

FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

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ALUMNI NEWS

On October 14, **Dr. Joel Brown** (B.S. 1977) gave a public presentation on Global Climate Change and Carbon Sequestration to faculty, and students. Currently, Dr. Brown is the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) Leader for Global Change Activities. His research interests include ecosystem health assessment and management, applications of ecology to land management and technology transfer in extensively managed agroecosystems. He has over 40 refereed publications and book chapters in the areas of ecology and land management.

Dr. Brown's prior professional experience includes 5 years as an NRCS Field and Area Range Conservationist in Kansas, 5 years as California NRCS State Rangeland Specialist, 5 years as CSIRO (Australia) Project Leader and Senior Principal Research Scientist, and 4 years as NRCS Cooperating Scientist with the ARS Jornada Experimental Range and New Mexico State University. He resides in Las Cruces.

A native of Oklahoma, Dr. Brown's education includes a **Bachelor of Science Degree from Fort Hays State University** and a Master's and Ph.D. from Texas A&M University.

In addition to the public seminar, Dr. Brown also spoke to Dr. Karen Hickman's Range Management class.

BIOLOGY CLUB BITS

This year has started out with a bang and a buck for the biology club. We kicked off the year with our fall departmental BBQ, which got rained out, of course. Big thanks to **Dr. Finck** for letting us overrun his house! **Drs. Farley and Stark** fought the flames under hurricane conditions, literally, and still managed to grill some really good food! We had a big turnout considering the weather. A highlight of the evening was the taste test of Dr. Finck's Amarula liqueur which he brought back from his South African trip. Apparently elephants "self-medicate" with berries found on marula fruit trees. Generally, we were in agreement that elephants are cool.

Biology Club is planning to attend the Southwestern Association of Naturalists meeting

in San Antonio this April. We decided it will take money to do this. Fortunately for us the good old City of Hays now sponsors two opportunities for us to fundraise. On September 20th, we sold corn at the Midwest Deutsche Oktoberfest. It was a long, windy day, but the "die-hards" stuck it out. Two weeks later, we were at it again with the Volga German Society Oktoberfest. We sold out of corn by 2:30, mainly because there was a mix-up at our corn source, and we only got half the corn we ordered. But selling out meant we had more time to experience the culture. That's what it's all about, isn't it?

Our first service project of the semester is on the books. On October 20th, the Biology Club did a trash pick-up around campus but especially along Big Creek. Eleven people from the club participated, and there were even a few from the Pre-Med club, including Dr. Hohman, bumping the total number up to fourteen. A great turnout considering how little planning and preparation went into it. Thanks to everyone who came out.

Reporting from the trenches, Valena Hickert.

MEETINGS/CONFERENCES

FHSU was well represented at the 55th Meeting of the Kansas Ornithological Society, at Southwestern College, Winfield, KS October 3-5, 2003. Those in attendance included: Drs. Greg Farley and Elmer Finck, graduate student Kelly Ray and the following undergraduates: Clint Bowman, Rhett Moller, Matt Schoske, and Clint **Thornton**. Dr. Farley gave the following presentation: "Numbers of fall warblers captured at the Fort Hays State Banding Station did not change significantly from 1966-2002". His paper included more than 20 years of bird-banding data collected by Dr. Charles Ely, retired Professor of Biology. Dr. Ely and his wife Jan were in the audience; Chuck received a lifetime achievement award from the society for his many scientific contributions to understanding the birds of Kansas.

Dr. Bill Stark and **Mark Eberle** took five students to the Great Plains Limnology Conference in Lincoln Nebraska on October 9th through the 11th.

