



School of Natural Resources Alumni Newsletter



From the Director's Desk

At universities and colleges, the fall semester always seems to be a time of great optimism. Despite the fact that we are more and more a 12-month operation, the fall inflow of students is always refreshing. It reminds us of the importance of teaching in the tripartite mission of the land grant university system —Teaching, Research and Extension.

Two important things are happening this fall semester. This past year we have worked on the five-year academic program review. Drew Tyre headed our self-study during much of 2015 and that work resulted in a document that we have posted on the SNR website (<http://snr.unl.edu/aboutus/why/visionorganization.asp>).

The most important aspect of this process has been the shift from the older model, that is mainly a review, to something that is like a strategic action plan. The idea is to move away from the traditional approach of highlighting our accomplishments to looking forward to what we want to become. In October, we had an outstanding team from around the country who met with us to discuss our goals and our self-study. We are now waiting for their report. Their preliminary observations honed in on some issues all programs in natural resources seem to struggle with. How do we embrace our diversity, but maintain our identity? It is very much something that we will be focusing on in the next few years.

A second project for this coming year is a more detailed focus on our teaching program. We hope to narrow the scope of the APR and spend more time looking at all aspects of our teaching mission. We hope this evaluation will help guide us to a more efficient and effective teaching program.



John Carroll, Director

The last few months have been exciting in terms of hires of new faculty. This summer after a search led by SNR and Biological Systems Engineering, we hired two new groundwater faculty: Drs. Jesse Korus and Troy Gilmore. In addition, a collaborative effort with Nebraska Game and Parks has resulted in SNR hiring Dr. Chris Chizinski, who is an expert in wildlife human dimensions. We now have in the pipeline positions in fish genetics/physiology, climate risk, urban forestry, pedology (soil), and vertebrate biology. A number of other positions are on the horizon.

The School of Natural Resources is a pretty amazing and challenging place to work. There are no boring days around here and the future looks pretty bright.

A Note from our Alumni Coordinator



Karen Jensen
Alumni Coordinator

Hello alumni and friends of SNR! What a year it has been for SNR. New faculty, new staff, new students and an academic program review – very busy and exciting times. Check out a calendar of upcoming events at <http://events.unl.edu/snr/upcoming>. You can keep connected to us via the web as well. We have an SNR Alumni webpage, <http://go.unl.edu/snr/alumni>.

You can sign up to receive the weekly SNR newsletter, InsideSNR and see what other interesting things are happening with our alumni.

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Contact me at kjensen4@unl.edu if you would like to be more involved with SNR. Your time, knowledge and expertise are valuable to us. There are plenty of ways to be active within SNR. We love hearing what our alumni are up to! Share your story so we can share it with the rest of the SNR community.

We also greatly appreciate the financial support provided to SNR through the NU Foundation. Please consider supporting one of the funds such as the Natural Resources Development Fund or the Geography Founders Fund, or one of the other funds that are special to you. Visit <https://nufoundation.org/unl/institute-of-agriculture-and-natural-resources/colleges-and-areas/college-of-agricultural-sciences-and-natural-resources/casnr-academic-units/school-of-natural-resources> to discover all of the possible opportunities.

In the two years since he graduated, Chad Kelly has amassed a variety of personal and professional experiences.

“I returned home to Geneva, Illinois and started interning with the Kane County Forest Preserve District,” Kelly said. “I spent the internship removing noxious/invasive species of vegetation, restoring remnant prairies, as well as conducting wildlife observations and trapping.”

Upon completing that internship, Kelly moved on to a position with Fox Valley Park District in Aurora, Illinois as a naturalist/horticulturalist.

“With Fox Valley, I carried out identical duties and tasks as I did with the Kane County Forest Preserve District,” Kelly said. “The fall and spring were the best with Fox Valley for the sole reason of being involved in controlled prairie burns – that was by far the coolest part about that job.”

In May 2014, Kelly returned to Nebraska for an internship with Terracon, a consulting engineering firm with more than 3,500 employees in 140 offices and 40 states nationwide.

During his internship, Kelly wrote National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reports and conducted field oversight. Ultimately, he was offered a full-time field environmental scientist position with the company.

“However, this offer came from the Omaha office as well as the Naperville office in Illinois,” Kelly said. “I chose to return home and continued working for Terracon. I am currently responsible for conducting Phase I reports, Phase II field work, as well as being involved in large-scale remedial projects across the Midwest.”

Kelly, an environmental restoration science major who graduated in 2013, said the education he received at SNR enabled him to be successful in the working world.

