

# Natural Resource News

UAF School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences

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## UAF joins sustainability leadership effort

UAF Chancellor Steve Jones this year formed a new Sustainability Leadership Group, and the university has partnered with Audubon International (AI) to lead efforts in Alaska that address a sustainable campus, sustainable resources, and sustainable communities. SNRAS Dean Carol Lewis is chairing the group, which includes administrators, faculty, staff, and students. One aspect of Audubon International's focus on sustainability is the partnerships it forms with universities and other organizations (see story below).

The concept of sustainability incorporates every level of human organization, from the local neighborhood to the entire planet. It relates to the continuity of economic, social, institutional, and environmental systems. Translated into action, the concept involves configuring human systems and activities so that human societies and economies can meet present needs and express their potential, while also preserving biodiversity and natural ecosystems so that the systems can be maintained indefinitely.

The entire leadership group met last spring and this fall to consider directions

for this effort. Lewis has also had several meetings with a core group that includes Jones, provost Paul Reichardt, AI executive director Ron Dodson, Jake Pool, vice chancellor for advancement and community engagement, and assistant professor Mike Sfraga, director UA Integrated Geography Program.

"We are very excited about partnering with AI in their sustainable community campaign and look forward to UAF becoming an AI certified sustainable campus," said Lewis. "Students are at the center of activities we have discussed. The Sustainable Leadership Group is beginning an energy survey of our campus, looking at 'sustainability in the curriculum' and hopefully hosting a Sustainability Summit in the near future that will kick off our UAF efforts."

Planning for a UAF Center for Sustainability is underway. The center will develop and promote new approaches to improving quality of life through sustainable development, improved food systems, energy efficiency, and integration of the sustainability concept into approaches to economic and social problem solving.

Its design will build on the university's historical focus and strength in northern latitude horticulture, engineering, wildlife research, and interdisciplinary studies, although it will engage people from many other disciplines.

Short-term goals for the university community are an assessment of current policies and practices in light of sustainability; establishing methods for evaluating progress; and a review of how existing programs relate to the sustainability basics of social, economic, and ecologic systems.

External to the university, the center will be involved in the development of sustainable activities for several communities that have invited center participation. As individuals and agencies in these communities seek sustainable solutions to various social, economic, and ecological problems, university expertise will be made available through the center. The first participating communities are expected to be the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Nome, and Fort Yukon, which represent three different community types.



Forest Sports 2005

English major Tav Ammu aims carefully before letting the axe fly during the axe-throwing competition.—UAF PHOTO BY TODD PARIS.

## Audubon International programs

Audubon International is a not-for-profit organization that fosters sustainable human and natural communities. The organization promotes development and land management that protects land, water, wildlife, and natural resources by working with communities as they struggle to balance economic priorities, social responsibilities, and the environmental effects of their actions. Created in 1996 by the Audubon Society of New York State, Inc., Audubon International is not affiliated with the National Audubon Society, which primarily focuses on birds and bird conservation.

Through the **Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System** and the **Sustainable Communities Campaign**, Audubon International now has program members throughout the United States and in over two dozen countries. The programs, which relate to existing properties, new developments, and entire communities, work to fundamentally change the way people behave where they live, resulting in real, on-the-ground environmental results.

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**Welcome!** *The annual welcome barbecue for students was held in September at the Georgeson Botanical Garden pavilion. The pavilion, completed in June 2005, is available for rental by the public. For the meal, faculty and staff donated potluck items, including their favorite versions of chili. Pavilion construction was funded by the College Rotary in honor of their 100th anniversary and by receipts from GBG plant sales. At right, professor John Yarie exercises his culinary skills under the watchful eye of Dean Lewis.*

—PHOTOS BY DEIRDRE HELFFERICH



## Audubon International *continued from 1*

The group works cooperatively and in partnership with such organizations as academic institutions, governmental agencies, businesses, and not-for-profit organizations. By focusing on the underlying ecological, economic, and social foundations of sustainability, it aims to unify personal and organizational strengths as they are brought to bear on specific problems. The organization views universities as a valuable link between scientific research and practitioners who work to enact change.

The group has identified several considerations necessary for sustainable resource management: site-specific assessment, sensitivity to habitat, use of native and naturalized plants and natural landscaping, water conservation, waste management, energy conservation and renewable energy sources, transportation, greenspace and corridors, agriculture, and design of buildings and communities.

More than ninety **Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program** members in thirty-seven states and three countries have committed themselves to helping the organization help people help the environment as part of the **Audubon Steward Network**. The network supports people's active involvement in local programs. Stewards serve as a source of knowledge, good advice, enthusiasm, and encouragement, providing on-the-ground assistance to members of the sanctuary program and others interested in protecting and improving their local environments. Stewards may answer questions via phone or e-

mail, conduct a site visit, put on a workshop, or assist members with certification.

Audubon International created the **Sustainable Communities Program** to promote dialogue among citizens and action on communitywide concerns. Building on the cooperative sanctuary approach and beginning with simple plans and actions provides a means for community leaders to involve citizens in the development of balanced solutions to economic, social, and environmental problems. Audubon International works to facilitate partnerships with governmental agencies, academic institutions, and other environmental organizations that might provide support and assistance.

