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Sustainable local food systems and environmental sustainability

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We begin with a simple truth. How we eat determines how the earth is used.
(Wendell Berry, 1990)

Berry's statement provokes questions about the connections and relationships between food, our earth, and our environment. Where does food come from? Where and how is it grown? How is it harvested, packaged, delivered to us? What is its value and what is its cost? Is it a sustainable system? What food systems are in place? What is a sustainable food system? What is sustainability? What is environmental sustainability?

The role of food systems in environmental sustainability will be discussed in the context of the engaged curriculum of Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin. This will include a discussion of the components of its thriving local food system.

Sustainability is 'the ability to endure, relating to, or being a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged'. The definition of sustainability in the 1987 Brundtland report brings it to a more personal level: 'Meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs' (WCED, 1987). This sentiment is reminiscent of the Native American Seventh Generation philosophy that leaders must consider the effects of their actions through to the seventh generation of their people.

The principle of the three pillars of sustainability says that for complete sustainability to be achieved, all three pillars must be sustainable. The three pillars are social sustainability, environmental sustainability, and economic sustainability. Of the three pillars, the most important is environmental sustainability. If this is not addressed, the other two pillars will not survive. Environmental sustainability is made up of the rates of renewable resource harvest, pollution creation, and non-renewable resource depletion that can be continued indefinitely. In other words: 'The fate of the living planet is the most important issue facing mankind' (Gaylord Nelson).

Part of the solution can come from sustainable agriculture which forms the core of a sustainable local food system. Grace Communications Foundation defines sustainable agriculture as

the production of food, fiber, or other plant or animal products using farming techniques that protect the environment, public health, human communities, and

animal welfare. This form of agriculture enables us to produce healthful food without compromising future generations' ability to do the same.

Sustainable agriculture does not utilize chemical pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, or genetically modified seeds or participate in practices that might contaminate the air, water, or soil. Sustainable farmers grow a variety of crops, use crop rotation, and manage waste which benefits not only the ecosystem but also the farm workers, consumers, and general public.

Food systems are composed of all of the components involved in the farm-to-table voyage – from choosing and planting the seeds, through the growth cycle to harvest, to processing, packaging, distribution, purchasing, and consumption. One view of food systems categorizes them as either local or regional, or global. A local or regional food system infers a geographical area and is usually considered sustainable and environmentally friendly since all operations are located relatively close to consumers. This enables products to be picked or prepared close to maturity for ultimate freshness and nutritional value and to travel short distances to consumers, thus conserving energy, reducing pollution, and minimizing potential product damage. Having food system operations located close to each other also provides employment opportunities and encourages community interaction and development.

One important point involves the definition and use of 'local'. As stated, 'local' is a geographical reference; it does not necessarily mean sustainable. Nor does it mean that the food is fresher or more nutritious, or grown sustainably. One must be cautious and careful, ask for additional information, and remember *caveat emptor* – 'let the buyer beware'.

It is the view of the Grace Foundation's Sustainable Table that the global food system relies upon industrial agriculture by necessity since the quantities of food needed for production are so large. Rapid advances in transportation such as the refrigerated rail cars, intensive mechanization, increased production of food on mammoth farms supported by inexpensive energy, and the use of fertilizers, antibiotics, and chemicals for larger yields and extended shelf life have created a corporate-dominated food system that offers food sold at low prices that do not reflect the true cost of producing them. These costs are significant: monetary or economic costs for the seed that must be purchased each year; the 'necessary' chemicals and fuel; social costs such as worker injuries from machinery, health issues related to unavoidable chemical ingestion; and the environmental costs of loss of biodiversity, soil degradation and erosion, air pollution, and water contamination. Increased consolidation has resulted in difficulty of traceability and increased risks of improper handling or processing, food safety issues, contamination, and the danger of possible intentional tampering to large quantities of food. Although industrialized agriculture provides food for billions of people, the cost is of increasing concern.

J. I. Rodale wrote in 1954: 'Organics is not a fad. It has been a long-established practice – much more firmly grounded than the current chemical flair. Present agricultural practices are leading us downhill.' If this is true, all three pillars may be in danger.

