

NREL NEWS NOTES

NATURAL RESOURCE ECOLOGY LABORATORY
Colorado State University

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Spotlight on Science

Featuring: David Swift, Research Scientist - Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory

Dave Swift is one of the truly veteran members of the NREL. He began working here in the early 1970's when the NREL was the Grassland Biome Study of the International Biological Program. At that time, he had just completed an M.S. degree in forest hydrology, and was hired by George Van Dyne to direct the computer programming/data analysis group at the Laboratory.

In the late 1970's, he was called upon to develop simulation models of energy and nitrogen relationships of large grazing animals to assist in the analysis of the productivity and stability of grazing systems. This required some additional education on his part, and in 1983 he received his Ph.D. degree from the Department of Animal Sciences at CSU.

Through the 1980's he was active with Jim Ellis, Mike Coughenour, Kathy Galvin and others in the South Turkana Ecosystem Project, a study of the ecology of a subsistence pastoral people in Northwest Kenya. This was perhaps the first attempt at an ecosystem analysis which treated the human component as an interacting part of the system and not as an external driver.

Currently, Dave is "more or less, sort of semi-retired," but is having a little trouble breaking away from the Lab. He is still teaching one semester per year and advising graduate students. Two of his current Ph.D. students, Andres Cibils and Adnan Beker, are studying the ecology of four-wing saltbush, and its defensive chemistry on the shortgrass steppe.

He has recently worked in the People's Republic of China, as a consultant to the Asian Development

Bank, advising on the efficacy of a loan being considered for the improvement of North China grasslands and livestock production systems - an involvement which has given him the opportunity to work with another NREL old timer, Jerry Dodd. Dave is directing a project in Morocco, funded by USAID, designed at developing sustainable agricultural systems in the mountainous, and very erodible, Rif Mountain region in the northern part of that country.

Dave's two children from his first marriage, Melissa and Ethan, are grown and living in Denver. He is now married to Liliana Castro, a professor of spanish at the University of Northern Colorado, and is helping her raise two more children, Nicolas 1 and Luciana 12. Most of his leisure activities revolve around the mountains of Colorado and the Canyons of Utah.

Remember When

Celebrating 30 ears of NREL: 197 -1997

At an early meeting of the grassland biome, representatives of several major disciplines were asked to speak on the importance of their component in the ecosystem. Following presentations by a mammologist, an entomologist, an ornithologist and other biologists, a microbiologist took the floor and emphasized that the microbial biomass far exceeded the combined biomass of the insects, birds, mammals, etc. The next speaker, a soil physicist, gleefully pointed out that the water component of grassland greatly outweighed the microbial biomass. The microbiological response: "Please note that the data for our component were given on an oven-dry basis. We suggest that you do likewise."

Biome Trivia Questions

[Answers](#)

1. Name the species common name that was given telemetric monitoring at the Pawnee site.
 2. What Biome product was occasionally served in the Biome mess hall?
 3. What was the name of the waterless lake?
- . Name the lady who was the cook at the Biome mess hall.

Trivia submitted by an early Biome Participant

Announcements

The NREL recently established several categories of giving which include the NREL Graduate Student Fund, the NREL Scientific Equipment Fund, Financial Support for NREL Scientists and Visiting Scientists, the Van Dyne Distinguished Ecosystem Scientist Award, and the NREL General Fund. We would like to thank the following people for their gifts, which were received in February, 1997:

Dr. Jill Baron
Dr. Dennis jima

Roel Merckx has returned home to Heverlee, Belgium after working with Ted Elliott and Keith Paustian for six months on the KTSM project. He made considerable progress in isolating a SM fraction hypothesized to be microbially derived. Roel will be resuming his position at the Soil Fertility and Soil Biology Lab at the Katholieke Universiteit, but will be returning to NREL this summer to collaborate on manuscript preparation.

Tim Kittel has been appointed to the NASA, Earth Observing System ES, Algorithm Theoretical Basis Document ATBD Review Panel.

Congratulations to Bill Parton Bill was nominated for and won the Gamma Sigma Delta Faculty Award of Merit. Up to two awards are given annually to faculty who have distinguished themselves in research, teaching, extension, or a combination thereof. A nominee must be a faculty member in agricultural sciences or a related field at Colorado State University. The award was presented to Bill at the Chapter's Annual Initiation and Awards Banquet on Feb. 23 at the Lory Student Center.

