

# Good Work

News from The Office of Community Based Learning

Inside this issue:

*Environmental Citizen* 2  
*Faculty Spotlight* 3  
*Alternative Spring Break* 3  
  
*Local Food Guide* 4  
*Sustainability, continued* 4

## Students Mobilize for Community Energy Sustainability

### Unity College hosts Sustainability Training Institute

Upcoming Events:

- May 2** Trail Work Day  
10 AM– 2 PM  
FMI contact: agagnon06@unity.edu
- May 3** Student Conference  
8 AM-11 AM  
UCCPA  
FMI contact: jzavodny@unity.edu



UC students Tim Godaire, Jamie Nemecek, and Shayne Van Leer take it all in at the 1st annual STI.

**W**hat do college students in Maine do on a stormy weekend in February?

Well, some learn about how to make people’s homes warmer for the cold winter months. Others learn about how to gather and analyze data that will help towns reduce their energy costs and climate emissions. Still others explore the latest breakthroughs in renewable energy technology. Thirty two students from 12 Maine colleges did just that at the first ever Sustainability Training Institute hosted by Unity College on February 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.

The Institute was the brainstorm of students, faculty and community leaders who have seen students in action in places like Unity, Brunswick, and Waterville. Students were selected on a competitive basis to represent their institutions. A series of workshops over the two days included training on basic thermodynamics, greenhouse gas inventories, community-based weatherization programs, renewable energy technology and creating change in communities.



KVCC student, Matt Dolan, demonstrates a bike generator.

Continued page 4. See SUSTAINABILITY TRAINING INSTITUTE.

## Regi’s Got Heart and Soul!

### O’Brien wins Maine Campus Compact *Heart and Soul* Award

Growing up, Rachel “Regi” O’Brien did not enjoy school at all. This unhappiness in traditional educational settings, says O’Brien, is what influenced to her to pursue a degree in Environmental Education. She wanted to become the kind of teacher that made students *want to* learn.

While at Unity, Regi has demonstrated a commitment to service, as well as education. She has lead the Environmental Educators Club, contributed to Unity Elementary Earth Day, researched local hunger for the food pantry, and been a volunteer with local school gardens. For this work, Regi was recognized by the Maine Campus Compact (MCC) with a Heart and Soul Award, which acknowledges student leaders who make their campuses places of democracy and civic engagement. This is the most prestigious service award from MCC and was only awarded to four students statewide.

Regi will graduate in May 2011 and plans to teach science by encouraging kids to “get outside, get dirty, and learn!”

Andy Gagnon, junior in the Parks, Recreation, & Ecotourism program and trail crew leader, received a Maine Campus Compact PILLAR award for service.

Congratulations to Regi and Andy for their accomplishments!



Regi O'Brien at the Maine Campus Compact awards ceremony with President Thomashow.

## *'The Environmental Citizen' Students Act as Educators*

Each semester, students in The Environmental Citizen address environmental issues in partnership with community-based organizations. The issues and organizations change from semester to semester. This Spring course work focused on educating communities on environmental issues using art, curriculum design, and other creative venues.

### Speaking for Wildlife

Students in the "Speaking for Wildlife" section of The Environmental Citizen are partnering with REMAINE Wild, a wildlife rehabilitation organization, to design and deliver educational presentations on a variety of topics including habitat preservation, appropriate responses to injured wildlife, dangers of lead poisoning for wildlife, and how improperly disposed of solid waste affects wild animals. The goal of this project is to share information with community members about how they can, in their everyday lives, make a positive difference in the preservation and protection of wildlife and their habitats.



According to course instructor, Assistant Professor Sarah Cunningham, the students are learning to differentiate between mere information distribution and educational outreach that harnesses interpretation, interaction and fun. In April, students in the class will be presenting their projects to a variety of audiences including young women at the upcoming Hardy Girls Healthy Women Conference, Troy Central School's fourth and fifth graders, and participants at the Maine Central Institute's Sustainability Day. Cunningham notes, "students in the class are serving as an educational resource for the wildlife rehabilitation community *and* as positive role models for the youth groups to which they are speaking."

### Ag in the Classroom



An SAD3 student displays a carrot, above.



Angela Hardy's Environmental Citizen class has teamed up with local elementary schools to engage children in the production and harvest of local foods.

The "Agriculture in the Classroom" project is a way to teach elementary and middle school students about farming and food production in an interactive way. One student group is developing a series of lesson plans for Walker Elementary in Liberty that includes use of the school's greenhouse, which grows for their cafeteria and local food pantry. Full integration of the curriculum will take place next autumn.

