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ALUMNI NEWS

Mike Pellant (B.S. 1974, M.S. 1977), a rangeland ecologist from Boise, ID, was recently promoted to lead the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) effort to restore rangeland health in the Great Basin area of Nevada, Idaho, Utah, Oregon, and California. Mike, a Rangeland Ecologist in BLM's Idaho State Office, was selected for the Great Basin Restoration Initiative Coordinator's position by BLM's Nevada State Director Bob Abbey. Mike will focus on integrating the efforts of communities, scientists, land managers, and other groups to reverse the spread of invasive species and increasing wildfires in the Great Basin from his office in Boise.

Mike has worked for the BLM since 1976 as a Rangeland Conservationist and Rehabilitation Specialist in Moab, Utah, and Boise, as well as his most recent job in the agency's Idaho State Office where he has specialized in improving fire rehabilitation and restoration strategies and worked on protocols to assess rangeland health. In January, 2003, he received a National Fire Plan award for "Excellence in Rehabilitation and Restoration" from Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton for his contributions to restoring burned rangelands during the 2000-2002 wildfire seasons. Mike is a life member of Society of Range Management and is also active in the Ecological Society of America and the Society for Ecological Restoration. Mike Pellant holds a B.S. and M.S. in botany from FHSU.

On 21 February 2003, a lecture titled "Effects of Urbanization on Bats" was presented at the Sternberg Museum by **Dale Sparks** (M.S. 1996) to coincide with the "Masters of the Night" exhibition. Dale earned the MS in biology at FHSU in 1996 and is just completing the Ph.D. in biology at Indiana State University. He is also assistant curator of vertebrates in Indiana State University's Department of Life Science.

FACULTY HAPPENINGS

On January 11, 2003, **Dr. Jerry R. Choate** presented a lecture titled "Bat Basics" to docents and gallery attendants at the Sternberg Museum who will be interacting with the public during the current "Masters of the Night" exhibition at the museum.

On January 17, 2003, **Dr. Jerry Choate** presented a public lecture titled "Bats of Kansas" at the Sternberg Museum to coincide with the "Masters of the Night" exhibition.

Dr. Mary Morgan attended the XIth (11th) Plant and Animal Genome Conference in San Diego, California, in January 2003, with emphasis on the equine genome.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Mark Omura completed the requirements of the M.S. degree in Biology at FHSU in fall of 2002. He had come to FHSU after completing the B.S. degree in Biology at Boston College. His research report topic was "Taxonomic status of the Mexican woodrat, *Neotoma mexicana*, in eastern Colorado and New Mexico." Mark presently is employed by the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University. Mark's major professor was **Dr. Jerry R. Choate**

Lacrecia Johnson-Haynie recently completed her thesis and completed the requirements for the M.S. degree in biology at FHSU. The title of her thesis was "Intraspecific phylogeography of *Tamiasciurus hudsonius* in Colorado." Lacrecia's major professor was **Dr. Jerry R. Choate**.

BIOLOGY CLUB BITS

February presenters in the Biology Club Speaker Series were **Dr. Greg Farley**, Feb. 12, "Bird Tales from the Tropics" and **Dr. Elmer Finck**, Feb. 26, "Factors Affecting Fox Squirrels in Fragmented habitats of eastern Kansas.

March presenter in the Biology Club Speaker Series was **Dr. Jerry Choate**, "Bat Distributions in Kansas."

ODDS AND ENDS

Lindsey Kathleen Roland, an NSF funded Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) student supervised by **Dr. Elmer Fink** during the summer of 2002, presented her research to the Pew Midstates Science and Mathematics Consortium: Undergraduate Research Symposium in the Biological Sciences and Psychology at the University of Chicago, October 25-27, 2002. The title of her talk was "Home range and habitat use of Coluber constrictor flaviventris in northcentral Kansas." Lindsey is from Knox College in Illinois.

A group of students from Central Missouri State University visited FHSU, the Department of Biological Sciences and The Sternberg Museum the weekend of February 21st. They were given a tour of the museum and several of our graduate students talked to them about their research projects. They attended the public lecture at the museum by **Dale Sparks** and afterwards met with several students and faculty members. On Saturday, **Dr. Rob Channell** gave them a tour of Albertson Hall and **Dr. Eric Gillock** gave a demonstration of the new DNA sequencer.

Mark Eberle accompanied four biology students from FHSU and one student from K State on the third offering of a week-long fieldcourse through the Desert Southwest during spring break (March 15-21, 2003).

The first sites visited by the class were in the Chihuahuan Desert and included short hikes through the lava beds at Valley of Fires Recreation Area (BLM) and the gypsum dunes at White Sands National Monument in southern New Mexico. Following these stops, the class hiked through the nearby coniferous forests in the Sacramento Mountains near Cloudcroft. Driving south, the class visited Chihuahuan Desert sites at Carlsbad Caverns National Park (including a tour of the caverns) and made the 7-mile hike through McKittrick Canyon in Guadalupe Mountains National Park (across the border in western Texas).

From the Chihuahuan Desert, the class drove to southeastern Arizona and spent 2 nights at the Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch (www.audubon.org/local/sanctuary/appleton/). This 8000-acre desert grassland area is managed by the National Audubon Society, and the Assistant Director of the ranch is **Dr. Linda**

Kennedy, (B.S. 1992, M.S. 1994) However, Linda is not the only FHSU connection with the ranch. FHSU faculty member **Dr. Robert Nicholson** was among the first to conduct research at the site (for his PhD dissertation). Linda gave the class a tour of the ranch and offered the use of their bunkhouse facilities and vehicle to visit sites on the ranch.

The final 2 stops for the class were near Tucson. At the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, the class toured the extensive public exhibits of living southwestern animals and plants. In addition, the class was given a tour "behind the scenes" by Craig Ivanyi, Curator of Herpetology, Ichthyology, and Invertebrate Zoology. Our final stop in Arizona was actually a series of stops on the drive up Mount Lemmon through desert, woodland, and coniferous forests.

As with the 2-week summer fieldcourse through the Pacific Northwest, the 2700-mile cost of the university van was paid by the FHSU Department of Biological Sciences. Funds for admission fees were provided through contributions to the department's Endowment Association account #4441, which is devoted to the support of extended fieldtrip courses. The students prepare summaries of their trip, and much of this information, as well as many of their digital photographs, will be placed on the department's website (www.fhsu.edu/biology/ -- follow the links to "fieldcourses").

