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MEDIA ADVISORY: Environmental Stories for Earth Day, April 22

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April 17, 2002

DURHAM, N.H. -- The Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space at the University of New Hampshire is a leader in the fields of terrestrial ecosystems, atmospheric science and global climate change. Some of the more recent environmental science news to come from the institute is described below. More information on these stories found at <http://www.eos.sr.unh.edu/About/News>.

Research Finds Forest Fertilization from Increasing Carbon Dioxide and Nitrogen Deposition Offset by Simultaneous Increases in Air Pollution

Professor Scott Ollinger and his colleagues have thrown a new wrench into the debate over whether forests can take in enough carbon dioxide to offset global warming. He finds that while the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide does seem to increase plant growth and the ability of forests to act as carbon sinks, the simultaneous impacts of land use and ozone pollution decreases plant growth, often resulting in no net gain of carbon uptake.

New Study Projects Declining U.S. Carbon Sink: UNH Scientist Leads Research Team

In a new study, scientists suggest that atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide could increase over the next century at an even faster rate than previously projected, due to a diminishing U.S. carbon sink. The study, which appears in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, estimates that the U.S. carbon sink will decrease to one-third its current size over the next century, under an optimistic scenario, and could actually become a source of atmospheric carbon dioxide, in the worst case.

Climate Report Shows New England Region Changing Dramatically over Next Century

If nothing is done to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide pumped into the atmosphere, the average temperature in New England and upstate New York is likely to increase by 6† to 10† F over the next century. In addition to temperature change, the region may experience increases in precipitation from 10 to 30 percent. These changes, if they occur, would profoundly affect the New England region, with major impacts expected on weather, air quality, human health, the natural environment and the regional economy.

UNH Leads Largest-Ever New England Air Quality Research Project

UNH operates a three-station air quality monitoring network that will form the structure for the largest-ever air quality research initiative in New England. The research will be undertaken by the Atmospheric Investigations, Regional Monitoring, Analysis, and Prediction program (AIRMAP), a cooperative institute between the Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). It is designed to provide a detailed understanding of various sources of pollution.

An Advancement in Remote Sensing Sheds Light on the Relationship between Air Pollution and Forest Health

From an airplane flying at 70,000 feet, so high that the pilot is technically considered an astronaut, a new adaptation to a remote sensing instrument enables scientists to better study the capacity of forests to suck in excess air pollutants and carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. A paper authored by University of New Hampshire researchers and published in *Ecology*, the leading journal in the field, documents the advancements that this new adaptation brings to understanding forest health.

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