

## **Down to Earth Update: UW Students Awarded for Conservation**

Back in November we showed you students doing simple things in the spirit of environmentalism. Things like lowering energy use with compact fluorescents, biking instead of driving, and using travel mugs to reduce garbage.

About 280 students enrolled in Dr. Christopher Vaughan's Extinction of Species Zoology course at UW-Madison took part in the challenge. Earlier in the fall, they had to break off into seven-person groups and come up with a plan to reduce electricity, gas, garbage, and water use.

On Wednesday, the groups who made the best reductions for the fall semester were presented with awards, ranging from CFL's to a discount for the Madison Community Car Program.

One group reduced gasoline use by 1,500 hundred gallons this semester. In another, each person had about 180 fewer pounds of garbage. Then there was Jean Mellen's group, which won an award for making the biggest increase in bus trips compared to automobile trips.

Mellen did her part by no longer commuting from Middleton to campus by car. "I was averaging two hundred miles a week, and now I average about thirty," she said.

Taking the environmental cake was Darren Sherstad's group. It was declared the best overall. "I took a lot quicker showers and when I did dishes, would run the water a lot less," said Sherstad.

Team member Megan Meiklejohn said she, "changed to compact fluorescents, recycled, put the plastic over windows."

But the question of the day was whether these students would continue challenging themselves after the semester... even after graduation... once they enter the real world. "Personally, I would hope I could continue to conserve and do what I can," said Dan Mosgaller, who also was on the top team.

"I think all the little things will stay with me," said Meiklejohn who said she would like to use some of her new habits in other parts of her college life. After college, however, she wasn't so sure. "Maybe, I don't know. Maybe."

Mellen said she would definitely not go back to car commuting if she could prevent it. "I'm a changed woman! Are you kidding? I hate driving. It's really stressful."

"Just because you see how much of an impact you have, it kind of wakes you up, so this is something that sticks with you," said Sherstad.

Each students also had to teach thirty other people some of their conservation habits in hopes that what they learned would rub off on others.