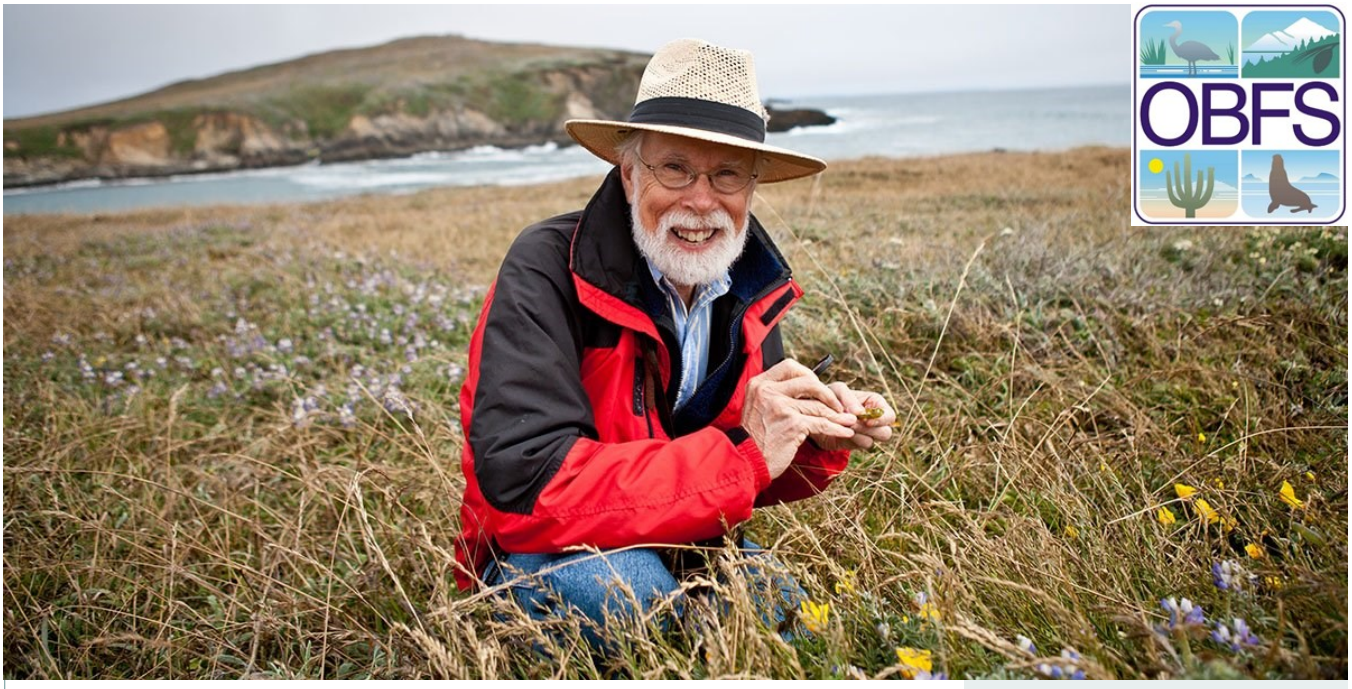


August 2024
Volume 1
Issue 17

OBFS President's Note

BY RHONDA STRUMINGER, PRESIDENT

Dear OBFS Community,

As with any community, membership comes with obligations, and the Organization of Biological Field Stations is no exception. You recently received a request from the Governance and Sustainability Committee to vote on some changes to our Bylaws by September 1, 2024. The committee has worked hard to make sure the Bylaws reflect today's OBFS current needs and future plans – of which we hope you will play an important role. **Two-thirds of voting members need to approve the changes** - take a few minutes and vote here:

https://forms.gle/wGZbzNXhqcjXxQXW7 .

The proposed OBFS Bylaw changes do the following:

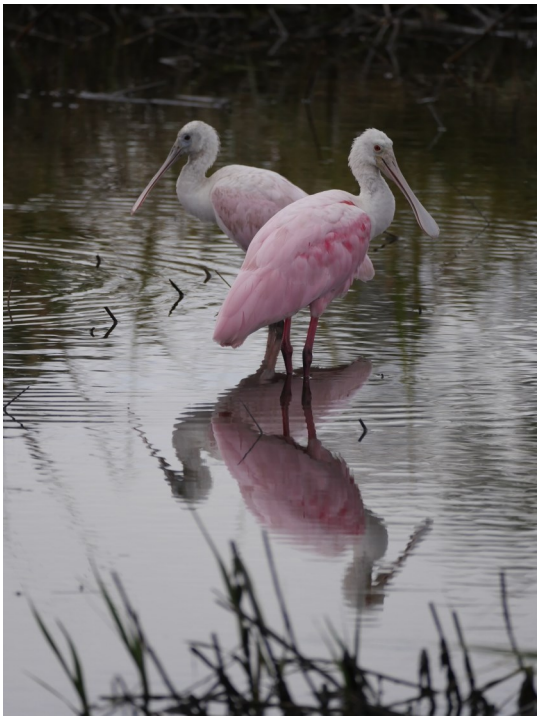
1. Increase the possible number of Board members from 16 to 24. This will allow the Historian and the Annual Committee Meeting Chair to be voting Board members and a new Membership Committee Chair can be added as a voting Board member. Additionally, increasing the Board to "no more than twenty-four members" will allow the Board to create new committees in the future and add the respective chairs to the Board without asking for a vote of the entire membership each time.