Equally important and destructive is the loss of knowledge and appreciation of the process of farming, of nature, and of the land itself. Social indifference to the farmers and farm workers who grow food echoes our disconnectedness to nature and season. The lack of concern about ever-increasing urban sprawl; erosion of topsoil; contamination of air, water, and soil; climate change; and loss of small farms further demonstrates our increasing disconnect with nature. In the words of the renowned farmer Abraham Lincoln:

The ambition for broad acres leads to poor farming, even with men of energy. I scarcely ever knew a mammoth farm to sustain itself; much less to return a profit upon the outlay. I have more than once known a man to spend a respectable fortune upon one; fall and leave it; and then some man of modest aims get a small fraction of the ground and make a good living upon it. Mammoth farms are like tools or weapons which are too heavy to be handled. Ere long they are thrown aside, at a great loss.

Over 100 years later, in 2002, the agricultural development leader Jules Perry concurred but was more ominous: 'If a system of production has negative side-effects, and cares not about the resources on which it relies, then we have taken a path leading ultimately to disaster.' One must add: and to the collapse of the pillars.

Both agriculturists are describing unsustainable agricultural systems. What could serve as an alternative? There is significant agreement that a food network of local-based and regional-based systems of diversified farms using sustainable practices to produce fresh, nutritious food is a solution. Shorter travel time from farm to table would maximize taste and nutritional value, reduce carbon footprints and layers of handling, stimulate local economies, and support interactive community relationships.

Increased public awareness of the problems caused by the current industrialized food system has resulted in extensive and growing support for sustainable agriculture. In addition to having access to healthy food, many consumers want to know where their food comes from, how it was grown, and who grew it. They want to know about the entire food chain. This awareness and demand for information is creating a vibrant, resilient, creative market for sustainable foods and provoking demands for changes in agricultural policies and regulations.

Leading civic and business organizations have commissioned studies and committed resources, leading to the inclusion of local food systems in local and regional planning efforts. In 2007, the American Planning Association released its first food systems paper. This was followed by a meeting in June 2010 of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly the American Dietetic Association), American Nurses Association, American Planning Association, and American Public Health Association to develop a set of shared food system principles. This declaration is the result: 'We support socially, economically, and ecologically sustainable food systems that promote health – the current and future health of individuals, communities, and the natural environment (American Planning Association, 2103).

To support the 2040 regional plan of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), the Chicago Community Trust in 2009 commissioned a food

systems study that was conducted by the Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council, the City of Chicago Department of Zoning and Planning, and a group of advisors. An in-depth section on building a local food system is now being included in CMAP's *Go to 2040* plan (2010). Other Illinois counties including DuPage, Lake, and Kane and cities such as Cleveland, Detroit, Madison, Kansas City, and Seattle are including local food systems in their planning. As more and more people begin to understand the economic, social, cultural, and environmental elements of a local food system, progress is being made towards accepting a sustainable local food system as a core element and important planning tool of a sustainable development plan.

The leaders and supporters of sustainable local food systems and environmental sustainability come from small and large communities, government, non-profits, regulatory agencies, business and industry, and academia. All play important roles but institutions of higher learning are particularly well equipped to play a unique role in the development, growth, and maintenance of sustainable local food systems. Their mission is to teach, to educate, to prepare students to address current issues and meet the challenges of the future. They provide technical assistance, develop innovative technologies and equipment, and then engage the community to share the knowledge and deliver the resources.

Northland College

With the acceptance of the value of sustainable local food systems, many educational institutions have conducted research on sustainable local food systems and the connections to environmental sustainability. Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin represents a unique endeavour that has been leading the way to environmental sustainability for over 100 years, and sustainable local food systems are a critical component of the future of the college and the region.

Northland College was founded in 1892 by community members who wanted to provide a unique educational opportunity for residents of the region. The founders created a learning environment that emphasized moral and spiritual values, placed high value on free enquiry, and recognized each individual's intrinsic worth. This value system spurred Northland's commitment to sustainability and good stewardship, demonstrated by its adherence to the core principle of sustainability – conservation of resources for future generations.

The deep connection with nature and appreciation of the environment that permeate Northland may be due to its location close to Lake Superior and its proximity to nearly a million acres of the Chequamegon National Forest. But it is also a result of the way the administration, faculty, and students view the human–nature relationship. They value exploring human nature in order to tap into the resources of this relationship, then utilize those findings to solve existing problems creatively and develop workable strategies in our increasingly interdependent world.

