

UNL organizations promote sustainable living habits with condoms

- [Ben Lampman](#)
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Organizations at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln worked together to show how biodiversity can be preserved by an unlikely ally: condoms.

JD McCown, the assistant director of UNL's LGBTQA+ Center, said several organizations partnered to host a two-day event to provide an intersectional view of biodiversity through the lens of reproductive health.

"We wanted to outline how not being in control of reproductive health leads to unintended pregnancies and overpopulation, which in turn causes more resource use because of [the] sheer volume of people," McCown said. "That will drive a lot of species to extinction."

The two-day event "Healthy People, Sustainable Planet" took place on Nov. 12 and 13. According to Pat Tetreault, director of the Women's Center and LGBTQA+ Center, the event was hosted by the Women's Center; the LGBTQA+ Center; Big Red Resilience & Well-Being; the Center for Advocacy, Response and Education; Sustain UNL and the University Health Center. The event was supported by Protection Connection and was presented by the Center for Biological Diversity, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting habitats, primarily for endangered species.

Tetreault said students received condoms with images of endangered animals on the wrapper at the event to promote sexual wellbeing and emphasize the connection between endangered species and overpopulation.

Tetreault said reproductive justice and active teaching about birth control can help curtail overpopulation, as well as provide well-being benefits through knowledge on avoiding sexually transmitted diseases and accidental pregnancies.

“Everything is connected,” she said. “The choice to be able to have or not have kids, protection from sexually transmitted infections and the knowledge about reproduction and resources is definitely connected to having a sustainable planet.”

Tetreault said discussions about reproductive health and sustainability are both important in their own right, so the event allowed students to gain a new perspective on how one can help improve the other. McCown said the duality of the issues discussed demonstrates how complex current issues can be and how working together on certain issues is important to solving others.

“Talking about reproductive justice and its tie to environmentalism shows there is no issue that’s isolated,” McCown said. “We want to show there isn’t just one issue, and multiple issues can intersect.”

Tetreault said she hopes to see UNL make more efforts toward sustainability and reproductive justice in the future by reducing waste and improving education on both sustainability and reproductive justice.

“UNL is doing a lot of things to improve sustainability, but I would like to see that continue and expand,” she said. “We want to be talking about and getting people engaged with reproductive justice and sustainability to show that we care about both people and the planet.”

McCown hopes to see students using a more collective approach toward issues they face on campus in the future.

“This was a great approach to promoting cooperation and intersectionality more in making the world a better place,” McCown said.

Tetreault said she believes the event was a step toward improving sustainability and wellness on campus.

“I think it was a good thing to have,” Tetreault said. “I would like to see more attention being paid to the connections between different types of justice for the people and the planet.”