The Structure of Life (Graves); Lab
- ELA/MAT 1015 Intro to Statistics (Diana Boyd)

Environmental Studies Non-track Electives

- ENV 2010 GIS Applications in Environmental Studies (Van Hoesen)
- ENV 2005 ST Campus Sustainability (Jesse Pyles)
- ELA/ENV 2022 The Political Environment (Stefanie Wickstrom)

I. Environmental Education

- EDU 3014 Environmental Education: Place-Based Education (Coker)
- PHI/EDU 3013 Philosophy of Education (Mauhs-Pugh)
- EDU/PSY 2017 Developmental Psychology & Exceptional Child (Shapiro)

II. Human Sciences, Policy, and the Environment Track

- HI/ENV 3045 Environmental Philosophy (Fesmire)
- ENV 3016 Land Use Planning (Greg Brown)
- ENV 3037 International Environmental Politics & Policy (Wickstrom)
- ENV 3000 ST: Farm Gate to Campus Plate (Ackerman-Leist)
- ENV 3032 The Empire of Nature: Imperialism & Natural Environment

III. Agroecology Track

- * ENV 1011 Fundamentals of Organic Agriculture (Ackerman-Leist)
- BUS 3051 Small Business Entrepreneurship (Park)
- BIO 3011 ST: Early Life History of Fishes (Brooks)
- PHI/ENV 3045 Environmental Philosophy (Fesmire)

IV. Natural Sciences Track

- GLG 2071 Geology Field Experience (Van Hoesen)
- GLG 3041 Hydrogeology (Jim Wallace, Visiting Instructor, Yale University)
- BIO 3025 ST: Forest Ecology (Graves)
- BIO 3025 ST: Limnology (Brooks)

V. Art, Literature, and the Environment Track

- ART 3047 Environmental Sculpture (Karen Swyler)
- ENG 2015 Creative Writing (Pernal)
- ENG 2022 American Lit 1860 to Present (LesCarbeau)
- ENG 3007 World Lit (Pernal)
- ENG 4017 Seminar in Lit Figures: Shakespeare (Stuwe)

VI. Recreation and the Environment Track

- REC 3006 Essentials of Rock and Ice Climbing
- REC 3007 Essentials of Winter Mountain Travel
- REC 2033 Foundations of Adventure Recreation (Raines)
- REC 3021 Social and Psychological Dimensions of Leisure (Raines)

Non-ES Courses of Interest to ES Students

- LAW 1001 Topics at the U.S. Supreme Court (Purdom)
- ENG 3033 Chinese Mountain Poets (Christensen and Dailey)
- ELA 2065 Homesteader's Ecology (Ackerman-Leist)
- ELA 1027 Simplicity and Sustainability (Karen Fleming, Teresa Coker)

For the full schedule, visit:

http://campus.greenmtn.edu/Library/course_schedules.asp

Greeningthecampus

Green Mountain College Recycles GMC's student-run recycling program continues to make great improvements. In addition to purchasing new work equipment and campus bins with grant money from last year's SCGF, the crew has been hard at work raising campus awareness about recycling. Veteran member and crew chief, Ashley Graban (second from right), successfully petitioned to have a recycling activity included in the Images program, and nearly every first-year student on campus has now been inside the recycling trailer. Other crew members are (pictured below) Gabbi Bellegarde, Zach Behney, James Keiner, and Jane Day. The crew has seen increased participation in recycling on campus and wishes to thank the community for supporting the program.



Student Campus Greening Fund Update
Voting starts next week! The Student Campus Greening Fund voting period will last from Wednesday, November 15th to Tuesday, November 21st. Students should pay attention to email updates- coming soon.

Studentspotlight

GMC Senior Completes Influential Internship
Austin Sachs, a senior at GMC, spent his summer internship in his hometown of Briarcliffe Acres, South Carolina. His goal was to help this town achieve certification through the National Wildlife Federation certifying as a Community Wildlife Habitat. He transformed a raw piece of land into what is now called "Habitat Park". Many hours went into identifying and selecting trees, clearing the lot, building the rain garden, and the planting of flowers and native plants. The town volunteers were able to take over the project after his return to school and complete the final steps.

Prior to this project we had already certified over 40 homes as Backyard Wildlife Habitats and made 4 feeding stations for birds. The completion of this park put us over our requirement for this certification. There are only 19 towns in the United States and we are the 2nd in South Carolina to be certified.

Thank you for having such a strong ES Program at Green Mountain College and thank you to Austin Sachs for making his hometown proud.
-Nancy Edelman PhD, Team Leader

ESspotlight

Philip Ackerman-Leist, Heather Keith, Julie Alpers, and Steve Fesmire (pictured below) recently attended the Slow Food Conference, Terra Madre, in Turin, Italy. In addition to attending various lectures and presentations (including Italian President Giorgio Napolitano, author Michael Pollan, author-activist Vandana Shiva, and chef Alice Waters), the four Green Mountain ambassadors also delivered their own presentation entitled *Fields of Knowledge and Fields of Hope* at Green Mountain College. By Philip Ackerman-Leist

THE SLOW FOOD MOVEMENT began in the 1980's in Italy as a response to the increasing influence of American foods and eating habits (fast food) and the homogenization of the global palate. It has since progressed into an international organization of "food communities" from across the globe. A "food community" consists of interested farmers, chefs, consumers, and educators, all of whom gather together in an effort to work toward encouraging "good, clean, and fair (socially just) food," as well as conserving agricultural biodiversity and local cultural traditions surrounding foods of a given region. Terra Madre 2006 was a gathering of food communities (each food community defines itself and its members and then applies for an invitation to attend Terra Madre. An invitation to attend as a delegate from a food community means that the Slow Food organization provides that person with ground transportation, food (ahhhh...food of exceptional quality!), and lodging.