Since its beginning, Northland has been a pioneer, charting a different course for itself. Long before people were discussing green issues and climate change,

Northland was building its national reputation as a leader in environmental and sustainability issues. Sustainability at Northland is practised through education, research, awareness, and implementation. Students test theories on campus and throughout the community, working on real world projects that have real risks, real rewards, and real impacts. Embedded in all of the college's activities is stewardship of resources. Practising stewardship on a daily basis can equip students to help move larger systems toward long-term environmental sustainability.

In 1970 the Northland Board of Trustees initiated the development of the Environmental Studies Program. All of the programs at Northland College place a strong emphasis on the environment and sustainability. Many classes focus on specific environmental issues. The natural settings around and near the college are utilized as classrooms and laboratories where students become agents of positive change.

Northland exhibited its environmental leadership once more in 1971, when it hosted its first environmental conference slightly more than a year after the first Earth Day. The two key speakers were Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson, the 'Conservation Governor', and Sigurd Olson, professor, author, environmentalist, and one of the foremost US conservationists. In addition to environmental presentations and exhibits, regional problem-solving workshops were held on issues and impacts affecting the Apostle Islands.

It was Senator Gaylord Nelson whose 1969 national teach-in increased environmental awareness and focused political attention on environmental issues. This led to the establishment of the first Earth Day on 22 April 1970. Sigurd Olson was born in Chicago but grew up in northern Wisconsin, where he developed his lifelong interest in the outdoors and his love of the wilderness. He studied agriculture, botany, geology, and ecology at Northland College, the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and the University of Illinois, and spent most of his life in the Ely area connected to Northland, teaching and writing about area history, ecology, and outdoor life.

Following the conference, Malcolm McLean, Northland's recently appointed president, who strongly believed that the institution should address society's challenges, distanced the college from traditional academia by taking the visionary step of embedding its environmental focus in its mission statement and curricula. He recognized the need to train future generations in environmental stewardship and enlisted support from Nelson, Olson, and many others including Robert Matteson. Matteson had held many positions in academia and various departments of the US federal government but was at heart an avid environmentalist. Citing the conference as the instrument of origin, he became the driving force for the creation of the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute (SOEI), which was founded in 1972 and serves as the outreach and extension arm of the college. The SOEI advisory board was created and the environmental outreach charter designed at that same time. Also in 1972, the college enrolled the first class of environmental studies students.

Northland is a member the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), which advances sustainability by engaging diverse representatives of the higher education community, providing a frame-

work for understanding sustainability in higher education, facilitating information sharing, and providing valuable resources and materials. AASHE created the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™ (STARS), a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to measure their sustainability performance. Northland College began its partnership with STARS in 2008 and has a silver rating.

Today, Northland is taking its leadership a step further. The current president, Michael Miller, who was appointed in 2010, has continued to build upon the Northland traditions of community engagement, strong curricula, and environmental sustainability. While many entities focus on sustainability at the scale of the institution or the single municipality, Northland is actively engaged in regional-scale sustainability initiatives with a broad range of community partners.

Currently, these collaborations are focused on two critical and interconnected regional sustainability issues: fostering a dramatically expanded local food system, and expanding carbon neutral energy production and energy efficiency. Northland's enhanced focus in these two areas is intended to help build the region's self-sufficiency and resiliency in the face of climate change, political instability, and economic turmoil; provide new educational opportunities; and strengthen the connection between the college and the regional community. A broadened focus on energy and food also will be leveraged as a distinctive economic development driver for the region by focusing social entrepreneurship on the quadruple bottom line of people, planet, profits, and place.

Northland has utilized a systems approach in order to integrate sustainability into different areas of operations and academics. There are eight sustainability initiatives: Local Food; Composting; Energy; Reduce, Reuse, Recycle; Bikes and Transportation; Native Landscaping; Green Buildings; and Community, and these demonstrate the breadth of their sustainability spectrum and the potential for the future. It is all about choice: 'What we choose to buy, where we choose to shop, even whether we choose to be part of campaigns ... all this is not an homage to some weighty obligation; it's a celebration of the world we want ... My choices as a consumer used to feel so small, but now I'm convinced they have real power. Together we are a sleeping giant and, awakened, we can really stir things up.' Each of these initiatives is described below.

