The Director's Report, July 2011

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

I was pleased to be in the position during May and June to allocate salary increases to SNR’s very deserving faculty and staff. Thanks to Carol Cartwright for all of her hard work in getting her portion of this task completed ahead of schedule. Carol is truly a dedicated employee and SNR is very fortunate to have her as manager of the Natural Resources Business Center.

I really appreciate the investment the citizens of Nebraska make each year in the University of Nebraska and its many employees who serve the needs of the state. This was reinforced again and again as I signed each of the salary notification letters. I hope all of our employees appreciate the investment the state is making in each of them.

Travel to Italy and Switzerland

The invitation to speak at the European Water Resources Association (EWRA) conference in Catania, Italy, allowed me to visit both the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in Geneva. My first stop was Rome to meet with Pasquale Steduto, deputy director of the Water Development and Management Unit for FAO. I invited Pasquale to attend the 3rd Water for Food Conference in May 2011 and make a plenary presentation. I have known Pasquale for nearly 10 years and have had the opportunity to work with him on several occasions. As a follow-up to his visit to Lincoln, I met with him on June 27 to discuss future collaboration between the Water for Food Institute (WFI) and FAO, the forthcoming 6th World Water Forum to be held in Marseilles, France, in March 2012, and other future collaborations on drought management. Collaborative opportunities between FAO and the WFI are significant and it will be important for the Founding WFI Executive Director to address these possibilities once that person arrives on the UNL campus.
The National Monument of Victor Emmanuel II, or "Il Vittoriano," honors the first king of a unified Italy. Between the Piazza Venezia and the Capitoline Hill in Rome, it was completed in 1935.

My next stop was in Catania to attend a portion of the VI European Water Resources Association Conference. The theme of this meeting was Water Engineering and Management in a Changing Environment. This is the second EWRA conference that I have attended. The first was in Menton, France, in 2005. At the Catania meeting I gave a keynote talk on drought risk management in the context of a changing climate. (The presentation turned out to be more of a challenge than I imagined—or at least almost. I was scheduled to give the first keynote talk and just before my presentation there was a power outage in our portion of the city. No Powerpoint! Panic! After about a 30-minute delay and when I was about to begin without the luxury of visual aids, the power returned.) Over the years I have worked on several projects with members of the conference scientific organizing committee so this meeting provided an important opportunity to reconnect with these colleagues and discuss current and future projects.

My final stop was in Geneva to meet with M.V.K. Sivakumar, director of WMO's Climate Prediction and Adaptation Branch, and my counterpart, Mohamed Ait Kadi, who co-chairs with me the executive committee on an International Drought Management Program, currently under development by WMO and the Global Water Partnership (GWP). Our goal was to review the concept note for this new program which I drafted earlier this year. Once the concept note is approved fully by WMO and the GWP leadership, they will begin to solicit contributions from donor countries and organizations to launch this new program.

**IANR 2025 Goals Retreat – July 23-25**

A follow-up to the IANR administrative retreat held in November 2010 is scheduled for July 23-25, 2011, in North Platte. The focus of this retreat for a broader group of IANR administrators will be to focus on the IANR 2025 initiative launched by Vice Chancellor Ronnie Green earlier this year, particularly addressing the Institute's goals and the outcomes of the 11 committees established to address key issues ranging from strategic partnerships to evaluation reformation.

I have been working with Tala Awada, Christine Steggs, and the SNR faculty to respond to the IANR draft goals presented to us a few weeks ago. Each IANR unit was asked to modify the goals as stated and/or suggest new goals, and to identify how it will allocate or reallocate resources to address these goals. The focus of our June faculty meeting was a discussion of this goals document. Thanks to all SNR faculty who contributed to this discussion and to those who provided written comments either before or following the faculty meeting. I submitted our document to David Jackson, ARD associate dean, on June 29, one day ahead of the deadline.

**SNR Fall Seminar Series**

See SNR July 2011 calendar.
The School's fall seminar schedule has been finalized, thanks to the great efforts of Tala Awada. The seminars this fall will highlight an array of the exciting and diverse natural resources-related research at UNL, such as hydrology, livestock and the environment, algae and biofuels, remote sensing and ecosystems, wildlife and molecular biology, and business and natural resources. The School will host eight speakers from UNL and two from other institutions:

- Valery Forbes, School of Biological Sciences, September 14
- Anatoly Gitelson, School of Natural Resources, September 21
- Galen Erickson, Animal Science, September 28
- Andy Bishop, Rainwater Basin Joint Venture Coordinator, October 5
- John Gates, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, October 12
- Paul Black, Biochemistry, October 26
- Jay Storz, School of Biological Sciences, November 2
- Jeff Royer, Agricultural Economics, November 9
- Paul Sutton, Department of Geography, University of Denver, November 16
- Suat Irmak, Biological Systems Engineering, November 30

You will be receiving a follow-up email with a complete schedule once I have the titles. I hope you will enjoy the seminars and take advantage of this unique opportunity to foster new research and teaching collaborations with faculty from other units at UNL. The seminars will be held on Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m. in the Hardin Hall Auditorium. The location of the October 5 seminar is pending.

