January 2002

TO: Environmentally concerned scientists, educators, citizens

FROM: Will Snyder, UMass Extension

RE: An invitation to offer a workshop at Earth Connection 2002

You are invited to be a part of Earth Connection 2002, an action conference for high school-age young people and their advisors. This year's ONE DAY conference will take place on Friday, March 29, 2002 at UMass Amherst.

Has there ever been a more critical time to engage young people on questions of citizenship, service, community, and the environment?

This is the seventh year for the Earth Connection "action conference." You can learn more about the conference at our web site: http://www.umassk12.net/~econnect.

For young people, Earth Connection is a chance to share with each other, explore new ideas, investigate issues that affect their schools and communities, practice environmental action skills, and discover environmental resources at UMass Amherst.

For educators who advise Earth Connection teams, the conference is a chance to share strategies, resources, and questions with each other, and to get to know key environmental resource people and programs at UMass and across the state.

For you, as a concerned scientist, educator, or citizen, the conference is an opportunity to help prepare these young people and educators to broaden their horizons and to take responsible action for the environment in their communities.

Earth Connection depends on resource people like you. You make this experience possible through your willingness to take time to share your skills, knowledge, concerns, and inspiration with these participants.

This conference has become known for high quality hands-on/minds-on workshops that succeed in helping high school age young people and their advisors to prepare for environmental action. We work hard to provide you with an optimal teaching environment, and promise feedback from participants soon after the conference.
We also encourage you to stay through the day and participate in the conference!

Some notes for new and experienced Earth Connection presenters:

Participants in your workshop will be mostly high school students, but may also include high school teachers and youth leaders, college students helping out with the conference, and sometimes other workshop presenters.

Morning sessions are a good time for more information-oriented workshops. We especially encourage active, outdoor topics in the afternoon, when participants will be ready to stretch and be less formal. In all cases, we encourage you to make your workshop as participatory and active as possible.

This year’s workshop sessions are 60 minutes long - shorter than in past years. If you need a longer time, the two morning sessions can be combined to create a 2 hour, 15 minute block.

If your situation and topic allow, we strongly urge you to include young people - high school or college age - as co-presenters in your workshop to model the potential for youth/adult partnerships.

Evaluations of Earth Connection workshops have taught us that if you are offering skills (how-to) workshops, it is important for participants that you use examples from environmental issues, and show how that skill can be used for environmental action.

Past participants have expressed a desire to learn less through lecture, and more through activity.

A workshop proposal form with details about workshop times, group sizes, room layouts, etc. is posted on the EC web site (http://www.umassk12.net/~econnect). The form should be completed and returned by mail or fax by Wednesday, February 13, 2002. Please call or e-mail if you have questions as you plan, or if you need more time to develop your proposal.

A tip sheet (Workshop Planning Tips) is available on the EC web site to help you offer a workshop that is a good experience for your participants AND for you. Please feel free to call with ideas or questions as you prepare.

I look forward to hearing from you! You can reach me at 413/545-3876 (voice), 413/545-6555 (fax), or wsnyder@umext.umass.edu.