“Each of us needs to withdraw from the cares which will not withdraw from us. We need hours of aimless wandering or spates of time sitting on park benches, observing the mysterious world of ants and the canopy of treetops” – Maya Angelou.*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Pg. 2 UM System Awards
Pg. 7 In Memorium
Pg. 4 COVID-19 Research
Pgs. 9-11 A Conversation with Mike Griggs

*Photo taken at Prairie Fork Conservation Area by Marissa York. http://prairiefork.missouri.edu/about/
HONORS and AWARDS

Chung-Ho Lin (pictured right) has been selected as this year’s recipient of the President’s Award for Economic Development. This is an UM System Award which recognizes faculty for distinguished activity in meeting the University of Missouri's goal of serving as an economic engine for the state and its citizens. Awardees shall demonstrate entrepreneurial innovation in using the classroom, outreach programs or the laboratory as vehicles for increasing or developing new economic activity in the state. Randall Miles (pictured left) has been selected as this year’s recipient of the Thomas Jefferson Award. This is an UM System award which recognizes faculty who rise above excellence and demonstrate clear distinction in teaching, research, writing, creative activities and service to the University of Missouri System and humankind.

Eric Aldrich, instructor in Soils, Environmental & Atmospheric Science, has been accepted into the 2020-2021 cohort of the University of Missouri Teaching Scholars (UMTS) program. UMTS is a year-long faculty development program designed to promote teaching excellence across the four UM System universities. Throughout the program, faculty have the opportunity to engage with colleagues across disciplines in a series of institution-based learning communities and system-wide conferences. The UMTS program promotes: Learning the techniques and strategies that will assist them in becoming effective educators; Growing their awareness of what it means to take a scholarly approach to teaching; and, Developing collegial networks and collaborations with colleagues from across the UM System. Eric has been teaching ATM_SC 1050 (Introductory Meteorology) in SNR since 2007, and has also developed and currently teaches ATM_SC 4110 (Broadcast Meteorology), ATM_SC 2150 (Natural Hazards), and an online version of ATM_SC 1050 each summer.
Conservation Biology Awards

https://doi.org.proxy.mul.missouri.edu/10.1111/cobi.13514  

The editors of Conservation Biology are immensely proud to have the opportunity to help our authors revise and publish their outstanding research. Among the many excellent papers, it is our privilege to publish, a few stand out for their quality and impact. To recognize authors who made particularly noteworthy contributions to the journal and conservation science, here are the awardees for 2019:

Most Cited Articles
Articles published in 2017 with the highest number of citations in 2018 and 2019

Nathan Bennett et al., first  
Mainstreaming the Social Sciences in Conservation  

Damon Hall et al., second  
The City as a Refuge for Insect Pollinators  

Michael Manfredo et al., third  
Why Social Values Cannot Be Changed for the Sake of Conservation  

PRESENTATIONS/PUBLICATIONS/RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Jennifer Wentz has collected and analyzed data on how students exploring parks, recreation, sport and tourism industry careers and facilities, through the PRST2115 Industry Practicum course, may assist them with career decision-making. She received a grant from the MU Graduate School Student Teaching as Research to conduct this research on the course’s impact. She presented this information at the Academy of Leisure Sciences Conference on Research and Teaching.
MU scientists assisting Missouri officials with Coronavirus Sewershed Surveillance Project. Departments of Health and Senior Services and Natural Resources partner with University of Missouri on project to test domestic wastewater for Coronavirus. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and researchers at the University of Missouri – Columbia are collaborating on a statewide project to test domestic wastewater for genetic markers of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The project is funded by a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity grant through the DHSS. The idea for the project came from studies in the Netherlands, Italy and United States that found a direct correlation between the amount of viral material in sewage and the number of reported cases within a given “sewershed,” or the area that drains into a community’s wastewater collection system. While the virus that causes COVID-19 is new, using wastewater for tracking disease is not a new technique. In the past, wastewater testing has proven useful in tracking diseases such as polio and norovirus, and could be a valuable tool for SARS-CoV-2 surveillance. The virus is shed in human feces, and it can be detected in wastewater by testing for specific genetic markers. It is important to note that wastewater is not a significant transmission pathway for the virus. “Wastewater surveillance is a cost-effective, proactive effort to inform public health strategy and help mitigate disease spread,” said Chris Wieberg, director of DNR’s Water Protection Program. “We’ve had a tremendous interest and response from our partners in the wastewater treatment sector.” Raw wastewater samples collected by communities are submitted via courier to the Life Sciences Center at the University of Missouri, where Professors Marc Johnson and Chung-Ho Lin, along with research scientist Hsin-Yeh Hsieh, conduct molecular analysis that looks for genetic markers of the virus. The university laboratory is currently testing sewage samples from nine pilot wastewater treatment facilities, and expects to analyze samples from up to 80 facilities per week starting in July. “Our laboratory is equipped with state-of-the-art analytical instruments and methods,” said Professor Lin, “with the ability to detect and quantify down to low concentrations of the virus. It is certainly cutting-edge research directed at protecting the health and well-being of Missourians.” “This sewage testing can provide additional, population-level information about the presence and amount of virus in a community that is not captured by testing patients,” said Jonathan Garoutte, Administrator of DHSS’s Section for Environmental Public Health. “People can be infected for up to 14 days before showing any symptoms, and they may not get tested. This testing can provide early awareness for local public health agencies and help direct testing and resources that protect public health.” The data generated from sewage testing will be useful for understanding the distribution of SARS-CoV-2 in Missouri, and monitoring long-term trends for indication of reemergence to inform mitigation efforts.

