If your email program does not properly display this newsletter, a web version of the November issue of The Director's Report is also available.

The Director's Report, November 2007

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

Introduction
by Donald A. Wilhite

I am writing this month’s newsletter from cloudy Budapest, Hungary, while attending the Europe Regional Emergency Management and Response Conference. This meeting is sponsored by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency and is being attended by nearly 200 high ranking government officials and business leaders from the U.S. and Europe. Your next question should be, why is Don attending this meeting? And the answer is—earlier this year I was invited by the U.N.’s World Meteorological Organization and the U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification to prepare a project proposal to establish a Drought Management Center for South East Europe. There are 11 countries in this region. This proposal was completed in January in Geneva, Switzerland, at WMO headquarters and reviewed by WMO and UNCCD officials and members of the Slovenian drought management team. I presented this proposal at a workshop in April in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Slovenia was chosen as the host country for this new Center by member countries. As this conference in Budapest

In This Issue

Introduction
President Milliken’s Citizens Advisory Council Meeting
USGS/UNL Partnership in Climate Change Workshop
Nebraska Water Resources Association Water Roundtable
Corporacion Para Investigaciones Biologicas (CIB) in Medellin, Colombia
Participation in the Climate Change Conference, Washington, D.C.
New Climate Change course to be offered in Spring 2008
Water Colloquium and SNR Research Colloquium
Meeting with NU Foundation
New GIScience Faculty Position
was being organized, the Business Council for International Understanding asked me to make a presentation on the proposed center. I felt this would be a great opportunity to share the programs of SNR with an international audience and to promote the South East Europe Drought Management Center, which is now fund-raising from donor countries and organizations. The meeting has been quite successful and will certainly promote U.S. business interests in the region.

President Milliken’s Citizens Advisory Council Meeting

On October 4, President Milliken held a regular meeting of his Citizens Advisory Council in the Hardin Hall auditorium. He invited me to attend this meeting and present an overview of the School of Natural Resources and the renovation of Hardin Hall. His council members were enthusiastic about SNR and the work we are doing and impressed with the new facilities. Most of them had attended conferences in the building previously and many had stayed in the conference hotel. They appreciated the chance to see the newly renovated facility.

USGS/UNL Partnership in Climate Change Workshop

During the past couple of months, I participated in several meetings arranged by Prem Paul and his staff to organize the program for the Partnership in Climate Change Workshop that was held in Hardin Hall on October 26. I know that many of you were able to come hear USGS representatives and UNL faculty discuss activities of mutual interest and look for ways to partner on research and other ventures. Tom Armstrong, Senior Advisor on Global Change for USGS, was the leader of the USGS delegation and Tom and his colleagues were most impressed with the research being conducted at UNL and SNR on various aspects of climate change, water, and ecological systems. I had a substantive discussion with Ken Williams of USGS on SNR's

The Giving Season

Final Thoughts

Upcoming Events

Nov. 6, 7 p.m.
“Stability of Nebraska's Sandhills - Insights from Ecology and Geology,” Dr. James Swinehart and Dr. David Wedin.

Nov. 7, 3-4 p.m.

Nov. 12, 7-9 p.m
E.N. Thompson Seminar, Lied Center for Performing Arts
"Changing Nature in an Unequal World," Sunita Narain, Director, Centre for Science and Environment; New Delhi, India.

Nov. 14, 3-4 p.m.

Nov. 28, 3-4 p.m.
"Evaluation of the Potential Impacts of Human Physical Disturbance on Benthic Communities in Tributaries
research and academic programs. Ken was enthusiastic about the potential for SNR to train the leaders necessary to address emerging interdisciplinary natural resource issues. As a result of the discussions following this workshop, I have high expectations that our faculty and staff will be able to compete successfully for USGS funding in FY 08, FY 09, and beyond. Thanks to those SNR faculty who participated in the program. Your presentations were excellent and well received. Thanks also to SNR faculty, staff, and students who attended the workshop and participated in the reception and poster session. A smaller group of faculty met with USGS staff members on Friday morning to discuss the next steps for collaboration. The prospects for increased UNL/USGS collaboration are excellent.

**Nebraska Water Resources Association Water Roundtable**

I was invited to speak at the first Water Roundtable meeting to discuss the School of Natural Resources. My presentation emphasized the interdisciplinary research capacity of SNR and its undergraduate majors and graduate specializations. I was impressed with the diversity of representation on the Water Roundtable and the high level of interest in SNR programs.

** Corporacion Para Investigaciones Biologicas (CIB) in Medellin, Colombia**

In the two previous newsletters I reported on an evolving collaborative activity with CIB in Medellin, Colombia. I am pleased to report that Larkin Powell of SNR and Blair Siegfried of the Department of Entomology will be visiting CIB the week of November 5 to discuss future collaborative research and training opportunities. They will be accompanied by Z.B. Mayo, Associate Dean of IANR’s Agricultural Research Division. On their return, it would be informative if a brown bag lunch could be organized to give them an opportunity to discuss the possible outcomes of the Niobrara National Scenic River,” Kim Lang, MS Student, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Dec. 5, 3-4 p.m.
*Fire Frequency in the Great Plains: From Scars on Trees to Modeling,* Rich Guyette, University of Missouri

See SNR November 2007 calendar.

