



*Western Upper Peninsula Center  
for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education*

*A partnership of*

Copper Country & Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School Districts and Michigan Technological University

Serving schools and communities in Houghton, Baraga, Gogebic, Ontonagon and Keweenaw Counties

Website: <http://wupcenter.mtu.edu/>

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## **Earth Day 2006 "*Kids CAN Make a Difference*" Program Benefits All**

April 22 is Earth Day. This year, 649 students from nine schools in Houghton, Baraga, and Gogebic Counties celebrated Earth Day by designing projects that will benefit their schools, their communities, and the environment.

Twelve different projects were submitted as part of the Sixth Annual *Kids CAN Make A Difference* Earth Day Program sponsored by the Western Upper Peninsula Center for Science, Mathematics & Environmental Education with funding from the Michigan Tech Sustainable Futures Initiative and the Wege Foundation.

"Schools have submitted some very creative projects this year. We are *very* excited to see so much enthusiasm among local youth and their teachers," says Joan Chadde, coordinator of the *Kids CAN Make A Difference* Earth Day Program. "The efforts of these students will impact thousands in the western Upper Peninsula."

Each group that registered for the Earth Day Program will receive a certificate in recognition of their accomplishments and a visit from Western U.P. Center staff where they will present their projects. Four groups will be selected to receive \$300 towards an environmental education field trip for their class.

In Baraga County, L'Anse Middle School sixth grade classes, coordinated by teacher Randy Cadeau, will conduct a bottle and can drive and purchase trees with their earnings. Teacher Janet Gerzetch's second grade classes will educate the public about bats by displaying informative posters throughout the county. The Arvon School will work with local foresters to reconstruct a nature trail behind their school that will interpret the local ecology (interaction between plants and animals).

In Keweenaw County, the Copper Harbor School will be planting a native plant garden to attract butterflies and birds.

In Gogebic County, the Washington Elementary 6<sup>th</sup> grade class will research historic mining in the Upper Peninsula and investigate the proposed sulfide mine in Marquette County. Shari Nyquist's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class at Washington Elementary will design posters with a conservation message to place around their community. Teacher Kathy Makela's 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade science classes at Wakefield-Marinesco will conduct a trash pick up of Sunday Lake in Wakefield. Mary Toomey's 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade science classes at Wakefield-Marinesco are making notepads from recycled paper, decorating grocery bags with an Earth Day message, and encouraging their families to check for proper tire inflation to ensure the best gas mileage.

"I like to have my students involved in this project to promote greater awareness of how we all can do our part to maintain a healthy environment and use resources more wisely," explains Mary Toomey, a middle school science teacher at Wakefield-Marinesco.

In Houghton County, the Houghton Middle School classes taught Sara Beiring, Deb Sage, and Bruce Belmas, will be conducting an innovative “Its Cool to Carpool” day to raise their own awareness and that of their parents and the community about the need to reduce use of fossil fuels and also protect air quality. Students, faculty and parents will be encouraged to share rides, walk, or bike to school for one week. They will compare the numbers of miles traveled during a typical week, to those traveled during the “test” week. This will illustrate to students that *their actions* can make a difference!

Bridge High School students and their teacher Cathy Hill will continue their efforts at Terrace Park in Hancock by constructing a butterfly garden.

Lastly, Barkell Elementary third graders will challenge their classmates to have a “Waste-Free Lunch” where very little food is thrown away and very little or no garbage is thrown away. But first, they’ll need to do some school-wide education by making posters, sending home notes to parents, and visiting all classrooms and asking them to participate. On the “Waste-Free Lunch” day, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students will monitor the lunchroom encouraging their classmates to minimize waste.

"These projects are excellent examples of how students can help make their communities better places to live. We are pleased to see students’ and teachers’ commitment to caring for our environment!" added Joan Chadde, education program coordinator for the Western Upper Peninsula Center for Science, Mathematics & Environmental Education. "I am looking forward to visiting all of these classes."

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