MAKE IT YOUR BUSINESS!

This past spring, Warren Wilson College's Environmental Leadership Center partnered with Environmental Defense to convene North Carolina's Future... Make It Your Business. This initiative has begun with a series of forums to engage the business and civic leaders of North Carolina in a dialogue about the need to plan for the healthy and prosperous future described in Environmental Defense's report, Horizon 2100.

Commenting on the forums, University of North Carolina President Emeritus Bill Friday, who served as moderator at the Asheville forum, stated, "It is abundantly clear that discussions like these are urgently needed to set forth a course of action. We must make up our minds that we're going to move toward a policy of intelligent conservation because we know now of its great importance to economic development, to tourism growth, to the agricultural community, to the quality of life we all aspire to have."

Charlotte forum moderator former Governor Jim Martin commented, "I welcome this initiative by Environmental Defense and the Environmental Leadership Center of Warren Wilson College. They recognize the best course for all activists, business leaders, civic leaders - all of us - is to begin working together to address the most profound issues that we face, not just torment one another."

Forums in Raleigh, Asheville, Charlotte, and Greenville examined how the environment and the economy are linked to the vision for North Carolina described in Horizon 2100 - a report endorsed by one hundred and thirty of the state’s leading conservation scientists. The forums were made possible through grants and guidance from three of the state's most influential foundations – the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, and the Foundation for the Carolinas – and support from an anonymous benefactor in Greenville.

More than 600 business and civic leaders listened to former Governor Jim Hunt in Raleigh, University of North Carolina President Emeritus Bill Friday in Asheville, former Governor Jim Martin in Charlotte, and University of North Carolina, Wilmington Chancellor Emeritus Jim Leutze in Greenville, and to the panelists, before stepping to the mike in the second hour and posing their questions to the presenters.

According to forum co-coordinator and ELC Associate Director Margo Flood, "Harnessing the knowledge, the human resources, and the idealism of Warren Wilson to inspire change in the wider community has been gratifying and very effective. The forums have been a great success. We are receiving calls from participants who want to know how they can begin to take immediate steps..."

President Doug Orr hosts Asheville Forum

Governor Jim Martin addresses Charlotte Forum

...continued on pg 2

Leadership is Our Business
a letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

Leadership is our business, our calling, our opportunity, our chance to serve. Our leadership must involve children, young people, and individuals of every persuasion. We are all in this together. Never has participation on the part of every citizen mattered more.

We cannot stand idly by and watch continuing degradation of our streams and rivers, relentless development without planning, the negative consequences of non-sustainable agricultural practices, sickening air quality in our mountains, and the neglect of environmental education in our school.

We can do better. We can do much better. Warren Wilson College is determined to lead and to inspire - through education and dialogue – the systemic change that can secure a sustainable society.

We have to lead in order to create the dialogue that inspires systemic change. This change has to be based on good science. It also requires passion, hard work, dialogue among adversaries, and finally intelligent public policy.

We all breathe the same air and drink from the same watersheds. We don't have to search for common ground – we simply have to wake up to the fact that we live on it.

We start where we are – in this beautiful state where our natural heritage not only sustains our spirit but also fuels our economy.

...continued on pg 3

I think the visionary Horizon 2100 document and Charlotte's forum discussion will soon bear fruit. Todd Mansfield, CEO of Croland, Inc. (and Charlotte forum panelist), asked to learn more about Bank of America’s paper procurement policy and our funding of the Green Communities initiative with a view to potentially implement those initiatives at Croland, while Julie Birch, Assistant City Manager, Charlotte, has inquired about the organizational structure of our environmental efforts at the bank, as well as specific policies, also with a view to implementing them.

– Doug Fowler, Bank of America change consultant and panelist at the Charlotte forum
Sustainability Leader Coming to WWC

Harold Glasser, Ph.D., is coming to Warren Wilson College August 31 – September 1 for the first of a series of consulting visits to assist faculty, staff, and students on the path of sustainability. Key areas of focus will include campus greening and the Triad; the First-Year Experience; and the creation of a campus sustainability assessment tool that fits the unique needs of the College.

