

SIU Sustainability Council Projects Final Report

Project title: Support for the Center for Ecology Distinguished Speaker Series

Project I.D. #: 101203

Award date: 10 December 2012

Completion date: 18 March 2013

Funds used (if different from award amount)

Brief write up of project/project experience (not to exceed 250 words)

Two speakers were brought in with partial support from this award (the remainder of costs being paid by the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Dean). The first speaker was Dr. Scott Collins of the University of New Mexico, who gave a talk entitled *Pulse dynamics, climate change, and plant species interactions in a Chihuahuan desert grassland*. This talk was held (as are all Center for Ecology talks) in the Guyon Auditorium in Morris Library, followed by a reception and mixer in the adjacent rotunda. About 150 people attended. Dr. Collins also met individually with students and faculty during his two-day visit.

The second speaker was Dr. Joel Heath of the University of British Columbia. This speaker was brought in specifically to expand the appeal of the CFE Speaker Series to the Carbondale community outside the university, as well as to attract more students and faculty from social science disciplines. The talk was advertised in the *Southern Illinoisan*, *Nightlife*, and *Daily Egyptian*. Dr. Heath gave one talk in the afternoon entitled *Developing NGO-supported, citizen science in a subsistence-based Inuit community*, and in the evening he showed his award-winning film *People of a Feather* about the relationships between Inuit, eiders, and ecological impacts of dam development on rivers emptying into the nearshore marine environment. About 100–120 people attended each event. The conversations in the following reception were exceptionally engaging, and a number of people commented on the value of this unique approach to ecological studies. Dr. Heath also met individually with students and faculty on the day of his talk.

Best things learned/produced from project

It is difficult to gauge what attendees at these talks and receptions gained from the experience. The number and type of questions asked of the speakers after the talks is perhaps the best indicator of what the audience found stimulating. There were many questions after these presentations, and the questions had to be cut off to vacate the auditorium and move to the reception. There is a trade-off to having a broader public event after work hours, as attendance by faculty was minimal for the evening movie showing, and attendance by the public was less than expected given the expense of advertising. It seems that if such an evening event is attempted again, it should be scheduled near the beginning of the semester before people get too busy.

These talks are among the only events in Carbondale at which ecologists from a wide range of disciplines, and environmental thinkers and activists with many backgrounds, come together to hear talks by eminent speakers and to meet and discuss ideas in a subsequent reception. We feel it is an important function for the Center of Ecology.

How do you define sustainability?

I define sustainability as the development and beneficial use of natural resources in a way that does not compromise the availability and use of these or other natural resources by current and future generations.

Has this changed over the course of your project? If so, how?

No, although I did gain better understanding of the natural and human consequences of human exploitation of resources in the Arctic and arid western United States.

What do you see as the next step for the project?

We plan to continue the Center for Ecology Distinguished Speaker Series in the 2013-2014 academic year. Three speakers have already accepted invitations for next season's series

Optional: Suggestions for the SIUC Sustainability Council

Attach a minimum of five images – these will be used to promote interest in Sustainability Council projects.

I'm afraid I did not anticipate needing photographs of the speaker events, and did not take any. Failing that, I have attached the fliers for both talks. The web site for Joel Heath's film *People of a Feather* is on that poster, and can be consulted for images and a trailer of the film. I am sending both this report and copies of these fliers to Patti Perschbacher at pperschb@siu.edu.

Center for Ecology Distinguished Speaker Series

Scott Collins

Department of Biology
University of New Mexico

**Pulse dynamics, climate change, and plant species
interactions in a Chihuahuan Desert grassland**

**Thursday, 14 Feb 2013, 4 pm, Guyon Auditorium in Morris
Library, followed by reception and mixer in adjacent rotunda**



Center for Ecology Distinguished Speaker Series

Joel Heath

*Department of Mathematical Biology, University of British
Columbia and Arctic Eider Society*

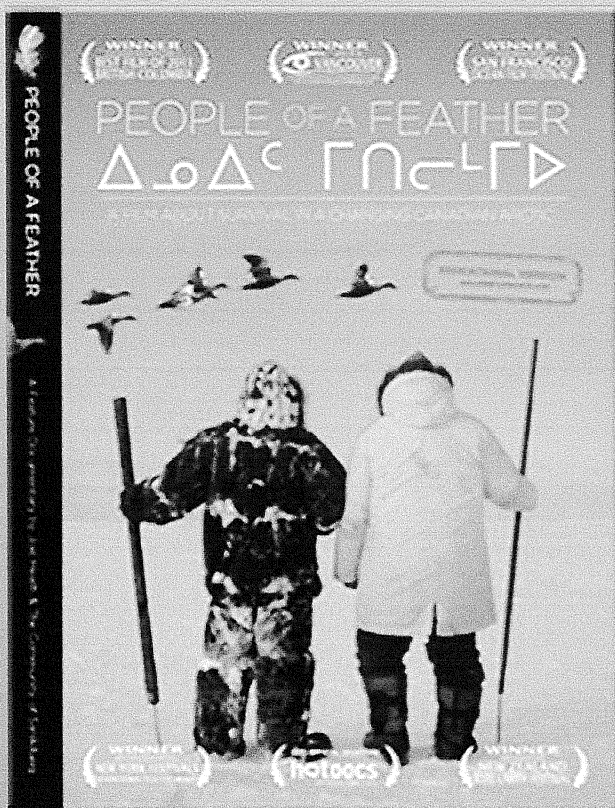
**Developing NGO-supported, citizen science in a
subsistence-based Inuit community**

Wednesday, 27 Feb, 4 pm, Guyon Auditorium, Morris Library

Plus special showing of Dr. Heath's award-winning film

People of a Feather

Wednesday, 27 Feb, 6:30 pm, Guyon Auditorium



Trailer at www.peopleofafeather.com/