Mohammed Kalkhan received an appointment to Affiliate Faculty in the Forest Sciences Department of Colorado State University. This position will allow Mohammed to have graduate students and to serve on their graduate committee.

On March 2, Indy Burke traveled to Richmond, Virginia, to receive the 18th Distinguished Women Scholar Award from Delta Kappa Gamma and Virginia Commonwealth University. She gave a public lecture at The Virginia Museum entitled "Global Change: Past, Present and Future."

Cynthia Melcher has accepted a 3-year term as editor for the Journal of the Colorado Field Ornithologists. Cynthia's activities began in early January when she and several other volunteers led a group of 3 professional and amateur ornithologists from Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Mexico to northern Chihuahua, Mexico, to conduct the first "Ejido San Pedro" Christmas Bird Count CBC. The CBC is a continent-wide effort to monitor winter bird populations. The period begins about one and one-half weeks before Christmas Day and ends in the first week of January. It started at the turn of the century as an effort to counteract the previous tradition of going out at Christmas time to shoot as many birds as possible. The counters recorded 117 species and nearly 22,000 individual birds in approximately 10 hours. Among the count were almost every species of endangered or at-risk species of grassland bird known to occur in western North America. Cynthia's goal is to eventually turn the entire CBC over to the Mexican scientists, who will use these data to help promote conservation of this incredible natural resource area.

Kathy Galvin is a member of the NAS/NRC panel on Human Dimensions of Seasonal-to-Interannual Climate Variability to provide scientific input to the NAA office of Global Programs on research needs and programs focused on the human dimensions of short-term climatic variability.

Meetings

COLORADO

Tom Hobbs gave a presentation entitled "Habitat Protection for Wildlife" at the Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute, University of Denver Law School, on March 1.

NORTON

Jill Baron was part of a team that met in Seattle, WA, on Feb. 3- to plan future global change research in mountains of the western United States. Jill then traveled to Wisconsin to participate in a NSF Long-term Ecological Research Intersite Comparison Workshop for intercomparison of Lake Districts at Trout Lake Biological Station on Feb. 4-8.

Tom Hobbs, Dave Theobald, and Tammy Bearly gave a demonstration of the SCoP information system to Colorado Legislators on February 20 at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC. The SCoP project has been designated as a Beta Test Site for Arc View for the Internet produced by the Environmental Systems Research Institute.

Molly Welker led an audit team on March 1-7, for a technical review of the Mercury Analytical Lab HAL at Frontier Geosciences in Seattle, WA. The HAL is contracted by CSU to provide the analytical services and site support services for the NADP/MDN. The laboratory audit was divided into the following categories: 1 organization management, 2 shipping and receiving, 3 field site support, analysis procedures, quality assurance/quality control, and data processing.

Tim Kittel attended a NASA, ES Algorithm Theoretical Basis Document ATBD Review Panel meeting on Mar. 10-11 in Columbia, MD.

Dave Schimel NTAC Chair and Tim Kittel attended the National Technical Advisory Committee NTAC, Department of Energy, National Institute for Global Environmental Change NIGEC on Mar. 12-1 in Phoenix, A.

Dave Theobald authored a poster entitled "Forecasting Rural Land Use Change: An Evaluation of Approaches" and co-authored a poster entitled "Characterization of Urban-Rural Gradients and Effects on Avian Assemblages" with Jim Miller Biology and GDPE and N.T. Hobbs for the 12th Annual Symposium of the US-International Association for Landscape Ecology, Durham, NC, March 1-19. He presented "Collaborative Design of Information Systems for Conservation Planning," authored by N.T. Hobbs, D.M. Theobald, J.A. ack, T.L. Bearly, T. Shenk, and W.E. Riebsame.

Jeff Welker attended the annual NSF-ARCSS/LAII spring meeting on Mar. 2-29 in Seattle, WA. The winter C2 flux studies in Alaska that Jeff, Michael Jones, Jace Fahnestock and Paul Brooks have been conducting will be presented as a poster. Kathy Galvin gave a poster presentation titled "Biological Conservation and Human Nutrition in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania," at the Human Biology Association meeting Mar. 31-Apr. 2 in St. Louis, M.

