

For immediate release

May 27, 2008

### **New resource promotes behavior that helps the environment**

Contact: Bret Shaw, 608-890-1878, [brshaw@wisc.edu](mailto:brshaw@wisc.edu)

Widespread evidence links human behavior to harmful effects on the environment. But despite the strong tie between human activities and environmental damage, many people continue their daily routines, paying little attention to ecological concerns—even when simple changes could make a positive difference.

“Environmental Communication and Social Marketing,” a new, free newsletter developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension Environmental Resource Center, tackles the issue of promoting pro-environment behavior with strategies based on current research and human psychology.

Drawing from both the social and natural sciences, the newsletter highlights practical approaches that encourage people to adopt new behaviors. For example, it looks at reasons why people might decide not to build rain gardens—even when the benefits to water quality are well-known. Survey research reveals that many landowners prefer a yard that’s mostly lawn for aesthetic and cultural reasons. One way to address this concern could be by showing people a computer image that depicts how a rain garden might look on their property.

In another example, Lake Buttes des Morts shoreland owners gave their perceptions of different conservation practices. Their responses showed people cared about their lawns, but also about maintaining water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat. For environmental professionals working to promote use of phosphorous-free lawn fertilizers, making the connection between phosphorous and damage to wildlife habitat and water quality could help their efforts.

“There are a lot of great projects going on around Wisconsin to encourage environmentally friendly behaviors,” says Bret Shaw, co-editor and environmental communication specialist for UW-Extension. “This publication highlights these initiatives

and offers ideas to help natural resource educators and citizen volunteers work more effectively.”

The newsletter also includes profiles of people working to improve the environment, and focuses on a range of issues that are crucial to protecting natural resources in Wisconsin, such as adopting storm water management practices and preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species.

”Environmental Communication and Social Marketing” is published three times a year, and is available in print and on the Internet. To view the premier issue or to subscribe, send an email to [join-ecsm@lists.wisc.edu](mailto:join-ecsm@lists.wisc.edu) or visit <http://ecsm.uwex.edu>

###