Glasser is Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He has been a visiting Fulbright Scholar at the University of Oslo; a visiting researcher at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis; and a lecturer at Schumacher College.

His most recent article, “The Sustainability Challenge: Higher Education for a Higher Purpose” was published in the recent issue of Heartstone. (Heartstone, a publication of the College’s ELC, is the Common Reader for incoming students this fall.) Glasser made many friends on the Warren Wilson campus during his first visit over a year ago.

“From where I sit,” says Glasser, “Warren Wilson College is poised for great things. I am excited and honored to have the chance to work with the entire Warren Wilson community to make recommendations and to facilitate the community’s commitment to sustainable practices.”

Paul Bartels, John Casey, Martha Knight-Oakley, Paul Braese, Stan Cross, Jessica Wooten, and John Huie are coordinating Glasser’s visit and schedule.

“What we are aiming for with Glasser’s help,” says Huie, “is movement towards a higher level of integration, exemplary sustainability practices, and a high level of coherence and communication throughout the campus culture.”

Heartstone 2005 Available!

The new Spring 2005 issue of Heartstone - Earth Day! Not Yet! - is out! This issue includes poetry, artwork, essays, a forum with E. O. Wilson and Senator Gaylord Nelson*, and a lead interview with Ian Johnson, Vice President for the Environment and Sustainable Development at The World Bank. To learn more about this issue and to read excerpts you may visit www.warren-wilson.edu/-elc/ and link to Heartstone. To receive your own copy of Heartstone, Earth Day! Not Yet! contact editor Margo Flood at 1.828.771.2002.

*As we go to press, we have learned Senator Gaylord Nelson, the founder of Earth Day, died on July 3, 2005 at age 89. President Clinton hailed him as “grandfather of the Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act.”

THE ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP CENTER

Director
John C. Huie, Ph.D.

Associate Director
Margo N. Flood

Education Director
Stan Cross

Director of Research and Community Outreach
Phillip Gibson

Administrative Assistant
Ellen W. Querin

Student Work Crew
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Catalyst Editor
Margo N. Flood

Publications Assistant
Courtney Cochran

Phillip Gibson Joins ELC Staff

The ELC team is pleased to be joined by Phillip Gibson who will serve as Director of Research and Community Outreach. Phillip has most recently served as the French Broad Riverkeeper at RiverLink. His demonstrated commitment to community problem-solving and depth of experience in environmental work will add dimension to the ELC’s ongoing work in the region.

Gibson will work with the ELC to address the region’s most critical environmental issues and expand the work of Applied Services. He has 14 years’ experience in development of meaningful projects that meet the needs of communities and their natural resources.

Planning to continue this important work, Gibson comments, “We are well positioned at the ELC to identify and engage the people of our region in addressing western North Carolina’s most critical environmental issues - a commitment driven by the mission of Warren Wilson College.”

Gibson can be reached at 1.828.771.3781

MAKE IT YOUR BUSINESS!

continued from pg 1

in their own communities.”

ELC Director John Huie commented, “We consider this undertaking mission-central and the finest sort of civic lesson in environmental leadership. Its success is directly related to the involvement of Warren Wilson faculty, staff, and students. From geography professor David Abernathy’s collaboration with WWC student Clay Gibson to develop Governor Martin’s GIS-based powerpoint presentation for the Charlotte forum, to the ELC student work crew who spent days on the phones convincing business and civic leaders statewide of the importance of attending these forums, WWC’s Triad of work, service, and academics was fully engaged.

Phillip Gibson

Director of Research and Community Outreach

Michael Glasser

Associate Professor of Environmental Studies

Phillip Gibson

Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies

Catalyst Publications Assistant

Note

Phillip Gibson

Director of Research and Community Outreach

Michael Glasser

Associate Professor of Environmental Studies

Phillip Gibson

Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies

Catalyst Publications Assistant

Note

Phillip Gibson

Director of Research and Community Outreach

Michael Glasser

Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies

Catalyst Publications Assistant

Note
Lester Brown, author of Plan B: Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble speaks to us all: “Throughout human history, humans have lived on the earth’s sustainable yield – the interest from its natural endowment. But now we are consuming the endowment itself. In ecology, as in economics, we can consume principal along with interest in the short term, but in the long run it leads to bankruptcy.” This is outrageous.

