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Fall 2003 Newsletter

Issue Number 34

College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Open House
Rosalee Swartz

Please encourage your students and their parents to join the UNL College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources for its fall open house, CASNR Day, scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 11, 2003. Registration begins at 8:15 a.m., followed by an overview of the college and browsing session where students and parents can visit with faculty, staff and students about the 22 areas of study in the college. Students and parents will then attend two academic-interest sessions in the morning. Lunch will be provided and the CASNR Ambassadors will present a "life on campus" session followed by a student panel. Special-interest sessions in Natural Resources, Animal Science, Food Science and Technology and Mechanized Systems Management, Ag Engineering and Biological Systems Engineering will be offered following lunch. Short sessions on admissions, scholarships and financial aid, career services, and preparation for veterinary school will also be offered during that time. A $500 CASNR scholarship will be awarded at the close of the day.

Interested students and parents can visit the CASNR website at http://casnr.unl.edu/future/day.htm to get more information and register. The registration deadline is Friday, Sept. 26, 2003. If you have questions, please contact Rosalee Swartz, rswartz1@unl.edu, 402-472-4445 or 800-742-8800, extension 2541.

What's New at Morrill Hall?
Kathy French, Education Facilitator

Morrill Hall, the University of Nebraska State Museum display building or "Elephant Hall," whatever you know us by, is OPEN! The drastic budget cuts are a reality. There are changes, but we continue to offer excellent opportunities for teachers and students. Our doors have NOT closed, although that seems to be the general public notion. We also have a new director, Dr. Priscilla Grew. We are hoping with strong leadership and support, we will continue to be one of Nebraska's treasures.

There are some additions worth noting in the museum. The planetarium lobby offers a peak into space. Mueller Planetarium is one of only eight locations in the world to be using the "live" version of ViewSpace. This is a direct connection from the computer at the Space Telescope Science Institute (STSI) linked directly to Mueller. It is not available on the Internet or the Web. Short seven to 10-minute segments concerning astronomy topics photographed with the Hubble Space Telescope make up its programming. In the "live version," new images are downloaded and displayed as they are released at STSI.

There are some wonderful shows available in the planetarium for your students. Since Mars was in the news this fall, there is one on Mars and a brand NEW show coming this fall is called "Hubblevision in the 21st Century." These are targeted for audiences 5th grade and up.

There is an expanded mineral collection on the third floor and a new rock and mineral gallery program. The program is targeted at a 5th through 8th grade audience. The students become geologists as they look for clues that rocks reveal about the environments in which they were formed. Teachers and students have given us great feedback on this addition to our gallery offerings.

Please call for reservations at 472-6302; email us at elephant@unl.edu, or visit the Web at www.musuem.unl.edu http://www.musuem.unl.edu/. Plan to visit or check out a kit this year!

Four Upcoming Geography Events
Charles Gildersleeve, University of Nebraska-Omaha

Celebrate Geography Action Week (GAW), Nov. 16-22, as well as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Day on Nov. 19. The theme this year is: Habitat: Home Sweet Home. Lessons and teaching activities for GAW and for the entire year can be obtained from Mary Lou Alfieri, State Geography Action Coordinator, at St. Columbkille School, 224 East 5th St., Papillion, Neb., 68046; or e-mail her at: maryloualfieri@stcolumbkille.creighton.edu. As long as they last, Mary Lou can send you information and lesson packets upon request.

The National Geographic Bee (GEOBee) is for 4th through 8th-graders across the country. Registration for the GEOBee is $50 and must be submitted by your school's principal along with a written request on school letterhead by Oct. 15. Send checks and letters to: National Geographic Bee, 1145 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036-4688. Call the school Bee Line at: 202-828-6659 for enrollment requests. School bees are conducted from Nov. 17, 2003, though Jan. 16, 2004. Winner of each school bee takes a 70-question exam, and a teacher sends it by mail to the National Geographic Society, postmarked no later than Jan. 20, 2004. See www.nationalgeographic.com for details. The State Bee will be held at UNO on April 2, 2004, and the National Bee, held in Washington, D.C., is in late May.

The Geography of the City Workshop, for K-12 students is being held June 14-18 and July 23, 2004, at UNO. Participants will receive a $250 stipend for attending and submitting a lesson. Contact Steve Callaghan at: scallaghan@esu3.org or callaghan@huntel.net for details and registration for this very successful program.

The Lewis and Clark in Nebraska Workshop is June 27-July 1 and July 23, 2004. It will be held at Dana College in Blair, Neb. It will include several field trips to Fort Atkinson, Lewis and Clark Park in Onawa, Iowa, and Ponca State Park. For more information contact Lonnie Moore at Lonnie.moore@ops.org or call 402-443-5904.

Sand Hills Discovery Experience

The second annual Sand Hills Discovery Experience was held this past July in Ainsworth, Neb. Hydrology was the focus of this event and a series of featured speakers gave presentations throughout the day on various topics relating to this theme. The Sand Hills Discovery Center Foundation started this one-day experience to provide comprehensive information about the Sand Hills to its residents as well as the many people who visit the vast rolling dunes while traveling through the Sand Hills of Nebraska. There is even an opportunity to receive college credit by attending the experience. The foundation was formed by a group of individuals dedicated to educating the general public on the geology and ecology of the magnificent, and sometime fragile, Sand Hills. Plans for a third Discovery Experience are in the works for the summer of 2004. For more information on the Sand Hills Discovery Center Foundation, please visit www.ainsworthlinks.com/shde/html.

