Diverse ecosystems throughout the Great Lakes region have contributed greatly to its prosperity and quality of life. The region’s forests are home to a variety of wildlife, such as birds, bears, and wolves. The forest and animals provide opportunities for tourism and recreation, production of timber and other wood and non-wood products, and services such as watershed protection. The region is also home to important wetland ecosystems, from the prairie potholes of Minnesota to the coastal marshes of northern Lake Huron. These delicate ecosystems are critical to migratory waterfowl and other birds, providing food, breeding grounds, and resting stops along major migration routes. Already stressed by problems such as pollution, exotic species invasion, and suburban sprawl, these important terrestrial ecosystems are vulnerable to the effects of global climate change.

Recent findings from the Great Lakes Regional Assessment suggest that both broadleaf and conifer forests could decline as tree species’ ranges shift north. If summers become too warm, the southern region could lose economically important species such as quaking aspen, yellow birch, jack pine, red pine, and white pine. As the composition of forests changes, so too will the distribution of some of the region’s popular wildlife. Migratory birds are especially sensitive to climate change, and scientists project that the region will lose a number of species altogether as their ranges shift northward. Drier climate conditions may contribute to a reduction in the size and number of prairie pothole wetlands, impacting the region’s duck population.

Speakers at the Climate Change and Terrestrial Ecosystems of the Great Lakes Region: The Potential Impacts and What We Can Do workshop will address challenges facing foresters, park managers, timber industry leaders, hunters, and waterfowl/wetland conservation organizations. Panel discussions will provide a forum for stakeholders to discuss the potential effects of climate change as well as appropriate response strategies and policy options to address these impacts.

Please Register at: http://www.geo.msu.edu/glra
Questions, Contact: Jeanne Bisanz #248-851-2316