“My SNR education prepared me very well for my career,” Kelly said. “Looking back, I've found that the lab portions of courses have helped tremendously. Receiving hands-on experience with environmental field equipment made for a smooth transition into the professional world.”

Moreover, Kelly sees the environmental restoration science becoming increasingly relevant and important.

“I have no regrets about majoring in environmental restoration science,” he said. “It is a fantastic,

stimulating program that will continue to do great things under Dr. Comfort. I recommend this program to anyone who has a liking or passion for environmental science and who doesn't mind getting dirty from time to time.”

When it comes to the future, Kelly said his first priority is to complete the requirements necessary to receive licensure as a professional geologist. Eventually, he may return to school and pursue a graduate degree.



Chad Kelly

Kelly said that he advises students who may be uncertain about their career paths to stay focused and determined.

“For those who are unsure about their post-grad future, all I have to say is be patient,” he said. “It took me two internships after graduating to finally land that ‘dream job.’ Try not to get discouraged while searching for your first job after graduation. Just remember – ‘never give up, never surrender.’”

— Mekita Rivas, *Natural Resources*

Conservation and Survey celebrates drilling first test hole of its kind

For more than 85 years, the Conservation and Survey Division in UNL's School of Natural Resources has been home to one of the leading test hole drilling programs in the country.

"It is a somewhat unique program because of its longevity," said Matt Joeckel, Conservation and Survey Division director and Nebraska state geologist.

The Nebraska statewide test hole database contains information on approximately 5,500 test holes that have been drilled since 1930. These test holes provide researchers with valuable geologic and hydrogeologic data.

"Nebraska has a better picture of shallow subsurface geology by virtue of geological survey activities than many other states do," Joeckel said.

There are many ways to drill a test hole, a common one being the mud rotary method. In this method, drilling fluid – a mixture of bentonite clay and water – is pumped down the drill pipe and out through the ports or jets in the drill bit. That fluid then flows up the space between the hole and the drill pipe, carrying cuttings – but not a continuous, intact sample – to the surface.

"We do a lot of mud rotary test hole drilling at CSD," said Matt Marxsen, field service coordinator. "Using that method, our samples come out of the borehole mixed together, and in some of the formation, it's very difficult to interpret."

That's where wireline coring comes in. In this method, a continuous core is extracted from the depth of the test hole, as opposed to just the cuttings.

"With wireline coring, we can retrieve a fully intact sample, which has many times the information value than the cuttings alone," Joeckel said.

Although the CSD has had the capacity to perform wireline coring since 2005, the road to drilling that first hole has been a bumpy one.

"We attempted wireline coring roughly eight years ago," Marxsen said. "At the beginning, it was working great."

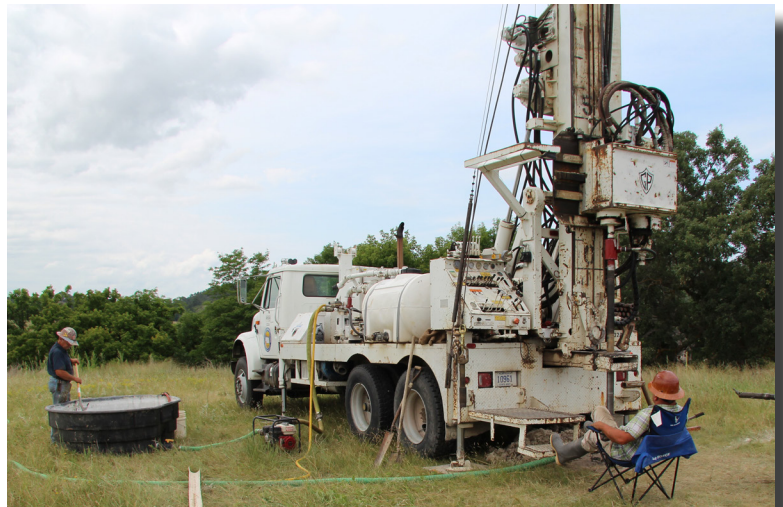
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But as the team drilled deeper and hit different geological materials, the process failed.

"The drilling rig was not set up with the right pumping equipment," Marxsen said.

After receiving funding to make the necessary equipment upgrades, Joeckel said the team tirelessly studied wireline coring and readied themselves for another attempt.

"We had the equipment for a while," Joeckel said. "It was a matter of building up talent – homegrown talent." Each year, the CSD participates in a U.S. Geological Survey mapping project. Geologists pick quad maps that need to be mapped. This year, Joeckel selected the Cornell Dam Quad, located east of Valentine near the Fort Niobrara Wildlife Refuge.



