

# WESTERN SOCIETY OF NATURALISTS

~ 2014 ~

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## 95<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING NOVEMBER 13-16, 2014 IN TACOMA, WASHINGTON

### MEETING INFORMATION

This year's annual meeting of the Western Society of Naturalists will be held November 13-16, 2014 at the **Hotel Murano in Tacoma, Washington**. Our current plans are that the meeting will begin on the evening of Thursday (Nov. 13th) with a film festival and student mixer, similar to last year's meeting. On the morning of Friday Nov. 14th, we will feature the Student Symposium followed by contributed paper sessions. That evening we will have the Poster Session and the ever-popular Attitude Adjustment Hour (AAH). On Saturday Nov. 15th, there will be a morning Presidential Symposium followed by contributed papers. Talks on Saturday will be followed with the Business Meeting, Presidential Banquet, and WSN Auction. On Sunday Nov. 16th, we will start the morning with contributed talks, followed by a special plenary speaker and finale event to close the 95<sup>th</sup> annual meeting on Sunday afternoon. Please plan to stay for the whole meeting, so you do not miss these unique events. As we approach the conference, we will provide more details on the schedule.

All workshops, symposia, and contributed paper and poster sessions will be held in the meeting rooms of the Hotel Murano. For driving directions and general hotel information, visit ([www.hotelmuranotacoma.com](http://www.hotelmuranotacoma.com)). The hotel offers a variety of services for WSN attendees, including complimentary wireless connection in the hotel rooms, discounts at the day spa, and use of the 24-hr fitness center. We have arranged for room rates of \$139/night for a standard King or double room with 2 occupants, \$149/night for 3 occupants, and \$159/night for 4 occupants per room. **These rates will apply until Wednesday, October 1, 2014.** As usual, we strongly advise you to **make your hotel reservations as early as possible and well before**

**the meeting**, or you may be unable to find accommodations at the Hotel Murano. We urge all members to stay in the Hotel Murano so that the Society can fulfill its room commitment, which will allow us to remain financially solvent. The special discounted rate applies for three days before and after the meeting as well, if you wish to arrive early or depart later.

We will send a special WSN reservations link and phone number in an upcoming email.

### **CALL FOR PAPERS/POSTERS**

We will open the WSN website for online submission of abstracts for contributed papers and posters beginning August 1, 2014. **Abstracts will be accepted through October 1, 2014** and posted subsequently on the WSN website along with a meeting schedule. If you have problems submitting your abstract online, please contact the Secretariat. WSN continues to strongly recommend that student abstracts and talks are vetted by their major advisors to assure the high quality of the work presented.

### **WSN BUSINESS**

As usual, the WSN Student Committee is seeking items to include in this year's auction. Money raised from the auction is used to fund student travel. The auction will be held immediately following the Presidential Banquet. Previously donated items have included books or monographs, art work, embarrassing collectibles obtained from prominent WSN members, wine, and other spirits. WSN is a non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible. If you have items that you would like to donate or have questions of the WSN student committee in general, please e-mail Jessica Abbott of the WSN student committee (jmabbott@ucdavis.edu).

### **RECAP OF THE 94<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING IN OXNARD, CALIFORNIA**

The 94<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Western Society of Naturalists was held November 7 – 10, 2013 at the Embassy Suites Mandalay Beach and Resort in Oxnard, CA. The meeting was a huge success, being attended by approximately 629 members, which may have set a new WSN attendance record. The secretariat experimented with a new schedule at this year's meeting and we generally received positive feedback from our members. Instead of the traditional Student Workshop and Mixer to start the meeting, this year the Student Committee hosted the Beneath the Waves Film Festival that screened short films about marine issues. The film festival was well attended by over 150 members. The excellent Friday student symposia had a theme of, "Science and Scientists in the Policy Arena". The Presidential Symposium on Saturday was titled, "Paradigms Lost and Found: the Utility of Emerging Concepts in the Fields of Ecology and Evolution" and it was a follow-up to a highly successful symposium held originally at the 1999 WSN meeting. On Sunday morning, members were treated to special plenary talk by Dan Reed and colleagues on "The Value of Long Term Ecological Research".

In total, there were over 200 contributed papers and 120 posters, which were filled with many excellent presentations. The Student Poster Competition was held on Friday evening, while the general poster session and AAH were held on Saturday night. Other highlights of the meeting included presentation of the Lifetime Achievement Award to Jim Morin of Cornell University, and presentation of the Naturalist of the Year award to Dan Richards of the Channel Islands National Park Service. In addition, much fun was had by all at the AAH and at the Presidential Banquet, where outgoing President Mike Graham delivered an entertaining and inspiring address, complete with trivia competition focused on WSN iconography. Winning tables were awarded bottles of wine for correct responses! Best student paper and poster awards were announced at the beginning of the banquet and a total of 144 banquet tickets were sold for this Sunday evening event, making it the largest banquet ever. The WSN Auction was presided

over by the hilarious auctioneering duo of Sean Anderson and Mark Steele, who helped to raise funding for WSN students. Several well-dressed assistants aided the performance. The auction and donations by members raised \$8,000 for student travel. Thanks go to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo for bidding on and winning the prized “tequila and trophy” at \$4,000.

We would also like to thank Sean Anderson and Mark Steele for doing a superb job as local chairs. The **WSN webpage** can be found at <http://www.westsocnat.com>, and we use online registration for the meeting through Cvent. In addition, we now have a new **WSN Facebook page** (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Western-Society-of-Naturalists/263186863792393>), where you can find information about the society, our annual meeting, and connect with your colleagues.

