

Midwest Environmental ADVOCATES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kick-Off Event Announced to Highlight Unique Multi-Media Art Exhibit Inspired by Wisconsin Farm Women

Madison, Wisconsin—Midwest Environmental Advocates announced today that it is sponsoring a free summer event celebrating the debut of *Rural Women: Voice and Spirit*, a special art exhibition focused on the lives and issues of Wisconsin farm women.

Wisconsin artist Kelly Parks Snider and video producer Jane Bartell have collaborated with Wisconsin farmers to create *Rural Women: Voice and Spirit*, an artistic exploration and exhibition scheduled to debut Saturday, August 13, at Folklore Village in Dodgeville, Wisconsin. A special gallery opening celebration will be held in the afternoon from 4:00 – 8:00 p.m. featuring artist talks, musical performances, informal discussion groups, and local foods of the season.

Funded in part by the Wisconsin Arts Board and the National Endowment for the Arts, this unique multi-media/multi-medium exhibition is the result of an in-depth, year-long artistic exploration by Snider and Bartell of the contributions of Wisconsin's women farmers.

The exhibit will display a collection of paintings by Snider, corresponding literary selections written by the featured farm women, and a companion selection of video portraits produced by Bartell. Organic metal sculptures by Madison artist Erica Koivunen will also be showcased, along with a musical performance by noted Wisconsin folk musicians, Katie Waldren and Candace Kreitlow, performing as the duo Heartwood.

The opening event and exhibit are designed to provide a comprehensive and integrated portrait of farm production, agricultural ecology and land stewardship, all from the unique and rarely heard perspective of rural women.

The family-friendly exhibition will include children's art activities, artists' talks for all ages, and a line-up of speakers including Miriam Brown, OP, editor of the new book *Sustaining Heart in the Heartland: Exploring Rural Spirituality*, and Mark Kastel, co-founder of the Cornucopia Institute, a progressive farm policy research group.

An additional highlight will be four large-format, mixed-media canvases created by fifth-graders from Edgewood Elementary School in Madison. These impressionistic rural landscapes will be included in a silent auction to benefit Midwest Environmental Advocates.

Complementing the exhibition's focus on local food production, Madison culinary landmark Marigold Kitchen will donate seasonal fare for the opening event.

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FAST FACTS

- ***Rural Women: Voice and Spirit*** will debut Saturday, August 13, 2005, from 4 – 8 p.m. at Folklore Village in Dodgeville, Wisconsin.
- Midwest Environmental Advocates is a non-profit, public interest environmental law center that provides legal representation and community organizing assistance to groups that are working for clean air and water. For more information visit www.midwestadvocates.org or call (608) 251-5047.
- Folklore Village is located in rural southwest Wisconsin, 35 minutes west of Madison and six miles east of Dodgeville. Take Highway 18/151 to County Highway BB, then turn south onto BB. The Folklore Village site is 1/2 mile south at 3210 County BB. For more information, visit www.folklorevillage.org.

Rural Women: Voice and Spirit
Opening Celebration at Folklore Village
Saturday, August 13, 2005 – 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.

4:00 - 6:00 Gallery Talks by Artists Kelly Parks Snider and Jane Bartell

5:00 Presentation by Mark Kastel, Co-Founder of Cornucopia Institute and Board Member of Midwest Environmental Advocates

5:30 Presentation by Miriam Brown OP, editor, *Sustaining Heart in the Heartland*

6:00 Communal Gathering for food by Marigold Kitchen, acknowledgements, and an introduction to Midwest Environmental Advocates

7:15 Farm Women Testimonials, with music by Heartwood

Silent Auction to benefit Midwest Environmental Advocates:
Bidding on multimedia farm scenes by Edgewood School 5th-Graders
begins at 4 p.m. and closes at 7 p.m.

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