



## “Generation E”

### Reporting Campus Sustainability Leadership For The Next Generation *National Wildlife Federation’s Guide Highlights Examples of Students Working for a Clean Energy Future*

RESTON, Va. (November 18)—National Wildlife Federation today released its new study of **Generation E: Students Leading for a Sustainable, Clean Energy Future**, which highlights the unique and critical role college students are playing in reforming sustainability programs that lower their campus’ carbon footprint.

“We scouted projects at more than 160 colleges and universities all across the country. In more than 20 years of supporting student environmental leaders, we’ve never seen this extraordinary degree of student engagement and creativity around sustainability at every level,” said **Julian Keniry, Senior Director of Campus and Community Leadership, for National Wildlife Federation**. “Our findings demolish the myth that students are apathetic or sitting on the sidelines. Their voices are rising up in ways we haven’t heard since the civil rights or the peace movements of the ‘60s and ‘70s, but the irony is, we are finding that most campus educators and leaders at the state and federal levels aren’t really listening.”

Published just weeks before major international climate negotiations kick off in Copenhagen, Denmark, *Generation E* is a timely exploration of how young people in college today are responding to the challenge of climate change and the need to shift to a sustainable, clean energy future. “*Generation E*” stands for the three “E’s” of sustainability: ecology, sustainable economics, and social equity,” said Keniry, “and it also stands for a tremendous amount of energy and excitement on college campuses today. The values of sustainability define and unite the current generation like no other issue of our time.”

The report highlights 165 campus examples in 46 states, covering 35 categories of creative student effort. Students, faculty and staff, community and business leaders, and anyone who desires a richer understanding of our future environmental leaders, will benefit from the myriad examples spotlighted in the new *Generation E* report, according to **co-author Christina Erickson of Champlain College and the University of Vermont**. Report topics range from renewable energy and conservation to dorm move-out programs; from campus food systems to wildlife habitat restoration.

“Students have creatively stepped up to raise funds for efficiency projects, there is great community outreach through weatherization and other projects, and we are seeing some campuses overcome behavior change in residence halls and beyond,” said Erickson.

**What specifically are students doing across the country?**

## **FUNDING**

Students at the University of Tennessee Knoxville formed a group called [Students Promoting Environmental Action in Knoxville](#). Through diligent activism, this group established a student fee for clean energy at several universities in Tennessee. In its first three years, the Student Environmental Initiatives Fee generated \$1.4 million for green power purchasing and energy efficiency upgrades on the UTK campus.

## **BEHAVIOR CHANGE**

[Greeks Going Green](#), a nonprofit launched in 2008, promotes campaigns to expand sustainable living solutions in fraternities and sororities across the country. There are currently 11 participating chapters which encourage recycling, switching to compact fluorescent light bulbs, and greening their communities.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Many American campuses teach about sustainability and carbon emissions reduction in their surrounding communities. Students at North Carolina's Warren Wilson College participated in a spring break service program called [INSULATE!](#), which aims to reduce carbon emissions one home at a time. Ten students collectively worked 440 hours to weatherize homes in their surrounding community.

However, there is another side to the story.

“Research by NWF and other groups consistently shows that the United States is out of position when it comes to educating and training students for a sustainable, clean energy future,” said **Kevin Coyle, Vice President for Education and Training at National Wildlife Federation**. “*Generation E* shows that American students care deeply about environmental, economic and social sustainability. The demand for action is there—our higher education leaders need to step up and meet it. Together, our students, professors and campus staff can reconcile this education and sustainability gap, which has enormous implications for economic prospects and security in coming years.”

NWF, along with sponsors, released the report today in a press call moderated by **Scott Carlson, Senior Reporter at the Chronicle of Higher Education**. The teleconference included three of the many students highlighted in the report who are making a difference on their campuses and in their communities.

“The good news,” said Julian Keniry, “is that *Generation E* illustrates the myriad reasons why there is a strong basis for faith in the ability of U.S. higher education to confront global warming and to model social, economic and ecological sustainability. College students today are leading in unprecedented ways, helping create campus communities that are repositories for hope and innovation for the larger society.”

### **About the Authors:**

Christina Erickson is Sustainability Coordinator at Champlain College and is the Eco-Reps Program Coordinator at the University of Vermont, where she is focusing her Ph.D. dissertation on the impact and effectiveness of Eco-Reps programs nationally.

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Julian Keniry is Senior Director of Campus and Community Leadership at the National Wildlife Federation. She co-founded Campus Ecology in 1989.

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**Thanks to *Generation E* sponsors:**

Association of College Unions International (ACUI); American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC); National Association of Campus Activities (NACA); American College and University Housing Officers; International (ACUHO-I); Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA); Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU); Partnership for Environmental Technology Education (PETE); Energy Action Coalition; Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Additional Resources:**

An executive summary and the full *Generation E* report, including a list of 165 highlighted schools, are available online at [www.nwf.org/GenE](http://www.nwf.org/GenE). Since its launch in 1989, National Wildlife Federation's Campus Ecology Program has worked with the college campus community (students, faculty, administrators and staff) to promote sustainability and ecological stewardship on campuses and beyond.

Campuses featured in *Generation E* are encouraged to enter NWF's *Chill Out* national competition this fall. **Chill Out: Campus Solutions to Global Warming** is a competition that rewards and recognizes all the cool things campuses are doing to reduce the impacts of global warming. To enter, students, faculty and staff need to submit a two minute video that shows how their college or university is working to reduce global warming pollution. Entry forms are at [www.campuschillout.org](http://www.campuschillout.org).

You can view online how your local campuses—and schools nationwide—are implementing solutions to global warming. The **Campus Ecology Campus Sustainability Case Studies**, the only database of its kind, is available at [www.CampusEcology.org](http://www.CampusEcology.org). Representing more than 30 states, it features over 500 case studies from U.S. campuses that highlight climate and sustainability practices ranging from composting and recycling to alternative transportation systems and global warming awareness campaigns. The database includes 100 entries recently posted for 2009.

**Note to Press:** For more information on the report or school contact information, contact Julian Keniry, Senior Director of Campus and Community Leadership, [Keniry@nwf.org](mailto:Keniry@nwf.org) or 571-226-0149.

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