Another group is teaching students at the Mount View School in Thorndike how to tap trees and make maple syrup. Kinney Farm is supporting this effort by hosting a fieldtrip for students to practice the tree tapping and sap collection process.

Instructor Angela Hardy believes that this collaboration is a great opportunity for all parties. "This class stresses the importance of volunteerism to achieve important, long-term, positive environmental outcomes."

Students contribute to 'A Bird's Eye View', left and lower left.



### A Bird's Eye View: Journeying through Climate Change in the 21st Century

Students in Cindy Thomashow's class have been collaborating since January with the Matinicus Island School, Julia's Gallery and the Farnsworth Museum to explore and celebrate the intersection of art and science by curating an exhibit on bird migration and climate change. The group of thirty elementary, middle, high school and undergraduate students has been working with mentor artists and scientists to learn about six local bird species, their local habitats, migration patterns and destinations, and climate change impacts on bird behavior. This information has formed the basis for a new student created learning exhibit that will be displayed at Julia's Gallery for Young Artists. 'A Bird's Eye View: Journeying through 21st Century Climate Change', is a mixed media, interactive display of photographs, sculptures, drawings, video and maps that seeks to engage the public in thinking about the impact of climate change on bird migration. It also helps visitors identify ways to mitigate climate change through individual everyday behavior choices... 'steps toward hope'. The exhibit will be on display from May 1st through August 31st in Rockland, ME.



## Unity Students on the Road to Service

### Student Leaders Give Back over Spring Break

For many college students, Spring Break is that much-awaited for hiatus from classes that beckons students to the sandy beaches and sunny climate of the southern states. Yet, even when Unity students have the chance to kick back, sleep in, catch some rays, or just hang out, many instead pursue opportunities to serve community. This year, ten students participated in an Alternative Spring Break service trip that took them to parts of northern and Downeast Maine. Starting out at the New Forest Institute in Brooks, the group headed north to work with the Battered Women's Project in Presque Isle, Caribou, Fort Kent and Houlton. In each of the sites, they carried out much-needed "deep cleaning", painting, and reorganization. Students with carpentry experience put their skills to work building a three-sided outdoor shelter at Spruce Run in Bangor. The trip concluded with two days of service work at Acadia National Park, where they hauled heavy equipment, tools and lumber in preparation for trails work days. A

sprinkling of well-deserved recreation was also enjoyed by the group, including cross-country skiing and snowshoeing at Presque Isle's Nordic Center and some R&R on Sand Beach in Acadia. Thrift stores, French-Canadian radio programming and a spontaneous fashion show at one of the women's shelters also made for some vivid memories. Trip organizers Joe Horn and Hannia Candelario were taken with the group's consistently high morale and desire to contribute at every turn. "Doing labor and being part of a team is a bonding experience that you just don't get by hanging out with your friends", noted trip participant Chelsea Ardle. The group is already thinking about next spring.



*Unity students working hard and goofing around in Acadia National Park.*

## Faculty Spotlight: Craig McLaughlin

### New Wildlife Faculty Collaborates with Local Land Alliance

Last Autumn, Unity College welcomed Dr. Craig McLaughlin to the community as a Wildlife faculty member. Returning to Maine after several years of senior level wildlife management in Utah, Craig is already embracing opportunities to connect his students to citizen science. In December of 2009, folks from the Sheepscot Wellspring Land Alliance (SWLA) contacted Craig for help in approximating population densities of various wildlife species that make their home in and around SWLA lands. The Land Alliance is hoping to determine whether or not current hunting and trapping activity can be supported sustainably and in concert with its mission.

Through Craig's Wildlife Ecology and Management course, Unity students Alan Brackett and Stacy Morrison have undertaken the beginning steps of a baseline study that will contribute to answering these questions. This capstone level research project has had the students reviewing and analyzing large amounts of district-specific wildlife data recorded by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Data for white-tailed deer, coyotes, red fox, fishers, raccoons, grouse and woodcock are abundant. "Much less is known about moose and black bear populations that may be present in this region" noted Brackett. As a capstone experience, the goals of the course challenge students to synthesize their knowledge of wildlife



