



FOREST AND WILDLIFE ECOLOGY NEWS



A Newsletter for Dept. of Forest and Wildlife Ecology Staff, Students and Alumni

Vol. 16, No. 3

December 2013

News from the Chair



Bill Karasov

Congratulations to our seniors graduating on Dec. 22! Our hopes are with them as they continue to build their future on their foundation of achievement. Although these are challenging economic

times, many graduates realize that their success and happiness is not solely about material prosperity in their careers. In fact, according to E.E Smith and J.L. Aaker writing in the *NY Times* (Dec. 1, 2013), millennials (as they are called) appear to be more interested in living lives defined by meaning. Social science research shows that most people assess this in terms of doing things for others, connecting to something that transcends our personal life stories in both time and impact on our communities. Most who are trying to live ethical lives are focused on integrating their individual lives to society. Our students and alumni are special in this regard because they are likely joining Aldo Leopold in the vanguard of people extending ethics to include our interactions with our ecological web. As he explained in *The Land Ethic* over 50 years ago, although our use of earth's resources has been mainly governed by economic self-interest, a land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of our community and demands that we develop ways to live in harmony not only with other people but also with air, soils, plants and animals – a state of harmony with the earth. Indeed, our ever-growing ecological knowledge demonstrates that this state of harmony is in our self-interest. Especially during this holiday period, we wish all of our colleagues, students, graduates, and alumni happiness through meaningful lives.

Innovative course on sustainable forestry helps first-year students adjust to college

by R. Bruce Allison

Who can forget the trepidation of starting classes the first week of freshman year? Teenagers thrust from the comfortable and familiar world of home and high school enter a swirling campus of thousands and lecture halls that in some cases hold more students than the entire population of small rural Wisconsin schools.

A campus-wide effort called First-Year Interest Groups (FIGs) was created 12 years ago to provide an option for students to successfully make that transition to college life. FIGs provide a matching of three courses having a common theme with one being a small seminar class limited to 20 first-year students. Within the smaller seminar class students receive personalized attention from their professor and the chance to create student friendships and study groups. Plus, they sit together in the other classes and labs further reinforcing a learning community comfort zone. The integrative learning approach of three matched courses facilitates a broad understanding of a topic and recognition of connections within related disciplines. First-year students are offered the option of enrolling in a FIG during their orien-



Trace Bareck (left) and Chris Sawall practice tree measurement during a field trip to Kemp Natural Resources Station near Tomahawk, Wis. Photo by Collin Buntrock

tation week. Since its inception in 2001, the number of FIG options has grown from 4 to 64. One out of 6 incoming students choose a FIG.

The FIG program came to Forest and Wildlife Ecology three years ago when faculty members Scott Bowe and R. Bruce Allison responded to an invitation from Dr. Greg Smith, Assistant Dean and Director of First-Year Interest Groups, by creating a course titled “Forestry, Sustainability, and the Environment.” The FWE FIG quickly fills to its 20 student maximum. This year graduate student Collin Buntrock served as TA for the course. With an emphasis on experiential learning, the class meets once a week for three hours, allowing time for field trips and demonstrations. The first field trip and a favorite of the students is a weekend stay at Kemp Station in Tomahawk,

FIGs continues on page 2



Alumni News

Congratulations to **David Linderud** (BS Wildlife Ecology 1971, MS 1982), recipient of the Wisconsin Wetlands Association's 2013 Wetland Enjoyment Award. Since retiring from his position with WDNR as Wildlife Manager at the Tiffany and Whitman Dam Wildlife Management Areas, he continues his educational activities to help people understand the importance of wetlands. Email: mdlinder@nelson-tel.net

Rick Horton (BS Wildlife Ecology 1995, MS 1998) is the Midwest Conservation Field Supervisor for the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) covering eight states and two Canadian provinces. NWTf is conducting strategic planning at all scales to successfully implement its "Save The Habitat. Save The Hunt." initiative. Rick works out of northern Minnesota. On the personal front, Rick reports that he and fiancé Tammy are scheduled to marry in May 2014. Email: rhorton@nwtf.net

Charles Kwit (BS Wildlife Ecology 1992) is an assistant professor in the Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville where he is establishing his research program in the areas of plant ecology, wildlife-plant and wildlife-habitat interactions. Following his studies at UW-Madison, Charles earned his PhD at Louisiana State University. Email: ckwit@utk.edu

FIGS, continued from page 1

where cohort bonding quickly occurs around campfires, shared meals, outdoor lectures on tree measurement and sustainable forestry practices. Other field trips take the classroom to a well-managed tree farm, a profitable saw mill specializing in recycled urban wood, a visit to the UW Arboretum with lectures on ecological restoration, the Aldo Leopold Center and Shack with readings from the Sand County Almanac, and a tour of the USDA Forest Products Laboratory with discussions of the wood related research. The last field trip is a late-autumn walk through the 400-acre Madison School Forest demonstrating multiple-use forestry practices. The walk ends at the nearby farm house of Professor Allison where the students are greeted by a warm fire and a dinner of chili, corn bread, cider, and apple pie topped with Babcock ice cream while listening to Professor Bowe's famous living room lecture.

Writing and creative thinking are emphasized with the requirement of weekly journal submissions processing and recording the lectures, readings and lessons. A short research essay suitable for publication is assigned on a current topic related to the forest environment and sustainable practices. A final project this year was a team development of a teaching video with topics chosen ranging from forest fire suppres-

Department News

Congratulations to **Professor Bill Karasov**. He was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Persons selected for this honor are recognized for scientifically or socially distinguished efforts to advance science and its applications.