There, the team would try again.

In August, the CSD drilled a 443-foot test hole using the wireline coring method.

Marxsen, who led the drilling effort alongside research assistant John Seamann and student worker Jordan Shields, said that the process had its ups and downs.

"The thing that surprised me the most was the quality and quantity of the core," Marxsen said. "I was unsatisfied with the time it took to perform this type of drilling, but the satisfaction of the quality of the core outnumbers anything else."

The remarkably intact core provides a “brand new glimpse into the geology of north-central Nebraska,” Joeckel said.

For example, throughout the core there’s evidence of ancient soils that are approximately 23-28 million years old. The core will likely provide new information about how climate and landscapes changed in ancient Nebraska during a critical period in the evolution of the Great Plains.

And that’s just the beginning.

“As of right now, some of what we see in the core is a major challenge to interpret,” Joeckel said. “And that’s a good thing.”

Now, it’s all about forging ahead – or downward, depending on how you look at it.

“It’ll be interesting to see how much deeper we can go in the future,” Joeckel said. “It’s an exciting time.”

— *Mekita Rivas, Natural Resources*

‘Fossils on the Floor’ books tell story of NE State Capitol mosaics

A field trip to the Nebraska State Capitol led Bob Diffendal, Emeriti Geologist with the Conservation and Survey Division, on an unexpected journey nearly 90 years in the making.

“One of the places we visited was the Capitol archives,” Diffendal said. “The Capitol archivist showed us many items in the collection. The most interesting to me were the large drawings done in color on tissue by the famous Nebraska paleontologist Erwin H. Barbour.”

In 1927, Barbour, a professor of geology and zoology at the University of Nebraska and director of the NU State Museum, was asked to fill another role: artist.

“He drew pictures of fossil plants and animals for artist Hildreth Meière to copy,” Diffendal said. “She used some of these drawings to make some of the mosaic pictures of fossils on the floor of the Nebraska State Capitol Rotunda.”

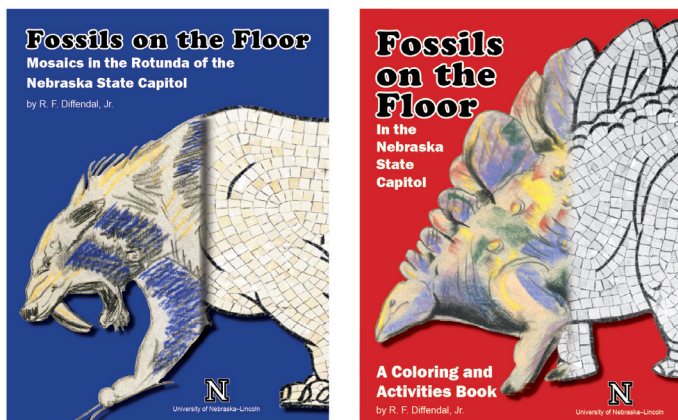
Barbour’s drawings had been missing for decades. Several were discovered in 1982 and donated to the Capitol archives.

Seeing the resurfaced drawings inspired Diffendal to write two books about the fossils and mosaics on the Rotunda floor.

“These images captivate thousands of visitors each year,” he said. “I’ve heard parents, tour leaders and teachers struggle to describe what they’re looking at when they’re looking at the mosaics. I wanted to put something together to give them a fighting chance at telling kids what these mosaics are depicting.”

“Fossils on the Floor in the Nebraska State Capitol” (\$8.99) is an activities and coloring book geared toward children of all ages. Black-and-white pictures of the mosaics are paired with scientific drawings. Readers can choose their own color for images and complete questions and activities.

“Fossils on the Floor: Mosaics in the Rotunda of the Nebraska State Capitol” (\$16.99) is a companion to the activities and coloring book that provides teens and adults with additional information about the creators of the mosaics, the materials used and the project overall. Both publications are available for purchase from the Nebraska Maps and More Store on the first floor of Hardin Hall at 33rd and Holdrege streets. The book can also be purchased online at <http://marketplace.unl.edu/>. To place an order over the phone, call 402-472-3471.



— *Mekita Rivas, Natural Resources*

New website aims to educate public about NE herpetology

You don't have to like snakes to appreciate them – at least that's what Dennis Ferraro says.

“My main function is to instill appreciation and awareness,” said Ferraro, herpetologist and professor of practice.