Local Food

Supporting the development of a significantly expanded local food system is Northland's highest sustainability initiative. Northland has actively engaged regional community partners in increasing the sale and consumption of local food products at the college and within the community. The college is partnering with the University of Wisconsin Extension, the Chequamegon Food Co-op, the Bayfield Regional Food Producers Cooperative (BRFPC), the Chartwells, and several area farms. Northland sees this as a significant step in building the region's self-sufficiency and resilience. Northland has a long-term goal of sourcing 80 percent of food consumed on campus.

This project is the result of a 2012 proposal from the (BRFPC to the Chequamogon Food Co-op requesting that the cooperative serve as intermediary between the farmers and area schools. Farmers deliver their products to the Chequamogon Food Co-op, which serves as an aggregation, storage, and distribution site, or 'food hub'. Then Chartwells picks up the food from the cooperative and delivers it to Northland College and to the Ashland School District. This not only provides local schools with access to more fresh produce, but also supports the local food economy, its farmers, and its families. This collaboration streamlines the entire process for both the farmers and the schools, relieving them of much time-consuming logistics and paperwork, reducing or eliminating fuel costs and waste, and creating jobs in the community.

This project involves thousands of pounds of local food going to local consumers and thousands of dollars going to local farmers, and is the result of over five years of steady growth in the local food market. It is anticipated that the program will expand to provide other area institutions such as hospitals, other school districts, and public service organizations. The initiative is building stronger connections between the college and the regional community and is on track to develop into a scalable and replicable model.

Northland is also a signatory of the Lake Superior Good Food Charter and the Superior Compact Purchasing Commitment, which are parts of the Lake Superior Good Food Network. Region. The Western Lake Superior Food System covers 18.4 million acres spread over fifteen counties and is based on the research by Stacey Stark, David Syring, and David Abazs, through funding provided by the Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute at the University of Minnesota. Their research demonstrates that the region has the potential to grow sufficient amounts of its own healthy food and has the economic potential to add thousands of jobs to the local economy. The non-farm portion of the food dollar and the health care impacts of embracing a 100 percent local food system are over \$1 billion per year for the Western Lake Superior Region.

Participants in the charter advocate economic resilience, community health and food justice, food knowledge, and culture and ecological health. They recognize that:

- Lake Superior and its bioregion play an influential role in agriculture and diet,
- The local food system plays a critical role in the overall health, security, and prosperity of area communities and environment,
- The development of a vibrant, dynamic local food system is an integral foundation to ensure the health and prosperity of our region.

The Superior Compact Purchasing Commitment asserts that the Western Lake Superior Region has the agricultural potential to produce adequate supplies of healthy food necessary for a balanced diet and supports a goal of locally sourcing 20 percent of food purchased by 2020. The compact is predicated on the beliefs that a local food system can:

- Create jobs and increase regional economic resilience;
- Provide fresher and healthier foods that can address critical health issues;
- Reduce food transportation costs, soil erosion and ground water contamination;
- Increase relationships between farmers and consumers;
- Revive small towns; and
- Support the development and diversification of the rural infrastructure throughout our region.

Composting

Recognizing that 10 percent of municipal waste consists of food scraps, a Northland student volunteer launched a composting program on campus in 1993 and has kept tens of thousands of pounds of food waste out of the landfill. Compost is collected from the cafeteria and from bins located in all dorm kitchens and other campus buildings. The finished composted material is used in the campus garden to grow food consumed in the campus cafeteria, for native landscaping, and for other uses on and off campus.

Northland College recently constructed a new compost building on campus that will be a focal point of the college's commitment to sustainable operations by reducing campus waste. Northland hired for the project several contractors from the local community, who all worked together to attain the highest levels of sustainability throughout the building process. The new building will operate more efficiently than the old compost shed, which will remain in use to compost the food waste from the campus cafeteria. Northland students financed the facility through the Renewable Energy Fund, which is funded by an annual \$80 contribution per student as part of tuition and fees.

