

News Release

Senior Sheila Carleton, Baxter, Minn., Receives Top Student Award from the Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society

By Itolfe on Monday, January 3, 2011



A University of Minnesota, Crookston student has won the Student Conservationist award given by the Minnesota Chapter of The Wildlife Society at its recent annual meeting in Minneapolis, Minn. Senior Sheila Carleton, Baxter, Minn., is the 9th student to be honored in the last 14 years. The award gives recognition to students studying a wildlife related major at a Minnesota college or university. Carleton is double majoring in natural resources management and agronomy at the U of M, Crookston and carries a 3.8 grade point average.

"We're delighted that a student representing two programs in the Agriculture and Natural Resources Department received this prestigious award," according to Ron Del Vecchio, Ph.D., professor and department head. "It reflects not only on the academic and many service contributions of Sheila but also the quality of our academic programs."

Carleton, from Baxter, Minn., transferred from Central Lakes Community College in Brainerd where she majored in natural resources. On graduating from Central Lakes, she was the co-recipient of the Soil Conservationist Award from the Minnesota Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, reflecting her early achievements and motivation. While in high school, Carleton volunteered with Mary Reetz, the district conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Brainerd.

On the Crookston campus, Carleton is the ultimate multi-tasker. In addition to her being active in the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) Club, Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Natural Resources Club, and secretary for the Crookston Students for Sustainable Development (CSSD), she tutors students in botany, ecology, agricultural chemicals, and plant breeding.

She also has a passion for gardening and local food production and was recently awarded an Undergraduate Research Opportunity grant to work with Dan Svedarsky, Ph.D., director of the Center for Sustainability. She will evaluate the feasibility of establishing a student-run University garden that aims to provide local food for the campus. As a follow-up to a Children and Nature Conference held last September at the U of M, Crookston, she helped write a mini-grant to develop a "Discovery Play Garden" on campus in conjunction with the Early Childhood Center.

"In reviewing her work experience (paid and volunteer), it's clear that Sheila will bloom where she is planted and has a broad range of interests and abilities," according to Svedarsky, one of her nominators. "She has even worked with noted U of M wildlife professor, Peter Jordan, in his long-term studies of moose on Isle Royale. It is unique to find a student who is so passionate about both natural resources and agriculture."

Carleton worked last summer on a fire crew with the National Park Service in Utah and has a career interest in working with the NRCS or a similar agency where she can work in a variety of projects and people. "She is a known quantity and will take her place in that upper echelon of the high achievers who will help guide the conservation community into a future that is sustainable and rich in variety of natural and human experiences," continues Svedarsky. "She will make a difference on many fronts and the people around her will feel a sense of empowerment, project ownership, and engagement."

Today the University of Minnesota, Crookston delivers 29 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and more than 40 concentrations, including several online degrees, in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of about 1,400 undergraduates from more than 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

In the photo: Senior Sheila Carleton, left, Dan Svedarsky, Ph.D., director, Center for Sustainability, right.

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