A part of that effort includes the new and improved “Amphibians, Turtles & Reptiles of Nebraska” website (<http://snr.unl.edu/herpneb/>), managed by Ferraro and his team at UNL's School of Natural Resources.

When the website launched in 2001, it was “a real beta version,” Ferraro said. It was updated in 2003 with additional photos and text, but at the time it was limited to covering snakes and turtles. In 2005, the website expanded to include information on frogs, lizards and salamanders. A decade later, the website underwent its most extensive renovation yet.

“We completely redid it,” Ferraro said. “We had new photos taken. It's a completely different look.”



And, most notably, this version is mobile-friendly – meaning the website is much more than, well, a website.

“Really what it is now is a free app that's made to be used on any instrument – iPhone, iPad, a Droid device,” Ferraro said. “So if you're out in the field

and you see something, you can pull this out and use it as a resource.”

For example, anyone trekking along the Platte River who hears “ribbit ribbit” can go the website and access the calls of all the frogs and toads found in Nebraska. In an instant, one can figure out whether that sound came from an American Bullfrog, a Great Plains Toad or another amphibian.

Or let's say someone sees a patch of snakeskin slithering near a stone – is it time to run or relax? With a quick scroll through the website, readers can identify the difference between non-venomous and venomous snakes.

“You can be a citizen scientist,” he said. “You can identify something that can't hurt you and how to stay away from what can hurt you.”

Inflicting harm upon a snake simply because it looks scary may negatively impact the ecosystem to which it belongs, Ferraro said.

“The number one rodent that snakes eat is the deer mouse,” he said. “By having snakes around, you have a diminishment of those rodents getting into grains. Because of snakes, there's less destruction of property and commodities due to an invasive pest, and most farmers realize that.”

Another key function of the website is the “Ask an Expert” form that enables people from across the world to contact Ferraro with herpetology-related questions. He estimates that since 2003, he's received more than 1200 inquires.

“In the past, the inquiries from April-November would be at least one every other day,” Ferraro said. “They'll range from identifying something to finding something that's odd to young students wanting to know how to become a herpetologist.”

“We want to promote stewardship and conservation of a species in which a large number are in decline or listed as threatened in the state,” Ferraro said. “We're instilling stewardship of these animals and therefore of other animals in the state. And that's our function – to empower people to make intelligent and informed decisions on conservation and protection in the state.”

– Mekita Rivas, Natural Resources

In Memoriam- Xun-Hong Chen

Xun-Hong “Hong” Chen, 57, professor of hydrogeology, died Oct. 22. Chen was part of UNL’s School of Natural Resources.

“Hong was an outstanding researcher and colleague,” said SNR director John Carroll. “He helped put groundwater modeling at UNL on the map and was an expert on the High Plains Aquifer. Hong will be missed by his many friends and colleagues in the School of Natural Resources.”

Ron Yoder, IANR associate vice chancellor, said that Chen’s groundwater research and modeling contributed significantly to the nationally and internationally recognized water resources management in Nebraska.

“His extensive knowledge was valued by the water resources agencies in Nebraska, and he was respected by his students, who received a sound education in groundwater science,” Yoder said. “He was a great colleague, and his many friends in the water management community will miss working with him.”

Born Aug. 20, 1958, to Zhangcheng and Meimei Chen in Yiwu, Zhejiang province, China, Chen earned an undergraduate degree from Zhejiang University. He was awarded a master’s degree from California State University, Northridge and a doctorate from the University of Wyoming.

He began his career as a consulting hydrogeologist at TriHydro Corporation in Laramie, Wyoming.

In 1994, he moved from Wyoming to Nebraska to accept a position as an assistant professor with the Conservation and Survey Division at UNL. He became a full professor with the School of Natural Resources in 2005.

“I knew Hong from the time he arrived at UNL in late 1994 until his passing,” said Bob Diffendal, emeritus professor. “He was a kind, wonderful friend and colleague.”

Chen’s work involved the analysis of groundwater systems and their interactions with streams. His research used computer models to better understand how water flows, some of which explored how groundwater irrigation affects groundwater storage and stream depletion.

“Hong was a widely respected colleague who contributed in a substantive way to an improved understanding of groundwater in Nebraska,” said Matt Joeckel, CSD director and Nebraska state geologist.

“His scientific expertise was widely sought-after in research endeavors and his professional reputation was sterling, even on an international level.”