In recent months the Environmental Leadership Center in collaboration with Environmental Defense has brought together more than six hundred citizens in forums around the state – leaders from business, industry, medicine, education, faith communities, and corporate and nonprofit organizations. (See Catalyst article on page 1 of this issue.) Given the breakdown of dialogue and frustrating polarization in our culture, these high-spirited forums are in themselves cause for celebration. People from different perspectives are beginning to listen to each other in our region and in our state.

The intense participation and passionate concern expressed at these forums included two former governors (one Republican, one Democrat), prominent educators, business men and women, heads of major corporations, doctors, lawyers, real estate professionals, and just plain folks. The energy generated must now be channeled into an even deeper dialogue which impacts our culture, these high-spirited forums are in themselves cause for celebration. People from different perspectives are beginning to listen to each other in our region and in our state.

What does it take to be a campus greening crew member? Tenacity. Idealism. Energy. Hope. A dose of zealotry. And an utter conviction to change the world. Every one of this past year’s crew members possess these qualities and they are changing the world.

The campus greening crew is responsible for maintaining and furthering WWC’s campus greening initiative. These Warren Wilson students are supervised by the ELC’s Education Director Stan Cross and the Recycling and Solid Waste Supervisor Jessica Wooten. Llina Laufer, Julia York, Amanda Davis and Julia Kernitz worked tirelessly this past year and when we say what follows is just a sample of their work in the 2004–2005 academic year, we mean it.

- Scheduled “Lunch and Learn” sessions for the Warren Wilson community with regional sustainable business representatives.
- Established a system for monitoring energy and water use in campus buildings and then posted information about dorm energy and water use as an educational tool for students.
- Organized month-long dorm energy reduction competition.
- Administered the Campus Greening Seed Grant Program.
- Represented the College and presented workshops at environmental/social justice conferences in North Carolina and Tennessee.
- Researched environmental campus alternatives such as conservation easements on riparian zones, bicycle paths on campus, grant options for lowering emissions, and alternative outdoor lighting options.
- Managed the “Roots & Shoots” Environmental Action Club.
- Helped to develop plans for the LEED-certified College Relations building.
- Trained to become Green Walkabout tour leaders; improved the Green Walkabout Primer.
- Helped to organize WWC’s Earth Week festivities.

Environmental Leadership Center     www.warren-wilson.edu/elc/     phone: 828.771.3006
Thomas Berry Student Writing Award

The Environmental Leadership Center (ELC) of Warren Wilson College announces the Thomas Berry Student Writing Award in honor of our mentor and good friend, Thomas Berry. Berry’s books include The Dream of the Earth, The Universe Story (with Brian Swimme), and The Great Work.

The award was created to foster dialogue and quality writing on environmental themes, and all Warren Wilson College students are eligible to participate. A committee composed of ELC staff and College faculty will select the winning essay, which will address the crisis in human-earth relations in the 20th century and the need for healing and change in the 21st. The Thomas Berry Student Writing Award will be presented annually at the fall meeting of the ELC’s Council of Advisors.

Thomas Berry has often visited the campus of Warren Wilson College. Now, in the ninth decade of his life, he continues to inspire and to challenge us with his cosmic perspective and his inimitable prose.

He writes in The Great Work:

Concern for the environment must become ‘the central organizing principle of civilization.’ The story of the universe is now being told as the epic story of evolution by scientists. We begin to understand our human identity with all the other modes of existence that constitute the single universe community. The one story includes us all. We are, everyone, cousins to one another. Every being is intimately present to and immediately influencing every other being.

Contact John Huie at the ELC, 1.828.771.3780 for a copy of the award guidelines.

