

Hollister to lecture on global warming

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Talk of global warming has increased on the Allendale Campus of Grand Valley State University.

A lecture series on the effects of the changing climate kicked off this fall and a group of students from the Student Environmental Coalition recently attended a national conference in Washington, D.C.

This year is an International Polar Year, meaning research activity is heightened in Antarctica and the Arctic, said GVSU biology professor Robert Hollister.

Hollister received a grant of almost \$70,000 from the National Science Foundation to study the effects of climate change on vegetation in the Alaskan tundra. He has been conducting research in Alaska since 1995 and there are some unusual things that have been happening in the environment there lately, he said.

Hollister had heard that lightening only strikes about once every decade in Alaska, but he has seen it a lot during his trips, he said. Also, there has been an increase in the mosquito population there. On a bad day, Hollister would be talking to another researcher while a cloud of thousands of mosquitoes buzzed between them, he said.

"You would be hard pressed to find someone in Alaska — Democrat or Republican, conservative or liberal — who did not believe in climate change," Hollister said.

However, the atypical occurrences in Alaska might not all be directly caused by climate change, Hollister added. Climate change most likely enhances many of these environmental oddities, but it would be hard to say what the exact cause of each one is, he said.

At 7 p.m. today Hollister will give a presentation that relates the changing climate to Michigan. The lecture, *Global Linkages: The Significance of a Changing Tundra*, is part of the International Polar

Year Lecture Series on campus. It will take place in Loutit Lecture Hall 101.

Hollister will discuss observed and expected changes from an ecological perspective, he said. Some of his research in the Arctic will be presented, but that will be a smaller portion of the talk, he added.

Hollister's research is important because it gives students a unique opportunity to study in an exotic environment, said Biology Department Chair Shaily Menon. Four GVSU students conducted research in Alaska with Hollister last year.



Hollister

"It allows our students to plug into a network on a topic of global concern," Menon said.

GVSU senior David Faling, said he thinks it is great when professors incorporate research they have done into their classroom discussions. Faling is a student of Hollister's and thinks the research the biology professor is doing is a key indicator of global warming, he said.

"Global warming is not the biggest hoax given to the American people of all time and (Hollister's) results show that it is happening at a faster rate and that it's here and not going anywhere," Faling said.

Global warming is not far off and it is headed south, Faling added.

Faling recently attended an international student summit in Washington, D.C. entitled *Power Shift 2007*. Eleven GVSU students attended the *Power Shift* and collaborated with other students on ways to fight the changing climate. The GVSU students watched about 30 different panel presentations and got a lot of ideas they are planning to implement to fight global warming at the campus level, Faling said.