Xun-Hong Chen

Chen’s research also focused on the hydraulic properties of aquifers and streambed sediments. His research group conducted numerous pumping tests in the High Plains Aquifer, and his recent work explored the hydrologic cycle in the Nebraska Sandhills, the Platte and Republican River valleys, and the Blue River and Elkhorn River basins.

“Dr. Chen made significant contributions in studies of groundwater-surface water interactions, characterization of aquifer properties, and evaluation of groundwater resources of Nebraska,” said Vitaly Zlotnik, professor in UNL’s Department of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences. “His list of more than a hundred papers includes many important and well-respected publications in leading disciplinary journals. He will be missed by his colleagues in the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences.”

Chen was an internationally recognized research scholar and collaborated with universities and research institutes across North America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

“As a Yangtze River Scholar and Thousand Talents Program professor, the most prestigious national awards in China, professor Chen dedicated himself to promoting international collaborations between UNL and top Chinese universities,” said Jian Ma, president of Chang’an University. “His meticulous scholarship and pursuit of excellence will continue to inspire us.”

He will be missed greatly by his colleagues and students in China.”

Chen served on the editorial boards of the Journal of Hydrology and Hydrogeology Journal. He was a member of the American Geophysics Union, an elected fellow of the Geological Society of America, and a fellow of UNL’s Center for Great Plains Studies.

Chen regularly taught groundwater modeling and geostatistics courses, and advised dozens of students. Many of his former graduate students have successful professional careers in hydrogeology and other areas of earth sciences.

“Dr. Chen was a meticulous and dedicated scientist and educator,” said Gengxin Ou, a former student who is now a hydrologist at the Nebraska Department of

Natural Resources. “He cared for his students like family members. I never felt alone even though I was far away from home. He will never be forgotten.”

Zhaowei Wang, a hydrogeologist and groundwater modeler at Arcadis, studied under Chen from 2010 to 2012.

“Dr. Chen was a great mentor and role model for me,” Wang said. “His passing is a tremendous loss to his family, friends and the hydrogeology community. He is always in my heart and will be remembered forever.”

Chen was preceded in death by his father Zhangcheng. Survivors include Chen’s wife, Wen Zhao; sons, William and Lucas.

— Mekita Rivas, *Natural Resources*

Annual ‘Coats for Clinton’ drive collects donations for neighboring school

Now in its seventh year, SNR’s annual “Coats for Clinton” drive continues to provide coats and winter gear to the students of Clinton Elementary, located at 1520 N. 29th St. – just a few blocks away from SNR’s home building, Hardin Hall.

The 2015 drive differed from previous years. This year, the Lincoln Firefighters Association has helped students from Clinton Elementary stay warm this winter by providing all 550 students with new coats.

Therefore, in lieu of coats, SNR asked for new boots and shoes to be donated to Clinton students. The elementary school is also fundraising to install a concrete path around their playground, so monetary donations will go toward shoes or the path.

The 2015 drive resulted in two bags filled with shoes, boots and coats; a box of books; and \$800 in donations.

Dee Ebbeka, SNR graphic design specialist and community engagement committee member, said that Clinton’s family care coordinator, Clare Nelson, wanted to convey her gratitude to SNR.

“She said they love the people of SNR and their concern for the children and parents of Clinton,” Ebbeka said.



Clare Nelson, Clinton Community Care Coordinator
Dee Ebbeka, Community Engagement Committee

“Clare said she just had an issue that day with a boy and his shoes. Shoes seem to be an ongoing issue there.”

Individuals interested in making a winter gear or cash donation to Clinton Elementary are encouraged to contact Clare Nelson at 402-436-1132 or cnelson3@lps.org.

— Mekita Rivas, *Natural Resources*

VanWormer to take over OneHealth reins

For Liz VanWormer, there's more to health than meets the eye.

"I started out focused on wildlife health," VanWormer said. "But I have grown more and more interested in connections among animals, people and environments – which led me to One Health."



Liz Van Wormer

The Nebraska One Health Program is a grant-funded program that aims to connect and inform producers, pest control operators, educators, public health officials and other interested parties about diseases in nature that affect humans and their animals.

VanWormer, an adjunct assistant professor in UNL's School of Natural Resources, will start her position as the program's coordinator in November. She earned undergraduate and veterinary degrees from Michigan State University and a Ph.D. from UC Davis.

Prior to coming to UNL, she spent three years living and working on One Health projects in Tanzania.

"I'm very excited about the opportunity to work with faculty and students at UNL, and in the broader NU system, as well as with Nebraska groups interested in public, animal and environmental health," she said. "The collaborative culture at UNL and the commitment to

global engagement offer a wonderful foundation to build One Health teams and projects in Nebraska and abroad."

