

September 7, 2011 News**1. Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative Funded for Two More Years**

The Western UP Center for Science, Math and Environmental Education has been awarded a \$175,000 grant from the Wege Foundation and the Great Lakes Fishery Trust to continue and expand the Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative (LSSI) through the 2012-13 school year.

"Our mission is to have schools and communities work together to engage young people in the stewardship of Lake Superior and its watershed," said Shawn Oppliger, director of the Western UP Center. She works with Joan Chadde and Lloyd Wescoat, both of Michigan Tech, to coordinate LSSI.

Mike Benda, a member of the initiative's advisory council and the K-12 assistant principal for Adams Township Schools, added: "LSSI promotes firsthand experience in the natural environment in an effort to establish a sense of place, enhance environmental appreciation and build a foundation for environmental stewardship for both youth and adults."

The grant will allow the LSSI to add two more schools in the western UP, bringing to 16 the number of participating schools. The grant will also provide mini-grants to all participating schools to support stewardship projects, funding for teacher professional development workshops, and education/outreach programs for the community.

LSSI was established in 2007 and its programs have grown to include 2,236 students and 79 teachers at 14 schools in the area. Many community organizations and government agencies are also involved.

Projects include storm water education and rain garden construction; creation of nature trails and heritage school gardens; designing remotely operated vehicles to investigate water quality; establishing new service-learning courses in the school curriculum; constructing a disc golf course for community recreation; controlling invasive species; and conducting two adopt-a-beach programs.

The LSSI is one of eight regional hubs of the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLSI), a statewide program that was also launched by the Great Lakes Fishery Trust in 2007.

The GLSI connects teachers and students with their communities to create opportunities for learning for a lasting and positive impact on the local area, including the environment. With the support of regional hubs like the LSSI, students work with local community groups to identify and study a local environmental issue and plan and implement solutions to problems.

"We are engaging students, invigorating educators, transforming schools, and improving communities through place-based education" said Mary Whitmore, GLSI coordinator.

The Western UP Center for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education is a partnership of the Michigan Tech Center for Science and Environmental Outreach and the Copper Country and Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School Districts. For more information, see <http://www.wupcenter.mtu.edu/> For more information about the LSSI, see <http://lakesuperiorstewardship.org/> For more information about the GLSI, see <http://www.glstewardship.org/>