GREEN WATCH!

Warren Wilson has been recognized by the National Wildlife Federation as being among the top 24 colleges in the nation with students, faculty, and staff working toward sustainability. Highlights of the past year’s activities reflect this commitment:

- Landscape Crew’s remaining two gas mowers are being converted to propane which produces less pollution than petroleum gas.
- A new, in-vessel Grendrum system has been installed to compost campus food waste and convert the waste stream into ‘tea’ to be used in the organic management of the school’s new soccer fields.
- The Landscape Crew’s vehicle fleet is being converted to B100 - 100% plant-based diesel fuel - to replace standard diesel fuel as part of a campus-wide plan to significantly reduce mobile source emissions.
- The Building Services Crew is 90% converted from general cleaning chemicals to environmentally friendly certified products.
- The WWF Farm has a new cattle winter feeding station, which allows them to gather the herd’s manure, compost it, and apply it to the fields, thus dramatically reducing dependency on off-farm nutrient inputs.
- Sterling Planet donated 88,000 kwh of 100% new wind energy to WWF for the Earth Week Events (offsetting 100% of WWF’s weekly energy usage) thanks to the hard work of the Earth Day planning committee and the Campus Greening Crew.
- Sub metering of all buildings is complete so WWF can monitor energy use and encourage conservation.

I am green and it’ll do fine, it’s beautiful! And I think it’s what I want to be.
- Kermit the Frog

Living Green

If every household in the US replaced one light bulb with an ENERGY STAR qualified compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL), it would prevent enough pollution to equal removing one million cars from the road.* ENERGY STAR-qualified CFLs use up to 66% less energy than a standard incandescent bulb and last up to 10 times longer. Replacing a 100-watt incandescent bulb with a 15-watt CFL - both of which provide 1,400 Lumens of light output - can save you at least $30 in energy costs over the life of the bulb. Operating eight hours per day, a CFL bulb will pay for itself in five months. CFLs are now available at major hardware stores.

*http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm

EJC Council of Advisors

Joel Adams – Asheville, NC
Susan Andrew – Asheville, NC
Ann Baker – Cranston, NC
Taylor Barbour – Mars Hill, NC
Bill Bondurant – Chapel Hill, NC
Dawn Averitt Bridge – Asheville, NC
Andy Brown – Asheville, NC
Bill Baub – Salem, NC
Ginger Cecil (chair) – Asheville, NC
Mimi Cecil – Asheville, NC
LisaBee Cooper – Black Mountain, NC
Jane Craig – Charlotte, NC
Thomas Rain Crowe – Callowhee, NC
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Ellie Daniels – Asheville, NC
Robert Deutsch – Asheville, NC
Joe Epley – Tryon, NC
Ric Felker – Atlanta, GA
Jay Fields – Asheville, NC
Hertha Flack – Tryon, NC
James Hendrix – Atlanta, GA
Mary Rich Hill – Asheville, NC
Paula Holmes – Pittsburgh, PA
Mike Horak – Asheville, NC
Ben Keys – Greenville, SC
Page Kizer – Denver, NC
Florence Krapnick – Asheville, NC
Jim Kubus – Somersa, MA
D’Etta Leach – Marshall, NC
Michael Leonard – Winston-Salem, NC
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Harry Petrequin – Asheville, NC
Doug Rader – Raleigh, NC
Sally Rhoads – Asheville, NC
Susan Roderick – Asheville, NC
Doug Riley – Asheville, NC
Sandy Schenck – Cedar Mountain, NC
Brad Searson – Asheville, NC
Peter Sterling – Waynesville, NC
Alan Thornburg – Asheville, NC
David Turner – Asheville, NC
Wally Wallin – Asheville, NC
Ed Wilson – Wentworth, NC

EJC Educational Advisors

Tom Bohn, Ph.D. – Ithaca, NY
John Brock, Ph.D. – Asheville, NC
Hans Cole – Berkeley, CA
Dean Kahl, Ph.D. – Asheville, NC
Susan Kask, Ph.D. – Asheville, NC
Carl Leopold, Ph.D. – Ithaca, NY
Hertha Flack – Tryon, NC
Jim Kuhns – Sonoma, CA
Janisse Ray – Brattleboro, VT

Educate for the Future!

