

The Soil Ecology Society Newsletter

Published for Members of the Soil Ecology Society

January 2004

Ninth Biennial Soil Ecology Conference Palm Springs, California, May 2003

The Soil Ecology Society hosted its ninth biennial international conference on May 11-14, 2003, in Palm Springs, California, and by all measures the meeting was a great success. The theme of the meeting was "Invasive species and soil ecology." There were over 130 presentations, including 44 contributed talks and over 80 posters. The quality of the presentations was outstanding. There were 4 keynote presentations including talks by: David Wardle on the diverse impacts of invasive large animals on soil ecology; Patrick Bohlen on the impacts of invasive earthworms nutrient cycling in northern forests; Mary Firestone on the effects of invasive plants on soil microbial functioning; and David Rizzo on soil-borne *Phytophthora ramorum* and sudden oak death syndrome.

The social functions arranged by Edie Allen and the local organizing committee were very successful and enjoyable, including a poolside banquet at the Doral Resort and a field trip to the spectacular Joshua Tree National Park. New officers were elected at the business meeting with two-year terms starting January 1, 2004. Current plans are to host the next biennial meeting at the Argonne National Laboratory in Chicago, sometime in spring 2005.

Edie Allen, her local support team, and other members of the organizing committee are to be commended for hosting a successful, diverse, and scientifically exciting biennial meeting!



Photo: Past SES Professional Achievement Award recipients, Dave Coleman (foreground) and Dennis Parkinson (middle) get first dibs on the banquet fare.

New SES Officers Elected

The SES Business Meeting was held on Tuesday May 13. Paper ballots cast by the meeting attendees for Society Officers were tallied at the meeting. The new President-Elect is Jayne Belnap of the U.S. Geological Survey in Moab, Utah. Jayne is well known for her work on soil crusts and was a former Chair of the Ecological Society of America's Soil Ecology Section. The new Society Secretary is Matthias Rillig of the University of Montana, known for his research on mycorrhizae. The Society is very fortunate that Ralph Boerner has agreed to continue his excellent work as Business Manager. The new officers begin their terms January 1, 2004. Julie Jastrow is now president of the Society and will host the next biennial meeting in Chicago in 2005. Yosef Steinberger was elected as a new SES Board Member. Congratulations to the new Society Officers!

Minutes from the Business Meeting [\[Top\]](#)

SES members dealt with several important issues at the business meeting on the evening of May 13, 2003. In addition to announcing the newly elected Society officers, members discussed selection of a representative for the US National Committee for Soil Science (currently Jayne Belnap), management of fund accounts and dues, and the idea of an international meeting.

Ralph Boerner, SES Business Manager, suggested combining the main Society fund and the Parkinson Fund into a single account to avoid paying fees for the two separate accounts. The funds would be kept separate through internal accounting. This motion was passed and Ralph is currently searching for an arrangement that gives the Society maximum flexibility and interest.

Another important issue involved dues and membership. Please read this carefully because it's a little complicated, but it shouldn't take a PhD to figure it out. If you attend the biennial meeting, the registration fee for the meeting will include a two-year membership. Thus, if you attend the meeting, you will automatically be a member for the next two years. If you want to maintain a membership but are not attending the biennial meeting, then your membership dues are \$20 per year, which you can pay to Ralph Boerner at Ohio State University (see contact information on sidebar). Please send your current contact information to Mitch Wagener, SES webmaster, so he can keep the membership list up to date. All non-meeting dues will be credited to the Parkinson Award, so you can help maintain funds for this award by sustaining an active membership. Individual separate donations to the Parkinson Fund are always welcome and can be submitted to Ralph Boerner.

Some members thought we could broaden the international participation at the biennial meeting we held it at an international location. Participation would be low for US scientists if the meeting were in Europe but Canada or Mexico could be ideal locations for such a meeting. Many people were concerned that foreign students in the US would face difficulty traveling abroad because of more restrictive visa requirements these days. No final decision was made on this issue, but since a main duty of the President is

planning the biennial meeting, we would either need to elect a president from another country or have a president from the US plan the meeting with an international host.

