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SENIOR CITIZENS TO PARTICIPATE IN VIDEOCONFERENCE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

Project sponsored by Ramapo College and the Meadowlands Environment Center

(Mahwah) – Senior citizens at the Northwest Bergen Senior Activity Center in Midland Park and the Daughters of Miriam Center in Clifton are asking, “Should I tell my children and grandchildren to eat the fish and crabs they catch?” The question will be posed in an interactive videoconference they’re participating in on March 28 and 29 sponsored by Ramapo College of New Jersey and the Meadowlands Environment Center.

The senior citizens at the Northwest Bergen Senior Activity Center and the Daughters of Miriam Center are the first to participate in this new outreach program. Called the Senior Environmental Experiences (SEE), it is funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Internet videoconferencing will connect senior citizens at community centers and extended care facilities to scientists and environmental educators in the field to view habitats adjacent to the Meadowlands Environment Center, a unique ecosystem in Lyndhurst, New Jersey. The program fosters an ongoing dialogue between the seniors and the scientists.

“The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission takes great pride in the announcement that Project SEE will be conducting its inaugural videoconference,” says Robert Ceberio, executive director of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission. “This is the first attempt by the Commission, in conjunction with Ramapo College of New Jersey, to have the educators at the Meadowlands Environment Center specifically reach out to senior citizens and teach them about the Meadowlands environment.”

(more)

The goal of the program is to increase the interest of senior citizens in environmental issues by linking science to history and politics. SEE consists of four modules related to the natural history, ecosystem structure, and future of the Meadowlands that will pose questions to spur participants' thinking about scientific processes.

Dr. Angela Cristini, a professor of biology at Ramapo College was awarded a \$462,002 grant by the NSF to coordinate the three-year project with the Meadowlands Environment Center. SEE is expected to reach approximately 4,500 senior citizens in 32 centers throughout New Jersey.

The grant also allows for the production of video versions of the four modules in the program to be made available to facilities across the state and country. Although the tapes won't allow for live interaction with the scientists, planners and engineers in the Meadowlands, they will serve as a model to introduce more senior citizens to this unique ecosystem.

For more information, contact Dr. Angela Cristini, 201.684.7724.

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