The program is based on voluntary participation; engagement of leaders and ordinary citizens; action-oriented, place-based educational elements that are discrete and realistic; formation of strong local partnerships; broad-based citizen involvement, empowerment, and ownership; a focus on the environment as a "first among equals" with social needs and economics; short and long-term strategies for immediate results and long-range strategic planning; and an educational approach that recognizes achievement and inspires excellence.

You can learn more about these programs on the Internet at [www.auduboninternational.org/](http://www.auduboninternational.org/).



**Memorial Tree**—When the SNRAS advisory board met in Fairbanks this fall, they took time to gather with faculty, former board members, and others to plant a larch tree at the Georgeson Botanical Garden in memory of Mike Hoyt, who was a board member at the time of his death in 2004. The tree was one of several that Hoyt was nurturing to plant on his property. Here former board member Chris Maisch prepares to plant, then gets some assistance from board member Cyndie Warbelow-Tack. Associate Dean Steve Sparrow is at right. Current board members are Warbelow-Tack, Sarah Leonard, Mara Kimmel, Ruby Hollembaek, Meg Hayes, Ray Jakubczak, Michael Woods, Paul Costello, and Dave Verbyla. —PHOTOS BY DOREEN FITZGERALD

## **UAIGP startup: focus on outreach, public service, and program enhancements**

As the new University of Alaska Integrated Geography Program (UAIGP) begins to take shape, several new alliances and developments have been announced by program director and professor Mike Sfraga. Based in SNRAS at UAF, the program was created to add depth and breadth to the university's activities in the field of geography, including opportunities for degree-seeking students.

The Alaska Geographic Alliance (AGA), a National Geographic Society-supported geography education and teacher training program for grades K-12, will now operate under the UAIGP umbrella. AGA is co-directed by Dr. Roger Pearson, UAF professor of geography emeritus, and Sitka school teacher Ms. Jody Smothers. Pearson has rejoined the geography program on a part-time basis to assist in geography education and program development. Smothers, a nationally recognized expert in geography education, has received many awards and recognitions, including the National Council for Geographic Education/CRAM Award for Exemplary Classroom Presentations, and the "Disney

Channel and McDonald's Salutes the American Teacher" award. She is a past president of the National Council for Geographic Education, and has served on several national advisory bodies, including the AP Human Geography Reader for the College Board. Smothers was instrumental in shaping the state's classroom standards as co-chair of the Alaska 2000 Geography Standards Committee.

Pearson, Smothers, and UAIGP director Mike Sfraga are currently working with the National Geographic Society to expand and enhance the AGA network, inclusive of summer programs for both teachers and students. In April of 2006, the UAIGP will partner with Alaska's school districts and the AGA to coordinate and sponsor the National Geographic Society Geography Bee.

Outreach to the people of Alaska includes a series of public round-tables now being developed for broadcast throughout the state. Experts from many different areas will participate in the series, which will highlight issues of particular interest and relevance to Alaskans. Tentative round tables include: Alaska's Global Reach: The

Strategic Military and Political Value of Alaska's Geographic Position; Not Remote Enough: The Impact of Global Health Issues on Alaska; Pipelines and Pundits: The Potential Impact of the Next Boom.

In spring 2006, the UAIGP launches a public service lecture series. The lectures will constitute the first presentations in the recently developed UAF International Polar Year (IPY) lecture series. Both the geography program and SNRAS are well represented in UAF's IPY planning. Sfraga and SNRAS recruiting coordinator Barb Pierson are participating on the UAF Education and Outreach Committee, and the overall UAF IPY Steering Committee.

In February, internationally celebrated explorer Helen Thayer will give the first IPY public lecture at UAF. The lecture and subsequent educational programs are coordinated with and sponsored by the Alaska Geographic Alliance. Thayer walked solo to, and circumnavigated the Magnetic North Pole, walked across the Sahara, and trekked the entire length of

*continued on 4*



## Fairbanks Experiment Farm to celebrate centennial

Planning has begun for an day-long community event at the Fairbanks Experiment Farm to celebrate the research facility's first 100 years. The event will take place at the farm on June 24, 2006. Guests will be able to view displays and participate in activities related to the farm's history, present work, and future. A reunion gathering is also in the works.

Community event  
Saturday June 24, 2006

### *Farm workers, where are you?*

*We're collecting farm-related stories and photos for the centennial. If you ever worked at the Fairbanks farm as a researcher, staff, or student (or know how to locate someone who did), we'd like to hear from you. Please get in touch with us by e-mail, mail, or phone. Contact:*

AFES Publications, University of Alaska Fairbanks, P.O. Box 757200, Fairbanks, AK, 99775-7200

907-474-5042 • E-mail [fndlf2@uaf.edu](mailto:fndlf2@uaf.edu)

## UAIGP startup *continued from 3*

the Gobi Desert. Along with the public lecture, Thayer will lecture in Dr. Sfraga's geography senior seminar course; work with research professor Martin Jeffries of the UAF Geophysical Institute; work with local school teachers in the Alaska Ice and Snow Observing Network (ALISON Project); and will travel to the Denali Park area in partnership with the Denali Foundation.