Members discussed the possibility of approaching a journal about publishing a special issue on ecological invasions and belowground ecology, the theme of the meeting. Patrick Bohlen agreed to take the lead on this and has subsequently arranged a special issue on this topic to be published in the journal *Applied Soil Ecology*. The issue is planned for publication in fall 2004 and will include both papers presented at the meeting and papers solicited from the general membership after the meeting. Members also agreed that they would like to continue to be able to get discounted subscription rates on *Applied Soil Ecology* through their membership in SES, which is another good reason for maintaining an active membership.

Diana Wall Receives Professional Achievement Award by Edith Allen, SES Past President

It is with great pleasure that the SES presented Diana Harrison Wall with its Professional Achievement Award during the Biennial conference. The award is presented to a soil ecologist who has made significant contributions toward advancing the field, has excelled in teaching and graduate education, and has been a national and international leader in promoting soil ecology through representation in committees, organizations, and outreach beyond the circle of scientists. Diana has excelled in all of these areas.

Diana began her research career with a Ph.D. in Plant Pathology from the University of Kentucky. She held several college and university teaching jobs, and did postdoctoral research at the University of California, Riverside, Department of Nematology. She became an extraordinary grant-writer, being self-supported on competitive grants, until she became associate professor in that department in 1991. In 1993 she moved to her current position as Director of the Natural Resources Ecology Laboratory,

Colorado State University, where she also held the positions of associate dean and interim dean.



Photo: Walt Whitford begins the roasting of Diana Wall (far left), who is standing in line next to her fellow roasters.

Diana is a well-known nematologist through her extensive publication record that includes more than 80 journal publications and 33 book chapters, one edited book, and numerous reports, including four for the National Research Council. She began her studies in Kentucky on the impacts of two nematode species on one host plant, and gradually extended the breadth of her studies to include the impacts of nematode and microbial biodiversity at the ecosystem level. She is currently well recognized for her work on the unique ecosystem ecology of the Antarctic Dry Valleys, where she is co-investigator of a NSF Long-term Ecosystem Research Grant. She also has programs in grassland ecology and agricultural implications of nematodes at the ecosystem level. In addition to her successful research career, Diana has been a leader in numerous national and international committees that have made important contributions to issues in soil ecology, biodiversity, ecosystem ecology, and global change. Since 1994 she has held significant scientific leadership positions including: chair of three SCOPE (Scientific Committee on Problems in the Environment) committees and two DIVERSITAS committees (Office of Science, Technology, and Policy, Washington, D.C.) on aspects of microbial diversity and ecosystem functioning; chair of the

Department of Interior's Biodiversity Monitoring committee; chair of the Committee on Valuation of diversity; co-chair of the Council of Scientific Society Presidents Population and Environmental Task Force; and a member of numerous other committees on topics ranging from Antarctic research, climate change, polar biology, NASA Planetary Advisory committee, NCEAS Scientific Advisory Board and others. She was a research panel member, advisory committee member, and program officer at the National Science Foundation. She has been on editorial boards for *Oecologia*, *Ecosystems*, *Applied Soil Ecology*, and the *Encyclopedia of Biodiversity*. She has received several prestigious awards including Fellow of the Society of Nematology, Fellow of the AAAS, and Fellow in the Aldo Leopold Program of the Ecological Society of America.

Diana is active in several scientific societies, and most importantly has been president of the Society of Nematologists, the American Institute of Biological Sciences and the Ecological Society of America. It's hard to understand how she could fit all this into her schedule, but Diana has impacted the direction of soil ecology by serving in these national level offices and helping to assure that soil ecology receives the attention it deserves both in research funding and management of natural resources. Diana would probably tell you that her most important contributions have been in guiding the young researchers who have come through her lab, including 8 post-docs and 7 graduate students in Fort Collins.

