



## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE —BY RHONDA STRUMINGER

As I start my tenure as president, I foremost want to thank each of you for being a part of this community. Without your expertise, care and energy, the organization could never achieve our goal to provide resources to our member stations. Through initiatives such as this newsletter, our active listserv, or the matching program, OBFS helps field stations be inclusive, environmentally responsible models of scientific innovation and discovery for researchers, students, and the public.

We would not be where we are today without the commitment and vision of the past two presidents, Chris Lorentz and Lara Roketenetz. Chris gave us concrete goals to work towards in the 5-year [OBFS Strategic Plan](#). Lara kept the momentum going, adding her own focus on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA+) issues. From developing a Code of Conduct with the IDEA+ committee to representing OBFS at the Society for Integrative & Comparative Biology meeting as well as regional virtual conferences, Lara is an inspiring leader, focused on inclusion, outreach to local communities, and accessibility.

In 2024 OBFS will have the benefit of their achievements. The new [web site](#) will help us stay organized and better able to promote events, jobs, and programs, and an exciting series of Virtual Cafés are being scheduled. We will learn about fire management on four continents as well as the role field stations can play in community outreach, conservation, funding, and research. There will be opportunities to apply for mini-grants, get funding to visit other stations, and represent OBFS at conferences (we will be at the Ecological Society of America in Long Beach, CA – if you plan to go in August, let us know!). Register for the new [OBFS calendar](#) to stay on top of all the programming.

As a volunteer organization none of these exciting initiatives would be possible without the [OBFS board and committees](#). Growing member involvement and support will be the key to our ongoing success. Consider coming to one of our open board meetings – your input is always welcome and greatly appreciated. Wishing everyone a peaceful 2024!

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*Banner photo: Coastal wetland and walkway at the Belle W. Baruch Institute for Marine and Coastal Sciences.*

*Photo credit: [https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/artsandsciences/baruch\\_institute/index.php](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/baruch_institute/index.php)*

2024 OBFS MEETING DETAILS ON PAGE 4

## OBFS ENDOWMENT ESTABLISHED

At the annual Organization of Biological Field Stations (OBFS) meeting at La Selva Research Station in Costa Rica, Philippe Cohen and Cindy Stead made a major announcement.

These dedicated former field station directors created the Philippe S. Cohen and Cynthia I. Stead OBFS Endowment, establishing their legacy of support for field stations and marine labs.

The unrestricted income from the endowment will be used to support OBFS programs and operations as determined by the OBFS board and finance committee.

The OBFS board seeded this endowment with \$50,000 from a restricted fund, and several generous members stepped up to add to the total. The endowment will be a percentage of Cohen and Stead's retirement accounts as a bequest.

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*Cohen is “giving back to a community that has meant a lot to me.”*

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Stead said the endowment will enable OBFS to enhance the organization's ability to support science across the globe. “We have a rapidly changing situation on our planet, and who knows what is going to be critical to address rapidly?” said Stead.

Cohen has been involved with OBFS for 35 years, serving for many terms as Vice President, Treasurer, Member-At-Large board member, and Chair of various committees. The members of OBFS are “passionate and [know] how to laugh at themselves...[this is] giving back to a community that has meant a lot to me,” Cohen said.

OBFS President Rhonda Struminger stressed that “donations like this create opportunities to grow our capacity to fulfill our mission. Thanks to these funds, we can better support stations in their efforts to adapt to a changing climate by promoting environmental research, education and public understanding.” Co-chair of the OBFS Development Committee, Sarah Oktay, said this is “a game changer and we're very grateful...it is something OBFS has needed for a long time.”

*Watch Sarah Oktay interview Cindy and Philippe here:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uL6gSiRKjXE>



## ALL-NEW OBFS WEBSITE GOES LIVE —BY SARAH OKTAY



*Above: Member field station and marine lab logos on the OBFS web site. Below: Example member station profiles.*

On January 1st, 2024, OBFS launched its long-awaited, revamped website after a year of dedicated work. The website renovation was an important action item in the strategic plan for OBFS and is designed to provide great value to members.