2. Allow Committees to authorize expenditures that have previously been approved by the Board to more efficiently administer programs.

(continued on page 7)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Banner: Peter Connors at UC Bodega Marine Reserve Herbarium. Credit: Lobsang Wangdu/NRS



Above: Two roseate spoonbills (Platalea ajaja) in the salt marsh adjacent to Baruch Marine Field Lab. Photo credit, Dr. Sarah White of Clemson University.

2024 OBFS ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE

Registration is rolling for the annual meeting, to be held **November 11-15** in South Carolina by the Baruch Institutes of Hobcaw Barony (co-hosted by Clemson Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology and Forest Science and University of South Carolina Belle W. Baruch Institute of Coastal and Marine Sciences).

The theme of this year's meeting is "Rising Tides and Winds of Change: A New Generation for Field Stations." The conference program includes a hearty slate of Workshops, from best practices in field education, to GIS and R tools to tackle large data sets, to engaging the arts at field stations!

Field trips will immerse attendees in the complex environmental and human history of the South Carolina Lowcountry, engaging with Gullah-Geechee culture and broad swathes of increasingly rare undeveloped coastal lands.

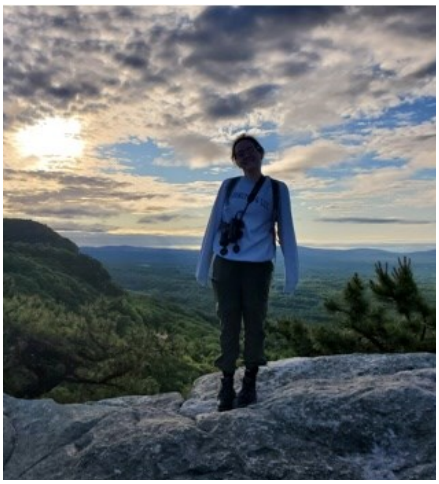
Register soon—don't miss out on your preferred workshop, field trip, and housing slot options!

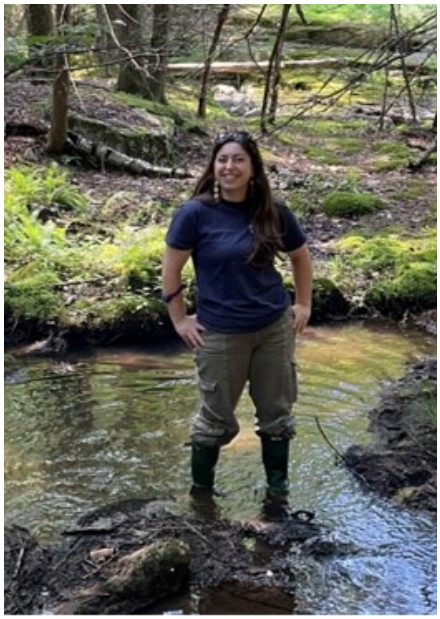
BODEGA MARINE RESERVE HERBARIUM NAMED TO HONOR PETER CONNORS — CONTRIBUTED BY PHILIPPE COHEN

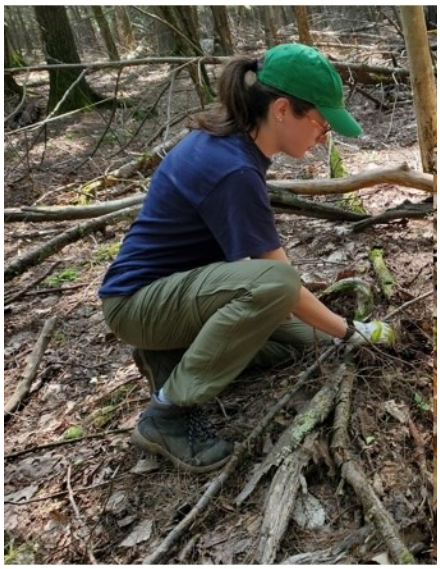
The University of California Natural Reserve System's Bodega Marine Reserve has named its reference plant collection in honor of the longtime OBFS member and former manager of the reserve. The Peter G. Connors Herbarium at Bodega Marine Reserve recognizes decades of scientific, administrative, and facilities achievements by a man who arrived as a postdoctoral scholar in 1971 and remains an active member of the reserve community today.

The Connors Herbarium is an important scientific asset for both the reserve and UC Davis's Bodega Marine Laboratory, located on the reserve. The collection supports researchers who want to know which plants and algae are found in the area. The presence or absence of certain species helps scientists draw inferences about environmental conditions, see how those conditions have shifted over time, and understand how influences such as climate change are affecting the ecosystem.

Originally published in the UC NRS May newsletter, https://ucnrs.org/bodega-herbarium-named-to-honor-former-reserve-manager/







MOHONK PRESERVE SCHAEFER RESEARCH INTERNSHIP — BY MEGAN NAPOLI

The Mohonk Preserve Schaefer Research Internship introduces early-year undergraduate students to the fascination of the natural world by providing the setting, exposure to dedicated scientists, and opportunity to sample a wide variety of conservation work. This internship is based out of the Conservation & Education department and offers a 10-week immersion into numerous ecological, forestry, and community science projects.

For the past two years, the Conservation Science team and Schaefer Research Interns have focused on our most vulnerable vegetation community, the hemlock-northern hardwood forest. We have completed developing a Climate-Adapted Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest Management Plan, implementing various management strategies, and monitoring both pre- and post-management conditions.

