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MEDIA RELEASE

Get into the environment at SFU Open House

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[Tweet](#) [Facebook](#) [Pinterest](#) [Email](#) [Print](#)**Contact:**Leigh McGregor (to reach FENV dean/Van. res.), 778.782.8810, leighm@sfu.caStevie Benisch (Burnaby res.), 778.782.9032, scb@sfu.caCandace Le Roy (Coq. res.), sustainability coordinator, 778.782.8914, 604.377.6206 (cell), candace_leroy@sfu.caDuncan Wlodarczak (Van. res.), 778.782.3972, 604.970.5555 (cell), exec_director@sustainablesfu.orgDana Sundmark, 778.782.4083, dsa17@sfu.caCarol Thorbes, PAMR, 778.782.3035, cthорbes@sfu.ca

Note: Candace Le Roy and Duncan Wlodarczak will be available for media interviews via their cell phones during the Victoria Day long weekend

[Photos on Flickr](#)

There will be no shortage of ideas, questions and activities to intrigue and engage visitors at displays falling under the [Faculty of Environment's](#) (FENV) banner at Simon Fraser University's 2012 [Open House](#).

The event is from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, May 26 on Burnaby Mountain.

Fun interactive displays will have the curious of all ages engaging in environment-awareness raising pursuits, such as viewing our planet's tiniest aquatic creatures through a magnifying glass to appreciate the importance of watersheds.

"Visitors will get a chance to experience what it's like to be an environmental sciences student or faculty member out in the field," says Stevie Benisch, an academic programs coordinator with FENV.

In addition to [environmental sciences](#) — one of [seven](#) areas of FENV programming covering academics, teaching and research — archaeology's Centre for Forensic Research will introduce visitors to maggot painting.

A simulated excavation site, a search for the missing link and an up-close survey of specimens from the field will give aspiring archaeologists a chance to discover their leanings in the discipline.

"We hope that the open house will draw attention to the exciting educational opportunities available to students in the Faculty of Environment," says the dean [John Pierce](#). "For example, we place great emphasis on developing experiential learning opportunities in an interdisciplinary context."

As well as engaging visitors in learning about the many disciplines that comprise its academic programming, FENV will demonstrate how its teaching and research are cultivating the next generation of environmental leaders.

"From social and natural science perspectives we ask two fundamental questions," explains Pierce. "What is our relationship

to the environment and what should be our relationship to the environment?

“From the local to the global, environmental change is becoming an increasingly significant force that will impact ecosystem health and human well-being. Understanding these forces of change and how to respond to them is one of the most important scientific challenges facing humanity.”

Faculty and students involved in water science, fisheries, resource-use, sustainability, urban planning, geographical information systems and First Nations **research** will discuss the interconnectedness of their work.

SFU **Facilities Services**, the SFU **Sustainability Network** and **Sustainable SFU** will share the stage with the FENV. Among the displays highlighting their involvement are:

- An electric van powered by rechargeable batteries will be on display. Facilities Services uses it to transport trade staff and materials around campus. Dana Sundmark, SFU electrical superintendent, says: “We have four of these vans. They run up to a maximum speed of 40 kilometres an hour, and can last all day.”
- A human powered bicycle blender, bought from a San Francisco firm, will encourage visitors to hop on a bike that enables them to enjoy a fruit smoothie blended by their own foot power. “The bicyclist’s foot power spins a blade that blends almost any product inside the blender. This display demonstrates the human power needed to shred whole fruits or create smoothies in a fun, engaging way,” explains Duncan Włodarczak, Sustainable SFU executive director.

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Backgrounder: Sustainable SFU and the SFU Sustainability Network

- Sustainable SFU is a student-run, not-for-profit organization based at SFU. The organization is a vehicle for student input into how SFU can best model campus sustainability. It promotes social, environmental and economic sustainability in its advocacy of change on campus and its education of students about the need for such change.
- The SFU Sustainability Network is a hub for sustainability, energy reduction, education and climate action initiatives at SFU. Facilities Services, the SFU Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC), the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS), SFU’s Faculty of Environment and Sustainable SFU founded the network, which was officially launched in April 2012.
- SFU formed the **Sustainability Advisory Committee (SAC)** in 2005. SAC evolved after the student-led group Sustainable Campus Coalition (now Sustainable SFU) approached SFU’s senior administration about collaborating on undertaking activities that promote the study and practice of sustainability at SFU. At the time, SFU recognized a need to better integrate the many initiatives already started at the university, and to better communicate administration’s support for initiatives that promote sustainability principles throughout the university.

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Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive
Burnaby, B.C.
Canada V5A 1S6