Nizar Kassis was the primary web builder with Ron Marcelle debugging and coding. Sarah Oktay, Shane Waddell, Paul Wetzel, Conner Philson and OBFS committee chairs and board members provided content. Photos were curated by Nancy Lowe and original photography was supplied by Philippe Cohen, Dustin Angell, Nancy Lowe, and Joe Klementovich.

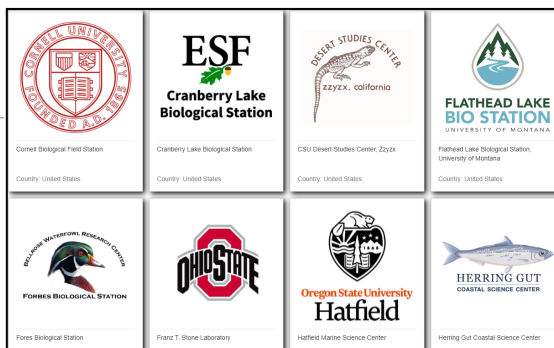
The website has a discussion forum and links to the Virtual Field, the Ecotones project and the listserv. Committee chairs can curate committee webpages. Here is an example of a new page on the website with committee info: <https://obfs.org/about/committees/>.

Members are encouraged to log on and create a page that features detailed information about their field station or marine lab. A FAQ with step by step information on how to do that can be found [here](#). Members will be able to upload events, news, and job postings directly. Profiles may be selected for student members, individual members, board members, and lifetime members who are unaffiliated with a field station or marine lab.

### *Tour the OBFS website February 6, 2024*

A general tour of the site via Zoom will be offered on [February 6th](#) at 12:00 noon Eastern Time by Sarah Oktay. Training sessions to assist users in log-ins and uploading of station info and postings will be offered via Zoom; the next training is at 12:00 noon Eastern Time on [February 9th](#).

Contact: [web\\_admin@obfs.org](mailto:web_admin@obfs.org)



## 2024 OBFS ANNUAL MEETING

Bald eagles, red-cockaded woodpeckers, and great egrets soar where pine, oak, and cypress forests of coastal South Carolina meet the saltmarshes of the North Inlet estuary to form a unique location for the study of nature, culture, and history, and to host the next OBFS Annual Meeting. We hope you'll join us in November for an exciting and inspiring meeting hosted by the Baruch Institutes of Clemson University and the University of South Carolina.

Note that the meeting has been shifted from our traditional mid-September date. Moving to November allows us to miss the height of hurricane season. It also provides an experiment with a different time on the calendar, as some of our members are quite busy closing field stations or running educational programs in September.

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*November 11-16, 2024*

*Hobcaw Barony, Georgetown, South Carolina*

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Hobcaw Barony is a 16,000-ha private non-profit reserve that was established by Belle W. Baruch in her will in 1964. She charged the foundation to work with the state universities of South Carolina and to make a long story short, that's why we have co-hosts for this meeting. Both USC and Clemson have research stations on the property, with USC focusing on Marine Science and Clemson on Forestry, Wildlife, and Natural Resource Management.

The Annual Meeting Committee is working on programs now. Stay tuned to the listserv for calls for workshops, concurrent sessions, lightning talks, and auction items. To volunteer to help, contact Skip Van Bloem ([skipvb@clemson.edu](mailto:skipvb@clemson.edu)) or Tom Bansak ([tom.bansak@flbs.umt.edu](mailto:tom.bansak@flbs.umt.edu)). We'll always take volunteer helpers! We'll have a collection of exciting field trips to choose from. We are currently working on kayaking, cycling, history tours, art tours at the historic Brookgreen Gardens, and others.

Planning your trip: The Georgetown area typically has pleasant coastal weather in November, with mean daily highs/lows of ~67°/45°F (20°/7°C) and about 3" (7.5cm) rainfall in the month. Cabin/field-dorm style housing is available on site, up to 60 beds. Ample beach rentals, VRBO, or hotel rooms are also nearby (search Georgetown or Pawleys Island, SC). The closest major airports are Myrtle Beach (MYR, 40 minute drive) and Charleston (CHS, 1h40m). Hobcaw Barony is on highway US17, just east of the Waccamaw River and Georgetown. (*See box, page 5*)



*Photo Credits: <https://www.clemson.edu/cafls/baruch/> and [https://sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/artsandsciences/baruch\\_institute/facilities/marine\\_field\\_lab/index.php](https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/baruch_institute/facilities/marine_field_lab/index.php)*

## VIRTUAL FIELD ESTUARINE MODULES—BY BILL STROSNIDER



*Above: Matt Kimball and Bruce Pfirrmann demonstrate proper seining techniques in a tidal creek.*

### Useful 2024 Meeting Links

To learn more about the rich history of [Hobcaw Barony](#) and the visionary Belle W. Baruch.