Terra Madre 2006 followed the first such event in 2004, also in Turin. Terra Madre was combined with the wildly successful Salone del Gusto ("Salon of Tastes"), one of Slow Food's early efforts at promoting the slow ideals, by way of offering tasting booths of specific products from across the planet, with written and graphic interpretation of each of these culturally significant—and often rare—food and agricultural traditions in Italian and English.

The Salone del Gusto was held in an enormous exhibit hall covering several acres, with foods, smells, farmers, chefs, and curious tasters filling every corner of the space for four days, from 11a.m. until 11p.m. Seminars, tasting events, and films were held almost constantly throughout each day.

The bilingual cultural interpretations at the booths told the stories of foods and traditions that are being rapidly marginalized, if not outright threatened, by the rapid changes brought about in food production, processing, and preparation. The stories of these threatened food traditions are specific and clear reminders that these foods generally were and are products of humble farmers and household cooks—not the staged showcasing of a gastronomic elite. Finally, the predominance of the middle class in Italy and the overall love of food are reminders that good food—food marinated in meaning and served at the table for family and friends—is a still a conscious choice for most of us in industrialized societies.

I came away from this incredible immersion in people, ideas, food politics, and gastronomic delights (a multicultural vortex) with a much deeper appreciation for the commonality of the problems that we all face as farmers, chefs, consumers, and educators. Of course, the problems are also region-specific, and while I appreciate the complex plight of farmers and food in the United States, I could also see that the challenges we face in the U.S. in producing



"good, clean, and fair" food are magnified several times over in less industrialized countries. Our consumers wield considerable power, and our farmers and chefs have resources beyond those in most parts of the world. Besides having reasonable access to land, water, and markets, we are particularly fortunate to have a host of creative farming-food pioneers, elasticity in our markets, and significant potential for producer-consumer alliances. In fact, the founder of Slow Food, journalist Carlo Petrini, is calling for us to think of consumers as "coproducers," a concept that makes the farmer-consumer alliance more emphatic and potentially more enduring.

Environmentalnews

GMC Becomes First Campus Powered by Vermont Dairy Cows In a state where it's often theorized there are more cows than people, Green Mountain College believes it may now be the nation's first cow-powered campus. The college recently announced its enrollment in Central Vermont Public Service's Cow Power™ program, through which the utility delivers energy created from burning biogas created from cow manure on Vermont dairy farms.

This initiative helps the college do its part to address global warming by reducing its carbon emissions by approximately 3500 metric tons per year, or the equivalent of removing 758 passenger cars from use for a year. The College has committed to designate 50 percent of its main campus electric usage as Cow Power and 100



percent on all its other accounts, which include the president's house, the college farm, the college inn and alumni house, and the residence hall in Killington, VT. Total Cow Power enrollment will be approximately 1.2 million kilowatt-hours annually.

"This is a great step for us toward a sustainably-powered campus," said Provost Bill Throop. "We are very happy to be supporting not just renewable energy," says Throop, "but also the regional economy and the family farms that are so important to the Vermont way of life. It is a good fit with our mission, and departments across campus are supporting the project from their own budgets because they feel it's a priority."

Green Mountain College officials were drawn to Cow Power because it has the added benefit of being a local program where students and employees can actually see the farms where the power is being generated and learn about the process.

To create energy, manure and other farm waste are held in a sealed concrete tank at the same temperature as a cow's

stomach, 101 degrees. Bacteria digest the volatile components, creating methane while killing pathogens and weed seeds. The methane fuels an engine/generator, and the electricity generated is fed onto the CVPS electric distribution system.

Cow Power is Green Mountain College's latest effort in a string of projects aimed at making the 172-year-old campus more environmentally-friendly.

There's rarely a single, unambiguous "right thing to do." Cow Power raises important questions across disciplines about agricultural sustainability, the science of climate change, and the ethical treatment of animals. If you have thoughts about Green Mountain College's new cow power initiative, please share them with the ES Newsletter.

GMC Presents at Sustainability Conference Three members of the GMC community traveled to Yale University recently to present at the 3rd Annual Conference of the Northeast Campus Sustainability Consortium. Green Mountain was one of nearly 50 colleges attending the event. Other presenting colleges included UVM, UNH, Harvard, Yale, and MIT.

"It was great to be able to represent the good work being done here at GMC and realize how much our colleagues at other colleges appreciate what we're doing," said Jesse Pyles, GMC's sustainability coordinator. "People were very impressed with our academic focus on the environment, which has been a tough nut to crack at other colleges. They also praised our student greening fund and our efforts to push for local food."

The theme of this year's conference was Strategies for Institutionalizing Sustainability in Higher Education. Professor Jacob Park (business and public policy) organized a workshop and gave a presentation on "Green Purchasing and Campus Sustainability Strategy." Jesse Pyles, sustainability and service learning coordinator, helped out with the workshop, while GMC environmental studies major Corinna Lowe and John Turenne, consulting faculty member of the fall block course, presented as well.

EnvironmentalStudies newsletter

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Contact Us

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Special Thanks to the GMC Journal