### **ELECTIONS, NOMINATIONS, AND OTHER SOCIETY BUSINESS**

A number of decisions were made at the 2013 business meeting. Unapproved minutes of that meeting will soon be posted on the WSN website, but highlights included:

- Gretchen Hofmann of UC Santa Barbara was nominated and unanimously elected as President-Elect.
- The 2014 meeting is the last meeting hosted by the current Secretariat (Mike, Scott, Diana, and Corey). UC Davis has graciously agreed to serve the tenure of the next Secretariat, starting those duties for the 2015 meeting. The WSN meeting in 2015 will be held in Sacramento, CA.
- The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Society will occur in 2016 and we have formed an ad-hoc committee to plan this celebration as a birthday party for the society, with a social focus. The 100<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Western Society of Naturalists will occur in 2020 and will focus on a celebration of the science contributed by the Society. Locations for each of those special celebrations are currently being considered.
- Attendees continued to voice support for folding membership dues into the total registration costs so that attendees will pay one all-inclusive registration/dues fee for the meeting. Members not attending the annual meeting still have the option to pay dues only.
- The society voted to include a new award for best undergraduate poster, starting at the 2014 meeting.
- Three new students were elected to serve on the student committee. The chair of the Student Committee is Jessica Abbott (UC Davis). Additional student members include: Will Fennie (MLML), Suzanne Christensen (MLML), Tomas Bell (UCSB), Jenn Burt (Simon Frasier University), and Bobby San Miguel (MLML).

### **TRAVEL AWARDS**

Travel awards totaling \$8,000 were given to students who presented at the 2013 meeting. Although we are not able to fund all students who apply, or cover the majority of their expenses, students are encouraged to apply for these awards in order to attend future meetings. Preference in making awards is given to those students presenting a talk/poster and those that are in the last year of their degree. The size of awards depends on distance traveled and the

amount of funds collected at the auction. All members are encouraged to contribute to the travel fund when they pay their annual dues. Details on applying for student travel awards are available on the WSN website.

## **STUDENT PAPER AND POSTER AWARDS**

From the student papers presented at the 94th Annual Meeting, awards for Best Student Paper were given in three categories: 1) Organismal and Population Biology, 2) Community and Ecosystem Ecology, and 3) Applied Ecology. WSN also presented a Best Student Poster Award. Many, many thanks to Christine Whitcraft and Tonya Huff for chairing the Best Student Paper and Poster Awards Committee, and for doing an outstanding job of organizing the judging, helping to evaluate the presentations, and tallying up the scores of 112 presentations and 75 posters in record time! Many thanks also to all of those who volunteered to serve as judges, for their efforts.

As always, there were numerous outstanding papers that deserved awards, but this year was difficult for the judges due to the huge number of papers and posters of excellent quality. Here are the winners and those receiving honorable mention in each category:

### **BEST STUDENT POSTERS**

#### **Winner:**

- Burt, Jenn (Simon Frasier University), "Patterns and processes: understanding multi-scale dynamics in high latitude kelp forests"

#### **Honorable Mention:**

- Meyers-Cherry, Natasha (Cal Poly SLO), "Assessing MPA effects on life history traits of gopher rockfish (*Sebastes carnatus*) in central California"

### **BEST STUDENT PAPERS**

#### **ORGANISMAL/POPULATION BIOLOGY**

##### **Winner:**

- Smolenski, Jennifer (CSU Northridge), "Spectral distribution of light has no effect on coral calcification in response to increased pCO<sub>2</sub>"

##### **Honorable Mention in Organismal/Population Biology:**

- Bible, Jillian (UC Davis), "Variation in salinity tolerance of Olympia oysters: implications for restoration in the face of climate change"

#### **COMMUNITY/ECOSYSTEM ECOLOGY**

##### **Winner:**

- Abbott, Jessica (UC Davis), "The effects of genetic relatedness and functional trait differences on the performance of pairs of eelgrass genot"

##### **Honorable Mention in Community/Ecosystem Ecology:**

- Castorani, Max (UC Davis), "Facilitation or inhibition? Impacts of blue mussels on eelgrass across a light gradient"
- Wirth, Camdilla (CSU Northridge), "Giant kangaroo rats influence spatial distribution and microhabitat use of the common side-blotched lizard"

## **APPLIED ECOLOGY/CONSERVATION BIOLOGY (Mia Tegner Award)**

### **Winner**

- Peterson, Sarah (UC Santa Cruz), "Foraging ecology influences mercury in deep-diving elephant seals"

### **Honorable Mention**

- Cheng, Brian (UC Davis), "Current environmental stress can outweigh climate change stressors"

## **STATE OF THE SOCIETY AND MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER**

The membership in WSN stands at over 600 current members. Please continue to help promote the Society by encouraging your colleagues and students to join WSN as we continue to grow the membership. **Because the Society now operates almost exclusively by e-mail**, it is very important that you contact us with changes to your e-mail address and other contact information so that we can update our database. You can update your email address yourself at the Society's website: <http://www.westsocnat.com>.

Please note again that when you renew your membership you have TWO ways to make a donation in support of the Society: 1) a donation to the Student Travel/Dave Montgomery Endowment Fund and 2) a donation to the general fund to help support the day-to-day costs of running the Society.

Also, note that there is a third way that you can help support the Society at no cost to yourself! Moose O'Donnell has set up a **link to Amazon** from the WSN webpage. We'd like to encourage you all to use this as your regular link to Amazon, because for each purchase made through this link a significant amount of money (6% of the purchase price) returns to WSN. This money goes towards helping keep WSN the low cost, student-friendly society that it has long been! **To bookmark the site, just drag the "Powered by Amazon" box on the WSN homepage to your bookmarks and use it for all your Amazon purchases.**

Thank you for supporting WSN and we hope to see you at the upcoming meeting in Tacoma, Washington this November!

