

## News Release

# Regional Partnership focuses on Sustainable Development

By Linda Kingery on Wednesday, December 28, 2005

What is all the buzz about sustainability? Sustainability means that this current generation chooses to live in a way that allows future generations the resources and options they will need. Many people and organizations in the region are interested in shaping a future that balances social, economic and environmental objectives. Several of these groups have submitted their ideas to the Northwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (NW RSDP). The NW RSDP connects the resources and ideas of citizens in the region with the education, research, and outreach capabilities of the University of Minnesota.

Here are some of the project partnerships supported by the NW RSDP this fall and winter.

- The Red River Watch involves high school teachers and students in water quality monitoring in the region. Over the past 10 years, the program has grown to include 29 school teams collecting water quality data at 150 sites. This fall, several teachers, administrators and agency partners laid out priorities for data quality assurance, access to data and community involvement. The NW RSDP recently allocated \$10,000 to strengthen the partnership between the University of Minnesota Crookston, River Watch and the International Water Institute (IWI) by supporting the development of an online database. Dr. David DeMuth, Associate Professor and Head of Math, Science and Technology Department at UMC and John Nowatzki, Extension Geospatial Technology Specialist at North Dakota State University are leading the database development in cooperation with Chuck Fritz, IWI. This database will be linked the Red River Basin Decision Information Network. ([www.rrbdin.org](http://www.rrbdin.org))
- Gathering of the Planning Circles represents a partnership between the tribes in northern Minnesota, Sowing Hope, Inc. and the University of Minnesota. The Gathering of the Planning Circles emphasizes respecting and incorporating Ojibwe culture, history, and language while introducing non-reservation insights and expertise. The Gathering of the Planning Circles brings together American Indian community members from Red Lake, White Earth, and Leech Lake along with other Ojibwe reservations, Extension educators, and representatives of other community agencies and organizations. All who participate seek to empower American Indians to enhance their health and well-being through a multifaceted effort to educate youth and adults in the areas of nutrition and horticulture while promoting intergenerational interaction and traditional values.
- The NW RSDP offers co-sponsorship to conferences that encourage sustainability in natural resource management and agriculture in the region. The Red River Basin Commission Annual Summit will be held in Winnipeg on January 12 – 14, 2006. With the theme "The Mouth of the Red Speaks", this conference focuses on Lake Winnipeg, the receiving waters of the Red River of the North, and how lake health is related to watershed management. The Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society 7th Annual conference will be held in Fargo, ND on February 10 and 11, 2006, and will feature presentations on the Local Foods Challenge project coordinated by the White Earth Tribal and Community College as well as keynote speaker Winona LaDuke.

The Northwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership connects resources of the region and the University of Minnesota to develop a sustainable regional community by empowering citizens to explore and act on their ideas. To submit your ideas, please see our website or contact Linda Kingery, Executive Director at 877-854-7737.

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