While I have tulips emerging in my yard, it is perhaps premature to call an end to winter. But the beginning of March is a welcome indicator that spring cannot be far away. I know our students, faculty and staff are anxiously awaiting spring break. Final exams will quickly be upon us.

**IANR's Unit Planning Process**

SNR's faculty and staff are currently engaged in a very important unit planning process to provide a framework for meeting the goals articulated by Chancellor Perlman and Vice Chancellor Ronnie Green.

For IANR, this process will lead to the strategic reallocation of resources across the Institute beginning later this year. This process was discussed at SNR's faculty and staff meetings the week of February 20 and was the subject of two All-SNR listening sessions the week of February 27. These listening sessions will continue into March as we seek to identify our current and emerging signature programs.

**Remote Sensing Scientist Search Status**

In early February we came up with a short list of candidates for the remote sensing scientist faculty position. This position is a tenure track, 12-month appointment in SNR, fully funded by IANR. The position has a 60 percent research and 40 percent teaching apportionment and was advertised at the rank of assistant or associate professor. We received more than 60 applications for this position.

The candidates approved for interview were:

- Le Wang, Department of Geography, University at Buffalo
- Margaret Andrew, Canadian Forest Service, Pacific Forestry Centre
- Brian Wardlow, National Drought Mitigation Center, UNL
- Soe Myint, School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning, Arizona State University

Le Wang and Margaret Andrew interviewed for this position on February 20-22 and February 22-24, respectively. Brian Wardlow and Soe Myint will be interviewing for this position the week of March 12. You will be receiving detailed agendas for their interviews and copies of their CVs in the near future. Both candidates will be presenting research and teaching seminars as part of their interviews and meeting with faculty, staff and students. Please plan to participate in these interviews and provide feedback to the search committee.

Members of the search committee include Jim Merchant (chair), Don Rundquist, Mark Svoboda, Anatoly Gitelson, Tala Awada, Milda Vaitkus, and Andy Boateng.

I hope to be in a position to make an offer to one of these candidates by the end of March.

**Crop Simulation Modeler and Hydrogeophysicist**

We worked successfully with IANR to recruit a crop simulation modeler from the University of Florida. This position is part of the IANR faculty cluster hire. Guillermo Baigorria will be
joining SNR in July as an assistant professor. He will have a joint appointment in SNR (70 percent) and Agronomy and Horticulture (30 percent). His appointment is divided between research (75 percent), teaching (15 percent), and extension (10 percent). SNR faculty and staff had the opportunity to meet Guillermo during his interview in early January, although he was on campus for only one day. We will arrange for Guillermo to give a seminar following his arrival in July so more faculty and staff can get to know him and see how his research can be integrated into other SNR programs. I will provide a copy of Guillermo’s curriculum vitae to faculty and staff soon.

We are currently working with IANR to set up interviews for two candidates for the hydrogeophysicist position as part of the IANR cluster hire. The candidates for this position will be hired at the rank of professor, with tenure. I expect these interviews will be held during the early part of April. Stay tuned for more information on each of the candidates and the agenda for the interviews.

**Heuermann Lecture Series Planning Committee**

I have been appointed to the newly formed planning committee to organize the Heuermann Lecture Series for the 2012-13 academic year. The committee’s membership is highly diverse, representing a wide range of interests. The committee met for the first time on February 20 and Vice Chancellor Ronnie Green gave the committee its charge. The committee agreed to organize four lectures as part of this series for next year, two each during the fall and spring semesters. Our plan is to have the program set by late March so the series for next year can be formally announced.

**Faculty and Staff Evaluations**

Faculty evaluations were completed in early February and delivered to IANR administration by the February 15, 2012, deadline. IANR administration is reviewing these evaluations and I will be meeting with our faculty beginning the week of March 5. As stated previously, the focus of these meetings will be on 2012 goals and future faculty development opportunities.

Staff evaluations are currently underway and will be completed in early March. I have completed evaluations for those staff that I directly supervise, including Sharon Kelly, Jim Hines, Jacki Loomis, and Christine Steggs. I also share supervision for Mark Mesarch, Kelly Smith, and Les Howard with Betty Walter-Shea, Mike Hayes, and Mark Kuzila, respectively. Meetings with staff to discuss their evaluations are to be completed and the staff evaluations must be submitted to me for review and approval by March 9.

