



# **Environmental Literacy –Phase II**

## ***Developing a Ponderosa Project at RIT***

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# The RIT Commitment to Environmental Sustainability

Through its administration, faculty, staff, students, academic programs and scholarship, RIT contributes to the development and propagation of policies and practices that protect the natural environment and foster sustainable use of our material, environmental, and energy resources. It is appropriate then for RIT to lead by example by conducting its operations when feasible in this spirit and in recognition of its responsibility to protect human health and the environment.

RIT is committed to proactive activities that prevent pollution, comply with applicable environmental laws and regulations, and improve its environmental performance.

**RIT believes that proactive environmental management and fostering sustainability are fundamental components in educating our students and future leaders and is further committed to integrating environmental stewardship into its academic programs.**

RIT values its relationships with the local, regional and global communities and is committed to developing opportunities that share and expand the environmental expertise of its faculty, staff and students.

Approved March 16,





# FITL 2007 Recap – RIT Environmental Literacy

- **A General Discussion of three questions**
  1. **What do RIT undergraduate students need to know in order to be environmentally literate? (What competencies do we think they should have?)**
  2. **What are the strengths and assets of RIT that can be used to promote environmental literacy for undergraduate students?**
  3. **What suggestions do you have for implementing environmental literacy at RIT?**

**See handout for compiled results from FITL 2007**





# Implementing Suggestions 1

- <http://www-staging.rit.edu/fa/ritgreen/index.html>
- Revived the Honors Course **The Greening of RIT**
  - Sustainability on Campus: Stories and Strategies for Change
  - Invited faculty, staff, and other students to share their work on creating a green campus with greening students
    - Cathy Ahern (FMS)
    - David Harris (FMS)
    - James Yarrington (FMS)
    - Terry Walker (FMS)
    - Nancy Chwiecko (CIAS)
    - Tyler Stewart (Student Recycling Coordinator)
    - Gary Gasper (RITZ, SAU Dining Hall)
    - Jim Cezo (Engineers for a Sustainable World)





## Sustainability @ RIT

- Energy
- Buildings
- Food
- Housing
- Recycling
- Transportation
- Academic Programs and Research

## LEED Initiative

- What does it mean?
- What is RIT doing about it?



Restoration of native plants on RIT grounds. ↩ ↗



CAST Building

**Making a difference.**  
Rochester Institute of Applied Science and Technology (CAST) Building will officially be opened in **April 2008**. This **latest addition to the RIT campus** will also be its 'greenest building. [Click here to read more.](#)



Recycle Mania!

**The Three Simple Steps**  
**Information about Recycle Mania** is coming soon!



How Green Are You?

[Take our Quiz to find out!](#)



**Green Glossary**



# Implementing Suggestions 2

- Student Projects Focused on Environmental Education
  - **FYE**
    - Developed a 1-2 week lesson on individual actions and sustainability linked to the web site Consumer Consequences <http://sustainability.publicradio.org/consumerconsequences/>
  - **Residence Life**
    - Developed Orientation Activities/Lessons
    - Researched sustainable lifestyle handouts (mugs and bags)
    - Created Bulletin Board sheets for RAs
  - **The Faculty Role in Environmental Education**
    - Conducted a survey of faculty views
    - Recommended RIT start its own “Ponderosa Project”
      - See Handout Sustainability on Campus, Chapter 4, pp 91-108





# Northern Arizona's Ponderosa Project

The Ponderosa Project at Northern Arizona University (NAU) is an interdisciplinary faculty group effort to incorporate environmental sustainability issues into university courses with the ultimate goal of providing future citizens the education and skills necessary to achieve sustainable communities and societies.

Environmental sustainability is defined as the wise and just use of natural resources to maintain Earth's natural cycles while meeting human basic needs and protecting resources for future generations.

Note that the definition of environmental sustainability is intentionally broad





# The Ponderosa Group

- The Ponderosa Group consists of NAU faculty members from various disciplines who share a common vision of education for environmental sustainability. Participants in the Ponderosa Group have attended an intensive three-day training workshop in which they learned about environmental issues and how to incorporate such issues into course materials. After their training, participants revised syllabi for selected courses to include environment-oriented content. The Ponderosa Group meets regularly throughout the academic year in support of this "greening" of the curriculum project.





