

GRIP Launches "Living Green" Series Live Programs Will Focus on Living Sustainably

To the beat of the eco-rapper known as "The Granola Ayatollah of Canola" (aka local resident Charris Ford), GRIP kicked off its Living Green series in May with the program, "Bio-diesel and Beyond! The Hope, the Hype and the Hip-Hop." The nascent series is intended to provide all of us in southwestern New Mexico with opportunities to learn how we can reduce our impact on the planet and live more sustainably. The series grew out of GRIP's successful "Sustainable Architecture and Design in the Home" event last year.

Thanks to rising average global temperatures and the increased frequency of extreme weather, mainstream consensus (including even a long-unfriendly U.S. President) recognizes that climate change is real. But now that we have accepted the problem, what can we do as individuals to reduce our "ecological footprint" for the benefit of the global as well as local environment?

In response to significant interest in this topic locally, the Living Green series will provide programming on low-impact living in a variety of areas, such as green building, alternative transportation, renewable energy, water conservation, and sustainable food production.

For the Living Green kick-off event, Bio-diesel advocate Charris Ford, and his colleague, Megan Hartman, presented the "Bio-diesel and Beyond!" program to a crowd of 40 attendees. Ford and Hartman talked about their experiences with bio-diesel production for the commercial market

in Telluride, CO and Oracle, AZ respectively. Ford's short film, *French Fries to Go*, winner of the Telluride Environmental Film Award, was also screened. The presenters wrapped up with a discussion of the dark side of bio-diesel and the problems of competition between food and fuel in countries such as Mexico. A DVD of the event is available in the GRIP office.

The second program in the series was held June 23 in Silver City. It focused on renewable wind and solar power generation. Robert Foster, International Programs Manager of the Institute for Energy and the Environment at New Mexico State University (NMSU), discussed solar and wind energy development along both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. His talk covered wind energy development, the use of solar energy to provide basic electricity to rural indigenous populations in Mexico's Sierra Tarahumara, and photovoltaic projects on the NMSU campus and at the SW Environmental Center in Las Cruces. A copy of Foster's PowerPoint presentation is available in the GRIP office.

The next program in the series, "Context Matters: Integrating the Built Environment into Natural and Human Systems" is scheduled for October 9 at 7 pm at the Silco Theatre in Silver City. Environmental design and ecological restoration expert, Joel Glanzberg, will speak about integration with the site as the key to ecological building. Glanzberg has worked extensively in the field of regenerative agriculture, including

recent agricultural restoration projects in Maryland, at the Hubbell Trading Post in Arizona and at the Rodale Institute in Pennsylvania. He has worked as a consultant to the City of Santa Fe on watershed restoration, where he has helped to design and implement programs for restoration as well as public education and engagement.

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has been moving ahead with efforts to study water withdrawals from the river. This has been done without examining the range of water supply alternatives available to the region. The groundwater supply of the Silver City area, the intended beneficiary of any diversion project, is estimated to last centuries as things stand now, even taking into account projected growth. Thus, diversion of the state's last wild river is unnecessary from a human standpoint.

According to a report conducted for the Gila Conservation

Coalition (GRIP is a partner in the GCC) by the economics consulting firm ECONorthwest, the cost of extracting water from the Gila River would cost upwards of \$300 million, which is 16 times higher than the costs of purchasing unused water rights and developing new wells. Even if partially subsidized by federal coffers, it makes no economic sense for local governments to buy into infrastructure development that would provide water they don't need and at such high cost to water users and taxpayers.

During this year's legislative

session, Governor Richardson recognized this reality: he vetoed a \$945,000 appropriation for "Gila Basin Water Development" in response to hundreds of calls from throughout the conservation community. The Governor's Office stated, "The appropriation language was problematic and didn't include the proper balance. The different parties have not reached consensus yet on this issue, and, until that happens, it's going to be hard to move forward. The governor remains committed to helping

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