[Between the Waters](#), fascinating interactive website on the site's history was also produced by our public TV service.

Co-host [USC Baruch Institute of Marine and Coastal Ecology](#), including the majority of on-site housing and evening events.

Co-host [Clemson Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology and Forest Science](#), where most of the daytime program will occur.



*Above: Sampling the Maple River.*

Baruch Marine Field Lab has made a suite of updated [virtual field experience modules](#) available online. The modules focus on estuarine ecology and are most applicable to the southeast USA, yet contain elements of broad fundamental applicability.

Each module includes informative text, photos, videos, data sheets, real datasets, and data exercises all wrapped together with ArcGIS Storymaps.

Developed as a response to COVID19 by researchers and educators at the University of South Carolina's Baruch Marine Field Laboratory, University of Georgia Marine Institute, and University of Wisconsin, we see their utility now as pre- and post-lab information/exercises, classroom lecture support material, as well as substitutes for cancelled field trips.

Module topics include Barrier Island Dynamics, Estuarine Primary Productivity, Nekton Ecology in Estuaries, Oyster Ecology, and Anthropogenic Impacts on Estuaries.

The project was funded by National Science Foundation award #[2037372](#).

*Contact: Bill Strosnider ([bill@baruch.sc.edu](mailto:bill@baruch.sc.edu))*

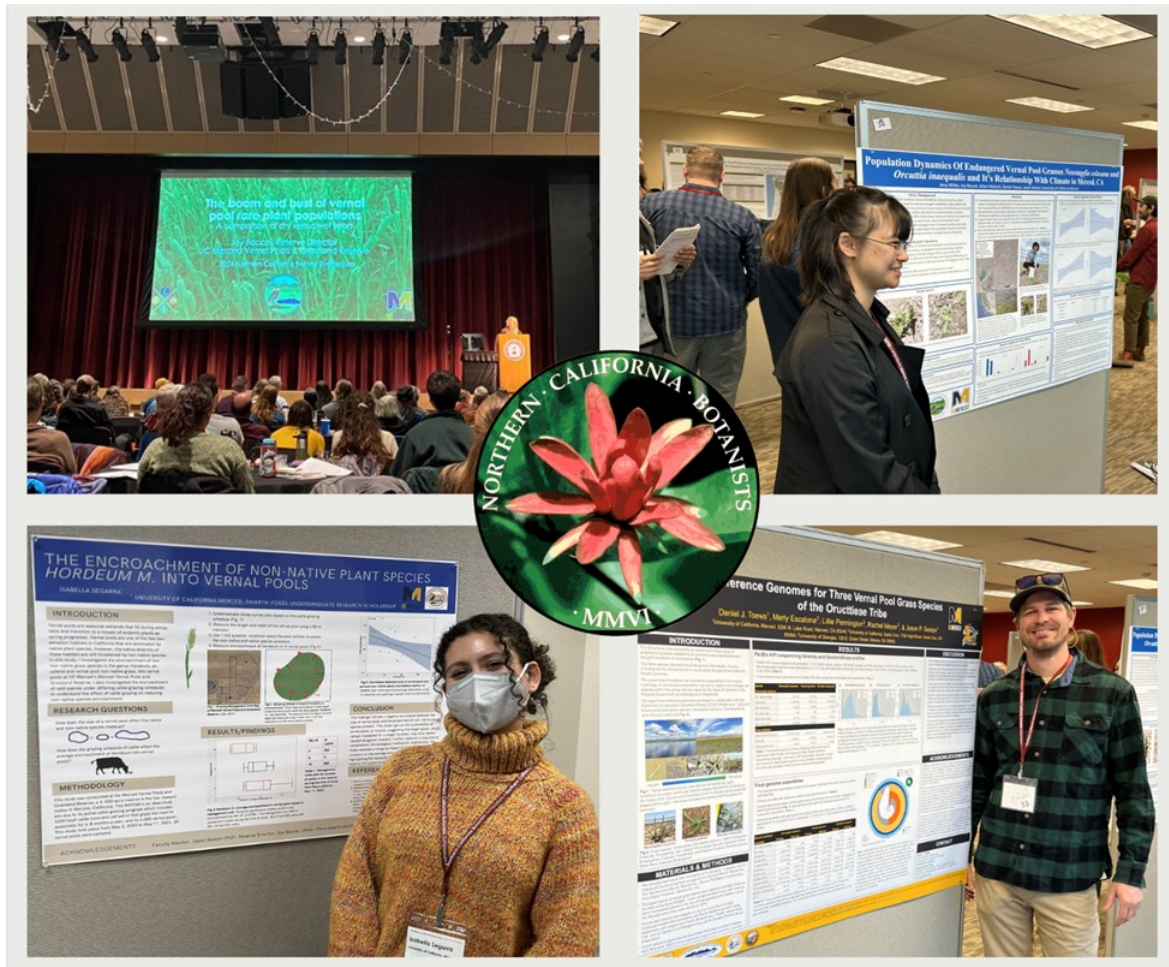
## DAM REMOVAL AT UMBS — BY CHRISSY BILLAU

