The Director's Report, April 2009

School of Natural Resources
From Earth to Sky and Everything in Between

Important Opportunities for Your Input

Please mark your calendars now to be sure you have no conflicts with these upcoming all-SNR events:

- May 12 - SNR Spring Retreat and Workshop
- August 20 - SNR Fall Retreat

The chapters for the SNR five-year review are progressing nicely, thanks to the leadership of the SNR administrative team and SNR faculty. The final opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to provide feedback on the chapters and the process will be at the May 12 spring retreat. The retreat will be in the Hardin Hall auditorium beginning at 8 a.m. and continuing all morning. We will be breaking into smaller groups to focus on each of the chapters, which are organized around current and emerging issues. Please attend and participate actively in the discussion. Of course, you will first need to read the chapters, which will be available in the next few weeks. Following the retreat, the administrative team will finalize the document. We are required to deliver a draft of the review document to IANR and the College of Arts and Sciences administration by July 1. The document will be distributed to the review team in early to mid-August. Copies of the document will be available on the SNR website to all SNR faculty, staff and students. The review team will be on-site September 21-25. You should already have these dates on hold on your calendars. I will be providing the full agenda for the review team visit in the next week.

Faculty have received a request from Jim Merchant to prepare a two-page curriculum vitae for inclusion in the review document. These CVs are to be prepared following the format that Jim provided. Please email them to Sharon Kelly no later than April 24.

In This Issue

- Important Opportunities for Your Input
- SNR External Advisory Committee
- SNR Faculty Positions: Update
- World Water Forum: Istanbul, Turkey
- Congratulations to SNR Graduate Students
- Grants Awarded and Proposals Submitted

Upcoming Events

See SNR April 2009 calendar.

Director's Upcoming Travel

April 5-8
Washington, D.C.
To participate in a U.S. Climate Change Science
On the morning of Thursday, August 20, SNR will be holding its second annual fall retreat for all faculty, staff, and students. The purpose of this retreat will be to focus on the accomplishments of the previous year, the unit’s goals for the new academic year, and final preparations for the unit review. Attendance at the fall retreat is required.

**SNR External Advisory Committee**

On March 25, I met with members of the SNR External Advisory Committee to bring them up to date on the activities of the unit and to discuss our upcoming five-year review and their involvement in that event. I will meet with this committee again in July to seek further input on the review, critical questions that SNR would like to have the review committee address as part of the review process, and the expected outcomes from the review process. The External Advisory Committee will also be meeting with the Review Team to provide a stakeholder perspective on the unit.

Members of the SNR External Advisory Committee include:

- **Tim Anderson** - Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District
- **Don Blankenau** - Husch Blackwell Sanders LLP
- **Ron Case** - retired SNR faculty member
- **Barbara Cooksley** - Sandhills rancher
- **Chris Helzer** - The Nature Conservancy
- **Kirk Nelson** - Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
- **Lee Orton** - Orton Law Office
- **Matthew E. Pillard** - HDR Engineering, Inc.
- **Richard Ross** - Southeast Community College
- **Wes Sheets** - retired Game and Parks Commission
- **Chadwin Smith** - Headwaters Corporation
- **David Stock** - President, Stock Seed Farms

I look forward to future interactions with the committee.

**SNR Faculty Positions: Update**

We have completed the interview process for three candidates for the Advanced GIS faculty position. I expect to be moving forward with the hiring process next week, and I will be making an announcement to all SNR employees as soon as possible. Thanks to all of
you who participated in the interviews. Your participation and feedback on the candidates was very helpful.

We have now reached the short list phase of the Applied Climate Scientist/High Plains Regional Climate Center Director position search. We hope to be conducting interviews in late April. Additional information will be forthcoming.

**World Water Forum: Istanbul, Turkey**

I attended the World Water Forum meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, the week of March 16, an extraordinary event that attracted an estimated 20,000 people. The purpose of my participation was two-fold. First, I was invited by the Spanish Directorate of Water to participate in a session called *Running Dry! How to Turn Droughts into Opportunities for Better Management*. Following an opening presentation by Marta Moren, Water Director for Spain, a technical session focused on the socio-economic and environmental impacts of recent droughts. In addition to my presentation on the experiences of the United States with drought management, there were also case studies presented on Spain and the Segura River Basin, and on Chile, France, Turkey, and Argentina. What was most impressive to me was the tremendous interest in this topic by participants. Attendees at our session numbered around 250 and the auditorium was literally jammed. Excellent presentations were followed by many questions from attendees. After the session, I was inundated with questions about American experiences with drought management and potential collaborative opportunities.

Don Wilhite, director of the School of Natural Resources, far right, discussed drought mitigation strategies at the 2009 World Water Forum with fellow panelists.
from Chile, Spain, and France.

Second, my participation in this meeting provided an excellent opportunity to reconnect with members of the science and policy community, this time broadening the discussion from drought to water and other strengths of the School of Natural Resources. Numerous organizations of the United Nations engaged in water activities, U.S. federal agencies, and private organizations/non-governmental organizations were present at the Forum and provided opportunities for me to share the expertise of SNR faculty. Many of these organizations had prepared interesting exhibits and displays about their water programs. Coincidentally, Mike O’Neill, Water Quality Program Leader with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), was part of the American delegation to the Forum. Several SNR faculty have worked with Mike on competitive grant proposals so he is quite aware of the expertise of our unit in water and climate. The USDA display prominently highlighted the U.S. Drought Monitor as a drought management tool that is widely relied on in USDA for guidance on drought policy recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture. This display was excellent exposure for the map tool and the National Drought Mitigation Center.

One of the venues for the 2009 World Water Forum, the week of March 16 in Istanbul, was the Congress and Cultural Center at Sutluce on the Golden Horn of the Bosporus Strait.

Congratulations to SNR Graduate Students

Saadia Bihmidine and John Quinn are the recipients of the School of Natural Resources Meritorious Graduate Student Award for their outstanding performance as graduate students and for their research and professional contributions to their fields and to SNR. They will each receive a cash prize and will be recognized at the School’s monthly birthday celebration on April 10. Please plan to attend and acknowledge the contributions
that Saadia, John and all of our graduate students make to our programs.

Saadia Bihmidine

John Quinn

Grants Awarded and Proposals Submitted

SNR faculty and staff were awarded grants totaling $265,000 in March. Congratulations to Kyle Hoagland, Craig Allen, Scott Hygnstrom, Ken Hubbard, Jesse Korus, John Lenters, and Don Rundquist. The total for grants awarded in 2009 to date is $3.66 million.

Faculty and staff submitting proposals in March included Walter Schacht/Larkin Powell, Craig Allen, Kyle Hoagland, Jesse Korus, Jim Brandle/John Quinn, Ken Hubbard, Don Rundquist, and Rachael Herpel. The total amount for grant proposals submitted in March was $2.06 million. The total for grant proposals submitted by SNR faculty from January through March 2009 was $4.285 million.