The question of how wildlife communities respond to environmental change has long been recognized as a key consideration in conservation & management decisions. Among the most prevalent causes of habitat change are invasive pests whose numbers and wide-ranging effects are rapidly increasing. Eastern hemlock forests in New York have been under threat from the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid since 1985, when it was discovered in the Hudson Valley.

The Preserve's 2023 and 2024 Schaefer Interns have monitored breeding bird and salamander communities to both evaluate community assemblages in hemlock forests of varying health conditions and also to gauge the impact of pilot silviculture interventions. Our interns have been incredibly dedicated and have endured many early mornings, tough hikes up steep slopes, hot and humid conditions, and dense understory with excitement and enthusiasm!

So far, both hemlock-dependent species richness and abundance have a positive correlation to hemlock forest health condition. These results support the use of both bird and salamander communities as bioindicators of hemlock health condition.

We plan to use changes in these communities as a metric for evaluating management strategy success and adapt silviculture interventions as needed. By promoting climate-resilient, diverse forests, we aim to retain suitable habitat for both hemlock-dependent species and species community assemblages that inhabit our hemlock forest. Our project results can help inform best forest management practices in areas of hemlock decline throughout the Northeast.

Thank you to the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) New York State Conservation Partners Program (NYSCPP) and the LTA Land and Climate Program for the generous grants which help the Preserve fund these projects.

Encourage your undergraduate students to apply for our yearly summer Schefer Research Internship! Announcement goes out every January. Learn more about the Mohonk Preserve at https://www.mohonkpreserve.

Megan Napoli is Associate Director of Conservation Science and Research

Left, top: Victoria Thompson birding atop Millbrook Ridge; Middle: Victoria Odescalchi; Bottom: Victoria Thompson surveying for salamanders.

IDEA+ SPOTLIGHT: RADICAL HOSPITALITY FOR THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY — BY CASEY WOODALL

Luxury resorts and scientific field stations have more in common than you might think in providing intentional hospitality to their guests. Curiously enough, the goals of both are closely aligned: to make the guests feel at ease, welcome, and safe. Ample information, approachable staff, and a maintained, intentional workspace can collectively boost an LGBTQIA+ user's positive experience at a field station and encourage them to stay active in the larger scientific community.

Ample Information
Transparent, accurate, and readily available information is key to giving LGBTQIA+ users the ability to plan and enjoy their stay. Clear photos available online, including the sleeping accommodations and bathroom areas, allow folks to decide if the amenities will work for them. Clear and direct information imparted by staff through various means (e.g., email, in-person orientation, signage) gives all users consistent messaging about the expectations of the space.

Approachable Staff
An approachable staff member sets the tone for the people who come to utilize the field station. Verbal and nonverbal communication such as eye contact, a hand wave, and acknowledgement of every person can play a critical role in a user feeling acknowledged and enhance belonging. Moreover, using inclusive language when addressing individuals and groups, as well as the offer to earnestly listen to discomfort or concerns of any kind can make a user feel seen and safe.

During orientations, including an overview of a code of conduct, communication expectations, reporting mechanisms, and the research station's goals can help to affirm that everyone is there to learn and contribute to the scientific community. Encouraging and paying staff to engage in additional readings and professional opportunities related to fostering inclusivity and belonging can also help to cultivate a safe and respectful station culture.

Intentional Spaces
Lastly, creating and maintaining intentional spaces and maintaining can play a significant role in LGBTQIA+ users' experiences. For example, gender neutral bathrooms that separate a locking shower area from toilets, and bathroom stalls that have a working lock and full privacy screening, can increase users' comfort levels. Amenities such as toilet paper and menstrual products that are well stocked and equally available in all facilities also signal intentionality to users.

Ultimately, ample and transparent information about a station, staff communicating a culture of respect and learning, and thoughtful maintenance of station amenities can help field stations better align with the needs of users, especially for users who may identify with a historically marginalized community such as the LGBTQIA+, as emerging and seasoned scholars continue building their careers in science.

Interested in Starting an LGBTQIA+ Affinity Group?

The IDEA+ committee is seeking to gauge member interest in developing affinity group(s). Please provide your thoughts, interest, comments, or concerns via the following google form:

https://forms.gle/JVUBCQU8TiSyJTPX6

If you are interested in additional resources, have content to submit for the IDEA+ Spotlight, or are interested in joining the IDEA+ committee please reach out to Tori McDermott (vmmcdermott@alaska.edu), Phoebe Jekielek (phoebe@hurricaneisland.net) or email diversity@obfs.org

Casey Woodall is Assistant Director of the James San Jacinto Reserve, California

OBFS HISTORIAN REPORT — BY MARY HUFTY

This has been a landmark year for OBFS Historical Resources as, on 8 February 2024, the OBFS Board voted to form an official Historic Resource Committee to survey historical resources and centralize, digitize and make available the background papers and photos of the Organization of Biological Field Stations.

The Historic Resource Committee was formed which includes: Beth Norman, Philippe Cohen, Skip Van Bloem, Rhonda Struminger and Mary Hufty. The OBFS historian was given an official voting position on the Board of Directors.

Skip Van Bloem at Clemson's Baruch Institute secured a research intern for OBFS to consolidate records and digitize them for the future of the organization. We began shipping the hard copies from Archbold Biological Station, FL and from former OBFS Treasurer Philippe Cohen to Georgetown, SC in May 2024, to be received by the amazing OBFS intern Louie Prete. The vast majority of these materials have been scanned and archived, including some old slides and photographs. We look forward to a presentation from Louie at our annual meeting.

