

## COMPETING TO CONSERVE

By Celene Lovato

This February marks the beginning of the fifth annual Campus Conservation Nationals competition to reduce energy and water use on college campuses across the nation. This year will be UCCS's third year participating in the competition, and the Office of Sustainability is really working to get everyone in the residence halls involved and educated. With weekly on-campus events, a stack of pledges to conserve energy, and a team of sustainability impassioned students, UCCS is really in it to reduce this year.

CCN was founded in 2010 and has been growing exponentially every year since, nearly tripling its number of participants and increasing monetary savings during the competition tenfold. The goal of the competition is to get university students excited about energy and water conservation and expand conservation awareness in universities across the nation. CCN aims to create a culture of conservation, inspiring students to continually make sustainable choices and encourage others to do the same.

"Campus Conservation Nationals has grown a lot from when I worked on this competition last year," Says Tori Roybal, Events Coordinator for the Office of Sustainability. "Planning for CCN began in the fall so that we could kick-off the events at the beginning of the new semester. This year the goal was to educate students about energy conservation in an effort to reduce student's energy usage in the residence halls. Each week we hosted an event, located in the residence halls, which focused on different aspects of energy conservation."

This year's events feature creative teach-ins that aim at making sustainability a fun and attainable goal for on-campus residents. These events include Less is S'more, Cardboard Craft Night, and an Earth Hour Screening of *The Lorax*. Students at the events are also encouraged to fill out a Small Paw Prints Pledge, reminding them to unplug for a certain amount of hours to conserve energy. These pledges will be displayed on the roof of the interactive house model in the Monarch building lobby. The interactive display also shows the amount of energy saved throughout the competition.

So far UCCS students have pledged to unplug for up to 381.5 hours, and energy usage has gone down 2% from the average. The numbers are promising and there's hope that conservation numbers will rise as the competition finishes out. At the end of the competition, the Office of Sustainability will be hosting an "Unplugged" concert event. Students are encouraged to participate by giving acoustic performances for their peers. This is the third Unplugged concert at UCCS and will be taking place March 4<sup>th</sup> in the Lift Lounge at 7 p.m.