

RACHEL CARSON IN THE ADIRONDACKS CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

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Rachel Carson Leads the Way! 100th Birthday Celebrated Across Adirondacks in May

Newcomb, NY. On Tuesday morning, March 20, 2007, Newcomb Central School in the heart of the Adirondack mountains hosted the unveiling of a portrait of Rachel Carson by Maine artist Robert Shetterly. The unveiling launched the *Rachel Carson in the Adirondacks Centennial Celebration*, a partnership involving several Adirondack schools, regional colleges and environmental organizations as well as The Wild Center of the Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks, Girl Scouts, Foundation for Excellent Schools (FES), women scientists working in the region today, and a diverse group of artists, musicians, poets, actors and writers.

“There is nothing more important than providing opportunities for students from various schools to collaborate on a worthwhile cause, and this *is* the Rachel Carson project,” commented Newcomb Central School Superintendent, Clark “Skip” Hults. “We are happy to be involved and honored to kick-off the program at our school.”

A naturalist and biologist at a time when few women worked professionally in the sciences, Carson was the author of Silent Spring, the ground-breaking 1962 book that awakened the nation to the danger of DDT and the indiscriminate use of pesticides. The *Rachel Carson in the Adirondacks Centennial Celebration* is designed to embrace Carson’s legacy and to cultivate broad social engagement in stewardship of the Earth, particularly among children and youth; to increase students’ comprehension of conservation and environmental issues; and to shine a light on Carson as a role model for youngsters, especially girls, who are interested in the sciences.

“SUNY-ESF is excited to participate in this project because of its creative, multidisciplinary approach to increasing students’ conservation literacy,” said Paul Hai, project co-coordinator and Program Coordinator at SUNY-ESF’s Adirondack Ecological Center in Newcomb. “This,

coupled with an increased appreciation for the process of science and exposure to Carson as a role model are building blocks of a life-long commitment to responsible environmental stewardship.”

Hundreds of students and scouts across the Adirondack region will benefit through artist residencies, *Women & Girls in Science Day*, concerts, and Rachel Carson’s 100th birthday party and student showcase of work created alongside visiting teaching artists. Participants will receive a complimentary *Rachel Carson Leads the Way!* t-shirt.

“We are aware that the sheer magnitude of today’s environmental challenges could cause people, especially children, to succumb to indifference, denial or despair,” explained project co-coordinator Martha Swan. “Therefore, we have infused the ***Rachel Carson in the Adirondacks Centennial Celebration*** with the arts, nature-based experiences, and, for many, their first exposure to Carson—an individual who studied a problem she saw worsening around her, took action on it, and made a positive difference in the world.”

The Carson portrait to be unveiled on March 20 is one of more than 100 individuals portrayed in Rob Shetterly’s touring exhibition, *Americans Who Tell the Truth*. A touchstone to our past as well as a mirror reflecting our lives today, the exhibition also features Frederick Douglass, Eleanor Roosevelt, Caesar Chavez, Helen Keller, Henry David Thoreau, Harriet Tubman, Abraham Lincoln, Bill Moyers, Bill McKibben, Terry Tempest Williams, and many more.

The unveiling took place at New York State’s smallest public school, Newcomb Central School, at 7:45 a.m. on Tuesday, March 20. Each weekday at that hour, the entire student body and teaching staff are gathered in the cafeteria for breakfast and morning announcements. The school is located on Route 28N in the town of Newcomb.

Other key dates in the ***Rachel Carson in the Adirondacks Centennial Celebration*** include:

- April – May Pre-residency activities led by students from SUNY-ESF, Paul Smiths’ College and Middlebury College;
- April 21 *Women & Girls in Science Day* at the Adirondack Park Agency Visitor Interpretive Center (VIC) in Newcomb featuring panel discussion and guided outdoor activities for Girl Scouts and other children;
- May 14-18 *Rachel Carson Leads the Way!* artist residencies in area schools;

- May 16 Concert by folk duo, **Magpie**, of songs dedicated to Carson formally opens the residencies; hosted by Newcomb Central School for all participating schools and community members;
- May 18 “Sweet Crude,” a screening of a new documentary film on human and environmental costs of oil exploitation in Nigeria, followed by discussion with independent filmmaker Sandy Cioffi and other invited guests.
- May 19 Afternoon panel discussion on children and nature, with Valerie Trudeau, CEO for the Girls Scouts of the North Country Council, and Yusef Abdul-Wasi Burgess, Environmental Educator at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) where he coordinates the DEC Diversity Program, and other invited guests.
- May 19 *Rachel Carson Birthday Party* and student showcase of work created during the residencies, hosted by The Wild Center in Tupper Lake.

The *Rachel Carson in the Adirondacks Centennial Celebration* is coordinated by Paul B. Hai and Martha Swan. Mr. Hai is the Program Coordinator at SUNY-ESF’s Adirondack Ecological Center. Ms. Swan currently teaches and facilitates the Arts-in-Education program at Newcomb Central School, and she was Development Director for the Adirondack Council in the late 1990s. The ESF College Foundation is serving as the project’s fiscal sponsor.

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