Diana was "roasted" by her students and colleagues at the award ceremony. She received flak from former Ph.D. student Amy Treonis about the mixed messages given by the stuffed toy penguin, and the long, black whip ever-present in Diana's office. This was capped by the story of the 5-mile conga line she led at a soil zoology colloquium in Uppsala, Sweden, told with great glee by Dave Coleman. She was heard to say why walk, when you can dance all the way home? She is obviously very much loved and respected by her students and colleagues, and we all congratulate her on her well-deserved achievement.

Diana was preceded in this award by a prestigious line of soil ecologists, including D.A. Crossley, Jr. and David C. Coleman, both from the University of Georgia (1997 and 1999), Clive A. Edwards, from The Ohio State

University and Dennis Parkinson, from The University of Calgary (both in 2001).

The newly "anointed" lifetime achievement award winner, Diana Wall with her former graduate student Amy Treonis.

Student Presentation Awards

The quality of student presentations at the SES meeting continues to rival that of our more senior members. Student presentations at the biennial meeting in Palm Springs were outstanding and the judges for student awards (Mike Miller, Dave Coleman and Patrick Bohlen) had the challenging task of picking winners from among the many excellent oral and poster presentations. A total of 21 posters and 18 oral presentations were included in the competition.

First place for oral presentations went to Stuart Grandy of Kellogg Biological Station at MSU who examined soil C, nitrous oxide and aggregation changes following cultivation of an undisturbed soil. Second place went to Katherine Batten, of the University of California, Davis for her talk on plant invasions and soil microbial communities in serpentine soils. Sarah Leckie of the University of British Columbia was awarded third place for her talk on soil microbial communities in forest that differ in N availability. Honorable mentions for talks were given to Jennifer Pett-Ridge of the University of California, Berkeley and Amiee Classen of Northern Arizona University.

The winner of the poster competition was Kelly Moran of the University of California, Davis, who examined the role of inorganic N fertilizer in crop residue decomposition and soil organic matter formation. Second place in the poster competition went to Sarah O'Brien of Argonne National Laboratory with a poster on the effect of soil fertility on physically fractionated C and N pools in soil exposed to elevated CO₂. Third place for posters was awarded to Gregory Newman of Northern Arizona University whose poster examined wildfire effects on soil microbial activity and community level physiological profiles in Ponderosa Pine ecosystems.

Congratulations to the winners and to all student presenters for the commendable job they did with their presentations. There were many excellent student presentations that were not entered into the competition and hopefully more advisors will nominate their students for these awards in the future (which will only make the competition stiffer!).

Parkinson Student Travel Awards

The 2003 biennial meeting was the first time that students were eligible to receive Dennis Parkinson Student Travel Awards. These awards were established at the last biennial meeting at Callaway Gardens in Georgia (2001) to help encourage student participation in the meeting and honor lifelong contributions of Dennis Parkinson to soil ecology. Dennis was on hand to present the awards to the following students:

Loren Byrne, Penn State University, Mary Ann Bruns, advisor

Sara Leckie, University of British Columbia, Cindy Prescott, advisor

Paul Meiman, Colorado State University, Ed Redente, advisor

Kelly Moran, University California, Davis, Johan Six, advisor

Evan Preisser, University California, Davis, Don Strong, advisor

Andrea Thorpe, University of Montana, Ray Callaway, advisor

Congratulations to these first recipients of the Parkinson Travel Award!



Photo: Attendees of the 9th Biennial Soil Ecology Conference in Palm Spring, California.

Smithsonian Soils Exhibit Project

Patrick Drohan, the co-chair for the national Smithsonian Soils Exhibit Project, recently contacted Edie Allen about the new soils exhibit to gain support for this effort from members of the Soil Ecology Society. He would like to make the Soil Ecological Society aware of an exciting new way to explain the importance of soils to millions of people. Furthermore, he would like to enlist the support of the members of the Soil Ecological Society in making this exhibit a reality.