Energy

Energy efficiency has always been a leading focus but has now taken on more importance as the college works to expand carbon-neutral energy production and energy efficiency as part of its strategic regional development plan. Since most of Northland's greenhouse gas emissions come from buildings, the college has committed itself to making the buildings as energy-efficient as possible. The recently renovated Dexter Library, featuring a photovoltaic array and geothermal heating and cooling, was one of the first buildings in Wisconsin to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold certification. Recent additions to the campus are the student-built Strawbale Demonstration Energy Lab, which operates off the grid, and the McLean Environmental Living and Learning Center (MELLC). The campus also features two wind towers, four hot-water arrays, five photovoltaic arrays (including one installed by students at the president's house), and geothermal heating and cooling in the Ponzio Campus Center.

Nationally, Northland is a signatory of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC) and a participant in the Billion

Dollar Green Challenge. The ACUPCC is a national initiative undertaken by a network of universities that have made institutional commitments to eliminate net greenhouse gas emissions from certain campus operations and to promote research and education to stabilize the earth's climate. Participants recognize the responsibility that institutions of higher learning have to serve as role models for their communities.

The Billion Dollar Green Challenge ('The Challenge') encourages colleges, universities, and other non-profit institutions to invest a combined total of one billion dollars in self-managed revolving funds that finance energy-efficiency improvements. Participating institutions will achieve reductions in operating expenses and greenhouse gas emissions while creating regenerating funds for future projects. The Sustainable Endowments Institute, in collaboration with sixteen partner organizations, has launched The Challenge to help non-profit institutions achieve sizeable energy savings through the use of green 'revolving funds,' which invest in energy-efficiency projects to reduce energy consumption on campus and reinvest the money saved in future projects. They are called 'revolving funds' because the funds loan money to specific projects, which then repay the loan through an internal account transfer from savings achieved in the institution's utilities budget.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

The 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' initiative is one of Northland's most basic sustainable practices. Work-study students monitor campus waste and recycling, create educational campaigns, and operate an on-campus 'ReUse Room.' Plastic, aluminium cans, glass, mixed paper, cardboard, batteries, and ink cartridges are collected for recycling, and an electronics recycling event is held annually for the community. Food waste is collected and composted on site.

A new and expanded ReUse Room recently opened in the basement of the Townhouses. Students and community members can peruse the displays in search of treasures. All items are free and donations may be placed in a drop-box outside the Ponzio Campus Center.

Bikes and Transportation

Since the mid-1990s, Northland's Sunshine Community Bike Shoppe has served as a hub for bike enthusiasts. The shop has tools, parts, and plenty of advice to offer people who need to repair or want to build a bike. A template for other campus communities, the shop is a reminder of the potential of bicycles to bring us closer to sustainability.

The Northland College Student Association (NCSA) partners with Bay Area Rural Transit to provide expanded services and free bus passes for students, faculty, and staff. Northland is measuring greenhouse gas emissions from field trips, sporting events, and college-related air travel to develop the best methods to offset this impact. NCSA provided a new hybrid car for the admissions office out of its renewable energy fund.

Native Landscaping

Northland's campus has many chemical-free lawns for lounging and games. However, in keeping with the mission of environmental sustainability, large areas of campus have been restored to native plant communities. The college is working to instill the distinct character of northern Wisconsin habitats into its grounds in order to connect the campus further with its surroundings. White pine, graceful grasses, wildflowers, and the songs of indigenous birds combine to form a landscape pleasing to all the senses. Signage describing the various habitat areas and plantings is sprinkled throughout the campus.

Green Buildings

Strawbale Building

Northland's commitment to green buildings began in the 1990s. During the winter semester of 1998, a straw bale design workshop was conducted. During the May term, several students built a structure constructed entirely of locally produced materials. Straw bales provide excellent insulation, and the ceiling is insulated with cellulose from recycled newspapers. All south-facing windows capture passive solar heating, and a one kilowatt wind generator and three 75 watt solar photovoltaic panels supply electricity to the building's batteries. In-floor heat is provided by four hot-water solar panels. The building is now the home of the Sunshine Community Bike Shoppe.

