

Proposed environment program called unique by UNL officials

By Alan Phelps
Staff Reporter

A combination of physical, social and agricultural sciences would make the proposed environmental studies program at UNL unique, officials said.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln sociology professor J. Allen Williams Jr. said the program, set to be considered by College of Arts and Sciences faculty members April 29, would be a joint venture between arts and sciences and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Under the proposal, students would be able to earn either a Bachelor of Science degree in natural resources from the agriculture college or a Bachelor of Science degree from the College of Arts and Sciences with an emphasis in a particular field, Williams said. The emphasis would be like a minor, he said.

Sam Treves, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, was the chairman of the original committee to develop the program proposal. Although planners had knowledge of other programs around the country, he said UNL's

proposed program is probably unique because it combines elements of the social sciences, physical sciences and the college of agriculture.

"I think it gives us a bigger pool of expertise," he said. "The program is more diverse... students have more opportunity to interact."

Williams said he thought such a mix was important to understanding environmental issues.

"Environmental studies clearly involves a broad spectrum of differences," he said. "It's important to have a balance between things that social science has learned as well as understanding the natural biological principles involved."

Many of the classes needed for the proposed major are already being taught at UNL, Treves said.

"The program is crafted largely from programs that already exist. Very few classes will need to be added," he said.

Williams said there seems to be a lot of interest in such a program at UNL among both students and faculty.

"I've been really pleased by the interest of faculty. There's a lot of enthusiasm about this program,"

he said. "I think there's been a real groundswell of interest... at this university."

The UNL group Ecology Now spearheaded a petition signed by hundreds of students in support of such a degree program last year, Williams added.

Williams said that the jobs a student graduating with the proposed degree would be qualified for lie primarily in environmental fields.

"It depends on what their emphasis is," he said. "They might do research in environmental issues, or be involved with environmental organizations or the government."

One environmental course, Earth in Crisis, is already being taught on an experimental basis this semester as Geography 181. The teacher of the course, Jeanne Kay, said her class is going well and she is optimistic about the proposal's chances.

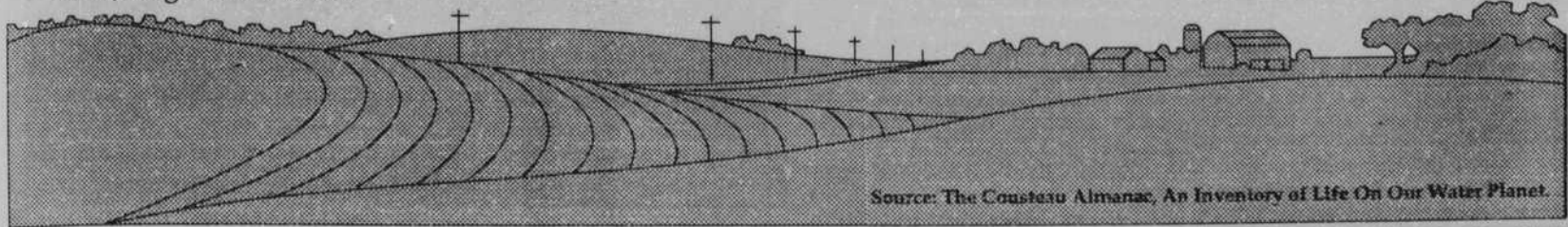
"It's past the preliminary stage and will be going to general arts and science faculty," she said. "I think even though there may be some disagreement about this and that, I think there is broad support for a major like this."

"We shall never achieve harmony with land, any more than we shall achieve justice or liberty for people. In these higher aspirations the important thing is not to achieve, but to strive."

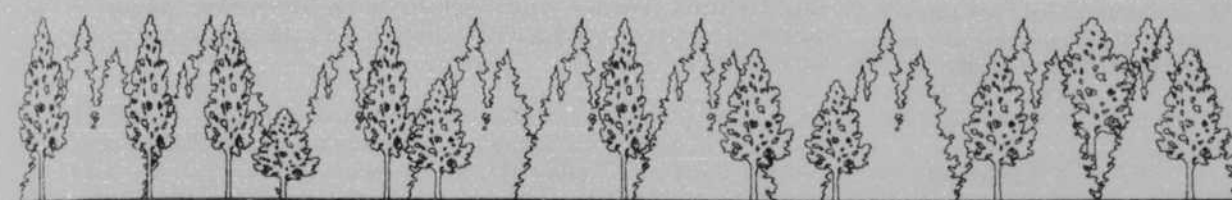
Aldo Leopold
naturalist and writer of
A Sand County Almanac

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- ... a baby born in the United States today will use approximately 1,200 barrels of petroleum during his or her lifetime?
- ... at least eight animal species that appear as official symbols of their native land are in danger of extinction?
- ... there are more insects in one square mile of rural land than human beings on the entire earth?
- ... one pound of hamburger requires one third of a gallon of gasoline, three fourths of a pound of fertilizer, seven pounds of grain and beans and 3,000 gallons of water?



Source: The Coustazu Almanac, An Inventory of Life On Our Water Planet.



'Green' publications boost consciousness

By Connie L. Sheehan
Senior Editor

For those looking to grow green along with the environmental movement, the variety of related books has sprouted, according to Kathryn Kelley, manager of the General Book Department at the Nebraska Bookstore.

"Prior to last year's Earth Day celebration, there weren't as many (titles) available," Kelley said. Because last year's Earth Day was so heavily publicized, the residual interest still remains.

"It was easy in the late '70s and '80s not to think about (the environmental issue)," Kelley said, "and people forgot but the public has become aware again."

Probably the best-selling book in this resurgence was "50 Simple Things You Can Do To Save the Earth" by EarthWorks Press, she said.

The book became a big seller over last year's Earth Day celebration, Kelley explained.

Dayna Macy, publicity director of EarthWorks Press agreed that their first book, "50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth," eventually became a best seller but said that in the beginning, no one in New York was interested in publishing the book.

John Javna, the publisher, decided to bring together his own group of writers and publish the book himself, she said.

Macy said that the newly formed company didn't even have a telephone since Javna was working out of his home, but the first 25,000 copies of the book were soon printed.

Then, the Los Angeles Times did a review on the book, and it "took off like gangbusters," she said.

The book has sold 3.5 million copies and became the No. 1 1990 Trade Paperback according to Publisher's Weekly Survey (a publishing industry listing), Macy said.

"That gave the company the base to start other projects," Macy explained. EarthWorks now has nine titles in print and two others to be released this summer.

These books aren't glossy illustrations or technical but just simple books on steps everyone can take to help the environment, she added.

"Even if the only thing you change is using your mug to buy coffee in the morning instead of Styrofoam cups, that will still save 365 cups per year," she explained.

The idea is to just do something — no matter how small. The act still makes a difference, she said.

Macy said that one of the books to be released in June, The Student Environmental Action Guide, concentrates on what students can do to institute environmental changes on high school and college campuses.

It was written in conjunction with the Student Environmental Action Coalition, a nationwide organization with the same philosophy, she said.

"50 Simple Things Your Business Can Do to Save the Earth" is already in print and Macy anticipates as more people grow environmentally aware that businesses will become the next big group to go "green."

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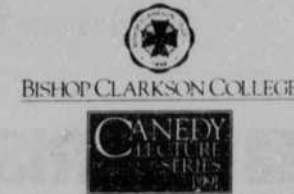
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