The University of Michigan Biological Station collaborated with Bowling Green State University to monitor the aquatic ecology of the Maple River before, during and after the removal of the Lake Kathleen Dam in 2018-19.

Read more here: <https://lsa.umich.edu/umbs/news-events/all-news/search-news/decade-long-study-reveals-dam-removal-effect-on-river-ecosyste.html>

## VERNAL POOLS AT BOTANISTS SYMPOSIUM — BY ISABELLA SEGARRA

On January 8-9, 2024, a group of University of California Merced affiliates, two of whom are part of the Merced Vernal Pools and Grassland Reserve (MVPGR), joined the NorCal Botanists 2024 Symposium at California State University, Chico highlighting “Plant Diversity and Viability in Uncertain Times.” MVPGR director Joy Baccei gave a talk on vernal pool rare plants *Orcuttia inaequalis* (San Joaquin Valley Orcutt Grass), *Neostafia colusana* (Colusa grass) and seed banking of another rare vernal pool plant, *Castilleja campestris* ssp. *succulenta* (Succulent owl’s clover).



Clockwise from top left: MVPGR director Joy Baccei, Amy White, Daniel Toews and Isabella Segarra present their research.

Amy White presented on population dynamics of endangered vernal pool grasses as part of her UROC scholarship, where she found precipitation impacted *Neostafia colusana* and *Orcuttia inaequalis*. Isabella Segarra’s talk focused on her Swarth-Fogel Undergraduate Research Scholarship on non-native species’ invasion into pools, where she found a marginal effect between cattle grazing and encroachment of *Hordeum marinum*. PhD candidate Daniel Toews presented “Reference Genomes for Three Vernal Pool Grass Species of the Orcuttieae Tribe” as part of the California Conservation Genomics Project (CCGP); his findings can be used for understanding gene flow and evolutionary adaptation between diverged species, and above all, conservation. Amy and Daniel won 2nd and 3rd place poster awards — congratulations!

Contact: [isegarra@ucmerced.edu](mailto:isegarra@ucmerced.edu)



## *Virtual Café on Field Stations and Fire: May 6, 2024*

### VIRTUAL CAFÉ TOPIC—FIELD STATIONS AND FIRE

The OBFS International Committee invites you to a Virtual Café on Field Stations and Fire this May.

Within the community of biological field stations, we don't need to debate whether climate change is real as we see the local impacts in real time. Among the most dramatic changes is the increase in frequency and intensity of fires as well as increasing length of the fire season.

For field stations in remote and urban/wildland transition zones, fire raises a host of challenges that potentially compromise the integrity of the biological resources we try to protect as well as research and educational activities.

So what tools and strategies should we consider to mitigate fire risk and recovery? Perhaps more than ever, it is important that we share what we know, what we are trying, and how we live in a time of increasing fire risk and impact. Whether you have thought about these issues or not, this is a virtual cafe you will not want to miss.