The ELC of Warren Wilson College is a founding member of the US Partnership for the Decade of Education For Sustainable Development (www.uspartnership.org), created to promote and implement the worldwide Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, launched in January 2005 by the United Nations. Among the many organizations supporting the goals of the Decade* is The World Bank.

During the College’s sixth year, Warren Wilson freshman Courtney Cochran, who serves the ELC’s student work crew as publications assistant, participated in a meeting at The World Bank headquarters in Washington D.C. with Ian Johnson* and the leadership team of the US Partnership. Key themes of the meeting included youth engagement in sustainability education; distance learning and the role of information and communication technology in support of sustainability; and the need for more Warren Wilson-like holistic and integrative education centers.

*Be sure to read ELC Director John Huie’s interview with Ian Johnson and Steve Cochran’s piece on the Decade in the most recent Heartstone and learn how you can get involved.
Dear Catalyst Readers,

Here is an update on my life. After completing two Environmental Leadership Center Internships and then helping to manage the Internship program while a senior at Warren Wilson, I am now working with the New England Wildflower Society (NEWFS) and have just completed the first few weeks of my six-month fellowship here.

NEWFS was established in 1900 and is the oldest existing plant conservation and advocacy group in the country. Seventy-five years ago, they started a horticulture component to encourage native gardening as an antidote to invasives. NEWFS recognizes the only way the environment and the plants will be preserved is by gaining the interest of the younger generation and they have developed educational programs for schools (and for older generations, too). I believe sincerely in all of these goals and am pleased to be a part of this Society.

The department I work in is the conservation department. Back in the 1990’s, NEWFS started a volunteer program to help the state natural heritage program of Massachusetts collect data on the hundreds of endangered plant populations around the state. We now have over 400 volunteers in all of the New England states working as Plant Conservation Volunteers (PCV), and/or working on the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (IPANE). My job here is to help coordinate the volunteers and to obtain land owner permission to monitor plant populations on private property. I am in the field working on management projects, biodiversity inventories, and plant monitoring.

All aspects of my job are directly connected to my past experiences and largely those with the ELC. My internship with North Carolina’s Nature Conservancy – Mountains District taught me that the health of a preserve is reflected in its vegetation. In fact, I would not be qualified to coordinate the volunteers if not for my experience helping to manage the ELC’s Internship Program. For all the wonderful experiences and direction the ELC has provided me to get me to this job today, I give thanks.

Sincerely,

Joy VanDervort-Sneed, ’04
B.S. in environmental studies with a concentration in conservation biology
Natural Science Seminar Projects Delve into the Region’s Ecosystems

Natural Science Seminars are the capstone experience for Warren Wilson’s science graduates. At the North Carolina Academy of Science’s annual conference, select WWC students present their research and receive more awards than students from any other institution in North Carolina. Not surprisingly, WWC students often choose research topics that examine the environmental health of our regional ecosystems. Their findings underscore the need to understand the complexities of our ecosystem in order to develop effective and long-lasting protection plans. Here is a sampling of this past year’s research.

The Effects of Agriculture on the Water Quality and the Invertebrate Communities of Shope and Bull Creeks

Student: Irene Redmond
Mentor: Dr. Mark Brenner
Non point source (NPS) pollution from agriculture is a major cause of water pollution in the United States. Five sites in an agricultural watershed along Shope and Bull Creeks in Buncombe County were sampled and analyzed over four dates in the fall and winter of 2004 to determine the effects of one farm on the water quality of Shope and Bull Creeks.

Monitoring Beneficial Insectary Habitats on a Certified, Organic, Mixed-Vegetable Farm

Student: Maureen McKenna
Mentor: Dr. Laura Lengnick
Organic farmers must find alternative methods of crop pest management because certification requirements preclude the use of chemical insecticides. The objective of this study was to determine the success of the various insectary plants in attracting beneficial insects and not providing harborage for pest species.