The **Robert A. McCabe Student Scholarship for Academic Excellence** was awarded to five wildlife ecology majors. Congratulations to: Tyler Garwood, senior; Sara Matasick, senior; Matthew Meisenheimer, senior; Andy Muench, junior; and Carolin Tappe, junior.

sion debates to sustainable management of campus natural areas. The Forest and Wildlife Ecology FIG students are a diverse group atypical of the usual department student profile. This benefits the department by exposing newcomers to its faculty and offerings. The students are appreciative of learning new ways of thinking about forestry and the environment while having a supportive environment in which to make the adjustment to life on a big campus.

Forest and Wildlife Ecology FIG students explore a floating bog around Jyme Lake at Kemp Natural Resources Station. Photo by Collin Buntrock





Debra M...
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Don Paul:
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Scott Bowe

Carol...

Joseph Buoyono
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Ellen Joseph Buoyono
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James Peterson
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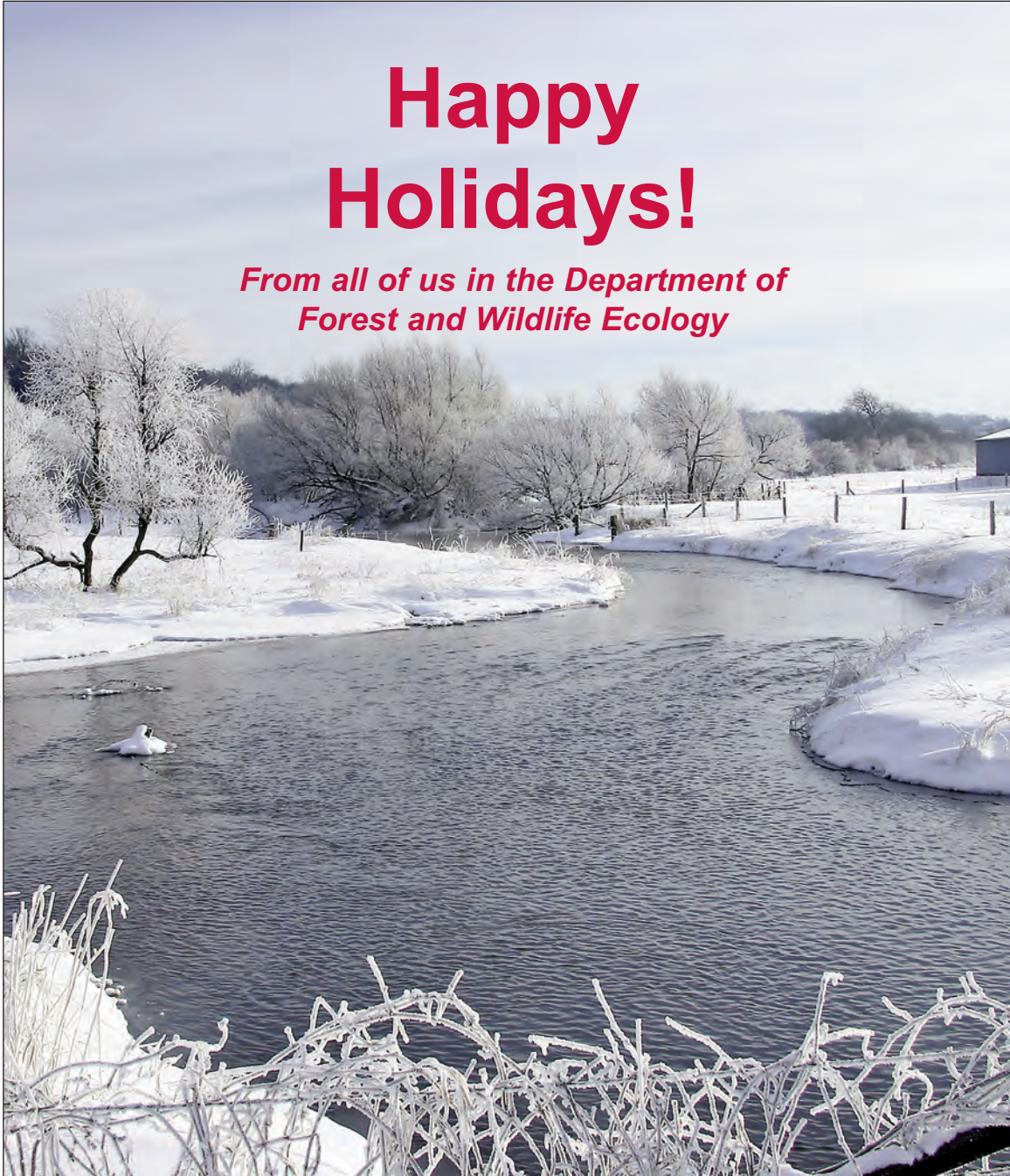


Photo by Gene Summers

Happy Holidays!

From all of us in the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology

Michael...

Richard...

Val...

Elly...

Chris...

Laurie Carol Bergman
Ballentini

Sheila Timme

Bell Karner

Eric King

Orval...

Adena Rissman

Chris...

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Forest and Wildlife Ecology Fund

We invite you to join us in our efforts to provide support for important department priorities. Donations to the Forest and Wildlife Ecology Fund are used to support various activities such as student travel to professional meetings, help cover the costs of the summer field camp, and host special lecturers. You may also donate directly from the FWE web site: <http://fwe.wisc.edu/>

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