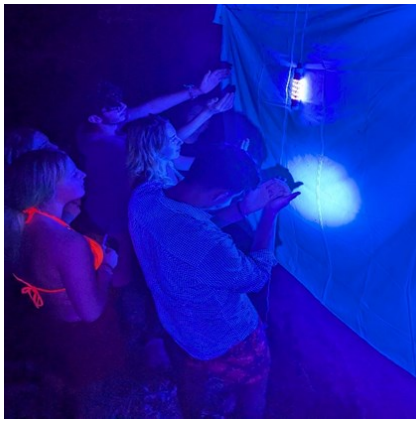
A few jewels have been revealed, such as the first electronic copy of the OBFS directory on IBM punchcard and an insightful interview of a panel of OBFS presidents at Douglas Lake in 2010. Read more of the interesting findings here: https://obfs.org/2024/07/15/2024-obfs-historian-report/.

If you have any items to share, please email OBFS_history_internship@obfs.org! There is also a large OBFS

FORGING A NEW PARTNERSHIP IN GREECE — BY TED KARFAKIS

The Kalamos Island Biological Field Station, operated by Terra Sylvestris, recently became a partner of the Global Entomology Coalition, an organization that incorporates entomological data into existing projects, creating new research initiatives, and developing outreach and no-strings-attached funding for research and station operations.

In June 2024, Jace Porter, the founder of the Global Entomology Coalition, visited the field station. He set up an ultraviolet (UV) light trap and demonstrated insect tracking and passive trapping techniques. We identified an opportunity to contribute to conservation planning and environmental legislation by confirming the population of *Lucanus cervus*, a near threatened species of stag beetle needing updated presence data. We will monitor this and other insect species, as well as flora and fauna that rely on a healthy insect population.



We are developing an open expedition to bring citizen scientists from all over the world to our station to assist in data collection and specimen management. The work will further the mission of Terra Sylvestris to restore traditional community conserved areas and to recover the once rich ecosystem of the area while respecting local communities.

Ted Karfakis is Director of Kalamos Island Biological Field Station

Left: Insect trapping with volunteers using UV light. Photo credit: Jace Porter. Above: European stag beetle, credit: Wikipedia.

BEAVER DAM ANALOGS TRANSFORM A STREAM — BY SIOBHAN FATHEL

At Susquehanna University's Center for Environmental Education and Research (CEER) in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, beaver dam analogs (BDAs) are being used to restore an on-site stream. This new, ongoing collaborative project explores sustainable stream restoration solutions.

Urbanization, suburban development, and agricultural practices have significantly degraded many streams, leading to increased stormwater runoff, erosion, pollution, and habitat loss. Traditional stormwater management systems, like concrete channels, often exacerbate these problems. BDAs, however, offer a promising alternative. These low-tech structures mimic natural beaver dams, regulating water flow, enhancing groundwater recharge, capturing sediment, and promoting riparian vegetation. They support biodiversity and contribute to ecosystem resilience.

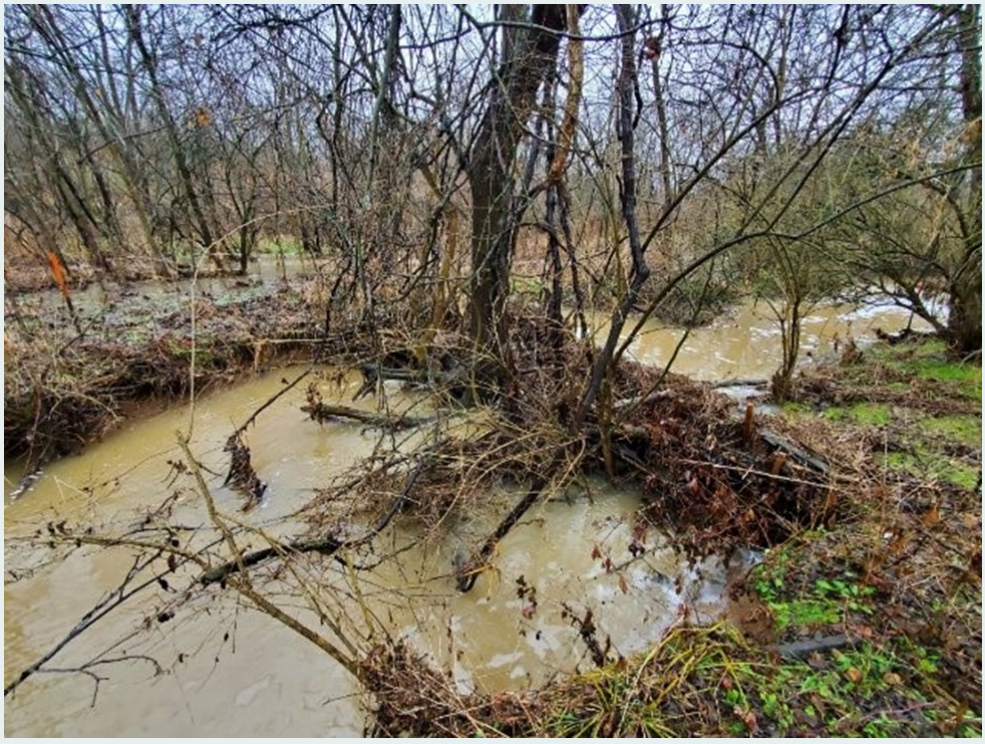
This project focuses on a stream impacted by both urbanization and agriculture—areas often overlooked in restoration efforts. At the CEER, eight BDAs have been installed along a 200-meter stretch of an ephemeral stream. These structures aim to slow water flow, redirect excess water, and reconnect the stream with its floodplain, addressing severe erosion and infrastructure damage caused by runoff. Notably, this is the first time the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA-DEP) has permitted such structures.