Citizen team searches for heritage trees as "living witnesses"
Program may include Lone Tree and tree in Sacred Hoop Garden

Christine Meyer, Education and Information Specialist, SNRS

To honor trees that have “stood watch” over lives and events that form the fabric of Nebraska’s history, the Nebraska Heritage Tree Program was inaugurated at the annual Tree City USA ceremonies at the state capitol building in Lincoln this spring. The program is intended to highlight the state’s past by recognizing trees that have marked historic events and so ensure that these living emblems of our heritage endure for future generations. To further such a mission, the Nebraska Heritage Tree Program was created to identify, preserve, publicize and protect those trees with historical and cultural significance. This program is a new venture sponsored by the Nebraska Community Forestry Council – a citizen team that acts as ambassadors for Nebraska's community forestry programs – Nebraska Cooperative Extension, forestry faculty and staff at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Natural Resource Sciences and private individuals.

Trees currently being researched include the Lone Tree – a cottonwood that served as a well-known landmark for pioneers as early as 1833 – Hill’s Hanging Tree in Holt County, a crabapple tree in the Sacred Hoop Prayer Garden at the home of John G. Neihardt, and the Moon Trees, trees that grew from seed that went to the moon and back on Apollo 14.

Few historic trees in Nebraska have yet been identified. Their legacies are buried in historical documents and archives, or in the memories of the state’s citizens and their ancestors, so the program encourages people to nominate a distinctive tree for its register.

Criteria for tree eligibility for the Heritage Trees Program include:
* the tree stands at the home of a person who played a role in Nebraska history as a leader, writer or other significant contributor;
* the tree stands at or near an event that affected Nebraska’s development and its citizens;
* the tree was planted by an individual or group whose experience is of significance in Nebraska, or it is an important part of the culture of a group;
* the tree is illustrated in sketches, journals, photographs or writings related to a historical event in Nebraska;

Nomination forms are available through sponsoring agencies or local extension offices. The register will include tales, photographs and a journey into Nebraska’s past through the special accounts associated with trees.

The program will collect the information through historical archival research and public participation. The Heritage Tree Register is the primary means of educating and communicating to the public the historic significance of these trees. Once the register is complete, programs through the Nebraska Department of Tourism will showcase historic trees, allowing visitors and state residents to experience Nebraska’s history through its trees.

New School of Natural Resources Offers Many Careers and Benefits

Students who want to help their society develop an environmentally and economically sustainable path to the future should investigate the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s School of Natural Resources (SNR). The university’s natural resource majors recently have been brought together through a unified curriculum committee administered by SNR that retains traditional disciplines within an interdisciplinary, ecosystems approach geared to the complexities of the future, according to Elizabeth Walter-Shea, teaching coordinator for the school. The graduate specializations have also been re-developed in the past few years to reflect a more cohesive approach to courses and degree programs, she noted. A recent merger of the former school with the Conservation and Survey Division – the state geological, water, soil and geographical survey – will also help SNR education by bringing more research experience to teaching, particularly in Earth science and geographic information systems, she explained.

Faculty affiliated with SNR have worked with UNL and various partner organizations to secure access to demonstration sites, field labs and protected areas to assist research and have established internship opportunities to give students hands-on training.

“The broad diversity of climate, habitat, hydrology, soils and near-surface and subsurface geology across Nebraska provides a multitude of field opportunities for students,” she said. “Also, unique opportunities for internships, assistantships and cooperative research are available through many state, federal, and private natural resource organizations.”

Those envisioning work in natural resources and environment can find SNR programs leading to careers in the public, private and non-profit sectors, Walter-Shea added.

SNR has many strengths on which to build a leading program in natural resources and many researchers who already have national and international reputations, she added. The strengths include faculty in a variety of interrelated scientific disciplines: biological resources; climate and bio-atmospheric systems; Earth resources; ecosystems science; geospatial (geographic) information systems; human dimensions such as environmental anthropology and public policy analysis; and water sciences.

The merger with Conservation and Survey brings additional opportunities for career-directed jobs. The survey has traditionally employed students on grant-sponsored research related to geologic mapping, the ancient climate, geography and geology of the Sandhills, water quality research, wetlands research and test drilling for geological data bases, to name a few, said the survey’s director, Mark Kuzila.

The new school will continue to offer a wide variety of extension and outreach programs to new and traditional clientele. And these may well be expanded by taking advantage of Conservation and Survey’s extensive commitment to publishing both popular and technical publications on a wide range of natural resource topics. These range from multi-disciplinary encyclopedic reference volumes on a given resource or region to fact sheets, booklets and brochures, Kuzila said.

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The NESEN Newsletter is compiled by Kylee Anderson and edited by Charles Flowerday of the Conservation and Survey Division, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Information for the NESEN Newsletter can be sent to Kylee Anderson at 9 NE Hall, Lincoln, NE 68588-0517 or *kander20@bigred.unl.edu*. NESEN’s lead organizations are the 1) Conservation and Survey Division, 113 Nebraska Hall, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, NE 68588-0517; phone 402-472-3471; fax 402-472-4608; website *http://csd.unl.edu/csd.html* and the 2) School of Natural Resource Sciences, 303 Biochemistry Hall, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, NE 68583-0758; phone 402-472-9873.