# The Ponderosa Philosophy

The Ponderosa Group recognizes that environmental issues such as overpopulation, resource depletion and pollution transcend traditional discipline boundaries with physical, political, organizational, social and cultural implications that impact all humans and other species. The Ponderosa Project operates on the premise that since environmental issues are relevant to many disciplines, the best way to educate students is to include environmental perspectives in the content material presented in a variety of subjects. This overall "greening of the curriculum" has the potential for educating wide numbers of students with recurring themes of environmental sustainability as related to all disciplines.





# The Ponderosa Goals 1

- GOAL 1: Educate and empower faculty in an interdisciplinary effort
- GOAL 2: "Green the Curriculum" so that the theme of environmental sustainability is introduced and reinforced throughout students' educational experiences
- GOAL 3: Educate students in all courses of study about the implications of environmental sustainability in their chosen careers





## The Ponderosa Goals 2

- GOAL 4: Empower students with the tools they can take into future leadership roles (knowledge, problem-solving techniques, desire to make a difference)
- GOAL 5: Introduce environmental sustainability issues to our own campus and apply our knowledge toward campus stewardship
- GOAL 6: Work within our communities at various levels (city, county, state, region, nation, and international) whenever possible to encourage and achieve environmental sustainability
- GOAL 7: Provide resource materials to achieve the above goals





# The RIT “Middlemarsh” Project

- Essentially an informal Faculty Learning Community
  - Faculty participate in a three day summer workshop that teaches and shares exercises, materials, and teaching strategies related to environmental education
  - Faculty participate in a regular seminar series to share and update others on ideas, materials, concerns
    - One or more faculty or local experts present at each meeting and lead discussion session
    - Feedback provided by attending faculty
  - Overall goals include reaching as many students as possible and building on the growing interest in sustainability and the environment AND fostering faculty/staff/administration networks and improving interdisciplinary collaboration





# Current Curriculum Greening Resources

- The Common Book (Deep Economy by Bill McKibben)
- Caroline Werner Gannett Series is bringing Bill McKibben to campus November 6, 2008 and Matt Coolidge of the Center for Land Use Interpretation (CLU I) May 4-5, 2009
  - Both promote involvement in local initiatives
- Residence Life and Orientation are working on sustainability modules and curriculum
- First Year Enrichment (FYE) developing curriculum
- The Sustainability Committee is launching a central Green website linked to the RIT Homepage for all things environmental and sustainable





# Planning for the RIT Middlemarsh Project

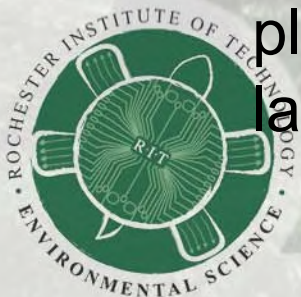
- **2009-10 Provost Learning Innovation Grant (PLIG)**
  - Would fund summer workshop activities
    - Faculty stipends (\$1,000-\$2,000 each)
    - Materials
    - Food and transportation
  - Would fund monthly seminar series
    - Lunch and drinks provided
  - Other possibilities include funding conference travel
    - AASHE (or similar) conferences and workshops
  - **Korfmacher attending the 2008 AASHE Sustainability Across the Curriculum Leadership Workshop (June 12-13)**
    - What topics would you all like me to raise?





# Next Steps in 2008

- Do we have the interest to run an interdisciplinary Middlemarsh pilot project based on Deep Economy?
  - Funds for activities related to Deep Economy are likely available through the common book initiative
    - Local speakers
    - Lunches for a seminar series focusing on the lessons of Deep Economy (debates, exercises, future activities)
    - Earth Day 2009 activities
  - Common Book committee will be building a website for Deep Economy with resource websites, lesson plans, reading guides and questions, and in-class and lab exercises





## Possible 2008 Goals (Based on NAU Experience)

- Identify and invite 40 faculty from a wide variety of disciplines to participate (and expect 20 to accept and follow through)
- Require participating faculty to revise one course that they teach that currently counts or could count towards general education to include sustainability as a theme
- Invite local, outside experts who represent various aspects of sustainability to give guest lectures or speak at monthly seminars
- Provide a networking forum
- Work on teaching and student learning assessment as well as content

