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INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED OCEANOGRAPHER TO SPEAK AT MONTANA TECH ABOUT CONSERVATION, EARTH DAY AND THE ECODAREDEVIL AWARD

BUTTE, MT – Widely acclaimed conservationist, oceanographer and sea turtle expert Wallace J. Nichols, Ph.D, will present a discussion of his work and our inland connections to our oceans on Sunday, April 20, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Copper Lounge of Montana Tech’s Student Union Building. The event, sponsored by the Clark Fork Watershed Education Program (CFWEP), is free to the public. Donations are appreciated.

Dr. Nichols’ presentation will feature his work in marine and sea turtle conservation, and Nichols will also officially announce the creation of the EcoDaredevil Award, inspired by legendary daredevil Robert Craig “Evel” Knievel. The award, to be presented during Dr. Nichols’ keynote address to Duke University in Durham, North Carolina on Earth Day, Tuesday, April 22, will recognize young individuals from around the nation who, through science, policy or personal action, have taken particular risk and shown exceptional courage and creativity to go against the mainstream to successfully solve or raise awareness for an environmental issue. This year marks the inaugural EcoDaredevil award, currently sponsored by the Ocean Conservancy, Ocean Revolution, Tree Media, the CFWEP and YERT.com. Future EcoDaredevil awards will be chosen by a committee of individuals that include members of various national and regional conservation organizations, students and the scientific community at large, and will be honored nationwide.

“This is an exciting opportunity to connect my childhood hero and my life’s work by recognizing people who are really making waves, doing what others think is impossible, and making our planet a healthier place”, said Nichols. “The world needs a lot of EcoDaredevils with the guts and inner drive of Evel Knievel.”

The event will begin at 4:00 p.m. with a free showing of the film *The 11th Hour*. Narrated by Leonardo DiCaprio, this captivating documentary explores the perilous state of our planet, and the means by which we can change our course. Contributing to this crucial film are noted politicians, scientists and other ambassadors for the importance of a universal ecological consciousness. Dr. Nichols presentation will begin at 5:30 p.m. following the film. Dr. Nichols, a senior research scientist at the nonprofit Ocean Conservancy, was one of the experts interviewed in *The 11th Hour*. In addition to highlighting the breadth and importance of his work, Dr. Nichols will take questions and encourage discussion from the audience. A central focus of Dr. Nichols’ work has been forging alliances between former environmental adversaries. He works with conservationists, commercial fishermen, landowners, coastal communities and researchers worldwide to advance ocean protections. He also spearheads Ocean Revolution, an outreach program designed to inspire and mentor the next generation of ocean conservationists. In 1998, Dr. Nichols founded the Grupo Toruquero, an international grassroots movement dedicated to protecting endangered Pacific sea turtles and promoting sustainable practices by commercial fisheries. In 1999, he co-founded WILD Coast, a global conservation network that works to preserve coastal wilderness. He is the son of former Butte educator and Big Hole River Foundation president Sheila Youngblood.

For more information on Wallace J. Nichols, visit www.wallacejnichols.org; for more information on the EcoDaredevil Awards, visit www.ecodaredevil.com; and for more information on *The 11th Hour*, visit wip.warnerbros.com/11thhour/. Sunday’s event will begin at 4:00 p.m. with a free showing of *The 11th Hour*, followed by Dr. Nichols’ presentation at 5:30 p.m. The CFWEP, the organizer of Sunday’s event, is part of the Technical Outreach Department at Montana Tech and has been a leading provider of environmental and restoration education programs and services in western Montana since 2003. For more information about the CFWEP and current education and restoration projects in the Clark Fork Basin, visit www.cfwep.org.

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