**Collaborating Agencies Update**

As a follow-up to the December 2010 meeting with key state and federal agency representatives in Nebraska, Tala Awada and I set up one-on-one meetings with several of these representatives to discuss current collaborations and partnerships and how these could be strengthened in the future. Over the last few months, representatives from the School's administrative team, faculty and staff have met with leaders from The Nature Conservancy, The Rainwater Basin Joint Venture, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Headwaters Corporation, Nebraska Forest Service, and Agroforestry Center. We will resume our visits with other agencies this fall and we hope that by the end of 2011 we will have met with leaders and representatives from most key agencies in the state. We would like to thank the faculty and staff who participated in those meetings and who provided valuable input on relevant current and future research in Nebraska, graduate and undergraduate education and personnel training in SNR, and undergraduate internships. Meetings were productive and leaders from various agencies shared with our team their current and future research priorities and needs. Follow-up meetings with individual faculty and several new collaborations and internships have resulted from these meetings. If you are interested in contacting an agency or would like to learn more about some of the key research priorities for a specific agency, please contact Tala Awada.

**Outreach Coordinator – Announcement**

I am very pleased to announce that Ken Dewey has expressed a strong desire to serve as SNR's next Outreach Coordinator. Ken's term will begin on July 1 and continue for the next academic year and, perhaps, beyond. Ken’s appointment in SNR is mostly directed towards outreach activities and he has done an excellent job in recent years with the Central Plains Severe Weather Symposium and Weatherfest and, more recently, with the new Weather Camp activity. I expect Ken to continue the tradition of excellence for this program that was achieved under Matt Joeckel’s leadership. Of course this level of achievement could not have been possible without the strong support of numerous SNR staff such as Sue Ellen Pegg, Kelly Smith, Dee Ebbecka, Jacki Loomis, Elaine Connelly, and Bernice Goemann, to name a few. I have scheduled a meeting in early July with Ken, Kelly, Jacki, and Sue Ellen to discuss activities for the coming academic year. Stay tuned for future announcements. Please note that the next NaturePalooza has been scheduled for Sunday, November 6. Contact Sue Ellen Pegg for more information, if you want to participate. She sent an announcement out recently for expressions of interest.
Conservation and Survey Division – New Positions

Mark Kuzila and I have been working with IANR administration to formulate two new managerial/professional positions for the Conservation and Survey Division. These positions, a hydrogeologist and a geologist, are currently being classified by Human Resources and will then be advertised. These two new positions will help provide stronger services to our clientele across Nebraska. I am looking forward to having these two new staff members join SNR. It is expected that the hydrogeologist will be stationed at the Research and Extension Center in North Platte with periodic visits to Lincoln.

Ted Elliott – Memorial Tree Planted

On Friday, June 3, SNR faculty and staff planted a limber pine tree to honor E.T. “Ted” Elliott’s contribution to the development of the School. Ted was the SNR director from 2000 to 2001. Ted died of cancer in 2002. The limber pine tree is located northeast of Hardin Hall, set among a grove of other coniferous trees, and will be maintained by UNL’s Landscape Services with funds provided by the Ted Elliott Memorial Fund. A plaque and a bench will also be installed at the site within the next two weeks. With Ted being from Colorado and loving trees and loving the mountains, we thought that honoring Ted with a tree would be very appropriate. We coordinated the effort with Elliott’s family.

Before joining UNL, Ted was the associate director of the Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory at Colorado State University and program officer of Ecosystem Studies for the National Science Foundation in Arlington, Virginia. He was a renowned ecosystems scientist internationally recognized for his research in ecosystems and soil science, and their relationship to agriculture.

“As an ecologist, Ted celebrated the complexity that we see in ecological systems, but what made him special was that he demanded we solve that complexity, because society demands answers,” said Dave Wedin, who worked with Ted on the Sand Hills Biocomplexity Project.

Pat Shea served as associate director under Elliott. He said that while Elliott was only at UNL a short time, he had a major influence. “It’s important not to forget Ted and his contributions to moving the School to become what it is today,” Pat said. “I’m confident that Ted would be pleased with the reality that we’ve created here.”