This discussion will be led by a panel of field station managers/directors with a range of experiences managing fire risk and recovery.

Panelists will include representatives from these field stations (from east to west):

- ◆ Mpala Research Station, Kenya
- ◆ University of Ioannina Palase Field Research Station, Greece
- ◆ Iracambi Research Center, Brazil
- ◆ Archbold Biological Station, Florida, USA
- ◆ Quesnel River Research Centre, British Columbia, Canada
- ◆ Pepperwood Preserve, California, USA

Issues/questions to be addressed include:

- ◆ Policies for use/prevention
- ◆ Warning systems
- ◆ Plans/Strategies for recovery
- ◆ Strategies that have NOT worked.

On May 6, 2024 will be a 90-minute Virtual Cafe with 5-10 minute presentations from panelists followed by participants' questions.

9:00 - 10:30 AM US Pacific  
 Noon - 1:30 PM US Eastern  
 5:00 - 6:30 PM London  
 7:00 - 8:30 PM Athens

Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85744265020?pwd=9JpLeh53GtVQi0emSsFojwP1eMYAWd.1>

*Photo credit: <https://csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/becoming-a-wildland-firefighter/>*

## 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](mailto: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!

## CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY BIOLOGICAL STATION —BY JESSICA LAPP

Nestled along the curving beaches of Sand Bay on Beaver Island, CMU's field station looks east across northern Lake Michigan. The field station's prime location allows access to the Beaver Island Archipelago as well as the inland lakes, forests, dunes, marshes, and bogs of Beaver Island itself. Offering courses and space for workshops, research, and meetings since the summer of 1960, the field station provides a unique educational location for students and researchers to study a variety of landscapes and waterways and the great variety of life teeming in these. In 58 square miles, Beaver Island is home to a striking array of biodiversity, with distinct ecosystems available for exploration, education, and recreation.



*Above: Sunrise on Lake Michigan's shoreline at Central Michigan Biological Station.*

Purchased for \$1 in 1942 from the Michigan Conservation Land Division, the then Central Michigan College of Education intended the property for educational use but did not initially develop the site until 1959. Construction on the main lodge began on July 1, 1959, and once the main lodge was completed, the station could formally open. Classes were offered during the summer terms beginning in 1960.

Over the years, with additional assistance from grants received from the National Science Foundation and private donor support, the station has expanded to include the lodge with attached dining hall and dormitories; a classroom building with auditorium, library, and teaching labs; research labs; faculty/staff housing; a pole barn; and a campground with additional cabins, campsites, and hiking trails.

In 2006, CMU purchased the decommissioned US Coast Guard boat-house on Whiskey Point, providing a deep-water dock for the motor vessel Chippewa and two research Zodiacs. Donor support also enabled CMU to purchase Miller's Marsh and provided the deed to Egbert Farm.

Those interested in visiting the station for classes, workshops, research, conferences, or a tour can contact staff at [CMUBS@cmich.edu](mailto:CMUBS@cmich.edu).



## IDEA+ SPOTLIGHT: RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Research Roundup! Many articles related to IDEA+ and safety in field-based institutions were published in 2023. Here are some of the amazing articles to add to your 2024 reading list!

*Click the links to access; journal subscription may be required*

Ackerman, A., Yarincik, K., Murphy, S., Cetinic, I., Fundis, A., Miller, A., Shroyer, E., Busse, A., Covington, Q., DeSilva, A., Haupt, A., Johnson, L., Lee, C., Lorenzoni, L., Murphy, B., Ramarui, J., Rosenheim, B., & Steinberg, D. (2023). Know before you go: A community-derived approach to planning for and preventing sexual harassment at oceanographic field sites. *Oceanography*, 36(1), 38-43. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27200036>

Blonder, B. W. (2023). Carrying the moral burden of safe fieldwork. *The Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America*, 104(1), e02031. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bes2.2031>

Bowser, G., & Cid, C. R. (2023). Knowing your field community: Elevating the human dimension in ecological research and teaching. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, 63(1), 128-135. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icb/icado36>

Cronin, M. R., Zavaleta, E. S., Beltran, R. S., Esparza, M., Payne, A. R., Termini, V., Thompson, J., & Jones, M. S. (2024). Testing the effectiveness of interactive training on sexual harassment and assault in field science. *Scientific Reports*, 14(1), 523. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-49203-0>

