

Upcoming environmental discussion to engage and green up campus

BY ELLEN STEVENS
Staff Writer

On Monday, November 19, 2012, Lakehead University will host an environmental discussion, focused on creating more sustainable and environmentally friendly practices here on campus. The event will take place in the Study from 7-10 p.m. All are invited and free pizza will be provided.

According to Megan Clark, Co-Commissioner of the LUSU Sustainability Initiative, "The goal is to educate students about groups who are proactive in doing environmental initiatives, to get the opinions of students regarding sustainability, and provide a chance for students to voice their concerns as to what they want to see done on campus."

Over the past few decades, conversation about the environment has taken a serious turn. Trends in pollution and global warming have resulted in drastic weather shifts, and a shocking reality that resources are rapidly running out. It is predicted by some that a number of sources of fresh water may run out by 2050.

Carly Mason, an Engineering student at McMaster University, stated that her concern for the planet's future on a scale of 1 to 10 is "11": "I'm worried about the state of the planet because

I'm concerned about the quality of life my future children will have to endure. It's frightening."

Benjamin Karki, a Lakehead University student, remarked, "We need to direct resources towards discovering new technologies in water refinement."

Even the slightest change in temperature can cause a dramatic change in weather patterns. Scientists who study ice formation claim that weather has fluctuated in the past, but that never before – even just before ice ages – have carbon dioxide levels ever been this high.

"Cold", hard facts

Earlier this year, the Discovery Channel aired a documentary called, "Global Warming: What You Need To Know", in which Tom Brokaw described that it has taken glaciers thousands of years to form, and yet they are melting so rapidly that they may vanish in our lifetime. The impact of this was witnessed earlier this year when an ice chunk twice the size of Manhattan broke off a glacier in Greenland.

The impacts of climate change and global warming are indisputably severe. Scientists predict that in the very near future, coastal life will not exist. The sea levels are predicted to rise by three feet, a change which

(according to Discovery Channel) can wipe out one quarter of all US beaches and Coastal Areas.

In his interview with Brokaw, Dr. James Hansen, director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City, states that "if we follow business as usual, the ice caps will melt and our world will look very different." He stresses that, even though, "We cannot stop global warming; we can certainly slow it down."

Canada's future

Health and species survival are two areas in Canada that continue to suffer because of allegedly man-made environmental problems.

Air pollution is a particularly deadly force for the nation's inhabitants. According to Environment Canada, air pollutants cause wheezing, coughing, aggravation of existing respiratory and cardiac conditions, and death. In analysing air pollution and mortality data from eight Canadian cities, Health Canada estimates 5,900 deaths per year in those cities can be attributed to air pollution.

Pollution also poses harm to Canada's 7,000 known wild species of plants and animals, 500 of which are listed as being "Species At Risk." Many of these species are threatened by current land "development" initiatives and result-

ing environmental conditions.

An anonymous Lakehead student said that the increase of invasive species also poses harm to Canada's wildlife and ecosystems. "We have the Asian Carp infestation here, they are an invasive species which weren't here before. They can actually dive out of the water and knock you unconscious." The student also mentioned the havoc wrought by anakehead fish, the Asian long-horned beetle, and zebra mussels.

Clark added that one of the goals of

the Sustainability Initiative is to work towards institutional change, an initiative Lakehead students can effectively promote. "Sometimes it's hard to know which direction to go into, especially if we don't know what students are expecting."

Students are encouraged to join the conversation in the Study on Monday. There will be free food, and products from local markets. Clark emphasizes that "The ideas generated at this meeting will be used to advocate for and work towards change."



FULLY ESCORTED

