

# ASU slated to host summit on environmental studies

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SPECIAL TO THE SUN

Arkansas State University will host the 2008 National Environmental Studies and Sciences Summit May 22-24. This summit gathers academics from dozens of universities and colleges from around the world.

Attendees will discuss numerous issues concerning teaching and research in different areas of environmental studies and sciences. The two previous summits were convened at the University of California at Santa Barbara and Syracuse University in New York.

Besides several academic units at Arkansas State University, this summit is sponsored by the U.S. Council of Environmental Deans and Directors, CEDD, and the National Council for Science and Environment, NCSE.

Among the topics to be discussed are how to train students in environmental issues for the challenges of the 21st century, encourage minority students to participate in these kinds of programs and how to promote and sustain interdisciplinary research.

Other sessions will deal with interdisciplinary teaching, community programs and lab and field studies. The summit provides a great opportunity for faculty engaged in environmental research and pedagogy to exchange experience.

The summit is also a great opportunity for ASU to showcase its Environmental Science program and future plans. Faculty from the program have been involved with National Academy Summits and National Science Foundation sponsored workshops geared toward the development of re-

search-based undergraduate courses that cross the many and varied disciplines of the environmental sciences.

The lines between the disciplines are becoming more and more blurred, so students must be able to work across disciplines. Our faculty and students are leaders in the integration of the sciences and humanities to provide training and research opportunities that address real-world environmental issues. With ASU's location in the Mississippi Delta and the unique environments of the region, faculty and students in the program are excited about the opportunities presented by the summit.

With this summit taking place in Jonesboro, ASU will be placed on the map of the great U.S. institutions of higher education that have solid environmental academic programs. This will enhance not only the reputation of the institution, but also attracts more support and students to the university.

That is particularly true this year when the Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences, AESS, is being created and is using the ASU meeting to kick it off.

For more information contact the ASU Department of Biological Sciences at [biology@astate.edu](mailto:biology@astate.edu).

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**An aerial picture shows deforestation in the South American jungle caused by gold mining. These are problems that require the interaction of different disciplines.**