The unique position is shared between SNR and the School of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, an arrangement that VanWormer called "a great fit."

"We know that environmental change – including climate and land use change – can strongly impact patterns of disease transmission among people and animals," she said. "So drawing upon the expertise of ecologists and environmental scientists in SNR is an exciting way to complement the animal and public health focus of VMBS."

But VanWormer doesn't see the interdisciplinary collaboration stopping there.

"As social determinants of health like poverty, infrastructure and access to health services are a critical part of health at the human-animal-environment interface, I also look forward to broadening collaborations with social scientists, engineers and health communication experts," she said.

Although making the One Health approach accessible across disciplines and industries can be difficult, VanWormer said that she's excited about uniting diverse groups to work on a common cause.

"One of the challenges of working in One Health is providing concrete examples of how individuals with different training and perspectives can work together to improve human, animal and ecosystem health," she said. "I will work on developing those connections and identifying potential research topics in Nebraska where an interdisciplinary health approach can impact real-world health issues."

"Working with Stacy Asher (assistant professor of art) and students in the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts opened my eyes to exciting new ways to link graphic design and health communication," she said. "I'm looking forward to learning more about existing interests and projects within and beyond UNL."

Anyone interested in learning more about One Health and collaborating with the program is invited to contact VanWormer at 472-8483 or liz.vanwormer@unl.edu.

— *Mekita Rivas, Natural Resources*

For Adam Rhoads, it all started with a table.

“I first became interested in the Peace Corps after visiting their recruitment table at a career fair while in school,” he said.

After graduating in December 2000, the natural resource and environmental economics major received a job offer with an inter-agency work group in Missoula, Montana.

“I took the position and lived in western Montana for two years, during which I applied for and was accepted into the Peace Corps,” he said.

In 2003, Rhoads headed to Jamaica to begin two years of volunteer service.

“The organization I was placed at worked with local residents to conserve Jamaica’s last remaining forested area, focusing on education and development of income-generating activities that were less dependent on forest resources,” he said. “Working at a non-government environmental conservation organization in a rural part of the island, I fell in love with Jamaica’s people and culture, and ended up staying in Jamaica for four years.”



While there, Rhoads partnered with another volunteer to start Mystic Rhoads Productions (www.mysticrhoads.org), a non-profit organization that provided school

supplies and scholarships to underprivileged youth and organized sporting events for local communities.

“Upon moving back to the United States, we decided to keep the organization going,” Rhoads said.

MRP is now a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit based in Lincoln with a mission to improve communities through education, healthy lifestyles and environmental conservation.

“This is accomplished through supporting community gardening in Lincoln all the way to helping a fellow Peace Corps volunteer provide clean drinking water to children in Zambia, Africa,” Rhoads said. “MRP also makes micro-grants available to smaller community organizations with a similar mission.”

In addition to his non-profit work, Rhoads is currently an environmental health educator with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department.

Some of his responsibilities include coordinating the “Keep Lincoln & Lancaster County Beautiful” campaign and developing educational resources for the department’s household hazardous waste program.

“The most rewarding part of this position is that I get to spend a lot of time working in the community, trying to create positive behavior change from the ground up,” he said. “I work with neighborhood associations, youth groups, schools and other community-based groups, providing resources and education so we can all enjoy a clean, healthy and safe community.”

When reflecting on the past, Rhoads said he sometimes thinks about what he could have changed.

“Many times I’ve looked back on my life, including my time at UNL, and thought about things I should have done differently or new things I could have tried,” he said.

But he quickly catches himself.

“Then I realize how fortunate I am, both personally and professionally, to be where I am today,” Rhoads said.

“I’ve worked with local, state and federal governments, lived in a foreign country for several years, served at a handful of non-profits and have spent much time educating others about the importance of our natural environment. None of this would have happened if I didn’t leave Lincoln for Montana shortly after graduating, always keeping in the back of my mind that Peace Corps recruitment table I visited at a UNL job fair while still in school.”

Having accomplished so much in his professional life over the last 15 years, Rhoads said his priorities for the future have shifted.

“I have two young daughters – ages three and one – and my only real goal in life is to make sure they grow up to be happy, healthy people,” he said. “What I hope to achieve is ensuring they have the same opportunities at success I was given – maybe even getting a great education from UNL.”

