



## Sustainability Committee Developing Plan for UNR

Since the Spring of 2008, the UNR Sustainability Committee has been gathering information and developing a plan for creating a more sustainable campus. This plan is one of the requirements of the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment (<http://www.presidentsclimatecommitment.org>), signed by President Glick in 2007. In an effort to expedite the development of this plan, four working groups were formed and have been actively engaging faculty, staff and students in a number of ways. A brief summary of their activities are listed below:

### Campus Life Working Group:

This group is responsible for gauging campus awareness of sustainability initiatives currently in place on campus and working to change the campus culture to one of awareness and support for environmentally sustainable practices both on campus and in the community. This working group is developing a sustainability survey that will be administered in early April, and is working with students to bring energy conservation and recycling events to campus. Their ultimate goal is to incorporate environmental sustainability practices into the daily lives of every member of our campus community.

### Curriculum Working Group:

This group has the goal to strengthen the focus on sustainability issues across the curriculum. The broad participation in this working group from many different colleges and departments has ensured a cross-disciplinary approach. A survey of faculty involved in undergraduate teaching was

conducted in order to establish a baseline. This survey revealed considerable interest by faculty in increasing focus on sustainability in teaching, indicated appropriate ways that would support faculty in changing existing courses or developing new ones, and identified obstacles that keep faculty from doing so. As a first step towards such a culture, the group has initiated a series of Sustainability Lunches, held the last Wednesday of each month, which create a forum for faculty and students to discuss a relevant theme with an invited expert. The group is now developing a report that summarizes the survey, discusses the gaps in the curriculum, considers the obstacles and the support required by faculty, and recommends specific steps to increase the focus on sustainability issues in teaching.

### Energy Working Group:

This group is gathering and refining information with respect to UNR energy consumption and budget. The group also

is compiling prior UNR energy conservation accomplishments with respect to lighting efficiency and heating efficiency, and developing carbon reduction suggestions such as photo voltaic systems and solar water heating. A 30 kW photo voltaic system has been installed at the Student Union and a 1kw photo voltaic system and 1 kW wind turbine system is being installed at the Planetarium.

### Commuting and Transportation Working Group:

This group is responsible for reviewing the alternate transportation options available on campus and making recommendations for enhancements. The University already has a fairly extensive program in place, which includes providing incentives for carpooling, biking, walking, riding a motorcycle, or taking public transportation to campus. There is also a campus shuttle service and a ridesharing website. However, the group is developing recommendations to further increase the efficiency of transportation operations.

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## UNR Earth Day: "Turning Earth Day Theory into Every Day Action"

Building on the success of the Fall 2008 Sustainability Festival (Go Green with Nevada Blue), we have teamed up once again with the Joe Crowley Student Union (CSU), the Associated Students of the University of Nevada (ASUN), the Environmental Action Team (EnAcT), and the Child & Family Research Center (CFRC) to bring a multi-generational Earth Day event to the University of Nevada, Reno campus on Monday and Tuesday, April 20-21.

**Film Festival & Swap:** Soylent Green, the 1970's cult classic film, will open the Earth Day event as the headliner for Monday night's film festival, also organized and hosted by EnAcT. The film will be shown at 5:00pm at the movie theater on the third floor of the CSU. There will be a Book & Clothing Swap on the CSU lawn on April 20 from 1-4 p.m. (weather permitting).

**Recycled Art Exhibit:** Several classes from the CFRC are constructing works of art that will be displayed on the fourth floor lounge areas of the CSU. Prior to the Trashion Show EnAcT is hosting a catered, community-wide mixer for UNR students, faculty, staff, community business, non-profit organizations and families to join. The mixer is free to everyone, and starts at 5:00 p.m. on the CSU fourth floor in the lounge area in front of the ballrooms.

**Trashion Show:** A multi-generational Trashion Show with guest appearances by local television news hosts wearing costumes designed and constructed by undergraduates and pre-schoolers will premiere on Tuesday, April 21 in the CSU Ballroom A-C at 7:00 p.m. The Trashion Show, developed by Environmental Studies major and EnAcT President Delia Martinez, features unique runway designs fashioned from materials that would otherwise be garbage. Tickets can be purchased at the door on the day of this event. Tickets are \$5.00 for general admission and \$2.00 for students.