https://dnr.mo.gov/news/newsitem/uuid/60f4ee8c-adce-4358-b13b-3c48bc1b4834
Mitch Weegman (pictured left) has been awarded a grant and will be the PI from the Black Duck Joint Venture: Quantifying the influence of environmental conditions and American black duck behavior and movements throughout the full annual cycle on subsequent productivity using state-of-the-art tracking devices. This comprehensive and full annual cycle project on American black ducks uses state-of-the-art Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking devices to quantify movements and wetland use, and GPS and behavioral data to quantify black duck reproductive metrics as a function of behavior and energy expenditure, as well as environmental conditions throughout the year. These birds breed primarily in the Canadian boreal forest and winter along the Canadian and US Atlantic coast; the tracking devices will collect data about black duck decision-making in the boreal forest for the first time. Results from this project will better inform our understanding of the breeding season and carry-over effects of environmental conditions on black duck populations for more complete understanding of the annual cycle and targeted conservation planning.

Mitch Weegman and Mike Byrne (pictured left) have been awarded a grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation: Factors influencing wild turkey nest success and poult survival in northern Missouri. Wild turkey production has declined substantially in Missouri and throughout much of the species range; in each of the last three years, production has been the lowest since 1960. In this project, we plan to quantify drivers of turkey production using an ecosystem approach. We will deploy state-of-the-art tracking devices on turkey hens and pouls, capture and recapture nest predators, and measure insect abundance, habitat and weather conditions. These features will uniquely allow us to link drivers of poor turkey production and inform future statewide turkey conservation.
Tom Bonnot (pictured left) and Mitch Weegman have been awarded a grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation: Development of a quantitative management framework to assess Missouri’s mourning dove population and guide decisions about harvest management and monitoring. They will develop a quantitative framework comprising a set of models and linked analyses that will integrate multiple streams of Missouri monitoring data to assess dove demography, examine the effects of harvest on populations and guide future management and monitoring plans on Missouri Department of Conservation areas.


EVENTS/MEETINGS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

MPF Tours

Summer is upon us! We invite you to visit MPF's prairies, as well as to register for our free virtual prairie tours this month. We have organized two "Prairie Happy Hours" on July 8 and 15 at 4:00 p.m. During these special tours via Zoom, enjoy a prairie-themed beverage of your choice (or any liquid refreshment will do) with MPF Vice President of Science & Management Bruce Schuette and MPF Director of Prairie Management as your guides. We'll enjoy beautiful photography and interesting natural history about numerous MPF prairies. Also, as part of our July webinar series, we will have interviews with authors of two forthcoming books—Margo Farnsworth's Biomimicry and Business: How Companies are Using Nature’s Strategies to Succeed on July 22 and Alan Branhagen's The Midwestern Native Plant Primer on July 29, both at 4:00 p.m. https://www.moprairie.org/
IN MEMORIUM

[A remembrance from Darcy Wells]: Barbara A. (Albrecht) Peret passed away on June 2, 2020. Her mother married William Albrecht and later gifted land in Illinois to fund the William Albrecht Professorship. I met Barbara and Cortland Peret in June 2003. Former Dean Tom Payne and I were in D.C. visiting alumni and donors. We met them at the East Falls Church Metro Station; Barbara was holding up a sign with our first names on it (sweet!). We enjoyed dinner and a long conversation at their favorite French restaurant; by the end of the evening, I was smitten with this petite powerhouse. We exchanged letters and phone calls for years because she enjoyed hearing about the annual Albrecht Earth Day Lecture named for her father William A. Albrecht. Barbara attended the 2015 lecture, along with her daughter Anne Peret. They were able to see some dear Columbia friends and spend time with one of Dr. Albrecht’s biggest fans and former students, Pat Jones. In addition to the lecture that year, we celebrated Pat’s recent gift of $1.6M to support youth conservation education. My last personal visit with Barbara was in 2017. Shibu Jose and I had dinner with Barbara, daughter Anne and son Cort. The evening was as delightful as the first time I met her 14 years earlier. I’m blessed to have known Barbara, her family, her Columbia friends and several of her father’s former students. We’re grateful for her generous gift in 2019 to endow the William A. Albrecht Professorship in Soils Science. https://www.columbiamissourian.com/obituaries/barbara-albrecht-peret-may-14-1922-june-2-2020/article_370054d8-acdf-11ea-b315-3fc6a8a79268.html

