



*People and Nature: Our Future is in the Balance*

## **National Wildlife Federation**

11100 Wildlife Center Drive • Reston, VA 20190 • <http://www.nwf.org/>

### **Ball State University Muncie, Indiana Spring 2003, Environmental Literacy**

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### **Campus Profile**

Ball State University is a public four-year university located in Muncie, Indiana. There are approximately 19,000 students that attend the seven colleges in the university system. Ball State is best known in the environmental field for starting the Greening of the Campus Conferences. This coming September 18-20, 2003 it will be host to the fifth annual Greening conference.

##### **Contacts**

To get more information about this project please contact any one of the following people

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#### **GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

##### **Goals**

The goal of this project was to produce a seven-minute video segment on sustainability for a weekly television program called *Indiana Outdoors*. This video was made in collaboration with students, faculty and administrators at Ball State University and in partnership with the Telecommunications and Natural Resources and Environmental Management Departments. It was produced to highlight the need for sustainable practices in everyday living in an institutional setting. To ensure long-term success, the segment was written in an “evergreen” or timeless fashion. The program will air on twelve public television stations, reaching approximately 55,000 viewers, according to Nielson Research. I am personally conducting and overseeing research, interviews, writing, production and distribution of the video.

As far as future plans are concerned, this video segment will be showcased at Ball State's "Greening of the Campus V" conference in September 2003. It will complement the Council on the Environment's action item of Green Issues Awareness. The Council, a university-wide clearinghouse for sustainability initiatives, is comprised of multiple stakeholders, including administrators, students, faculty and local community members. Through a variety of outreach mechanisms, I am also seeking additional distribution channels to ensure use of the video by other campus stakeholders and in surrounding schools.

### **Accomplishments**

All the above stated goals were reached (with the exception of future plans). I spent most of the first few months in researching the topic of sustainability and how it related to Ball State University. I built up a strong base of contacts from which I chose six to interview in the video. I was also in contact with many other faculty and staff members who were able to provide me with the necessary information to write an accurate script for the video.



Along with producing the sustainability video I also decided to produce a video about recycling here on campus. I hope that video will be used to increase awareness of the recycling program on campus and it will be distributed to the appropriate and necessary areas of the university. The recycling video is currently available on the Internet. <http://www.bsu.edu/provost/ceres/cote/materials/Recycle.html>

In early January the *Farmington Valley Post* from Connecticut wrote an article about the project. This article is enclosed and can also be found at: [http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=6650414&BRD=1666&PAG=461&dept\\_id=14030&rfti=6](http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=6650414&BRD=1666&PAG=461&dept_id=14030&rfti=6)

More recently, Seth Slabaugh of the *Muncie Star Press* mentioned the project in an article he wrote (see enclosed). Within the next month or two Seth is interested in writing another article about the video and the NWF fellowship program.

### **Challenges and Responses**

I felt that I faced very few major challenges while producing this video. There were some difficulties to work through but I think that can be expected with any project. A significant challenge was when the assigned camera man decided to leave school and move to Chicago to work for Jenny Jones. That sounded like a very good opportunity for him and I was excited to learn that he had such a great opportunity but I was also upset when he decided to take the job and leave in the midst of the project we were working on. Each camera man has his or her own style so it was difficult to finish up the recycling video and continue with the sustainability story with new camera men on the crew.

Other than that, I found the production adventure to be very fun and exciting. I never felt that I had any lack of support Kathy Cacciola of NWF was extremely supportive (as much as anyone

could be in emails and telephone calls) and all the faculty and staff I worked with at Ball State along with the crew of undergraduates from *Indiana Outdoors* were remarkably supportive.

I wouldn't say that I had a shortage of time but I know that if I had more time I would have wanted to change some things, add others and delete still more things. In the end I think the amount of time granted for this project was more than sufficient.

## **ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT**

### **Leaders and Supporters**

#### National Wildlife Federation

This project could not have been done without the generous support, financial and otherwise, that the National Wildlife Federation provided.

#### The Center for Energy Research/Education/Service and The Council on the Environment

Through support of the project, Bob Koester was instrumental in creating support within the Council on the Environment and achieved matching funding from the Center for Energy Research/Education/Service. His assistance was greatly appreciated and he also became a valuable resource of knowledge for the script of the sustainability video itself.

#### Tools for Designing a Sustainable Future

This landscape architecture class helped to define the objectives of the video in a more clear order. By taking this class I not only learned an incredible amount about sustainability but I was also exposed to other viewpoints on sustainability by taking a class outside of the Natural Resources department. Those viewpoints turned out to be very helpful in developing a structure for the video what topics to cover and how to approach topics that the general public may not know or understand.

