

## Working together to save the Earth



BEN WOLOSZYN/Boomerang photo A discarded can floats in the Laramie River on Thursday.

By Eve Newman  
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From speakers to community service to a barbecue to a sunrise service, a multitude of events are taking place this weekend and next week to celebrate Earth Day, which is Tuesday.

"Earth Day is not about now, it's about the future - learning to change our habits for our future, for our children's future," said Sarah Ames, president of University of Wyoming Students for a Sustainable Environment.

The student organization is organizing a celebration from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Tuesday in Prexy's Pasture, featuring informational booths; free bike tune-ups courtesy of All-Terrain Sports, Fine Edge and Pedal House; a canvas bag decoration and give-away; music courtesy of the Ozark Country Ramblers; and a speech by student government president David Kiren.

One of the organizations that will have an informational booth is the UW Recycling Department. Recycling specialist Tod Scott said he would be informing visitors about what can be recycled and how. He said Earth Day is a good chance to educate people about what's possible in Laramie.

"We don't have very strong culture in Wyoming for recycling," he said. "We do have practices in place that people can use. There are places ... that are making a difference."

Also on campus, the university's Climate Change Committee will host a climate change symposium that will include two panel discussions and a keynote speaker on Tuesday and Thursday.

This will be the third symposium organized by the committee, following events in November and January. While the November symposium involved international speakers and took a global view, and the January symposium featured regional speakers, this one will be the most local. A panel discussion on Tuesday will examine home energy efficiency, while a Thursday discussion will cover sustainability initiatives in Laramie and on campus.

"The world is changing - slowly from the perspective of our lifetime - but very fast from a geologic perspective," Bart Geerts, associate professor of atmospheric science and a member of the committee said. "We are all responsible; we all contribute. Nobody can claim not to be a part of it."

Elsewhere in Laramie, the festivities start Saturday with a community clean-up and hazardous waste collection. The clean-up will take place from 8 a.m.-noon, with lunch included at the Laramie Fire Station afterward. Mayor Klaus Hanson said he and UW president Tom Buchanan would be cooking lunch for volunteers.

On Tuesday, if you don't mind getting up early, a group will meet at the east end of Willett to watch the sunrise.

"(We're going) to greet the sun and give thanks for our planet," Suzanne Lewis, a conservation advocate with Biodiversity Conservation Alliance said.

Lewis is part of the group organizing community awareness of Earth Day. The group met at a statewide conference last fall in Lander and has continued to meet locally since then. They have printed fliers that will be distributed around town that include a list of local activities as well as sustainability tips.

"If people would do just one or two, and then adopt that for a lifetime, it would make a huge difference," Lewis said.

Dr. Sally Palmer, who teaches classes on global religion and environmental care at UW, said the community group is united around its common purpose.

"One of the things that brings us together is that both of us see the danger of life as we know it," she said.

Dave Earnshaw, another group member, said there's more danger in not doing anything to curb climate change than there is in thinking it exists and being wrong.

"What we're really trying to do is save our ability to continue to live on the earth. I think we could literally cook ourselves off the planet," he said.

Earth Day began in 1970 as a grassroots initiative intended to raise awareness across the country about environmental issues. It has since become an international event.

An April 2008 poll by Angus Reid Global Monitor, a nonpartisan group that tracks public opinion, reported that 47 percent of Americans see global warming as a serious problem, with 47 percent also thinking it is being caused by human activity.

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