Dr. John Patrick Dwyer, 73, of Columbia, passed away on Friday, June 26, 2020 at his home. John was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, on Oct. 10, 1946, to the late James and Lillian (Fitch) Dwyer. He graduated from Maryknoll Junior Seminary in Chesterfield, Missouri, in 1965, received his Bachelor degree from Purdue in West Lafayette, Indiana, in 1970, and went on to receive his Doctorate from the University of Missouri in 1988. John’s career began with Weyerhaeuser Timber Company from 1970 through 1982. He then taught Forest Management and Planning and Forest Fire Control at the University of Missouri. While there, John wrote several publications on forestry management, impacts from flooding and forestry economics. He had an extensive research background in the forestry area including cloning cottonwoods and flood tolerance on various species, development and management guidelines for forest health, improvement and sustainability. John was involved in the management of several tree species, the impacts of livestock on forestry, and using trees for biofuel. He was instrumental in identifying, evaluating, and developing black walnut for timber. A Memorial Mass will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, July 7, 2020 at St. Thomas More Newman Center. Condolences may be left online for the family at www.ParkerMillard.com. https://www.columbiamissourian.com/obituaries/john-patrick-dwyer-oct-10-1946-june-26-2020/article_d99e533c-baec-11ea-8582-933d5e248037.html
Summer Welcome 2020: Incoming freshman and transfer students are going through orientation this summer which looks a bit different from that past. Instead of on campus activities, lectures, and staying a night in the residence halls, students are logging into Zoom Q&A sessions, watching videos, and having live chats with their advisors. With the capabilities of sharing the screen, students are able to see documents and walk through the registration process with help. Also, advisors, using Microsoft Teams, can connect with each other to provide summer welcome updates. New student programs and academic offices worked hard to deliver the same content in the new format and students are happy with the outcome! Thank you to the advisors and faculty who are helping with Summer Welcome 2020; we are excited to welcome the new students to SNR this fall! (Submitted by and starring Jenna Fusinatto.)

Chestnut catkins just before bloom and during bloom. Just some of the changes happening at the Horticulture and Agriculture Research Center (HARC). Photos by Cheryl Recker.
On the front lines: A conversation with Mike Griggs

Mike Griggs was selected as the Director of Columbia Parks and Recreation in March 2013. He received both his B.S. and M.S. from Mizzou: Master of Science Degree in Parks, Recreation and Tourism (emphasis: Administration); Bachelor of Science Degree in Recreation and Park Administration (emphasis: Leisure Service Management). He currently serves as a member of the SNR Advisory Council.

Because parks and open space have provided a much-needed respite from the quarantine necessary in many cities to slow the spread of COVID-19, how have you navigated between the stay-at-home orders and the re-opening phases? What has been the most challenging issues to comply with both orders?

We were happy that both the state and local Stay at Home Orders allowed the parks and trails to stay open. We received many expressions from our citizens on how valuable these resources were to them, especially during the strictest stay at home period. All the reopening of facilities and programs presented challenges to implement methods that protected our participants, as well as our employees, and were in compliance with the local and state health orders. Being a member of our state association, Missouri Park and Recreation Association, proved to be a real asset during this time period. They coordinated weekly conference calls with members all over the state to be able to share information on how they were navigating the health order restrictions. Probably the most challenging issue we faced was the City of Columbia’s hiring freeze that came right during the time we normally hire approximately 600 part-time, seasonal staff for the spring/summer season. It was very difficult, for example, to install tape and signage to close playgrounds at 48 park locations when you lack workers. The grass at the parks got pretty tall until we were able to hire some mowing staff. Our full-time staff were especially helpful during this time period. We had an aquatic supervisor mowing golf courses, a program supervisor mowing parks, and a variety of administrative support staff and recreation specialists cashiering at the golf courses. I am very grateful to have such willing and cooperative team members.

What/how have summer plans (which most likely is the busiest time) been accommodated/cancelled – substitute offerings or has loss of funding determined that planning?

