THE END OF THE YEAR PURGE:
LESSONS LEARNED AT BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY

Upper Midwest Association for Campus Sustainability Conference
September 23-24, 2011
Erika Bailey-Johnson
Hannah Hutchins
Emily Johnson
Bemidji State University

- Public liberal arts institution
- ~5000 students
- ~1200 students living on campus
- ACUPCC signatory
- Talloires Declaration signatory
- Environmental Stewardship Signature Theme
- Green Fee
- Sustainability Office
- Students for the Environment Club
The Past

• Newman Center organized a “Donate, Don’t Dumpster” program at the end of spring semester
  – Students encouraged to bring large unwanted, usable items to truck
  – Community members could take items (became a safety issue)

• Large dumpsters brought to each residence hall
The Present

• Sustainability Office and Student Union organize the “Donate, Don’t Dumpster” program
• Large dumpsters brought to each residence hall with a large sign that says “Place large usable items ....”
• Small bins placed inside every residence hall lobby area
• An area secured in every residence hall to place larger items (goes to Habitat for Humanity ReStore)
What do we get?

- All sorts of stuff!
- Half-used notebooks
- Toiletries
- Bedding
- Clothes
- Small home furnishings
- Knick-knacks
Non-reusable items...

• Items in poor shape get disposed of properly
  – Clothes made into rags for GMW’s
  – Fans that don’t work go to Transfer Station

• Old books go to Better World Books

• Single gloves and shoes went to Art Dept.

• Washed some clothes at laundromat
The FreeStore

- Student initiative to reduce waste and provide usable items at no charge for students
- Secured space in Union
- Work hard to get the word out! (Orientation, RA’s, signs by Bookstore, etc.)
- Upkeep essential
- Inventory not necessary
- Clothes that have stayed around a few months go to Goodwill
- List of acceptable items
  - Clothes?
  - Electronics?
Items Being Accepted for FreeStore

- Notebooks (used pages torn out)
- Notepads/post-it's
- Pens/pencils/erasers/etc.
- Books (not textbooks)
- Folder/Binders
- Winter apparel
- Plates, bowls, and cups
- Utensils
- Pots, pans, any baking items
- Extension cords, Ethernet cord
- CDs/DVDs (appropriate!)
- Home furnishing
- Small appliances
- Hangers

We cannot take broken items, please bring those to:
Waste Management of Bemidji
751 Industrial Park DR SE, Bemidji, MN 56601
(218) 751-1668

You must show Signature Theme Staff that appliances work before we will accept them. Thank you for your cooperation!
Suit Yourself

• Faculty initiative started in the Mass Communications Dept. to provide quality, used professional clothes at no cost to students for job interviews, etc.

• Tax deduction offered for donations
The Future

• Start of the year “purge” of FreeStore
• More quality control
• Constant education
• More monitoring of the purge
• Involve faculty in educating students about program
• Improve aesthetics of the FreeStore
• Covered containers outside each residence hall
Build relationships and educate...

Erika Bailey-Johnson, ebaileyjohnson@bemidjistate.edu, 218-755-2560
Hannah Hutchins, hutc1han@live.bemidjistate.edu
Emily Johnson, john1emi@live.bemidjistate.edu

“The human race is challenged more than ever before to demonstrate our mastery, not over nature but of ourselves.”
- Rachel Carson