— *Mekita Rivas, Natural Resources*

Howard Wieggers honored for 100 years, dedication of natural resources

Howard Wieggers, longtime professor and founder of the fisheries and wildlife program at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, turned 100 years-old on July 20. To celebrate his long life and contributions to Nebraska, a birthday celebration was held July 21 at Hardin Hall on East Campus. Howard's dedication to the university and its students goes beyond the classroom.

He started out as a poultry professor in the animal science department at UNL. He had a vision for conservation, passion for wildlife preservation and connection with students. He saw a need for a wildlife studies program and began teaching his first wildlife course in 1948. He ended up with about 200 wildlife studies advisees and retired from university service in 1985.

Howard knew that this program needed to extend beyond one class. In collaboration with students, he worked to lobby administration to institute a full-time wildlife program. He and his students invited administrators to events and enlisted the support of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Their efforts were rewarded when that one class turned into a sanctioned fisheries and wildlife program, a program that is now one of the top five degree programs based on enrollment in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.



Howard Wieggers

The program celebrates its 25th anniversary this fall.

"Building the program came about because of the students. That's why we're here: the students," Howard Wieggers said.

Since the start of the program, Howard has provided hundreds of students with lifelong memories and valuable skills. Through his efforts, students were able to gain hands on experience in the wildlife field by attending conferences and seminars, such as Wildlife Student Conclaves and the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference.

To honor Howard's commitment to students, his students, colleagues and family have established the Howard Wieggers Student Travel Support Fund at the University of Nebraska Foundation.

that prepared students to study the ecosystems they would encounter at the Minnesota-Ontario border.

"It wasn't only about the courses. Howard took the time to take care of his students," said Gary Hergenrader, professor emeritus at the UNL School of Natural Resources and former Nebraska state forester.



Howard's legacy also continues through the Howard L. Wieggers Nebraska Outstanding Wildlife Conservation Award. Each year, the UNL Wildlife Club in collaboration with the Lincoln Journal Star presents the award to an individual who shows exceptional efforts toward wildlife conservation.

"Howard truly made a difference in my life and the lives of many others by his genuine interest in his students and advisees as

This endowed fund will forever help to support his vision of learning opportunities outside the classroom. It will provide annual student scholarships for field experiences associated with the fisheries and wildlife program by supporting field trips and study programs for undergraduate students.

Howard's passion for hands-on learning along with a zeal for the outdoors led him to sponsor an annual two-week summer canoe trip for students who showed a great interest in his wildlife classes. He saw the trip as a chance for students to not only further their educational experience but to also encourage self-development.

"The trip was partly vacation, partly a lesson in wildlife studies and ecology and partly a personal growth experience," Howard said.

After seeing the impact the trip had on students, Howard once again lobbied the university's administration. This time it was an attempt to help students gain credit for attending the study trip. His dedication to his students transformed the two-week trip into a semester long class

individuals," said Tom Christiansen, Howard's former student and the sage-grouse program coordinator for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. "He didn't maintain office hours; his door was always open."

To donate to the Howard Wieggers Student Travel Support Fund, gifts may be made online at nufoundation.org. Gifts made payable to the University of Nebraska Foundation may also be sent to University of Nebraska Foundation, 1010 Lincoln Mall Ste 300, Lincoln, NE 68508-2886.

To learn more about supporting the Howard Wieggers Student Travel Support or the School of Natural Resources, contact Josh Egley at the University of Nebraska Foundation at 402-458-1202 or at josh.egley@nufoundation.org.

— Robb Crouch, University of Nebraska Foundation

(Editor's note: to see photos from the event, visit: <http://on.fb.me/1ek1B0Q>.)

White House names Morrow 'Champion of Change'

The White House has recognized Kim Morrow, climate change resource specialist in UNL's School of Natural Resources, and 11 others as "Champions of Change" for their efforts in protecting the environment and communities from the effects of climate change. The Champions of Change program was created as an opportunity for the White House to feature individuals doing extraordinary things to empower and inspire members of their communities.

"I am very humbled to receive this recognition," said Morrow, who will be formally honored at the White House on July 20.



Kim Morrow

She will participate in a panel discussion, and remarks will be presented by Gina McCarthy, Environmental Protection Agency administrator, and Brian Deese, senior adviser to the president. The event can be streamed live at www.whitehouse.gov/live at 1 p.m. CST.

"I became convinced of the urgency of climate change nine years ago, and at that time asked myself why I wasn't devoting every minute of my professional energy to working on this crisis," Morrow said.