*Craig McLaughlin with pronghorn in the wildlife lab.*

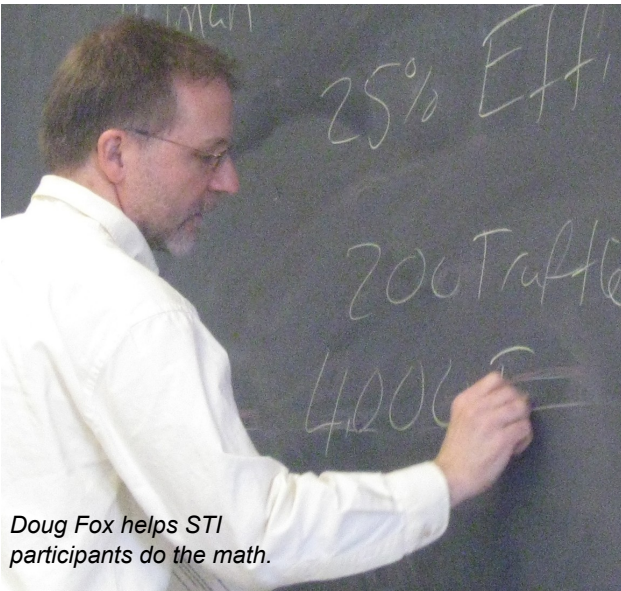
management with that of other disciplines, leading them to employ a holistic approach toward management issues. Over the course of the semester, students learn to authentically "connect the dots". Alan and Stacy will present their findings to SWLA's Executive Director, Buck O'Herin, at the end of the spring term and provide the organization with a written report for further review. McLaughlin is hopeful that this represents the first of many academically related service interactions with the Land Alliance.

## Sustainability Training Institute

Four students from Unity College were among the 32 participants. As a Sustainable Design and Technology major at Unity College and a Neighbor Warming Neighbor home weatherization volunteer for the past two years, Unity student Jamie Nemecek came to the Institute with a real understanding of what it takes to work with communities on issues of sustainability. “The Institute was a real catalyst for bringing students from different colleges and universities in Maine together to work on issues that we care about; combining our ideas will help each of us to push forward in this work. The Institute definitely spurred a lot of projects at Unity, and I’m sure it started some at other institutions as well.” Nemecek attended sessions on home weatherization, renewable energy and preparing communities for change.

The Institute was fortunate to have featured a variety of professionals who shared their technical and program expertise. Charlie Wing, co-founder of the Shelter Institute, noted author and award-winning teacher, showed students how home weatherization programs can be the most cost-effective strategy for reducing heating oil bills. This workshop also featured a panel discussion with key leaders of community-organized weatherization programs sharing their expertise around program mobilization and capacity building. Ron Desrosiers and Doug Fox of Unity’s Neighbor Warming Neighbor program and Andrew Carpenter of the Keeping Belfast Warm project were among the panelists.

Jamie O’Connell, Regional Associate for ICLEI, an international organization that helps communities plan for sustainability, facilitated a workshop on how to document greenhouse gas emissions and form a climate action plan. Day two of the Institute featured professional presentations on solar energy, geothermal, lighting, community wind, and biomass heat.



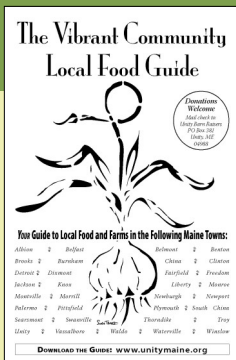
Doug Fox helps STI participants do the math.

Speakers shared their knowledge of these technologies, costs and benefits, and where communities might find the most effective sites for installations. Included among the presenters was the college’s own Professor Mick Womersley, who spoke about the future of community wind power in Maine.

The Institute concluded with a robust panel discussion that allowed students to tap into the experiences of several community leaders working on sustainability issues. Mary Ann Hayes of Maine Rural Partners, Steve Erario, a Colby College student and co-founder of the mid-Maine Sustainability Coalition, and Barbara DiBiase of the Falmouth Green Ribbon project, helped students frame their ideas and motivations into the larger context of community readiness and capacity for change. Each student departed from the Institute with specific plans for working on sustainability efforts being undertaken in their respective communities. As one participant reflected, “Being around so many different people tackling the issue of sustainability, was eye-opening. It allowed me to visualize how large this field is and how many possible answers there are to the environmental challenges we face.” This year’s Institute participants have unanimously called for a similar gathering next year.

## Announcing the second edition of the

### Waldo County Area Local Food Guide!



The Waldo County Area Local Food Guide, a print directory that helps citizens locate and purchase local foods, is due out in June.

Formerly the Vibrant Community Local Food Guide, this new expanded version is being produced by the Office of Community Based Learning with support from MOFGA.

As in previous years, this edition will be available free to consumers through town offices, the Common Ground Fair, and in other public places. Farmers and producers located in or selling in Waldo County are encouraged to contact the CBL Office to be included in the guide at no cost.

### Contact Us!

To learn more about the Office of Community- Based Learning contact Jen Olin, Community-Based Learning Coordinator.

[jolin@unity.edu](mailto:jolin@unity.edu)

207. 948.3131 ext. 273

90 Quaker Hill Road Unity, ME