Kamran, M., & Jennings, K. (2023). Fieldwork and LGBTQ+ identities: Queering the outdoors. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, 63(1), 79-85. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icb/icado38>

Matsuda, S. B. (2023). Centering transgender and gender non-conforming experience, access, & safety in ecological fieldwork. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, 63(1), 83-97, icado17. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icb/icado17>

McDermott, V., Roketenetz, L. D., Jekielek, P., & Struminger, R. (2023). IDEA+ and OBFS: using transdisciplinary strategies to create more inclusive spaces. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, 63(1), 136-144. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icb/icado25>

Morales, N., & Reano, D. (2023). Critically assessing undergraduate field experiences: Understanding conceptualizations and opportunities for building inclusive programs. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, 63(1), 66-78, icado08. <https://academic.oup.com/icb/article/63/1/66/7070715>

Verble, R. M., Richards-Zawacki, C. L., & Young, V. K. (2023). Beyond a vision for the future: Tangible steps to engage diverse participants in inclusive field experiences. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, 63(1), 59-65, icado63. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icb/icado63>

Yarincik, K., Kelly, A., McGlynn, T., & Verble, R. M. (2023). Best practices to promote field science safety. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, 63(1), 145-161, icado14. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icb/icado14>

*If you are interested in additional resources or have content that you would like to submit for the IDEA+ Spotlight, please reach out to Tori McDermott ([vmcdermott@alaska.edu](mailto:vmcdermott@alaska.edu)), Phoebe Jekielek ([phoebe@hurricaneisland.net](mailto:phoebe@hurricaneisland.net)) or email [diversity@obfs.org](mailto:diversity@obfs.org).*

### HOW TO FIND US

[www.obfs.org/](http://www.obfs.org/)

[@joinobfs](https://www.instagram.com/joinobfs)



[@OBFS-FieldBio](https://www.tiktok.com/@obfs-fieldbio)



[YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)



[The Virtual Field](#)



Above: Live oak, South Carolina.

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STACY MCNULTY, EDITOR  
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## NEW LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP IN OBFS

The Lifetime Membership category was launched by the first member, Eric Nagy, PhD, the Associate Director of the Mountain Lake Biological Station, Virginia and a longtime supporter of OBFS.

Eric served OBFS for many years in roles including President, Vice President, Governance Committee, Chair of the Preventing Sexual Misconduct Working Group and several other positions.

The Lifetime Membership fee is \$1,000 US and can be made in one payment or a series of 10 consecutive monthly \$100 payments. All funds received by OBFS for Individual Lifetime Memberships will be deposited to and invested in an OBFS endowed account. The donation is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

OBFS Individual Lifetime Members will continue to receive all the benefits of membership with no additional membership payment. In addition, they will be recognized on the OBFS web site and in the annual meeting program (unless individual lifetime members prefer to remain anonymous).

The Lifetime Membership category was approved by the OBFS Development Committee and OBFS Board in 2023.

### Lifetime Membership in OBFS Now Available

As of December 31st 2023, OBFS Lifetime Members include Eric Nagy, Philippe Cohen, Sylvia Torti, and Shane Waddell. Official “Friends of OBFS” also qualify for Lifetime Membership. Past winners include: Peter Connors, Miles O’Brien, Mark Ruffalo, and Peter McCartney.

To initiate your OBFS Individual Lifetime Membership, please contact Treasurer Paul Wetzel ([treasurer@obfs.org](mailto:treasurer@obfs.org)) and make payment on the OBFS Donation Page.

The cost of Individual Lifetime membership will be periodically reviewed by the Board of Directors. OBFS reserves the right to discontinue lifetime membership if an individual does not abide by the OBFS Code of Conduct.



**ECLIPSE 2024 VIEWING**

Is your station hosting a solar eclipse outreach event in April? Send items for the website to [newsletter@obfs.org](mailto:newsletter@obfs.org).

Credit: [www.nasa.gov/solar-system/new-nasa-map-details-2023-and-2024-solar-eclipses-in-the-us/](http://www.nasa.gov/solar-system/new-nasa-map-details-2023-and-2024-solar-eclipses-in-the-us/)