



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

## **National Wildlife Federation®**

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

**Cornell University  
Ithaca, New York  
Spring 2004, Environmental Literacy**

### **BACKGROUND**

Cornell is a privately endowed university and the federal land-grant institution of New York State. Cornell has seven college units, three assisted financially by the State of New York, including the College of Human Ecology (which offers the fashion design programs) and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (which offer the environment-oriented departments). The student body consists of approximately 21,000 students and 3,100 faculty members.

Cornell has had environmentally related work since its founding in 1865 and has continued to foster environmental studies through faculty and courses, student-based organizations, independent study programs, graduate field research, workshops and environmentally based speakers and community programs. Cornell's faculty and student body have established themselves as a world-renowned entity not only in the natural sciences, but also in numerous other disciplines. In addition to contributing significantly to cutting-edge environmental research and education programs, the Cornell community encourages students to become part of the solution by seeking innovative ways of connecting environmental issues on a larger, global scale and across multidisciplinary concentrations and stakeholder groups.

### **Contact**

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### **GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

#### **Goals**

Organic Portraits was formulated as an independent philanthropic international environmental-fashion project that has been developed to promote environmental understanding and humanitarian efforts through an intimate balance between fashion, art and popular media.

Specific project objectives include:

- Creation of a coffee table book and limited edition prints featuring photographic portraits of organic- and nature-inspired designs on top models juxtaposed with images of Chiapas, Mexico,
- Promotion of environmentally based, sustainable "green" textiles,
- Fostering of an understanding of the ecosystem and social issues within Chiapas, Mexico.

#### **Accomplishments**

To achieve those goals, I needed to educate myself on a number of issues, including the environmental and social situation within Chiapas; how to apply for grants without a not-for-profit status; and how to put up and design websites, contact publications and network with appropriate individuals, both in the environmental and fashion arenas. Most of the goals have been accomplished, including two websites: one on Organic Portraits for designers (<http://www.JohnFCooper.com/bookproject.ppt>) and one on the situation in Chiapas (<http://www.SummerRayne.net/Chiapas.html>). A more detailed website will be up in late 2004.

The biggest change in the project is the delay in the timeline. I am very confident that all my desired goals that I had originally formulated will be achieved, but since I have left college, I have been working on co-coordinating efforts that will work well with Organic Portraits. I hoped to achieve a larger, more recognizable networking group that would assist in the project so that it would get more mediagenic appeal, while still keeping an achievable goal in site. This has occurred and is still occurring, which partially pushes the project back. I am currently working with a not-for-profit known as the Collage Foundation (<http://www.collagefoundation.org>). Early discussion has mentioned the co-releasing of Organic Portraits during a widely publicized ecofashion show in February 2005.

I encourage people to not rush into projects just to get them done, but work on them efficiently and perhaps team up with other entities that may be able to add to the project. Waiting on certain aspects of the project will benefit Organic Portraits (OP) in rallying more media appeal and allow me to touch base with more press.

OP is essentially a springboard project that will, I hope, launch into more projects of its kind. It is my desire to have it set up as an evolving, but permanent program within an appropriate not-for-profit. Since the advent of the project, a number of organizations have jumped onto the project's support base, including Animus Rex, a marketing and design firm, the Sustainable Style Foundation, and the Collage Foundation. Animus Rex has volunteered to obtain more recognizable models for Organic Portraits as well as formulate ideas for possible trunk shows. When publication time comes, they will offer further support of the project. The Sustainable Style Foundation has agreed to write an article on the project in SASS Magazine. The Collage Foundation has agreed to act as a "mother-agency" and sponsor Organic Portraits with its 501(c)(3) status so that I may be able to apply for more grants and obtain organizational support. At this time, no policies have been adopted in coordination with the project.

### **Challenges and Responses**

It was difficult to apply for more funding for this project because it was not a not-for-profit entity. The magnitude and the scope of the project require larger organizational support, so a sponsoring not-for-profit was needed with the appropriate structure. Most of the project participation needs had to be met in New York City (photo shoots, designers and models). However, since I was at college in Upstate New York, it was difficult for me to work from a remote terminal. I moved to New York City two weeks ago and have already seen a difference in the amount that I can get done now.

The project is currently short for a portion of the funding and I plan for a portion of it to be covered after I can apply for more support.

## ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

### Leaders and Supporters

Since this project rallied the support of a number of universities, there were some integral individuals at each college who were significant factors in obtaining OP support. Most of the fashion design sectors in the college were extremely helpful and receptive to the project. At my university, I drew support from my mentor, Tom Eisner. Other key individuals in helping support me included my boss, my business manager, Angela Lindvall and Kelly Cox at the Collage Foundation, Sean from Sustainable Style, and numerous other individuals.

### Funding

Predicted project cost is \$41,000 according to the following budget:

#### Film & Processing

Film and Processing*	\$ 5,625.00
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(Film & Processing Breakdown)

Film Type	# Needed/Model	Price	Contains	Quantity Needed
Polaroid Type 55	At least 10 sheets	\$43.95	20 sheets	13
Polaroid Type 79	At least 10 sheets	\$60.00	20 sheets	13
Polaroid Type 804	At least 10 sheets	\$122.95	15 sheets	13
Polaroid Type 809	At least 10 sheets	\$122.95	15 sheets	13
Kodak Vericolor 120mm	2 rolls	\$20./roll	15 frames/roll	13
Fuji Instant Film	At least 10 sheets	\$12.00	10 sheets	13

Price of Kodak Vericolor 120 mm includes film and processing.

\*\* An additional 20 rolls of Kodak Vericolor is needed for shooting ecosystem of Chiapas = \$400

### Styling Material

Styling Materials (Plants, Makeup, Hair Products)	\$ 1,000
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### Studio

Studio Space	\$ 5,313
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### Promotional Material

Promotional Material (Paper, Ink, Posters, Printing Costs, Other Materials)	\$ 200
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### Travel

Travel Expenses (Flight, Car & Cab Fare, Travel Guide, Food, Lodging, Other Expenses)	\$ 4,430
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**Publishing (Production Costs)**

Book Production Costs	\$ 24,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 40,568</b>

However, the budget through time may fluctuate largely because it is difficult to say how much media appeal this project will get. If the appropriate models are used and the right marketing plans put into place, then a publisher is more likely to pick up the project with only a small amount of up-front costs, which is where the majority of the project costs come in. Funding has been obtained through the National Wildlife Federation Campus Ecology Fellowship Program grant, from personal donations by individuals, and from the people within Organic Portraits. No specific names will be released. Space to work on the project has been provided by StockinGirl Sales, Inc., the Collage Foundation, NoHo Studios, NV Bar and Lounge, and my business manager.

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

Campus Ecology helped give some clout to the project through NWF Name Recognition and funding. However, participation at the annual meeting also helped me network some more with individuals who are currently offering some support with Organic Portraits. When the Organic Portraits project is near completion, I will look to NWF for more support, possibly in press.

**CLOSING COMMENT**

In the words of Thomas Edison, "If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves." Too many times, students view themselves just as a "student," defined by the social system and confined to the walls of their schools. I encourage students to dream large while still keeping attainable goals and to reach outside and look for appropriate groups to help with their dreams.