**Director’s Upcoming Travel**

November 11-14
New York City
Representing SNR and UNL at the annual meeting of the Board on Natural Resources, National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges

Nov. 28-Dec. 4
Geneva, Switzerland
World Meteorological Organization’s Public Weather Service Symposium

January 14-18
Washington, D.C.
Climate Change Science and Solutions Conference

January 22-24
New Orleans
American Meteorological Society’s Annual Meeting
their visit.

Participation in the Climate Change Conference, Washington, D.C.

The National Council for Science and the Environment will be holding a national conference on Climate Change Science and Solutions, January 16-18, 2008. About a month ago I invited SNR faculty to express interest in attending this conference with support from Dr. Prem Paul’s office and from Dr. Gary Cunningham’s office. In response to my call for an expression of interest, Drs. Aris Holz, Anatoly Gitelson, and Kyle Hoagland will be attending the conference. I will accompany them, along with Drs. Paul and Cunningham. One of the features of this conference will be a closing session in which presidential candidates have been invited to express their views and describe how their administration, if elected, would address these issues. This promises to be an interesting exchange.

New Climate Change course to be offered in Spring 2008

During my interview I discussed the need for SNR to offer a new course on the science of climate change. Jim Swinehart and Ken Dewey quickly volunteered to teach the course, which we have titled, “Climate in Crisis?” This course will be offered next semester and natural resources majors are encouraged to register for the course. The course is listed in the new class schedule as NRES 299, Section 2. It is intended for a broad interdisciplinary audience so it will be advertised widely across campus. Look for advertisements in the Daily Nebraskan and elsewhere. Our hope is to raise awareness among students across both campuses about this important environmental issue. Thanks to Jim and Ken for stepping up to offer this course. If you have ideas for other broad natural resources or environmental science topics that would appeal to a campus-wide audience,
Water Colloquium and SNR Research Colloquium

This past month SNR hosted both the Water Colloquium and the SNR Research Colloquium in the Hardin Hall auditorium. These events included poster sessions. A special thanks to those who presented information on their research activities either orally or in poster format. There are excellent research and outreach activities ongoing in SNR and across the University's state-wide system and both of these events showcased these activities. A special thanks to the graduate students who participated in the poster sessions. Your research is of critical importance to SNR and Nebraska.

Meeting with NU Foundation

I had a very productive meeting with NU Foundation staff to discuss the vision and mission of the School of Natural Resources and potential fund-raising opportunities. As many of you know the Foundation is about to launch a new campaign for donations to the University of Nebraska and funding for natural resources is a high priority. During the meeting I presented them with a "wish list" of funding needs. Over the next month or two I will be asking for your help in identifying themes that would resonate with potential donors, both individuals and corporations. In the meantime, if you have ideas, please pass them along to me.

If you attended the last faculty or staff meeting then you know that I am also asking each of you to consider participating in a payroll deduction plan to contribute to a Natural Resources Fund with the NU Foundation. We will be putting payroll deduction cards in your mailboxes. I would like to see 100% participation! These funds will be used for social events and for facility improvements in and around Hardin Hall. The School is investing...
significantly in you and I would like to see you invest in the School to improve our physical and social environment. I will form a small committee to oversee expenditures of these funds as they build up over time. We will also provide you with the name and fund number for a few other NU Foundation accounts that you may wish to consider contributing to now or at a later date. Remember, all contributions are tax deductible.

**New GIScience Faculty Position**

Over the past several months there have been discussions about creating a tenure-track position in GIScience at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, with rank commensurate with previous experience. The position will be funded by UNMC’s College of Public Health and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. SNR will provide in-kind support for this position in the form of office and research space during the times when the faculty member is on the UNL campus. A GIS unit has been established in the NDHHS that includes two full time staff. This unit analyzes health status, disease outbreaks, preparedness and other public health concerns. It is expected that this unit will become an innovator in the application of spatial analysis in public health, both for the state and for the 18 regional rural departments of public health. The College of Public Health is a focal point for spatial analysis at UNMC, having a health geographer and a GIS expert in a department that includes health services research, health economics, health policy and health administration. The College is organized into departments and centers, with a future center contemplated that would emphasize application of spatial analysis in health data analysis, complementing existing centers in health services research and research design and data analysis. Leadership for the new center would come from the successful candidate for the GIScience position, with the support of existing faculty and analysts. The SNR will provide full access to state of the art GIS and remote sensing technologies at CALMIT. It is anticipated that
the person selected for this position will teach courses in GIS and health issues, alternating the offering of the course between UNMC and SNR. The search for this candidate is now in its early stages. One or more SNR faculty will serve on the search committee. If you desire more information on this position, please contact Jim Merchant or Pat Shea.

The Giving Season

Look for information later this month from the Outreach Committee on our holiday drive to benefit nearby Clinton Elementary School, which serves a less affluent area of town. We'll be collecting new or gently used clothing for children, gift cards, or cash that will be converted to gift cards.

Final thoughts

Notice how much the Hardin Hall facility is being used by non-SNR groups? The word is out about our facility! The latest group is the 4th Annual Symposium of the Nebraska Institute of Forensic Sciences, October 31-November 2. I am working to find ways to enhance the visibility of SNR programs in our public spaces when visitors come to call and would appreciate your suggestions. Of course, all of these additions to our public spaces take money.