



*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 2005 "Kids CAN Make a Difference" Program Benefits Local Schools**

April 22 is Earth Day, a day to celebrate the Earth's essential resources of air, water, and soil. This year, 489 students from six schools in Houghton, Baraga, and Gogebic Counties celebrated Earth Day with projects designed to benefit their communities and local environment. Ten school projects were submitted as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Wege Foundation.

"Schools have submitted some very interesting projects this year. We are very excited to see so much enthusiasm among local youth and educators," says Joan Chadde, coordinator of the **Kids CAN Make A Difference** Earth Day Program. "These 500 students will touch thousands with their projects."

Each group that registered for the contest will receive a certificate in recognition of their accomplishments and an ice cream party to celebrate their hard work when the Western U.P. Center staff visits their school. Each group also had their name entered into a raffle drawing for a chance to win \$300 towards an environmental education field trip for their age group: elementary (K-5) and secondary (Gr. 6-12).

Teachers had good things to say about what their students are doing.

"I like to have student involved in this project to promote cooperation and group work. The time of year allows us to look for additional way sto keep student interested and motivated," explains Mary Toomey, a middle school science teacher at Wakefield-Marinesco.

"This program motivates me to make time to do a special Earth Day project with my students," adds Stephanie Mazzon, a high school teacher at Luther Wright High School in Ironwood.

What kinds of projects are students doing this year?

In Houghton County, Lois Jambekars 5<sup>th</sup> grade class from Houghton Elementary did a litter pick-up and tree-planting at West Houghton Park. Mrs. Barnas 4th grade class from Hancock Elementary did a community clean up. Dollar Bay-Tamarack City high school social studies and science classes organized a school-wide paper recycling program and did beach clean-up. Houghton-Portage Township 8<sup>th</sup> grade earth science class is designing succession parkthat will teach future students about plant succession, honor those special people who have come before them, and beautify the entry to their school. The World Geography class at the Bridge School is designing and installing a walking trail at Terrace Park in Hancock.

In Baraga County, C.J. Sullivan Elementary School 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade classes did a litter pick-up, made bat posters, and organized a school-wide recycling program, respectively.

In Gogebic County, the 1<sup>st</sup> grade at Washington Elementary in Bessemer designed litter bug bags made of wallpaper scraps. Theyll be distributing their litter bug bags to drivers in the community and taking them home for their families to use.

"The projects were excellent examples of how small groups of people can help make our communities better places to live. We are pleased to see the strong sense of commitment to caring for our environment!" concluded Joan Chadde, education program coordinator for the Western Upper Peninsula Center for Science, Mathematics & Environmental Education.