

Jan. 25, 2005

Chinese scientist to speak in critical issues seminar series

A renowned Chinese scientist will be the fourth international speaker in a critical issues seminar series at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP), hosted by the Global Environmental Management (GEM) Education Center, the College of Natural Resources and UW-Extension.

Yongping Yang, deputy director of the Chinese Academy of Sciences Kunming Institute of Botany, will speak in the GEM Critical Issues International Seminar Series dealing with issues of global security in environmental terms. His presentation will begin at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 9 in the Laird Room of the University Center. The address, "Strengths and Weaknesses of Indigenous Knowledge in Cultural and Biodiversity Conservation and Development: Case Studies in Yunnan Province," is free and open to the public.

Three other speakers in the series appeared last fall. Topics have included pressing challenges such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, fresh water shortages and pollution, global hunger, loss of biodiversity, limited access to energy sources and other environmentally critical issues.

All presentations are videotaped for dissemination through UW-Extension statewide. Texts of the presentations also are available on the GEM Web site. Sponsors of the series include the UW System Institute for Global Studies and the UW-Milwaukee Center for International Education.

Yang will discuss the center's efforts to preserve Chinese cultural tradition and local biodiversity while supporting sustainable development and livelihoods. Yunnan Province in southern China is a global biodiversity "hot spot" with lowland subtropical forests to alpine ecosystems. With more than half the country's ethnic minorities, the province also features China's greatest cultural diversity.

Yang will discuss case studies such as a traditional rattan reserve that uses a sustainable terraced approach to management with a forest reserve at the top of the watershed, village residences in the middle and a paddy field in the lowland.