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The conference was well attended by a diversity of hydrologists, limnologists, and natural resource professionals. **Curtis Wolf** (B.S. 2002), current grad student, and Stark presented a poster (A Preliminary Survey of Freshwater Mussels and an Assessment of Historical Flow as a Correlate of Recruitment on the Marais des Cygnes River, KS) as did **Eric Hoch** (B.S. 2002), also a grad student, and **Dr. Richard Packauskas** (Preliminary Examination of Copepod Taxa and the Effects of Water Chemistry on Copepod Population Dynamics). Undergraduates that attended were **Amy Hladek**, **Josh Melby**, and **Eric Starkey**

The Central Plains Society of Mammalogists held its annual meeting at the Southwest Missouri State University field station on September 26-28th. Scientists from Fort Hays State University's Department of Biological Sciences who attended the meeting included three faculty members (**Drs. Elmer J. Finck, Jerry R. Choate**, and **Rob Channell**) and four graduate students (**Justin Hoffman, Brian Bartels, Shauna Marquardt**, and **Kelly Ray**). Other attendees included scientists from eleven universities in Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas.

In the business meeting, three of the Fort Hays State University scientists were elected to the organization's governing body. Dr. Rob Channell was elected President-elect, Justin Hoffman was re-elected as the State Representative for Nebraska, and Shauna Marquardt was elected as Secretary/Treasurer. Dr. Elmer Finck served as President during the meeting and became Past-President when the meeting was concluded. Drs. Elmer Finck and Jerry Choate and graduate student Shauna Marquardt were named to the Threatened and Endangered Species mammal subcommittee for the state of Kansas. Dr. Finck chairs the subcommittee.

Since 2002, the Central Plains Society of Mammalogists presents a student research award (\$500) to the graduate (MS or PhD) or upper-level undergraduate student who submits the best written proposal and oral presentation with respect to his or her research. This year, Brian Bartels of Fort Hays State University won the competition with his presentation on the identification and distribution of two similar shrews on the northern Great Plains. Bartels (a MS student studying under the guidance of Dr. Jerry Choate) won the award in competition with PhD students from Oklahoma State University, Arkansas State University, and Kansas State University. He is the first MS student to win the award. He will use the

award to pay some of the costs of analyzing DNA extracted from the shrews.

ODDS AND ENDS

The mammal class trip of 2003 was a fun filled adventure of caves, bats, rodents, and mud! We left Hays around 1:00 pm on Friday, September 19th. We headed south into the Gypsum Hills and camped on the Z-Bar Ranch in Oklahoma. The purpose of our trip was to gain hands on experience in trapping, handling, and identifying mammals. We went also to explore several caves and witness the nightly emergence of Brazilian free-tailed bats (Tadarida brasiliensis) from Merrihew cave. Merrihew cave is located in Oklahoma and contains an estimated 35,000 Brazilian free-tailed bats! On Saturday we arose to the aroma of **Dr. Jerry Choate**'s world famous "cowboy" coffee. After the standard duties of checking trap-lines that had been established the previous night, we spent the remainder of the morning and a portion of the early afternoon setting gopher traps and taking in the scenery of the Gypsum Hills. Around 2:00 pm we met Mr. Stan Roth of the Kansas Biological Survey. He escorted the group on a tour of a cave in Barber County, Kansas that contained three species of bat, the cave myotis (Myotis velifer), eastern pipistrell (Pipistrellus subflavus), and Townsend's big-eared bat (Corynorhinus townsendii). We sighted and/or collected 19 different species of mammal, including black-tailed prairie dogs (Cynomys ludovicianus) and several herds of bison (Bison bison). Burrowing owls were sighted also at the prairie dog town. The Gyp Hills region is a very beautiful place to visit. The class participants included eight biology undergraduates, two geology graduate students. and one biology graduate student, Shauna Marquardt (mammal lab teaching assistant). We were led by mammalogist extraordinaire Dr. Jerry Choate. The tag-a-long biology graduate students included Justin Hoffman, Eric Bartholomew, and Brian Bartels. We were met by two Fort Hays State alumni, Drs. Victoria Jackson (M.S. 1996) and Greg Wilson (M.S. 1994). Dr. Jackson brought along seven students from Central Missouri State University where she teaches, while Dr. Wilson, who teaches at the University of Central Oklahoma came solo. It was an educational and fun trip for everyone. (submitted by Brian Bartels)