All large events had to be cancelled, postponed, or modified so as to not draw large crowds. A good example would be the fourth of July event, which normally draws about 35,000 people. In past years, along with the fireworks show, it offered live entertainment and interactive activities in a central location. Planning for this event takes about a year of planning but we had to reinvent it this year in just a matter of weeks. After speaking with our sponsors, the new event is a firework display only event. We put all the sponsorship funding into a much larger fireworks display and had to find a new location that could accommodate a safety fallout zone for larger shells, that had
We anticipate that with the larger shells, the viewing radius will be at least 4-5 miles.

Are the basic precautions in place and practice: Visit parks close to home; plan for visits by bringing water and hand sanitizer along; wear a face covering; do not go to crowded places; avoid all playground equipment (note: playgrounds are now open); and, perhaps most critical, stay at least six feet (2 m) from others at all times. Other strategies? Have you been strategic in determining what can be kept open and where?

The Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services has done an excellent job of educating our community regarding best health practices for COVID-19. Our department follows their guidance and supports their efforts through signage, and social distancing and disinfecting practices at our facilities and programs. We converted our popular park trails into a one-way clockwise direction so that visitors don’t pass each other to help facilitate social distancing. We are working hard to provide virtual “on your own” outdoor activities such as trail runs and scavenger hunts to encourage people to explore other trails and parks. Ultimately, the responsibility falls on the visitor as to implement the best health practices recommended by health authorities. A good example of modifications made in a program area would be in our camp programs. We keep the same camp counselor with the same group of youth within the most current health order’s group size limitation. Activities had to be modified so that groups of youth did not intermix. Challenging indeed!

Are people becoming less cautious?

As can be seen by the local news, there is a mixed bag of reaction from the public. Some are very cautious and are following the guidelines of the health authorities, while others are less vigilant. It takes continual education for people to understand that the relaxing of restrictions doesn’t equate to a decrease in the threat of the virus.

Are there virtual summer programs, and if so, can you share some examples?

Since the current order (effective 6/23/2020) allows for up to 100 people, depending on the activity and venue; many of our classes, programs, and facilities are opened back up for in person participation. However, during the previous, stricter stay at home orders, we offered a virtual Easter Bunny greeting, virtual exercise workouts for Silver Sneakers and Zumba classes, and a virtual couch to 13.1k training group for the upcoming Bear Creek Run half marathon that takes place in the fall. We are excited to offer our first esports leagues in July.

Are your employees also experiencing lay-offs, furloughs, reassignments? Can/are volunteers being used?

Thankfully, we did not experience any layoffs of existing full-time employees but we did lose four positions that were vacant. If the facility or program they were assigned to was shut down, they were either reassigned to an active area or were used to clean, disinfect, paint, and/or renovate their facility. For example, during the time when the ARC and the Armory were not open to the public, the gymnasium wood floors were refinished and the annual ARC pool maintenance was
performed that would normally take place in August. We took advantage of the shutdown to do a lot of maintenance and renovations. Many of our part-time, seasonal staff did experience furloughs. Some were able to draw unemployment during that time period. The Parks and Recreation Department has the highest use of volunteers of all City of Columbia departments, using over 16,000 hours of volunteer service last year. With diminishing resources, the Parks and Recreation Department will be looking for even more opportunities to make good use of volunteers.

What lessons have you learned especially as this is all new territory?

I’ve learned just how valuable maintaining good relations and communication with other agencies is; how important having an affiliation with the agencies that govern our profession is and how critical it is to have a good reputation with our fellow city departments and citizens. For example, many of the facility and program reopenings required reopening plans to be submitted to and approved by the Health Department. Having good communication and a good reputation with the Health Department went a long way to facilitate the reopening of facilities and programs. To restart our sports leagues, we consulted the governing sports agency, such as USA Softball, for guidelines as to how to incorporate COVID-19 health protocols while running a softball league. And, having the trust from the public that we are professionals in our field and can be trusted to have safety precautions in place to protect them is critical for participants to return to our programs and facilities.

How do you plan parks and open spaces for the future?

How the pandemic will impact future park planning is yet to be discovered. One thing we did learn was how important having parks, trails, and open spaces for a respite from stress was during the pandemic. The National Recreation and Park Association found 83% of U.S. adults surveyed agreed that visiting their local parks, trails and open spaces is essential for their mental and physical well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our local citizens echoed the same sentiments. Our current *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan* was completed in 2013 and was designed to be a ten-year plan. When it comes time for our department to prepare the next master plan, lessons learned from this unusual time period will undoubtedly have an impact on it.

Where is the open place you’d go to first when you can?

I’m really looking forward to cheering on the Tigers at Memorial Stadium!

The *SNR Monthly Reader* will be distributed electronically the last working day of the month (except during breaks). Please send announcements to Cindy Greenwood, Editor (greenwoodci@missouri.edu). If you would like to unsubscribe from the *SNR Monthly Reader*, please email Cindy.