**Workshops:** On Tuesday, a series of workshops will be taught by students, faculty, staff, & community partners.

- 10:00 a.m. Leslie Allen, "How to be a Locavore" CSU Senate Chambers  
Jennifer Garza-Cuen, "Environmental Activism and Photography" CSU 320
- 11:00 a.m. Jen Huntleysmith "Sustainability Across the Curriculum: Strategies and Outcomes" CSU 320  
ENV 310 students: "Spoils to Soils: Worming our Way to A Closed-Loop Campus" Senate Chambers
- 1:00 p.m. Deb Stiver "Sustainability Projects in Kenya" CSU 320  
Carol Perry, Bob Tregilus, "Alternatives to the Daily Car Commute" Senate Chambers
- 2:00 p.m. Kevin Dick, "Greening Your Small Business" Senate Chambers  
Mark Walker "BBBMP—Best Bowser Biohazard Management Practices" CSU 320

For more information, or to find out how to get involved, please contact Erinn Thomas at the Academy for the Environment: (775)682-8403/ethomas@unr.edu

## Walker Basin Project Coming To An End

The University of Nevada, Reno and Desert Research Institute *Walker Basin Project* is a comprehensive research program developed to generate scientific information on how to best restore Walker Lake while sustaining the basin's economy, ecosystem, and lake in an era of declining economy, changing climate, and competing needs for a limited water supply. Over the past two years, numerous faculty, post docs, technicians, students and staff from both institutions have been diligently working, collecting data, and making interpretive assessments to ensure that the more than \$11,000,000 in collaborative research was well spent.

Major project components consisted of: Health of Walker River and Lake; Alternative Agriculture and Vegetation Management; Plant, Soil, and Water Interactions; Project Historical Account; Health of River Channel and Lake Water with Increased Flows; Water Flow Model; Water Conservation Practices for Agricultural Producers; Economic Impact and Strategies; GIS Database Development; and Wild Horse and Burro Marketing.

Because of this unique undertaking, it is almost certain that the findings will have local, national and international implications for other arid and high desert terminal lake systems throughout the world. Consequently, an International Symposium on Terminus Lakes has been scheduled for Oct 26-29, 2009 at the University of Nevada, Reno's Joe Crowley Student Union. Please see our web site <http://environment.unr.edu/research/> for further information, and remember to **save that date**. Publication of our collection of reports as a book through a university press is being pursued, as are nationally competitive proposals that take advantage of the multi-institutional infrastructure, interdisciplinary capacity, and the information now available from this region and the state of Nevada.

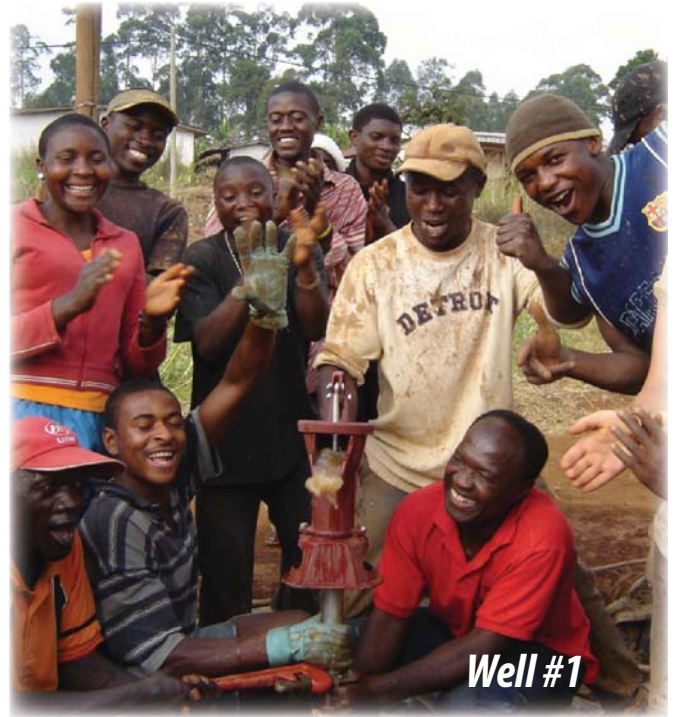


Photo by Erinn Thomas

## S.A. I. W. I. Brings H<sub>2</sub>OPE to the Community of Nkambe, Cameroon

Students drill wells, build garden center and train local community about water hygiene

