

## IonE@UMD Arrives



October 2, 2018

Cheryl Reitan

**A new academic group is linking students across majors to work on sustainability issues.**

Can you see it? It's right there." 20 pairs of binoculars follow the pointing finger and focus on the sky above Lake Superior. "Look for the oar boat," says the volunteer. "Right above the boat, there's a kestrel."

Chloe Kruger

"I see it," comes a voice from the crowd. A lone male kestrel soars on the wind over the water of Lake Superior, his tan and white feathers bright against the grey clouds. "I see it too," comes second voice.



Another Hawk Ridge volunteer spots more movement. “There’s a group of birds near the water tower.” In one smooth motion, the binoculars turn. “It’s a flock of robins. They are migrating south.”

Over 20 students gathered at The Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory on Sept. 29, 2018. They were attending “Land, Sky, Water,” the first event of a new campus organization, [IonE@UMD](#). The day included a visit to UMD’s Sustainable Agriculture Project farm, Hawk Ridge, and the *Blue Heron* research vessel.

IonE @UMD’s mission is to accelerate the transition to a future where people and the environment prosper together. To further this goal, students, faculty and staff across disciplines will work together for sustainability by engaging in education, research and leadership training. IonE stands for Institute on the Environment. It was established in 2007 on the Twin Cities campus, as their mission states, "to lead the way toward a future in which people and the environment prosper together." IonE @UMD began operating on the UMD campus in the 2018 fall semester.

Julie Eттerson, UMD Swenson College of Science and Engineering professor, will oversee IonE activities at UMD. Julie sees this partnership with IonE as a great opportunity for further growth in UMD’s sustainability mission.



Eva Weir

“The Duluth community, both on and off campus, is a place that attracts people who care deeply about environmental

sustainability,” Julie says. Chloe Kruger, a freshman from Burnsville Minn. agrees. When she began classes at UMD this fall, she was impressed to see that UMD practices composting. “The UMD farm is great. The vegetables grown there are served in the dining hall.” Even more impressive to her is the support within the Duluth community. “Local restaurants practice farm to table. One restaurant grows vegetables right outside the front door.”

Eva Weir, a senior from Howard Lake and Bloomington, Minn. is impressed with UMD's opportunities for working in the field. "I love the connections UMD has with the Duluth community for hands-on experience. I think it's important to

The group learned about the effect climate change has on plants at the UMD farm. The last stop of the day was on the Blue Heron

research vessel to learn how climate change is



influencing Lake Superior.

take advantage of the resources off-campus to learn more about sustainability."

Julie is excited that the [IonE@UMD](http://d.umn.edu/ione) community is enthusiastic about further developing programs and conducting research. In one of her first projects for [IonE@UMD](http://d.umn.edu/ione), Julie has created a climate change workshop, "Birds of a Feather," to discuss climate change and its accompanying ecological, societal and environmental impacts.

If the first [IonE@UMD](http://d.umn.edu/ione) event is any indication, the program will be a success.

[About IonE@Duluth \(http://d.umn.edu/ione\)](http://d.umn.edu/ione)

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