

J. SCOTT CHRISTIANSON

April filled with chances to learn about conservation



April is packed with opportunities to learn about the environment and how to become involved in conserving natural resources. Here is a list of some environment-related events — all free and open to the public.

Sunday: The annual "Day with Wildlife" is from noon to 5 p.m. at American Legion Post 202 on Route WW, east of Highway 63. This is an opportunity to talk with conservation professionals and learn about Missouri's natural resources. There also will be presentations by wildlife artists, falconers and conservation organizations. Young adults can participate in a fishing clinic.

Tuesday: A nationwide teleconference, People and the Planet, begins at 6:30 p.m. in Room 7 of MU's Hulston Hall. Speakers include vice president Al Gore. This is a chance to discuss issues that will be addressed at the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in September in Cairo, Egypt.

April 18: Many environmental organizations will have booths at the Earthweek fair from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at MU's Lowry Mall; live music will be featured from noon to 1 p.m. At 7 p.m., a panel discussion on flood plain issues will be held at Jesse Wrench Auditorium in the Memorial Union. The panel will include local residents and representatives from the Missouri Department of Agriculture, the USDA Soil Conservation Service and the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife.

April 19: A panel will discuss public land use issues beginning at 7 p.m. in MU's Middlebush Auditorium. Panelists include representatives from MU's geology department, the Houston-Rolla district of the Mark Twain National Forest and MU student activists.

April 20: As part of Earthweek at MU, a tree planting ceremony will be conducted by Jake Swamp of the Mohawk Nation at 5:30 p.m. on the north side of Ellis library.

April 21: Deidre Hirner, executive director of the Conservation Federation of Missouri, will deliver the keynote address for MU's Earthweek at 7:30 p.m. in the Memorial Union.

April 22: A bike rally begins at 5 p.m. at Lowry Mall. Participating cyclists will raise awareness of the rights of bicyclists and show support for increased funding for bicycle paths and routes.

April 23: The annual Earth Day celebration is from noon to 8 p.m. in Peace Park and adjacent city streets. The celebration will feature music, performance art, demonstrations and lots of information booths. In case of inclement weather, the celebration will be held at the Hearnes Center Field House. For information, call 875-0539.

•Volunteers can participate in an ecological restoration project on a 177-acre tract near MU's A.L. Gustin golf course. For information, call Kelly Lange at 442-5267.

•The Runge Nature Center in Jefferson City will host an Earth Day

celebration from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. There will be free lunch, live music, live falcons, games for children and activities along the trails. The celebration also will include demonstrations of recycling, paper making and composting and exhibits such as a saw mill, a stream table and wood carvers. For information, call 1-526-5544.

April 28: The Columbia Public Library will host a crafts program from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the Friends Room for children in grades two through six. Participants will make crafts from recycled materials. Registration is required; sign up at the library, or call 443-3161.

April 30: The Missouri Department of Conservation will conduct a volunteer water quality monitoring workshop from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Runge Nature Center in Jefferson City. If you're interested in participating, call Sherry Fischer at 882-9880.

MU's Ellis Library will present information throughout the month on issues such as environmental justice, population, Ozark ecosystems and land management.

If you have a suggestion for a column, a gripe, a success story or whatever, write it down and send it to me, care of the Columbia Daily Tribune, PO Box 798, Columbia, Mo., 65205.