

January 2009



NEERS News

Winter 2009

A publication of the New England Estuarine Research Society

“Global Climate Change Impacts” is theme of NEERS Fall 2008 Meeting

On October 16th, NEERSians boarded the ferry in Galilee, RI and kicked off the Fall 2008 meeting. While some members decided to brave stiff breezes at the bow and search for bird life, others lined up in the aisle for the impromptu registration table. Once docked, they trooped uphill with luggage to the Spring House Hotel, one of Block Island's historic landmarks and the site of our meeting.

Thursday's special symposium was on "Global Climate Change in Estuaries & Coasts: Impacts and What We Can Do About Them" and featured multiple local perspectives on climate change, including talks on potential impacts on benthic-pelagic coupling and fish population assemblages in Narragansett Bay by Scott Nixon and Jeremy Collie, respectively, on coastal geology (Jon Boothroyd) and the management of coastal communities and infrastructure (Grover Fugate) and how to engage the public in dealing with these issues (Peter Lord). The talks were followed by a discussion on the symposium and the welcoming social. As usual, NEERS members were enthusiastic about both.

After a delicious dinner provided by the Spring House, a relatively large group headed over to an evening discussion group in one of the guest houses, hosted by Leanna Heffner and her housemates. The discussion group covered a combination of topics including climate change, invasive species, and communication with the general public.

Saturday kicked off with a continuation of the climate change theme with talks on coastal flooding (Knee) and climate change indicators and impacts on salt marshes (Tillburg et al. and Hoover et al., respectively), transitioning into multiple talks on general salt marsh ecology that carried us through to lunch. The lunch break afforded a small group enough time to go in the beautiful sunny, breezy weather and check out the native *Phragmites* patches on the island, with guidance and information from Eric Hazelton and Tom Mozdzer. The afternoon began with a variety of talks primarily focused on research from Rhode Island from nitrogen in macroalgae (Heffner et al.) to fish community structure (Longval and Oviatt) and concluded with fisheries management and population dynamics of shellfish (Byron et al) and horseshoe crabs (Leschen and James-Pirri, Beekey and Mattei).

The NEERS business meeting followed, and featured a presentation by Sara Grady and Eric Hazelton of new logo ideas (see page 3) for NEERS. We were also reminded that the Spring NEERS meeting is going to be in Salem, MA and that CERF would be in Portland, OR.

The poster session was enthusiastically attended and created a roadblock of NEERSians that made navigating from poster to poster a challenge. It was followed by our awards banquet, which is



Ron Rozsa explores a stand of native *Phragmites* (photo by S. Hale)



Saturday night's entertainment, NEERSighted, with (L-R) Robert Buchsbaum, Jonathan Garber, Ed Levine, Mike Larkin, Lindsay Brin, Sara Grady, Chris Deacutis (photo by V. Berounsky)



NEERS President Pam Morgan (L) with student award winners (L-R) Thomas Mozdzer, Alexandra Bowman, Jason Graff, Stephen Rossiter (photo by V. Berounsky)

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NEW ENGLAND
ESTUARINE
RESEARCH SOCIETY
<http://neers.org>



NEERS is an
affiliate society of
the Coastal &
Estuarine Research
Federation
<http://erf.org/>

JOIN NEERS

Student dues are \$5.00
and regular dues are
\$20.00. To register, see
<http://www.neers.org/main/join.htm>

NEERS Fall 2008 meeting (cont.)

always a fun and raucous event, while still managing to pay tribute to all of our fine members and the winners of our various awards. The winners of the student presentation awards were:

Ketchum Prize (graduate oral): Thomas Mozdzer – “Ecophysiological differences between *Phragmites* lineages facilitate the expansion of the introduced type”

Rankin Prize (undergraduate oral): Stephen Rossiter – “Mangroves as reef fish nursery habitat: Pruning mangroves prunes fish”

Dean Prize (graduate poster): Jason Graff – “Chlorophyll extraction method matters: implications for long-term monitoring efforts and assessing change in marine ecosystems”

Warren Prize (undergraduate poster): Alexandria Bowman – “Characterizing circulation patterns in Quonochontaug salt pond”

Student travel awards were given to six students as well. After the awards ceremony we got down to business and played an exciting game of Wheel of Fortune. We learned that while “nitrogen” is a very easy answer to guess, “Howard and Eugene Odum” is not as easily determined.

Since the Spring House was essentially the only place open on Block Island in October, we created our own entertainment for the evening. A talented group of NEERSians from Rhode Island

and Massachusetts provided us with music for drinking and dancing. A few people even stepped up to play or sing along.

The next morning a small group headed out before breakfast for bird banding and huddled in a blustery wind as birds were pulled out of the mist nets and banded. Everyone there had an opportunity to hold and release a bird, and we learned about the importance of Block Island as a stopover for migrant birds.

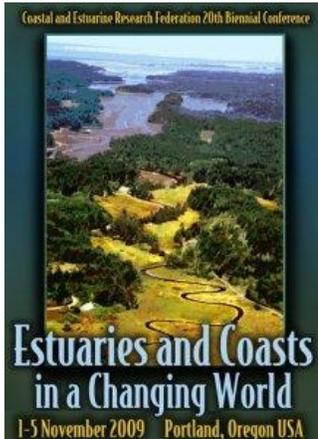
After breakfast there was a special talk on science communication by Chris Reddy of WHOI, focusing on the distillation and dissemination of scientific information to the lay public, including advice and common pitfalls. The symposium was followed by a few more talks and then the moment we all wait for at every NEERS meeting – the presentation of the Stickleback Award. This year it was given to Wendy Leo by Wade Elmer, Spring 2008 winner. After that, the conference was concluded and while some members headed downhill to the ferry, others joined geologist Jon Boothroyd of URI for a tour of Block Island’s bluffs and coastal ponds.

See you in Salem in April!

- Sara Grady

Come to the CERF meeting in Fall 2009!

Nov 1-5, Portland, OR



Early morning birders checking mist nets with the Nature Conservancy. (Photo by S. Hale)



Learning about Block Island geology with RI State Geology John Boothroyd. (Photo by S. Hale)

Salem in April!

In May, NEERSians will return to **Salem, MA, April 2-4** for our **Spring 2009 meeting** at the new Salem Waterfront Hotel at Pickering Wharf on Salem Harbor. The meeting will be jointly hosted by Mass. Audubon, Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries, and Salem State College. NEERS has not been to Salem since 2001, and this promises to be an exciting meeting in one of Massachusetts' great historic sea ports. The special symposium will focus on "The Science Behind Ocean Management". There will also be a workshop on Saturday morning on "How to give a good talk: public speaking and scientific presentations" led by Bill Cunningham from the Salem State College Theater Department.

Abstract submissions by February 6th
Pre-registration by March 18th

Potential new logos for NEERS!

After answering a call for logo ideas at the Spring 08 NEERS meeting, Sara Grady and Eric Hazelton volunteered to provide multiple options for NEERS members at the Fall 08 meeting – a compass rose theme with two design options, a design based on the coastline, an estuarine profile theme with two design options, and a design based on symbols for river and sea. Each option could be designed with either the full organization name or the acronym "NEERS". In addition, each would be provided in both color and black and white.

The current plan is for NEERS members to evaluate the logos (below and online at <http://neers.org/main/logo.html>) and consider which they prefer. There is an online survey where members can submit their opinions (at <http://tinyurl.com/neers>). We hope to have an official vote at the Spring 09 meeting in Salem, so check out the logos, think about what you like (and don't like), and let us know!