McLean Environmental Living and Learning Center

Opened in 1998, the McLean Environmental Living and Learning Center is a unique residential space for students and was an early model for green design. Students were active participants in the building's design process and helped to select environmentally-friendly materials including recycled carpet, furniture made from recycled milk jugs and recycled steel, bio-composite counter-tops, windows with low-emissivity coated glass, and natural-based linoleum floors. Walls, ceilings, and windows received increased amounts of insulation. Three photovoltaic solar arrays provide efficient active solar energy collection. Motion sensor lighting and high-efficiency light fixtures, motors, and appliances reduce electricity use. Two waterless composting toilets and low-flow water-saving fixtures throughout the building help conserve water. Fourteen solar panels placed on the roof of the south wing heat water for residential use. Heat recovery comes from exhaust air, and high-efficiency boilers are used for space and water heating.

Dexter Library

The library was renovated in 2008 and was one of the first LEED Gold-certified buildings in Wisconsin. To receive a Gold-level certification, the renovators had to control not just what they built, but what they threw away. Of the total construction and demolition waste, 75 percent was diverted from landfill. These materials were either recycled or reused, reducing the burden on landfill and the demand

for virgin resources. Recycled content carpet was used, and 30 percent of the furniture and furnishings were reused and/or refurbished. Of the new wood-based products and materials, 50 percent were FSC-certified, and 20 percent of the building materials were manufactured within 500 miles. There is a 14-kilowatt photovoltaic solar array on the roof, and geothermal heating and cooling are used. Energy-efficient lighting with occupancy sensors, increased roof insulation, and low-flow plumbing fixtures were installed. There was extensive use of materials low in volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Community

Community and sustainability are inseparable and omnipresent at Northland: ‘community – the place where we live and work, and we are committed to sustainability and good stewardship, in order to conserve this place for the generations that will follow us.’ It is appropriate to conclude with a few comments that demonstrate the college’s ongoing commitment.

Community engagement has been a leading priority and driving force at Northland since its founding. Northland strives to interact with the community to achieve local and regional growth in a sustainable manner. Examples have been provided of Northland’s commitment to sourcing local food, hiring area contractors and service providers, and working with multiple groups and institutions to form and implement strategies for regional well-being. Northland supports and promotes social entrepreneurship and the quadruple bottom line of people, planet, profits, and place in order to achieve regional resiliency and self-sufficiency.

In 2012, Northland joined public, private, non-profit, and tribal leaders to create a comprehensive plan for regional development based on the belief that economic development is more successful and more powerful when partnered with community development. Northland brings to the table its long history of community engagement, established partnerships, economic development initiatives, and its commitment to and expertise in utilizing environmental sustainability. Michael Miller, President of Northland and board member of the Ashland Area Development Corporation, served as chair of the steering committee. Four community work sessions were held to define the community vision, identify goals for the future, and develop an action plan that would target the focus areas the community thought were most important. On 5 November 2012, the committee hosted a community celebration, and the guest of honour was the one-page, four-point Strategic Plan.

Northland has a long and close relationship with nearby Native American communities and offers college access and readiness programs for Native Americans and indigenous youth; courses focusing on Native American history, language and culture; and a degree in Native American studies. In 2011, the Native American Indigenous Culture Center (NAICC), an extension of and successor to the long-standing Native American Studies Program, was established at Northland. It promotes awareness of and creates programs to appreciate and understand further Native American and indigenous cultures, traditions, and languages.

The NAICC serves as a resource centre and a gathering place for community meetings, cultural exchanges, presentations, and social events. It endeavours to form partnerships and connections in order to increase the capacity of the college and the community to develop solutions to issues and problems.

Northland College is a sponsoring partner of the Chequamegon Bay Area Partnership, a coalition of fourteen regional municipalities and tribal governments, state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations working toward the restoration of Lake Superior. Since September 2010, the partnership has won more than \$1 million in competitive grants from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to fund habitat restoration, outreach, and education and environmental survey initiatives. This amount includes two grants totalling nearly \$500,000 awarded in August 2011. The college is also part of the Eco League, a five-college consortium that enables students to spend semesters at Alaska Pacific University, Green Mountain College, Prescott College, and College of the Atlantic.

Northland College continues to examine itself and apply its traditions, environmental mission, and sustainable practice to shape a world where human and all biological communities can thrive together indefinitely. They are guided by the words of Chief Seattle:

Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the people of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it.

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