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Press Releases

UMD Global Great Lakes Project selected to receive major funding by U of M Institute on the Environment

University of Minnesota Duluth

3/4/2009

The UMD Large Lakes Observatory (LLO) has been selected by the University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment as one of five new projects to receive major funding from the Institute's Discovery Grants Program.

The Discovery Grants Program is part of the Institute's high-impact investment strategy, which aims to accelerate innovation in environmental research and problem solving across the entire University of Minnesota.

The announcement of the grant awardees follows a highly competitive selection process. Approximately 25 teams of university faculty members and external partners submitted proposals for funding. All five of the selected projects build on the unique strengths of the university, engage both faculty and external organizations, and provide opportunities for graduate and postdoctoral leadership training, as well as undergraduate research.

"These new projects have the potential to make a transformative difference in global research and solutions related to climate change, water resources, land use, public health, economics, policy and public education," says Jonathan Foley, director of the Institute.

Beginning in July 2009, the Institute will award between \$400,000 and \$800,000 to each of the five projects.

The UMD Large Lakes Observatory (LLO) project is titled Global Great Lakes.

Project coordinator is UMD Professor Robert Hecky.

With the Global Great Lakes Project the Institute will support researchers at UMD's Large Lakes Observatory (LLO) as they collect and interpret data on the World's Great Lakes across North America, East Africa and Eurasia. LLO will work with UMD's Natural Resources Research Institute and the Center for Water Research in Australia to identify meaningful metrics of ecosystem health; improve the capacity to monitor and model these metrics in real-time or near real-time, with an initial focus on the western arm of Lake Superior; and develop the capacity to anticipate, rather than react to, pressing environmental issues. This project could radically change how the Great Lakes of the World are viewed and managed by scientists, decision makers and the general public.

The other four selected projects include:

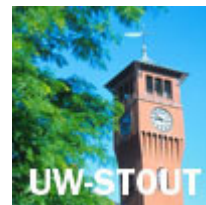
Accounting for Nature---project coordinator: Stephen Polasky

The Institute will partner with Stanford University, the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund, and several government agencies and other entities to develop new approaches to integrating economics and ecology—with a focus on how to assess the value of "ecosystem goods and services."

Reinventing the Boreal Forest--project coordinator: Peter Reich

The Institute will partner with state, national, and international academic, government, industry and environmental organizations to better understand boreal forests in Minnesota

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Wednesday
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and spanning North America, and how they interact with humans in the face of climate, economic and social change.

Science-on-a-Sphere--project coordinator: Patrick Hamilton

In collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota, the Institute will create new programming for worldwide audiences through Science-on-a-Sphere (SOS) technology. Developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, SOS is a room-sized, global display system that uses computers and video projectors to show planetary data on a large sphere, akin to a giant animated globe, that hangs from the ceiling.

Whole Village Project--project coordinators: Craig Packer and Katey Pelican

The Whole Village Project works to provide an in-depth understanding of the health, prosperity, education and natural resource consumption of rural Tanzanians in East Africa. This information is made available to the villagers, economic development and government agencies, and conservation NGOs, serving as a common language that allows communities to more easily collaborate and share best practices.

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BusinessNorth

101 W. 2nd St. Suite 202

Duluth, MN 55802

Phone: 218-720-3060

Fax: 218-720-3112

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