### **Funding**

The project cost the entire allotment of funding. If there had been more funding, that money would have been spent as well. If there was less funding I'm not quite sure how the video would have been done but I'm sure that something could have been worked out to cut corners. (I'm just glad I didn't have to cut any corners myself!) We received \$1,200 from the National Wildlife Federation and the university matched that grant adding another \$1,200 to the project funds.

The funding came from the NWF's Campus Ecology Fellowship Program and from the Center for Energy Research/Education/Service here at Ball State University. Through working with *Indiana Outdoors* we were allowed access to necessary resources including camera equipment, rental cars, crewmembers and media lab editing equipment.

### **National Wildlife Federation's Campus Ecology Program**

The National Wildlife Federation's Campus Ecology program played a vital role in this project. Without their support this video would not have been made. Reading about the Campus Ecology program on the web page is what generated the idea to make this video, provided we received the funding. If we hadn't received the funding we would have probably pursued a different story.

Being a NWF Fellow, I found the NWF name recognition very useful. Sometimes people were less than helpful to me, but once they learned that I was working with the National Wildlife Federation they seemed more inclined to help me out. I would say more than anything it just helped me get my foot in the door of places that I don't think would normally have been so hospitable.

## **CLOSING COMMENT**

Susan Aiezza

I would have to say that overall this experience is nearly beyond words. It was so much greater than I imagined. The NWF was more than just an organization that wrote me a check to work on my project. The National Wildlife Federation worked hand-in-hand with me to make sure that if I had any difficulties that they would be there to help me through. It wasn't like I felt an impersonal connection to the NWF either. After being to the NWF conference in April on Sustainability in Higher Education I would feel very comfortable calling up Kathy Cacciola or Sumona Das at homes and just chat about either my project or life in general! The staff that the fellows deal with is a group of very real and down to earth people. If I could make one recommendation to next year's fellows it would be to take a trip out to Washington DC and meet the Campus Ecology staff. They will really make you feel like you are part of the extended NWF family and they will certainly give you the confidence that you need to carry out your own personal projects. It's comforting to know how much support the NWF has to offer *beyond* the grant funding.

Nancy Carlson

The Campus Ecology program connected Ball State with other like-minded campuses by email communication and phone conferences. It was affirming to know we aren't alone in our efforts toward sustainability. I think the campus gained as much as our Fellow did.

Bob Koester

We can't emphasize enough the importance of having a well-coordinated support structure at the home institution to complement the national program in helping the Campus Ecology fellow achieve her goals.

That team at Ball State worked well; nonetheless, the success of this adventure was primarily due to the commitment of our student.

The national office was very wise in requiring that participants post frequent reports on progress and in providing the opportunity for our student fellow to interact with her counterparts from other schools.

This is a great program.

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*University's greening efforts show progress*

*Electronic books and hybrid vehicles are examples of Ball State's efforts to become greener.*

*By SETH SLABAUGH seths@thestarpress.com*

MUNCIE The abbreviation “BSU” has a second meaning at Ball State University: Becoming a Sustainable University. All 24 members of the university’s Council on the Environment (COTE) now use electronic books RCA's eBook to save paper. The university bought three ultra-low-emission, Honda Civic gasoline-electric hybrid automobiles that get nearly 50 miles a gallon of gasoline.

As a result of being named a campus ecology fellow by the National Wildlife Federation, graduate student Susan Aiezza is producing a 7-minute video on sustainability to be broadcast on a dozen public television stations. The university has adopted a sustainability statement and plans to build an environmental education center.

At a ceremony in Texas, the Sustainable Buildings Industry Council presented Ball State with an award for developing a cluster of minors in environmentally sustainable practices. Ball State's green initiatives coordinator, John Vann, has been lecturing on campus about sustainability, attending seminars on sustainability in Colorado, the United Kingdom and Brazil, and writing articles about sustainability in a campus newsletter. “We're making progress,” said Robert Koester, chairman of COTE and director of the university's Center for Energy Research, Education and Service.

But many challenges remain, such as a campus power plant that burns coal, expansion of the recycling program, the lack of environmentally friendly vans and service vehicles and the lack of a campus bikeway system.

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### *Farmington Valley Post Article*

FARMINGTON - She hadn't even started graduate school before environmental enthusiast Susan Aiezza was ready to fulfill her dream of visiting millions of people in their living rooms each day and bringing the outdoors in with her.

Well, almost.