Microbial Community Structure at High Altitudes in North Carolina as Indicated by Phospholipid Fatty Acid Composition.

Student: Amber Boles
Mentor: Dr. Victoria Collins
Dead trees and air pollution atop Mount Mitchell create the formerly picturesque view. Acidic fogs enclose Mount Mitchell 75% of the year, depositing concentrated air pollutants. However, the connection between acid precipitation and tree health remains unclear. Using PLFA (Phospholipid Fatty Acid Analysis), this study compared patterns in microbial community structure in Red Spruce (Picea rubens) soils where trees were classified as dead or alive.

The Use of Diurnal Oxygen Curves to Study Pollution in the Pigeon River

Student: William Pierzala
Mentor: Dr. Dean Kahl
The Pigeon River flows through western North Carolina. The Blue Ridge Paper mill is located in Canton, NC and has historically been a major polluter of the Pigeon River. The objective of this study was to use diurnal oxygen curves to estimate the relative rates of photosynthesis, respiration and diffusion.

Giving Thanks...

Our good friend D’Etta Leach conceived Green Walkabouts for Warren Wilson College several years ago. As a leader serving on the ELC’s Council of Advisors, D’Etta recognized the value of educating the region about the College’s best practices and envisioned that visitors would enjoy a campus tour featuring sites that model creative sustainability. And further, she hoped they might return to their homes or businesses and practice a higher level of environmental citizenship as a result of this visit. We seized upon this idea and have launched The Green Walkabout—a tour designed to introduce diverse groups from the region and beyond to the College’s best practices and ongoing challenges.

As these Walkabouts unfold, visitors have been asking for detailed information about each site. ELC director John Hsie is working with Warren Wilson MFA graduate Elizabeth Lutjens and the managers of the seven tour sites to develop The Green Walkabout Primer—a training document to prepare ELC staff, students, and interested volunteers to deliver informative tours that showcase sustainability efforts in Landscaping, the Garden, the Forest, Recycling and Waste Management, Facilities and Technical Services, the Farm, and the EcoDorm.

We give thanks to D’Etta, an artist by practice,* who inspired The Green Walkabout and serves each day as an extraordinary environmental steward.

*If you don’t yet have a copy of Heartstone Spring 2005, please call 1.828.771.2002 to receive your copy and enjoy D’Etta’s contribution to this issue.

YOUR OWN GREEN WALKABOUT

Call the ELC’s Ellen Querin at 1.828.771.3006 to arrange for your tour.

ECOTEAM EXPANDING

EcoTeam is the Environmental Leadership Center’s (ELC’s) science-based environmental curriculum for third graders. It is currently taught by Warren Wilson students to more than 65% of the third graders, or more than 1,300 students, in Buncombe County. The ELC is in the midst of a major EcoTeam expansion. Education Director Stan Cross and Lev Ben-Ezra, WWC senior and 2004 – 2005 student EcoTeam Expansion Coordinator, with support from the Bradham Family Foundation and the Charles M. and Mary D. Grant Foundation, are working to implement three new EcoTeam programs at higher education institutions in the southeast. Cross is working with Jeanne McCarty, director of The Jane Goodall Institute’s Roots & Shoots Program, to implement EcoTeam programs across Mississippi as part of a state-wide, service-learning, capacity-building initiative. Ben-Ezra has worked with schools regionally and identified EcoTeam interest at Western Carolina State University, Mars Hill College, and Pfeiffer University. According to Cross,* EcoTeam is the ELC’s capstone environmental education program. We are focused on growing the implementation sites because we believe so strongly in the value of the EcoTeam experience. All the credit for the regional expansion initiative goes to our student Lev Ben Ezra and her professional tenacity. There will be much to do next fall in order to actualize all this potential, but without Lev’s work this year we would not be enjoying these opportunities. Contact Stan Cross at 1.828.771.3782 for more information about EcoTeam.