She has since become a religious environmental leader, serving as executive director of Nebraska Interfaith Power & Light, a non-profit whose mission is to facilitate the faith community's response to climate change. She has also served as minister of sustainability at First-Plymouth Church in Lincoln and is ordained in the United Church of Christ.

"As a minister, I recognized that faith communities had tremendous resources for responding to this crisis with community-based solutions, moral visions for the care of creation and hope in the face of seemingly overwhelming circumstances," Morrow said.

At UNL, Morrow is assisting in the organization of a series of sector-based roundtable discussions on adaptation and mitigation actions in response to a changing climate, slated to take place in September and October.

Along with Don Wilhite, climatologist and professor, and Martha Shulski, assistant professor and director of the High Plains Regional Climate Center, Morrow is organizing an Arctic workshop scheduled for November at Nebraska Innovation Campus.

"(Morrow's) expertise, passion for addressing the issue of climate change and experience working with various stakeholder groups in this endeavor is a tremendous asset as these initiatives move forward," Wilhite said.

Morrow said that the work occurring at SNR is "at the nexus" of climate change work in the state of Nebraska.

"With the combination of cutting-edge climate information, relationships with key stakeholder groups and policy work, we have the opportunity to make a real difference in preparing Nebraska for the changes that lie ahead," she said. "With great people, excellent research and a wonderful institution, I remain hopeful that we can transform and thrive in the face of a changing world."

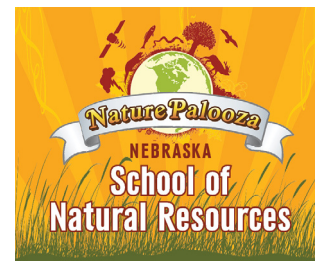
— *Mekita Rivas, Natural Resources*

NaturePalooza 2015

The School of Natural Resources hosted "NaturePalooza" on Sept. 29, 2015. This year, the event brought in nearly 1,500 attendees from the community who enjoyed live performances and interactive science exhibits.

Attendees also had the opportunity to get up close and personal with animals from the Lincoln Children's Zoo.

Held annually, NaturePalooza is free and open to the public. For a complete list of activities and booths featured at NaturePalooza, visit: go.unl.edu/naturepalooza.





SNR Elevator Speech Contest February 25, 2016, 7 p.m.

The “elevator speech” comes from the business world, where a chance encounter with a potential investor, employer or other VIP on the elevator provides the opportunity to make a brief pitch about yourself or your idea. The SNR Elevator Speech Contest provides an opportunity to practice presenting your research to non-scientists. The students are limited to only one non-animated PowerPoint slide for a visual aid.



The contest consists of three categories: undergraduate, master’s and doctoral students. In each category, the prizes are \$1000, \$300, \$200 and \$100. There is also a

\$100 audience choice award. Winners are selected by a panel of three non-scientist judges.

The School of Natural Resources is working with NET television to broadcast the SNR Elevator Speech contest! NET will tape the finals and broadcast it multiple times.

Before the speeches, browse the undergraduate and graduate Poster Contest sponsored by the SNR Graduate Student Association. Vote for your favorite poster and learn what our students are researching. Each student will be in attendance for any questions.

The final speeches are free to the public. We would love to have you attend to support our outstanding students.

If you have questions about the event, please contact:
 •Mark Burbach at mburbach1@unl.edu or 402-472-8210
 •Kevin Pope at kpope2@unl.edu or 402-472-7028

Fundraising

Private support is integral to the success of SNR and its programs. We are grateful to our many donors whose investments help SNR evolve into a world-class natural resources educator.

<https://nufoundation.org/unl/institute-of-agriculture-and-natural-resources/colleges-and-areas/college-of-agricultural-sciences-and-natural-resources/casnr-academic-units/school-of-natural-resources>

Get Involved



Your time, knowledge and expertise with us are extremely valuable to us. Whether it's staffing a booth at one of our outreach events or being a guest lecturer, there are plenty of ways to stay active within SNR even after you've earned that degree.

Share Your Story

Are you working your dream job?
Are you doing innovative research?
Are you living abroad?

We love hearing what our alumni are up to! Share your story so we can share it with the rest of the SNR community.



"Like" us on Facebook for all the latest news and updates. More details at: <https://www.facebook.com/UNLSNR>

Follow us on Twitter to stay in the loop with all that's happening at SNR. More details at: <https://twitter.com/UNLSNR>

Upcoming Events

For upcoming events:
<http://events.unl.edu/snr/upcoming/>

For full UNL calendar: <http://events.unl.edu/>



The University of Nebraska–Lincoln is an equal opportunity educator and employer.