S.A.I.W.I. (Student Association for International Water Issues) is a student group associated with the Hydrologic Sciences Graduate Program at the University of Nevada, Reno with a mission to: "Develop an understanding of global issues and apply our time and knowledge to promote lasting partnerships that empower others in dealing with water resources." In January this year, using funds from the Academy for the Environment's mini-grant program, SAIWI traveled to Nkambe, Cameroon where an estimated 56% of people have no access to clean water ([www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)). SAIWI was well received by the community, being welcomed by the mayor, divisional officer, city council, and the area tribal leader. While in Nkambe, SAIWI taught a manual well drilling technique to locals and worked with them to complete a well for drinking water. SAIWI also worked in a local organic nursery, and taught water hygiene and sanitation seminars to over 250 people. The completed well provides safe drinking water for school children and a local neighborhood of 500-1000 people. Since SAIWI's departure journalists have visited Nkambe to see the well site. In addition the community has constructed a 60-foot well on their own and has plans to begin a third well. (Photos courtesy of Marcy Kamerath)



## UNAE-Funded Mini-Grant Program Suspended

Since its inception, the University of Nevada Academy for the Environment has provided over \$185,000 in support to 71 mini grant applicants for interdisciplinary research projects, graduate student travel to interdisciplinary conferences/workshops, departmental/interdisciplinary program seminars, and curriculum development. Successful proposals are competitively awarded and are evaluated on the basis of environmental focus, technical content, interdisciplinary breadth, student involvement, and advisor support (for student applications).

Although the Academy has been soliciting applications on an annual basis, the recent budget crisis has made it necessary to suspend the Mini-Grant Program at this time. It is our hope that at some point in the future, this successful and highly-visible program can be reinstated.

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### Letter from the Director, Mike Collopy

This past academic year has been filled with many outstanding accomplishments by faculty and students, but also great uncertainty about the future. With funding from several federal sources, the Academy for the Environment has continued to work with UNR and DRI faculty on several projects, including the Roadside Heritage Project ([www.roadsideheritage.org/](http://www.roadsideheritage.org/)), the Walker Basin Project ([www.nevada.edu/walker/](http://www.nevada.edu/walker/)), and the Tahoe Science Consortium (<http://www.tahoescience.org/>). However, we too have seen significant reductions in our state funding. Moreover, like everyone else, we are bracing for some significant budget cuts in the upcoming biennium. The Academy was a part of the recent review of all centers and institutes, conducted by the Provost's Office. As a result, it was determined that the Academy for the Environment should



Mike Collopy

continue, but in a modified form and with a refocused mission. Many of these details are yet to be determined in cooperation with the Deans and Provost; however, I am pleased that even in these difficult financial times, UNR believes it is important to preserve an institute that focuses on interdisciplinary environmental issues. Beginning 1 July, the Academy for the Environment will be reporting to the Office of the Vice President for Research, in keeping with our renewed focus on promoting interdisciplinary research on environment issues.

### Tahoe Science Plan

Conservation and restoration of the Lake Tahoe Basin ecosystem requires the sustained engagement of Federal, State and local governments, and the private sector. Scientists from the University of Nevada, Reno; Desert Research Institute; University of California, Davis; US Geological Survey and the US Forest Service-Pacific Southwest Research station have collaborated in an effort to develop *An Integrated Science Plan for the Lake Tahoe Basin*. This plan describes a conceptual framework for an integrated science program and presents research strategies addressing key uncertainties and information gaps that challenge government agencies in the theme areas of: 1) air quality, 2) water quality, 3) soil conservation, 4) ecology and biodiversity, and 5) social sciences. Each strategy concludes with a presentation of near-term research priorities. The plan can be found online at:

[http://www.tahoescience.org/tsc\\_products/Products.aspx](http://www.tahoescience.org/tsc_products/Products.aspx).



Lake Tahoe, CA

Photo by Peter Goin



### UNAE graduates its first Environmental Studies Major 2009

The Environmental Studies major finishes its second year of existence with its first graduate, Mattie Melrose. Taking on Environmental Studies as her double major to honors Political Science, Mattie has taken advantage of her education to launch several sustainability initiatives on the UNR campus, including founding the ASUN club Environmental Action Team, and creating and managing UNR's first student-run organic farm in the summer of 2008. Mattie's senior thesis is on research issues relating to local food sourcing and farm security. Having learned the complexity and importance of sustainable, organic farming, Mattie ultimately hopes to become a farmer herself, and continue lifelong learning in the field she discovered through Environmental Studies. Congratulations, Mattie!