The 23-year-old Farmington native, a first-year graduate student at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, fancies becoming a fixture on The Discovery Channel television network. But she's still got a few streams to clear before she can navigate the big river.

Last July, Aiezza got a phone call from Nancy Carlson, director of BSU's Department of Communications and executive producer of Indiana Outdoors, a weekly half-hour news magazine program for public television in Indiana. The show, produced by WIPB-TV at BSU, highlights natural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities in Indiana.

Carlson had learned that Aiezza - who received her undergraduate degree in Natural Resource Management and Engineering from the University of Connecticut in 2001 - wanted to factor telecommunications into her graduate school program, and was calling to inform her of a National Wildlife Federation grant that could kick start her efforts at BSU.

It helps to have a boat to get upstream in rough waters, as Aiezza soon learned. The odds of winning were not in her favor. The NWF has awarded 10 to 20 fellowships each academic year for the last four years as part of its Campus Ecology program, which works with schools on campus greening projects, according to Kathy Cacciola, coordinator of the NWF Campus Ecology fellowship program. About 50 to 60 students apply nationally, on average. This year, NWF could only afford to pick 10 winners, Cacciola said.

To complicate things further, Carlson had dropped a big oar on Aiezza's foot. From the time she spoke with Carlson, Aiezza said she had just four days to complete and send the application and turn in a flawless grant proposal.

“I just dropped everything I was doing (to apply),” Aiezza said.

Her quick feet, coupled with Carlson's tip, won her the prestigious fellowship and started her sailing smooth at BSU in September, where she began work on the NWF-sponsored project, producing a seven-minute video segment on sustainability for Indiana Outdoors.

“Sustainability is basically conserving and using resources so they can be used from now until forever,” Aiezza said.

Aiezza learned she'd won the grant in mid-September, after receiving another phone call from Carlson.

“That was an incredible day,” she remembered. “I sent out a big mass e-mail telling everybody. And I was surprised and knocked off my feet when I found out I was one of 10.”

Aiezza is hoping to be finished with the video by the end of April, just before the spring semester wraps. It will probably air on Indiana Outdoors sometime in the fall, and is also slated for viewing around the same time at BSU's fifth annual Greening of the Campus conference in September, where presenters will illustrate various aspects of how the campus can become a "green" model for society by gathering and sharing information on how to utilize natural resources.

While she works on her time-consuming project, Aiezza also keeps busy as the only graduate student on the Indiana Outdoors staff. The unpaid crew member helps fellow BSU students produce their own 10 to 15-minute segments each semester that will air on the show.

“The students get real-life work, and learn how to produce a show,” she said.

Aiezza's own interest in the environment goes back to her days as a Girl Scout. In the 10 years she was a member, she learned a love for camping and outdoor sports with friends.

“Now I'm just obsessed, and I have all the gear,” she said.

Her love for the environment naturally spawned protective feelings for her lifetime playground. She said she's frustrated when people litter and otherwise damage the environment, and chose telecommunications as a vehicle that she believed could adequately express her opinions.

“I want everyone to share in the wealth of the outdoors,” she said. “I want to teach people, show them what we have and how we can save it. Telecommunications is that medium.”

In a couple of years, Aiezza plans to catch some big fish. If she wants to, she'll be able to head to The Discovery Channel offices, armed with a master's degree in environmental communications from BSU. Aiezza is the school's first graduate student to tackle the major, which combines work from the university's Natural Resource and Environmental Management, Journalism and Telecommunications departments, according to Hugh Brown, chair and associate professor of NREM.

"Susan is a real asset to the department," Brown said.

The ambitious first-year student plans to graduate with tons of producing experience. Aiezza has only been at school for a few months, and is already producing a video on campus recycling awareness for the Council on the Environment, a group of about 15 to 20 university and community representatives interested in making BSU more sustainable. Aiezza, an honorary member of the group, said it's exciting to participate with "people who have big pulls in the area as far as the environment is concerned."

The video features BSU mascot Charlie Cardinal, who tosses a piece of paper into a recycle bin. The camera follows that paper from the bin to a janitor's hands to a recycle truck, and documents what happens once it gets to a recycling plant and paper mill.

An unexpected job offer from the Jenny Jones talk show in Chicago for her filmographer delayed the project, but Aiezza hopes it will be finished by the end of this month, complete with a link to the footage from BSU's Web site.

While she navigates her way through school with a steady eye behind the camera, Aiezza is charting a course that should give her name more widespread recognition and ensure her smooth passage from shipmate to captain, from amateur to professional producer.

And at the pace she's working, Aiezza's credits could roll on television screens in your own living room someday soon.

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