If you have not heard about this project, it is a national effort to create an exhibit on soils and society in the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. The website for the project is at <http://www.soils.org/smithsonian/>. Their goal is for six to nine million people to visit the display each year to better understand four key messages:

Soils sustain life and are rich in biodiversity

Soils store, recycle and renew energy and organic material

Soils provide food, fiber, fuel and pharmaceuticals to humanity

Soil scientists work to understand and conserve this critical natural resource

This education would be done through a multi-year museum exhibit at the Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC. It could later be loaned out to other museums across the country. So far, they have raised over \$370,000 for the project and at present are contacting potential corporate donors. It is very important to have grass-root support for the project and Dr. Drohan encourages as many different groups as possible to get involved. So far, the project is being supported by: the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History; the Soil Science Society of America; the Agronomic Science Foundation; the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service; the USDA Forest Service; the National Park Service; the US Fish and Wildlife Service; the Bureau of Land Management.

Patrick Drohan or Valerie Breunig of the Agronomic Science Foundation (vbreunig@agronomy.org) can provide people with more information on the project. Soil Ecology Society members are invited to make a monetary donation to the project. Your help is crucial to initiate this unique approach for explaining soils and soil science to millions of people from a science-based, trusted source, the Smithsonian. Interested parties may donate online at www.a-s-f.org by clicking on "donate now" and mentioning the Smithsonian Soil Exhibit Project in the comments section. Questions concerning this project can be directed to Patrick Drohan, Coordinator for Exhibit Development and Smithsonian Committee Vice-Chair (702) 895-4438 patrick.drohan@ccmail.nevada.edu.

Ohio State University's Summary Acarology Course

The ever popular intensive three work workshop on Soil Acarology will be offered at the campus of Ohio State University from June 21 to July 9, 2004. All workshops at the program are geared towards training in identification of mites, in this case soil mites. A secondary emphasis will be on the role of mites in soil ecosystems and on mite evolution. Coverage will include one week each of Mesostigmata (Dr. David Walter), oribatid mites (Drs. Roy Norton & Valerie Behan-Pelletier), and Prostigmata (Dr. Cal

Welbourn). More information at our website, <http://www.biosci.ohio-state.edu/~acarolog/sum2k1.htm> or e-mail to Hans Klompen (klompen.1@osu.edu).

14th International Colloquium on Soil Zoology and Ecology

The XIVth International Colloquium on Soil Zoology and Ecology will be hosted at the University of Rouen (Mont Saint Aignan), France, from August 30 through September 3, 2004. The theme of the meeting is "Soil Organisms and Ecosystem Services." Thibaud Decaëns and Patrick Lavelle are the meeting coordinators. The meeting will follow the general format of previous meetings with keynote talks, short talks and dedicated poster sessions centered around general themes. The deadline for submitting abstracts is February 1, 2004. The deadline for registrations and accommodations reservations is April 1, 2004. The proceedings from the Colloquium will be published, probably in the European Journal of Soil Biology, and the manuscripts are due at the beginning of the Colloquium. The meeting will be followed by the XI International Colloquium on Soil Apterygota from Sept. 5-9, 2004. Detailed information on the colloquium can be obtained at:

<http://www.bondy.ird.fr/biosol/evenements/colloque-rouen/annonce/ICSZ-and-ICA.pdf>

18th World Congress of Soil Science

The Inter-Congress Meeting of the International Union of Soil Science (IUSS) will be held in Philadelphia, PA, April 25-28, 2004. The 18th World Congress of Soil Science will be held there July 9-15 2006. The theme of the international congress is "Frontiers of Soil Science: Technology and the Information Age." The program will consist of a plenary session of invited papers, symposia sessions of invited and voluntary papers, and poster sessions. Registration will be available by August 2004 at the website www.wcss18.org. Please see the IUSS Congress for more information: <http://www.iuss.org/pages/bulletins.htm>.

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