Inspiring Stewards of All Ages!

This past academic year the ELC …

- Taught EcoTeam lessons to more than 1,300 third graders in Buncombe County.
- Invited more than 4,000 business and civic leaders statewide to a series of environmental forums.
- Engaged more than 600 of them in inspiring dialogue about stewardship.
- Collaborated with more than 25 Warren Wilson students in its daily environmental work.
- Communicated with 10,000 readers through its publications.
- Hosted more than 100 people at the Heartstone Poets public reading on campus.
- Inspired business and civic leaders with Expeditions to the Art Loeb Trail and Baja’s Sea of Cortez.
- Sent 26 Warren Wilson students on summer environmental internships.
- Led more than 250 visitors on the Green Walkabout tour of campus.
- Convened more than 50 ELC Advisors and regional friends for three annual ELC meetings.

If just a fraction of those we touch are inspired to take environmental action, we are gratified.
BRIDGBUILDERS

John Huie, ELC Director

Lisbeth Riis Cooper and Don Cooper are achieving their remarkable vision of healing and hope for the mentally ill. Bridgebuilders of the rarest kind, they have in recent years established the CooperRiis Healing Farm Community located in Mill Spring, North Carolina, which offers a path from mental illness to personal fulfillment for men and women from all over the country.

Following a personal experience with the inadequacy of the American mental health system, Don and Lisbeth resolved to find a path to recovery for their daughter, Dani’le. “When we moved to North Carolina with our daughter about six years ago,” says Lisbeth, “we realized that services for people with mental illness were non-existent. We dreamed about building a place where the Dani’les of the world could regain their lives and get completely out of what Don and I call ‘unmanaged care.’”

To pursue this dream, Lisbeth and Don formed a nonprofit charitable corporation in 2000. An 80-acre spread of hill country was purchased near Hendersonville and construction began in 2001. The rural setting was essential in order to bring residents into a close working relationship with the natural world – farm animals, garden, forest trails, and mountain serenity. When the doors opened in 2002, comprehensive care became available to 36 residents. Then in 2003, CooperRiis opened the Graduate Program Campus - seven apartments in Asheville managed by three professional staff members - to guide and advise Graduate residents transitioning into jobs and new, healthy lives. Lisbeth regards the natural world as “our sanctuary.” She remembers her own childhood: “I grew up on a farm in Denmark after the second World War. I loved working on the farm, loved the gardening, flowers, vegetables. Things were not always rosy during those years, and when things got tough, I would go out and look up at the clouds, take long walks, dream about possibilities.”

Don and Lisbeth visited Warren Wilson College in the early stages of creating their healing farm community. “We knew we would have a lot in common with Warren Wilson and we wanted to build a partnership. Doug Orr introduced us to faculty, staff, and students. You work close to nature at Warren Wilson and your students, faculty and staff bring this spirit to us,” Lisbeth reflects.

Through Applied Services of the ELC, director John Huie has conducted teambuilding workshops for the CooperRiis staff. Bob Swoo, Warren Wilson College psychology professor, serves as trainer for the staff. Warren Wilson students who have served as interns or are employed with CooperRiis include Ken Dean, Brittany Amiss, Adam Rey, BJ Scofield, Diana Bardon, Heidi Stucker, Mark Fields, Mollie Meisterman, Laura Torres, and Saleem Penny.

Reflecting today, Don Cooper shares that “after only three years, we are seeing almost total fulfillment of our dream. Who would have imagined the Mayo Clinic would have put us on their recommended list...or that Menninger’s (the leading private facility for mental illness in the United States) would tell a parent that ‘CooperRiis is the best facility of its kind in the country.’” Bridgebuilders Don Cooper and Lisbeth Riis Cooper have harnessed nature’s healing properties for the benefit of every person involved in their remarkable undertaking. We honor them for building a healing community that reveres the sacred in nature and believes that in connection with the natural world, healthy lives may be built.