Water for Food Institute: Executive Director

The interviews for the four candidates for the WFI executive director have been completed and the search committee has provided their input to Vice Chancellors Ronnie Green and
Prem Paul and to President J.B. Milliken and Chancellor Harvey Perlman. I hope that SNR faculty also provided their evaluations of the candidates. Now we wait for the decision!

**IANR/Water for Food Institute Faculty Cluster Hire**

The search committee for the IANR faculty cluster hire in support of the Water for Food initiative was scheduled to meet at the end of June and will soon be evaluating applicants for these positions. In case you have missed previous announcements, the five positions are:

- Systems Agronomist
- Crop Simulation Modeler
- Irrigation Engineer
- Ground/Surface Water Modeler/Geospatial Hydrologist
- Hydrogeophysicist

Members of the search committee are Dean Eisenhauer (chair, Biological Systems Engineering), Ed Harvey and Dave Wedin (SNR), Kent Eskridge (Statistics), Martha Mamo (Agronomy and Horticulture), and Bill Kranz (Northeast Research and Extension Center). With the exception of the Systems Agronomist position, these positions have been advertised widely. If you know of potential candidates, please contact them to make them aware of these positions. The Systems Agronomist position is a targeted hire.

**Faculty Visit to ICTA, Autonomous University of Barcelona**

I have now finalized the date for the visit of SNR faculty to the Institut de Ciencia i Tegnologia Ambientals (ICTA) at the Autonomous University of Barcelona in the fall. The dates for the visit are October 13-14. Those SNR faculty scheduled to accompany me on this visit are Martha Shulski, Steve Thomas, Amy Burgin, Mark Svoboda, and Tala Awada. As mentioned in a previous report, the primary areas for collaboration appear to be with SNR programs in applied ecology, water, and applied climate science. The format for the meetings with ICTA faculty is currently being developed in collaboration with Louis Lemkow, ICTA director.

**Planning in Progress for Fall Assembly: Save the Date – August 15**

Our fall faculty and staff assembly will be August 15, 2011 from 8 to 11 a.m. Please hold this date on your calendars. The program is currently being developed with input from several committees.

**Emeritus Faculty Recognized for Environmental Leadership: Bob Kuzelka and Walt Bagley**

Congratulations to our emeritus professors, Walt Bagley and Bob Kuzelka, who received Lincoln-Lancaster Environmental Leadership Awards in June. Bob’s Education Award was for dedication to students, his work as UNL’s Environmental Studies director, and his personal commitment to protecting and preserving the environment.

Walt’s Agriculture Award was for working for more than 30 years to improve the environment. He taught at UNL and did research on agricultural tree windbreaks. In 1965, he and his wife, Virginia Bagley, planted Prairie Pines. As many of you know, Prairie Pines has been given to UNL and SNR is the custodian of this property. Jim Brandle is overseeing the maintenance of this property.
Graduate Students Receive Travel Awards

Congratulations to Dustin Martin, who is advised by Kevin Pope, for receiving the David & Anna Larrick Student Travel Award. He will use it to attend the 6th Annual World Recreational Fishing Conference, August 1-4.

Congratulations are also in order for Anthony Nguy-Robertson, who is advised by Anatoly Gitelson, for receiving a Larrick Student Travel Award to attend the American Geophysical Union conference, December 5-9.

Grants Awarded and Proposals Submitted

Congratulations to Song Feng, Steve Hu, Bob Oglesby, Dave Wedin, Mark Svoboda, Hong Chen, Sue Lackey, Martha Shulski, Ken Hubbard, Cody Knutson, Craig Allen, and Jinsheng You for grants awarded during June. Total funding received during June was $1,225,954. The total value of grants awarded from July 1, 2010, to June 2011 was $8,850,268.

The chart below illustrates the many sources SNR faculty and staff receive funding from in support of their research, teaching, and extension/outreach programs. It is also important to point out the amount of funding received from state sources since these agencies and organizations are critical clientele for SNR, IANR, and UNL. Congratulations to all faculty and staff who were successful this past fiscal year in attracting funding to SNR and UNL. These are challenging economic times but we continue to be successful in our efforts to lead cutting edge research, teaching, and extension efforts. Our success is recognition of the quality of our faculty and staff. Keep up the great work!
Proposals submitted during June 2011 requested funds totaling $1,667,633. SNR faculty and staff submitting proposals included Martha Shulski, Diego Riveros-Iregui, Jim Brandle, John Quinn, Mark Kuzila, Mark Svoboda, Cody Knutson, Craig Allen, Kari Decker, Jim Merchant, Xinhua Zhou, Dan Snow, and Bob Oglesby. The total funding requested from July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2011, was $53,539,087.