Initial data collection in Summer 2023 and 2024 included stream profiles to understand changes in channel width and depth, along with bed substrate analysis to gauge water movement. Ongoing monitoring involves photographic documentation, topographic surveys, erosion measurements, and tracking water depth and temperature. This framework helps understand the BDAs' hydrological dynamics and ecological impact.

Early results are encouraging. Increased water retention, reduced flow velocity, and effective sediment capture have been observed. Additionally, the floodplain, inactive for over five years, has been reactivated during high flow events, promoting sediment deposition and reducing flood risk. Challenges like erosion of the stream bank around the dams have prompted design adjustments to better suit site conditions.

This new long-term research project at the CEER aims to demonstrate the viability of BDAs as a sustainable stream restoration solution in areas affected by significant runoff and stormwater damage.

Through research and educational outreach, the goal is to inform broader adoption of BDAs, contributing to healthier, more resilient watersheds, ecosystems, and communities.



Above: A beaver dam analog (center of photo) during a storm event at CEER in March 2024 where the floodplain was reconnected and active (upper left).

Contact: Siobhan L. Fathel, Assistant Professor, Susquehanna University, fathel@susqu.edu

BIODIVERSITY COLLECTIONS: SPECIMEN MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Biodiversity Collections Network (BCoN), in collaboration with the U.S. Culture Collection Network, has published a new Special Report in the journal *BioScience* providing guidance on implementing a specimen management plan requirement for research proposals that involve collecting or generating specimens. This requirement, which was first proposed in the National Academies report on biological collections and then supported by the CHIPS and Science Act, is now in place for select National Science Foundation solicitations. The article provides:

- Examples of current sample management guidance at federal agencies
- Value-added benefits of a Specimen Management Plan
- Recommendations for implementation and evaluation of Specimen Management Plans
- Specimen Management Plan Suggested elements

Read the article here!

BIODIVERSITY COLLECTIONS NETWORK

OBFS PRESIDENT'S NOTE

(continued from page 1)

3. Change voting and communication via "Mail, Conference Calls, and Fax" to "E-mail and Other Methods, Virtual, and Electronic".

4. Re-align some duties associated with Secretary and Treasurer. These changes include who handles membership lists and state and federal reports and dates to a time when Secretary/Treasurer was one position.

If approved, a new Membership Committee will need a chair and members. While the committee will ultimately decide its priorities, it will focus on member recruitment (including helping stations register as full members), following up with station membership renewal and transitioning to the new website, and reviewing the 2022 OBFS survey results and how OBFS can better meet member wants and/or needs. Members of this committee will interact with field stations around the world, getting to know them, and their OBFS expectations. By growing membership, we create exciting opportunities for new collaborations and innovative strategies for mutual success. If interested, please contact me or any OBFS Board member.

A special thank you to all the members of the Governance and Sustainability Committee for their hard work: Shane Waddell (UC Davis Natural Reserves), Beth Norman (Lacawac Sanctuary Field Station and Environmental Education Center), Christopher Lorentz (Thomas More University Biology Field Station), Jessica Malisch (UC Merced's Natural Reserve System), Lara Roketenetz (The University of Akron Field Station), and Patricia Saunders (Ashland University Environmental Preserves).

Best wishes,
Rhonda Struminger, Ed.M. Ph.D.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE NEWS

Is there a subject you wish you could discuss with other field stations but haven't made the time?

Is there a speaker you have wanted to hear from but haven't had the opportunity?

Do you want other field stations to learn more about what is happening in your corner of the world?

Are you looking for help with a particular challenge?

Let the International Committee know and together we can organize a one-hour Virtual Café on the topic of your choice!

Send an email to david.maneli@mcgill.ca with your ideas or suggestions.

Events Calendar

Stay in the know: scroll to the bottom of the OBFS Events webpage https://obfs.org/events/ and click "Subscribe to Calendar." It's easy!

ECOTONES: ART-SCIENCE VIDEOS — BY NANCY LOWE

Above: Todd Gilens, Confluence, detail, Reno, NV. Photo credit: Todd Gilens.

The Ecotones Guide for Arts at Field Stations and Marine Labs, available in the Member Access Documents section of the OBFS website, now has a new component. The Guide is an extensive resource for field stations and marine labs that have, or wish to have, artist in residence or visiting artist programs. At the end of the Ecotones Guide, you can now find links to the following four videos:

Eric Nagy of Mountain Lake Biological Station, VA shares with us a wealth of information about ArtLab, a successful artist in residence program. This program invites cohorts of artists to stay for two weeks in summer and work independently or in collaboration with scientists.

Lindsey Rustad of Hubbard Brook Ecosystem Study walks us through the process of commissioning a data visualization project, and describes the complexities of collaborating with a diverse team of artists and scientists. Lindsey narrates the history of WaterViz, a tool for visualization of the water cycle.

Artist Todd Gilens tells the story of Confluence, a prose-poem of over 4,000 words that was installed for almost a mile through Reno, NV following the flow of water. This installation was years in the making and was conceived and developed at several sites in the University of California Natural Reserves System (UCNRS), including SNARL, Valentine Camp, and Sagehen Creek.