**SNR Recipients of the NU Teaching Council/Parents Association Recognition**

Congratulations to the six SNR faculty members and one SNR staff member who received the University of Nebraska Teaching Council/Parents Association “Certification of Recognition for Contributions to Students.” This very prestigious honor went to:

*Rebecca Buller*  
*Dennis Ferraro*  
*Patricia Freeman*  
*Gene Guan*  
*Sue Ellen Pegg*  
*Lisa Pennisi*  
*David Wishart*
We honor these faculty and staff and appreciate their service to our students in a variety of capacities.

**Congrats to Hygnstrom and Vantassel, Wildlife Educators of the Year**

The National Wildlife Control Operators Association (NWCOA) in February recognized Scott Hygnstrom and Stephen Vantassel as Educators of the Year for their effort in the development of the National Wildlife Control Training Program (NWCTP). As the wildlife control industry has continued to grow, agency officials and industry leaders have stepped up requests for a standardized curriculum that could be used throughout the country to train and regulate wildlife control personnel. The NWCTP is the first curriculum to meet NWCOA’s certification standards.

![Scott Hygnstrom, Stephen Vantassel](image.png)

The NWCTP is 250 pages in length and contains 17 modules. Part 1 covers information that every wildlife control operator should know, such as the theory of wildlife damage management, safety, control methods, animal handling, euthanasia, ethics, and regulations. Part 2, species modules, explains how the concepts contained in Part 1 apply to the management of bats, raccoons, skunks, tree squirrels, and urban birds.

The NWCTP’s developers also received assistance from Paul Curtis, Raj Smith, and Gretchen Gary of Cornell University. The Cornell team received NWCOA’s Researcher of the Year Award. Team members are gratified by the positive response from industry and government officials. Presently, the team is receiving queries from state agencies seeking to implement this training in their respective states.

**Green Fire’s Popularity Calls for Two Screenings**

A free screening of Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time was hosted by SNR on February 8 in the Hardin Hall Auditorium and again on February 23, due to popular demand. Curt Meine, senior fellow with the Aldo Leopold Foundation, introduced the film on the 8th and led discussion afterward. Curt, who has written a biography on Leopold, serves as the film's on-screen guide. The film explores Leopold’s life in the early part of the twentieth century, the development of his philosophy on the “land ethic,” and the many ways that it continues to be applied throughout the world today. Although probably best known as the author of the conservation classic A Sand County Almanac, Leopold also is renowned for his work as an educator, philosopher, forester, ecologist, and wilderness advocate.
Scott Hygnstrom, the SNR professor who organized the screenings, said, "I saw the film last November and found it to be one of the most picturesque, poignant, and well-crafted documentaries that I have ever seen. Aldo Leopold has done more to shape the ecological conscience of America than anyone I know. This is a must-see film for anybody interested in natural resources."

A trailer of the film can be viewed at [http://www.greenfiremovie.com](http://www.greenfiremovie.com). SNR owns a site license for repeated screenings of the film for anyone who is interested. The 72-minute documentary was produced by the Aldo Leopold Foundation, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Center for Humans and Nature.

**Proposals Submitted and Grants Awarded**

Congratulations to SNR faculty and staff for grants awarded during February. Total funding received during the month was $357,731. The majority of funding received this past month was from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, National Science Foundation, and the Upper Big Blue NRD. Those faculty and staff awarded funding included Don Rundquist, Xun-Hong Chen, Cody Knutson, Martha Shulski, and Amy Burgin.

Proposals submitted during February 2012 were for funds totaling $172,731. SNR faculty submitting proposals included Jim Merchant, Steve Thomas, Song Feng, Steve Hu, Brian Fuchs, and Mike Hayes. These proposals were directed to the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, AmericaView, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Geological Survey.

The total funding requested so far this fiscal year, July through February, is $14,754,124. The total amount of grants awarded to SNR faculty and staff this fiscal year is $5,037,621.