

UW-River Falls: Chancellor to sign sustainability commitment April 24 at Earth Fest event

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April 14, 2022 – During Earth Fest 2022 on Sunday, April 24, educational and community leaders will come together to sign a Sustainability Commitment.

University of Wisconsin-River Falls Chancellor Maria Gallo will sign the commitment along with representatives from the city of River Falls, the River Falls School District and Chippewa Valley Technical College.

“UW-River Falls is committed to sustainability,” Gallo said. “Sustainability is part of our [Mission, Vision and Core Values statement](#). Last fall I held a [listening and learning](#) tour to hear from internal and external stakeholders. One theme I heard from many students was their passion for sustainability. UWRF will continue to seek innovative sustainable practices that address sustainability including social, economic and environmental justice for current and future generations. At UWRF, we endorse the values, principles and practices of sustainability and will seek opportunities for collaboration, communication and partnership in joint sustainability efforts.”

The signing will take place in River Falls at 3:15 p.m. at the Glen Park pavilion where Earth Fest 2022 is being held.

Ten years ago, a commitment was signed by UWRF, and it is time to reaffirm that moral compass, said [UWRF Sustainability](#) Coordinator Mark Klapatch-Mathias.

“It shows we are taking sustainability seriously and we are doing what we can to improve the world for future generations of students and our community,” he said.

Earth Fest 2022 is a free, open community celebration scheduled from 2 to 5 p.m. in Glen Park. There will be food samples, sustainability exhibits, music and activities including tree planting, the opportunity to drive an electric vehicle and a clothing swap. A special event planned at 4:15 p.m. will recognize COVID-19 heroes.

Limited parking will be available at and around Glen Park. Free shuttle transportation is available from the River Falls High School where there is event overflow parking.

Visit hope4creationrf.org for a full schedule and other Earth Month events planned in April. In case of inclement weather, most events will be held at the River Falls High School, 818 Cemetery Road.

During Earth Fest, those attending can sign an individual Sustainability Pledge and one for churches, businesses and organizations. Those signing the commitments will receive action items to take to be more sustainable. The action items were developed by UWRF sustainability students.

Events are planned throughout April for Earth Month.

On Thursday, April 21, at 6 p.m. Christie Manning, director of sustainability and faculty member in the Environmental Studies Department at Macalester College in St. Paul, will speak on “Mental Health Impacts of Our Changing Climate” at the River Falls Public Library or virtually. Go to the hope4creationrf.org website for more information.

“We know students, staff and faculty have climate anxiety from climate change,” Klapatch-Mathias said.

Manning’s research focuses on how people respond to the climate crisis, and she is particularly interested in the psychological circumstances that motivate community-level climate action.

On Saturday, April 30, at 10 a.m. the UWRF Ecological Restoration Institute and guests will talk about “Your Pet Will Hurt the Environment ... If You Let It” at the UW-River Falls Library.

For more information on UWRF sustainability, contact Klapatch-Mathias at mark.klapatch@uwrp.edu or 715-425-4333.