INTERNATIONAL

Bill Parton and Robin Kelly attended the African-GAIM Modeling Workshop which was held in Mombasa, Kenya, March 3-12. They introduced scientists from across the African continent to the Century model and concepts of ecosystem modeling. They also met with Cheryl Palm and Pedro Sanchez Nairobi about ongoing TSBF activities involving Century.

Visitors

Keith Paustian, Ted Elliott, Vern Cole, Jan Cipra, and Kendrick Killian met with George Bluhm, USDA/NRCS on Nov. 21 to discuss further collaboration in doing state level assessments of soil C storage in agroecosystems. The effects of different agricultural practices and their contribution to C2 mitigation as a part of the assessments were discussed.

Dr. Pam Matson, Environmental Science, Policy and Management, University of California, Berkeley, CA, visited NREL and presented lectures for the 1997 Distinguished Ecologist Lecture Series on Feb. 2-28. Dr. Matson lectured on "Global Change in the Nitrogen Cycle" and "Trace Gas Emissions from Intensively Managed Agroecosystems."

Dr. John Frederick, Chairman, Department of Geophysical Sciences, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, visited NREL on Feb. 28. Dr. Frederick presented a seminar titled "Solar Ultraviolet Radiation and the Biosphere."

Dr. Terry Root, Professor, University of Michigan, School of Natural Resources and the Environment, Ann Arbor, MI, visited CSU and presented lectures for the Colloquium in the Life Sciences titled "Gender Differences in opportunities and obstacles in Science" and "Possible Ecological Consequences of Global Warming: A Case Study of North American Birds" on March 31. Dr. Root is a Pew Scholar as well as a winner of the Presidential Young Investigator Award.

NREL Seminars

February 7: Bill Davis and Dave Bigelow, NADP. "NREL's Choice Awards for the WWW: Useful examples and techniques for disseminating scientific information via the Internet."

February 1: Dennis Jima, NREL. "Land Use Issues in Temperate East Asia."

February 21: Andy Parsons, NREL. "Antarctic Travelogue - The Search for Scott."

February 28: John Frederick, Chairman, Department of Geophysical Sciences, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. "Solar Ultraviolet Radiation and the Biosphere."

March 7: Dr. Robin M. Reich, Associate Professor, Forest Sciences Department, CSU. "Application of Spatial Statistics in Sampling Natural Resources."

March 21: Tom Stohlgren, NREL. "The Weed Invasion of the West: Dearth Invader?"

March 28: John Gross, NREL. "Evaluating Conservation Priorities for Vertebrates - A PowerPoint Presentation."

April : Dave Schimel, NREL NCAR. "The Ecology and Economics of Stabilizing Atmospheric Greenhouse Gases."

April 11: Vern Cole, NREL. "Assessment of Potential Mitigation of Greenhouse Gases in Agriculture: A Challenge for Ecological Studies."

April 18: Diane Waddle, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, CSU. "Prehistoric Migrations and the origin of Modern Humans."

April 2: Gary Lear, NADP. "Atmospheric Deposition."

May 2: Mohammed Kalkhan, NREL. "Linking Multiphase Sampling and Spatial Cross-Correlation to Assess Map Accuracy and Patterns of Plant Species Richness."

May 9: Jim Ellis, NREL. "Implications of Spatial Scale for Diversity, Stability, and Productivity - Lessons from South African Game Ranching."

Graduate Student News

Ana Mireya Salas and Rodolfo Delgado have arrived from Venezuela and will be students of Ted Elliott Dwayne Westfall co -advisor and Keith Paustian Gary Peterson co -advisor, respectively. Vern Cole was instrumental in bringing them here and will be heavily involved in their research and education. Ana will be self-funded and working with Keith Paustian on the CRP project to develop a new high resolution agroecosystem model.

Eric Allstott attended and presented a talk at the BRD Watershed Studies Conference on the Olympic Peninsula in Forks, WA, in early Feb.

Geneva Chong was in Honduras, Feb. 2 -Mar. 7 to re-evaluate the butterfly farm in the Rio Platano

United States Department of Agriculture

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