

Title - ACSF Topical Lunch- Nature Rx at Cornell: Engaging Students in Nature

Hosts - Don Rakow, Associate Professor and Marcia Eames-Sheavly, Senior Lecturer/Senior Extension Associate

Date – Tuesday April 5, 2016 12:15 – 1:15pm 300 Rice Hall

Nature Rx at Cornell is a dynamic and growing movement, represented by numerous individuals and units at the university who have come together with a shared passion for the ways in which the natural beauty of our campus can positively impact our students' well-being. It is built on a model first developed by a group of Washington, D.C. physicians and the National Park Service. Based on the premise that time spent in nature is therapeutic and contributes to personal well-being, the physicians adopted the practice of writing prescriptions to stressed, depressive, or obese patients to spend time in nature each week as part of their overall therapy.

The Nature Rx program at Cornell has adopted as its mission “to reduce stress and thereby increase physical and mental health in students through their engagement with nature, and to cultivate in students an increased appreciation of nature.”

After introducing the Nature Rx concept to the assembled group, the goals of the lunch would be:

- To identify and discuss barriers (perceived or real) to encouraging students to spend more time in nature.
- To analyze ways in which students' greater appreciation of natural surroundings could motivate them to take actions to support the environment.
- To generate ideas of how best to communicate to every individual who touches students' lives at Cornell the value of spending time in nature.

From this discussion, we hope that some participants will be sufficiently motivated to hold subsequent meetings to identify and construct a format for introducing the Nature Rx approach to a larger body of faculty and staff. That structure might take the form of a colloquium or symposium or might be a one-time or series of webinars. Other options would also be actively considered.