Artist Leah Wilson describes a growing partnership with Lindsey Rustad at Hubbard Brook, as well as long term projects at the HJ Andrews Experimental Forest. Leah's art-science journey at field stations began with a 2012 residency at Andrews, where she developed creative projects alongside ecologists working on long-term ecological studies.

If your field station or marine lab has an artist in residence program or is interested in developing one, the Ecotones Guide and these four in-depth interviews will be very useful to your site. Make sure your OBFS membership is up to date so that you can make use of these resources!

Contact: Nancy Lowe, Ecotones Coordinator

RAYSTOWN FIELD STATION TURNS FIFTY — BY ERIC QUALLEN

This year, the Juniata College Raystown Field Station celebrated its 50th anniversary. The station, founded in 1974, sits on the shore of Raystown Lake in central Pennsylvania. In a unique partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Juniata College leases the 365-acre reserve in order to provide unique educational and research opportunities to students and members of the public.

At its founding, the station consisted of a single farmhouse previously owned by the Grove family. Due to the creation of the Raystown Dam for flood control, the land was seized by the federal government in anticipation of the lake expanding, and many families were displaced from the area. However, thanks to Dr. Bob Fisher, a passionate biology professor, the USACE leased the land to Juniata College to use as a research facility.

Since then, the field station has expanded to include a main programming building and dining area, two student lodges, maintenance garage, maple sugaring shack, paddle shed, boat fleet, and recreation area. The original farmhouse also remains. Today, the flagship program offered is the residential program. Each semester, up to 15 undergraduate students from the Environmental Science and Biology departments live at the station, taking all of their classes together and creating a learning community. The station also hosts programs for students of all ages, and is open to the public for rentals and other events. This summer is also the inaugural artist residency at the farmhouse.

As the station continues to expand, we welcome the next 50 years, and invite anyone who shares our passion for sustainability and experiential learning to come and visit! For more information, see https://www.juniata.edu/offices/field-station/index.php or contact rfs@juniata.edu.

Above, from left: Current Director Dr. Eric Quallen, Director Emeritus Dr. Chuck Yohn, Program Coordinator Austin Peck, and Facilities Supervisor Chris Bomgardner. Photo credit: Joyce Young.

ANNOUNCING THE 2024 STATION EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The Collaborations Committee would like to encourage members to consider applying for an OBFS **Station Exchange Program (SXP)**.

The intent of SXP is to provide mini-travel awards to facilitate field station staff travel to other field stations in the OBFS network for shadowing, cross-training and mentoring opportunities. Recipients should seek to learn more about specific aspects of station management (i.e., programs, infrastructure, land management, research coordination) that are applicable to the needs of their home station.

OBFS is offering travel awards of up to $1,000 each that will facilitate multi-day shadowing experiences with host staff. ***Reciprocal (2-way) field station visits are highly encouraged and will receive priority.***

Applicants should complete the online **2024 OBFS Station Exchange Program Application** **by the spring or fall deadlines for consideration: May 15 and September 15**. Rules, regulations and timeline of application process can be found in the link above.

Contact Itchung Cheung, Collaboration Committee Chair: itchung.cheung@oregonstate.edu

50TH ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY

On 15 April 2024, speakers from varied fields, departments, and career trajectories shared how their experiences of research, education, or stewardship at Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve (‘Ootchamin ‘Ooyakma) have shaped views of the preserve’s future.

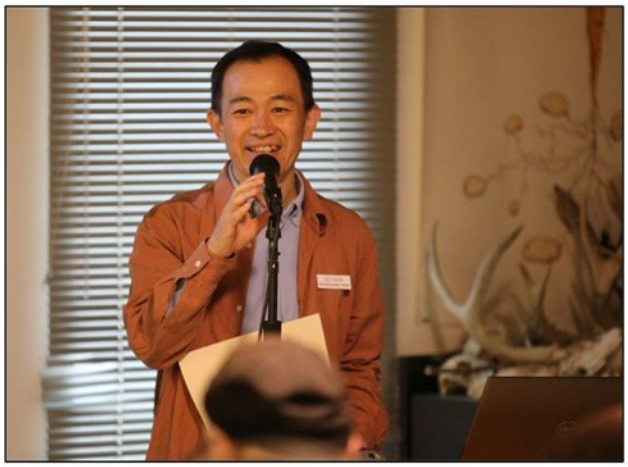
The symposium was opened by Faculty Director and Professor Tadashi Fukami, and Executive Director, Dr. Jorge Ramos. In an inclusive spirit to fully capture the impact Jasper Ridge has had in many areas, the symposium included sessions titled “Humans as Part of Nature,” “Messages from Plants,” and “Future of the Preserves.”

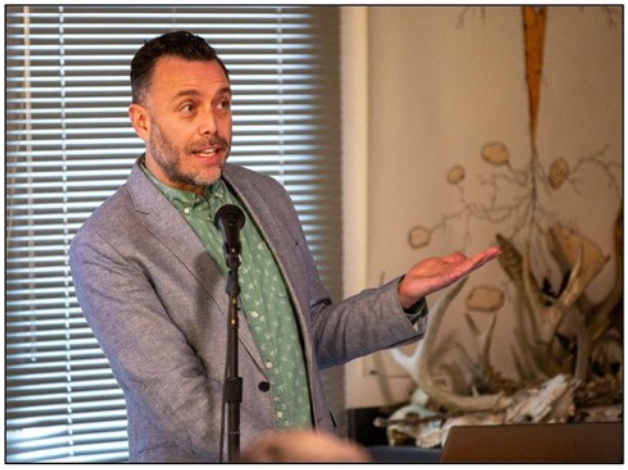
The joyful and exciting event was a celebration of the 50th anniversary of Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve (‘Ootchamin ‘Ooyakma), CA. The event highlighted the preserve’s past, present, and future through the lenses of research, education, and stewardship. Key themes emerged, such as the interconnectedness of humans and nature, featured scientific insights into ecosystem dynamics, and the need for integrated research and active land management strategies.

