

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Nature's Experiment with Humans  
Humans' Experiment with Nature**  
*Oliver Benediktson Lecture Series*

*Grand Forks, ND* – Humans are extraordinarily clever and have accomplished miraculous things. In the twentieth century alone, we have built telescopes that peer to the beginning of time, particle accelerators that probe the origin of matter, spaceships that travel beyond the Solar System, gene sequencers that reconstruct the history of life, supercomputers that calculate trillions of times faster than we do, and medical products that extend our lives. In fact, we are so clever our technologies make us the dominant force for change on the planet. So rapidly have we ascended to dominance that we are only now beginning to sense the consequences.

**Dr. George Seielstad, Director of Northern Great Plains Center for People and the Environment at the University of North Dakota**, will explain how we can use our extraordinary cleverness and our newfound understanding of consequences of our actions to move to a lifestyle that can be sustained on **Thursday October 23, 2008 at 4:00 pm in the UND Memorial Union Lecture Bowl. The presentation is free and open to the public. It will also be webcast live at [www.umac.org](http://www.umac.org).** Refreshments will be served prior to the talk at 3:30 pm.

By changing the chemical composition of the atmosphere, the acidity of the oceans, the diversity of the spectrum of life, the extent of polar ice caps, the level of the seas, and the uses of the land, we have initiated an experiment with Earth's entire system. What is most worrisome is the speed with which the experiment is being conducted. Modern humans, *Homo sapiens*, have been residents on this Earth for about 8,000 generations. The most recent five or so generations are behaving as if the planet's resources, its natural wealth, are ours to exploit without concern for generations that will follow.

Our scarcest resource, though, is time. The sooner we accept that the services nature provides underlie our economy, quality of life, and productive membership in the human family, the more likely we can prevent unforeseen changes that impoverish our descendants.

The presentation is part of the Benediktson Lecture Series, named for Oliver Benediktson, a UND alumnus who generously endowed a Chair of Astrophysics. Dr. Seielstad is the first recipient of the Benediktson Chair. In appreciation, he is presenting public lectures on the wonders of science. For more information, contact Karen Katrinak at 701.777.2482, or [katrinak@aero.und.edu](mailto:katrinak@aero.und.edu).



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