ELC Expeditions

ELC Expedition to Baja

ELC Associate Director Margo Flood and former ELC Science Advisor Paul Bartels led a group of environmentally conscious leaders to Baja this past January to experience this unique and spectacular habitat. They hiked the desert, bird watched, kayaked in the Sea of Cortez, explored pristine offshore islands, lived in solar powered cabins, started each morning with a yoga lesson, and learned the ecology of desert and sea.

One highlight was an excursion to San Ignacio Lagoon on the Pacific Coast to experience gray whales at the height of calving season. According to expedition participant Cyndee Patterson, “living off the grid for seven days was the right thing to do in this fragile and hauntingly beautiful environment.”

The ELC will travel to Belize in the coming year. Contact Margo Flood at 1.828.771.2002 for more information.

WWC Environmental Award

Warren Wilson College was selected by the Environmental Educators of North Carolina as it’s 2004 Outstanding Environmental Organization. The College, and, in particular, it’s Environmental Leadership Center, were recognized for “leading the way in environmental education and environmental problem-solving.”

Art Loeb Trail Hike

This past year, ELC staff, Joan and John Dickson, other family members of Art Loeb, and Asheville friends hiked a section of the Art Loeb trail to learn the history of this remarkable man and experience the beauty of the trail that bears his name. With a picnic lunch provided by ELC Advisory Council member Ellie Daniels, Art Loeb’s family spoke of their father and inspired us all to greater stewardship of this region’s precious land.
2005 Campus Greening Seed Grant Recipients!

Warren Wilson students have a passion for transforming theory into real-world action. From the student-initiated Cowpie Café to the community bike program and the EcoDorm, students take a lead role in the design and implementation of campus greening projects at the College. The Environmental Leadership Center’s (ELC) annual Campus Greening Seed Grants Program encourages this leadership and funds student projects that demonstrate practical solutions to environmental challenges. Thanks to the continued support of Chris and Ollie Ahrens, the ELC is proud to announce the 2005 Campus Greening Seed Grant recipients:

Herbal Tinctures and Holistic Wellness Project
Wellness Crew student Amanda Gammon expanded the Wellness tincture program by using a seed grant to purchase a wider variety of tinctures from Red Moon Herbs, a local women’s cooperative that grows herbs organically and sustainably.

EcoDorm Compost Bin
EcoDorm crew members Kim Douglas and April Nabbolz used their seed grant to purchase the hardware required for a new composting bin conceived by and built by the EcoDorm crew and residents.

Landscaping Crew Bulb Program
Ryan Nepomuceno received a seed grant to spread the beauty of flowers into the winter months. Red poinsettias are raised in the greenhouse in the fall, followed by a crop of paperwhites. The potted flowers are sold at a low price to the community.

Hemlock Wooly Adelgid
Students on the Landscape Tree Crew found hemlock wooly adelgid infestations on campus. With over 600 hemlock trees on main campus alone, the Crew is eager to prevent further damage. This seed grant will enable the purchase of an injection tool to administer pesticides into the soil.

Cob Construction
With her seed grant, Kim Douglas led a group of students in the construction of a cob oven and pavilion to serve as an example of this ancient building tradition and provide a gathering place for EcoDorm residents.

Preserving Garden Produce
Colleen O’Donnell and Joe Manoan will use their seed grant to support the work of the student Food Processing Crew. Containers will be purchased to store the food grown in WWC’s summer gardens for use by the food service to serve to students in the academic year.

Green Calendar
In the fall semester of 2004, Warren Wilson freshman Courtney Cochran, who serves as publications assistant on the Environmental Leadership Center work crew, went on-line to search for important environmental events that representatives from the College might want to attend. After a few hours of searching and culling information from many, many websites, she discovered there was no comprehensive listing available. In the coming months, Courtney developed The Green Calendar – a comprehensive listing of environmental happenings in the southeast. She announced it to nonprofits in the area, and soon established a network of regular contributors to the calendar. Next she developed links to the calendar from likely websites. Now the calendar can be viewed at www.warrenwilson.edu/~elc/green_calendar.shtml.

Take a look. Get informed!