

October 12, 2005

GEM 'Critical Issues' series launches second season at UWSP

The acclaimed GEM Critical Issues International Seminar Series begins its second season on the UWSP campus on Tuesday, Oct. 18 when longtime Wisconsin-based Native American educator and environmentalist Joe Rose discusses "Native American Spirituality and Sustainability."

Rose, associate professor and director of Native American Studies at Northland College in Ashland, Wis., is a member of the Bad River band of the Lake Superior tribe of Chippewa (Ojibwe) nation. He is the first of six speakers scheduled to address the 2005-06 Critical Issues theme, "Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable Development."

All seminars are free and open to the public. Each seminar is scheduled for 7 p.m. in the Melvin R. Laird Room, Dreyfus University Center. The series is hosted by the Global Environmental Management Education Center (GEM), a center within the College of Natural Resources (CNR) on the UWSP campus.

Speakers have been invited from Native American and other indigenous cultures overseas. They will discuss sustainability from the perspective of indigenous cultures' traditional knowledge, spirituality, community and health.

Native cultures have in many cases existed for centuries in a sustainable manner that preserves the resources on which they depend. Indigenous knowledge may help modern societies grapple with challenges of shrinking resources and increasing strain on the environment.

Rose is deeply involved in the traditional way of life. He is a champion competition Indian dancer and is lead singer and drummer on traditional Native American songs. His traditional activities include hunting, fishing, wild rice harvesting, making maple sugar, constructing wigwams, tanning hides, building birch bark canoes and participating in Native American religious ceremonies.

Waverly Beach Campground, which Rose owns, is the site of a traditional roundhouse on the Bad River Indian Reservation, a place where individuals and groups engage in traditional Native American ceremonies, outdoor activities and teaching.

During the 2004-05 academic year, the Critical Issues series focused on Global Security. Six speakers from Kenya, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, China and Australia redefined global security in environmental terms. The series drew enthusiastic audiences and in one case led to a special course offering by GEM. Geoff Lawton, an Australia-based expert on permaculture, spoke in

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Stevens Point in May. He returns to Stevens Point to teach a GEM two-week course on Permaculture Design, Nov. 28 - Dec. 9. Lawton and his wife Nadia Abu Yahia, also a certified permaculture instructor, will cover permaculture theory and design principles and more than a dozen specific aspects of sustainable living including soil rehabilitation, water management and energy-efficient housing.

Other speakers scheduled in the upcoming GEM Critical Issues International Seminar Series include:

- November 8: Invitation to be confirmed
- December 13: Hu Huabin, Ph.D., professor, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden, Kunming, Yunnan Province, People's Republic of China: "Ethnoecological knowledge and sustainable mountain resource management by indigenous cultures in Yunnan, China."
- January 24, 2006: Samuel Kariuki, Ph.D., professor of botany and University Botanical Garden Coordinator, Egerton University, Njoro, Kenya: "East African tribal ethnobotany and traditional cultures for sustaining indigenous community health and livelihoods."
- February 28: Ed McGaa, J.D., decorated Marine fighter pilot and author of "Nature's Way" and other books, and member of Oglala Sioux nation: "Native wisdom for living in balance with the Earth."
- March 28: Invitation to be confirmed.

The series is hosted by GEM with grant sponsorship from the UW System Institute on Race and Ethnicity and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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