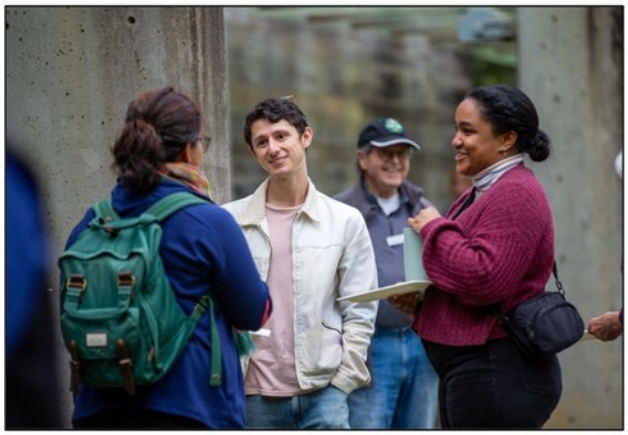
The concluding panel sent out the audience with discussions on the important role of field stations in research, education, and community engagement amidst environmental challenges. Overall, the event provided a platform for reflection on Jasper Ridge’s legacy and a vision for its continued role in environmental stewardship and scientific discovery.

Access a longer story and video here:

https://jrbp.stanford.edu/news/celebrating-jasper-ridge%E2%80%99s-legacy-and-vision-50th-anniversary-symposium







Above: Symposium speakers and participants. Photo credits: Herschell Taghap, Stanford University

COLLABORATIVE FUTURES PROJECT— BY KARI BISBEE O'CONNELL

This NSF-funded RAPID project studies and supports the process of involving the local community surrounding the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest (HJA) in influencing the vision for research at the HJA after a large fire impacted 70% of the forest in the fall of 2023.

In response, the HJA scientific community is launching a necessary process of revisiting how this most recent fire influences their research plans, while the local community has to reimagine its preparation for future wildfires. This project will engage the scientific and local community as they prepare for the future. By doing so we are figuring out how to connect with our local community in a way we haven't before.

This project is designed as a single case study focusing on the impact of community engagement on the scientists, the participating public, and the long-term research planning itself. Our case study will include five elements: 1) community mapping, 2) community conversations, 3) brief surveys and in-depth interviews with HJA scientists, staff, and leaders, as well as community members, 4) observations of the research planning process, and 5) document analysis.

The project is led by Kari O'Connell and Martin Storksdieck from the STEM Research Center at Oregon State University, Mark Schulze, Forest Director of the HJA, and local partner McKenzie Watershed Council. A steering committee of representatives from HJA partners and community organizations will identify and prioritize community partners to be included in conversations and ways of engaging with them, making sure to bring in a diversity of voices representing all aspects of the local community.

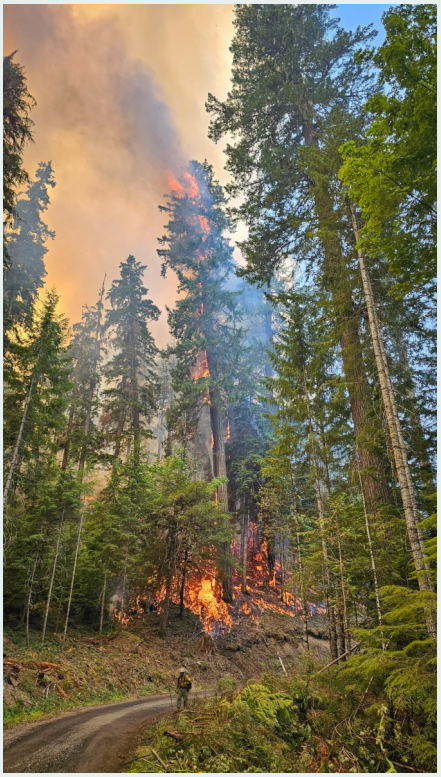


Photo credit: Benjamin E. Nash

We will share the results of our case study research with the Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) and FSML community as "promising practices" and with the science engagement community more broadly, through publications and conference presentations. Stay tuned for updates on this project!

If you are looking for partnership or information about doing this kind of work, email Kari O'Connell at kari.oconnell@oregonstate.edu. For more information about the Lookout Fire at HJA see https://andrewsforest.oregonstate.edu/.

JOIN THE VIRTUAL FIELD RESEARCH COORDINATION NETWORK

We are thrilled to share exciting updates and opportunities regarding The Virtual Field (TVF). As we progress into the second year of our network, we continue to expand with new curriculum developments with a network of faculty instructors from 2- and 4-year institutions and additional Field Stations and Marine Labs (FSMLs)! We are currently recruiting FSML and faculty participants for the second year of our thevirtualfield.org RCN!

The Virtual Field, initiated by OBFS, connects individuals worldwide to ecosystems through virtual learning environments. It offers Ecosystem Exploration videos, 360-Degree Seasonal videos, and Live from the Field content, complete with instructional materials for classroom use. Please see information sheet.

The Virtual Field RCN links FSML staff with college faculty, students, educators, and video content creators. Developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, it enhances digital experiences with feedback from instructors and students. This project provides global access to live and recorded ecosystem exploration videos in 2D and 360 formats, fostering a deeper connection with science and exposing students to STEM careers. The initiative aims to revolutionize undergraduate biology education, making place-based learning accessible to all students.

USING INATURALIST TO CONNECT FSMLS — BY AMANDA YOUNG

This past month, I finally created an iNaturalist project for Toolik Field Station to see what folks were spotting in the station's area.

I was surprised at how easy it was to make a place and then a project in iNaturalist. I included all the areas where researchers who typically stay at our field station work. This ended up being a relatively large polygon incorporating part of Gates of the Arctic National Park, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the Toolik Lake Natural Resource Area. When making the Toolik project I read about umbrella projects and that is when the epiphany hit me:

What if there was an OBFS-wide umbrella project?

Given it could be a great way for FSMLs to compare their biodiversity and observations, I made a draft of what an OBFS iNaturalist umbrella project could look like with just a few stations. I've now added all of the FSML sites from the OBFS website that I could easily find in iNaturalist and added others who responded to my email.

Each station selects one 7-day period during 2025 to run their bioblitz for the competition

The OBFS iNaturalist umbrella project now has 58 FSML sites. Some FSML sites operate numerous locations and thus the number is fairly high. From the current 59 FSML sites there are 738,146 observations and 33,548 species! The size and the status of individual FSML sites vary greatly, from encompassing entire states to just a few acres. Yosemite Field Station has the highest number of observations with over 200,000 observations while some of the smaller stations have just a few dozen (as of now!).

Unsurprisingly, the stations in Central and South America have the most species >3,000. Currently, the OBFS iNaturalist project is overwhelmingly U.S. centric with 47 sites, however there are stations in Mexico (2), El Salvador (1), Costa Rica (4), Ecuador (2), and Peru (2). At least one station in Africa has reached out to learn how to develop their own iNaturalist project, which can then be added to the larger OBFS project.

In the future, let's 'compete' in a friendly bioblitz. Challengingly, all of our stations have different peak seasons that might be ideal for a bioblitz. In the spirit of fairness, we are proposing that each station selects one 7-day period during 2025 to run their bioblitz for the competition. This could be during field courses, peak activity, or something else of your choosing.

If you would like to get involved in helping manage the OBFS iNaturalist project, planning an OBFS-wide bioblitz, or anything else, please let me know; I would love the support.

Additionally, we are moving the discussion about future directions for the project over to the OBFS discussion board. Please jump on and add comments and suggestions. If that does not work, you can email Amanda Young (ayoung55@alaska.edu)

Considering the minimum amount of effort and time put into this new project, it's already had a high engagement and created new ways for our stations to connect from afar. What else could we do to bring our stations together with minimum effort?

Contact: Amanda Young is the Spatial and Environmental Data Center Manager at Toolik Field Station, Institute of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska Fairbanks (ayoung55@alaska.edu)

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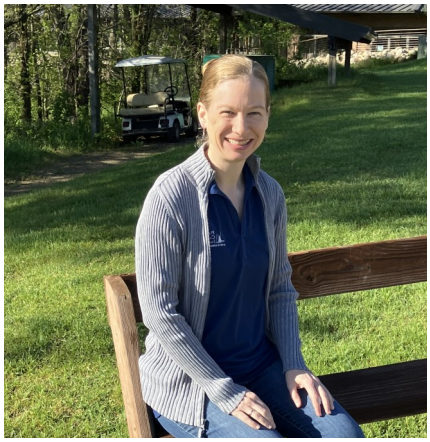
PIERCE CEDAR CREEK INSTITUTE CHANGES – BY SARA EDELMAN

After 17 incredible years as Program and Field Station Manager with Pierce Cedar Creek Institute in Michigan, Matt Dykstra is embarking on a new adventure. In May, Matt began a new position as Managing Director of the Calvin Ecosystem Preserve and Native Gardens at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI. He will manage the natural areas, assist with education programs, and train students in natural areas management.

Matt's dedication and leadership have left an indelible mark on the Institute's education department. He says he'll miss the people most. "I have really enjoyed working with members, volunteers, students, and staff at the Institute," said Matt. "It has been great to work with them to help the Institute carry out its mission."



Above left: Research and Community Engagement Manager Dr. Ellen Holste; right: former Program and Station Manager Matt Dykstra.

Another employee transitioning to a new role is former Community Program Manager Ellen Holste. Ellen is the Research and Community Engagement Manager. She will expand community and citizen science offerings. Ellen holds a PhD in Forestry & Ecology, Evolutionary Biology and Behavior and an MS in forestry from Michigan State University.

Ellen said, "I have truly enjoyed creating meaningful and memorable learning experiences for Institute's members and volunteers as the Community Program Manager. I am excited to bring those experiences to my new position to create connections between science, art, and the community. I want people to feel like there are part of their environment and to be inspired to actively learn about and steward the land around them."

The Institute extends its best wishes to Matt in his future endeavors. We are delighted to welcome Ellen to this new position.

Contact: Ellen at eholste@cedarcreekinstitute.org; Matt at Matthew.Dykstra@calvin.edu; Sara at sedelman@cedarcreekinstitute.org

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