With the support of the University of Alaska Office of Academic Affairs and Research, and Provost Paul Reichardt, the UAIGP will host Pulitzer Prize winning author Jared Diamond (*Guns, Germs, and Steel*, and current best seller *Collapse*). Diamond is a professor of geography at the University of California Los Angeles. Diamond will give a public lecture at the University of Alaska Anchorage on March 27 and at UAF on March 28 (details forthcoming). He will also visit with faculty and students from throughout UAF and UAA. SNRAS faculty will be scheduled to participate in a school-wide discussion as well.

Instruction for the statewide geography program will be enhanced by the contributions of Jason Ohler, president's professor of distance education and educational technology. Ohler will work with the UAIGP, and interested SNRAS faculty, in various capacities. A noted expert in educational technology and distance education pedagogy, he created the Educational Technology Program (Masters Degree in Teacher Endorsement) at the University of Alaska Southeast in 1986. Ohler has worked with teachers and government officials in Greenland, Ireland, and New Zealand in the effective use of educational technology and distance learning.

Ohler also is co-developer of a geography-based Alaska-wide initiative entitled "Stories of Place and Culture." The program brings together Native elders and youth to create stories of place that reflect regional and cultural values. Ohler and Sfraga

presented the program at the recent meeting of the Alaska Federation of Natives. Ohler will continue his affiliation with UAS, but direct the majority of his research and academic efforts toward enhancing the UAIGP. Led by Ohler, the geography program will launch its new website in January 2006.

Katie Kennedy, formally with the Statewide Office of Student and Enrollment Services, has joined the UAIGP as administrative assistant. Katie will support the program director, as well as UAIGP faculty and programs in Fairbanks, Kenai, Anchorage, and Juneau.

## International Polar Year 2007-08

### Why International?

- Polar processes extend across national boundaries.
- The science challenge exceeds the capabilities of any one nation.
- A coordinated approach maximizes outcomes and cost effectiveness.
- International collaboration shares benefits and builds relationships.

### Why Polar?

- Polar regions are active, highly connected components of the planet.
- Significant changes are occurring in the polar regions.
- Polar regions hold unique information on the past behaviour of the Earth system.
- Polar regions have growing economic and geopolitical importance, especially the Arctic.
- The harsh conditions and remoteness of the polar regions have hampered scientific inquiry compared to mid and low latitudes.
- There is a need to re-establish and enhance operational observing systems in the polar regions.
- The polar regions offer a unique vantage point for a variety of terrestrial and cosmic phenomena.

For more information visit the IPY website: [ipy.org](http://ipy.org)



## 8th Annual Farthest North Forest Sports Festival

*UAF photos by Todd Paris*

The 2005 Forest Sports Festival was held October 2 at the Fairbanks Experiment Farm, with birling at Ballaine Lake. In the photos above and at right, UAF athletic director Forrest Karr makes a valiant effort before succumbing to defeat in the birling competition with a series of going—going—gone moves. Dave Valentine (in waders) assisted the birlers; Steve Sparrow (with clipboard) kept score. Festival events included the pulp toss, axe throw, two-person log roll (on land), one-person bowsaw (men's & women's), fire building (two-person), two-person crosscut saw (for men, for women, and Jack & Jill), and log birling on Ballaine Lake. The event is sponsored by SNRAS, the Forest Sciences Department, and the student Resource Management Society.



## Volley Ball — *The other winter sport*



*A volley ball court was constructed this fall next to the Arctic Health Research Building as part of landscape renovations on the West Ridge at UAF. Unwilling to wait until next summer, some of the sporting types at SNRAS have been using it during lunch hours. From left they are George Aguiar and Steve Spores, playing against (above) Randy Fulweber, an unidentified server, and Brian Jackson. Future contests are planned.*

—PHOTOS BY DOREEN FITZGERALD

# Notes

SNRAS has welcomed several new staff members since the last newsletter.

**Wanda Tangermann** is now the administrative assistant in the O'Neill Building office, where she supports SNRAS academic departments. New in the SNRAS/CES business office are accounting technician **Sasha Miller** and travel technician **Teri Langton**. James Levison of the CES/SNRAS Business Office announced that the recruitment technician and payroll technician positions have been restructured. **Hilary Huffman** now performs all recruiting and payroll functions for CES, and **Brad Lobland** performs recruiting and payroll for SNRAS/AFES. Each position backs up the other. Hilary (CES) may be reached at 474-2401 or by e-mail at [fnhjh@uaf.edu](mailto:fnhjh@uaf.edu) and Brad (SNRAS/AFES) may be reached at 474-6352 or by e-mail at [fnbal@uaf.edu](mailto:fnbal@uaf.edu). **Katie Kennedy**, formerly with the UA statewide office of student and enrollment services has joined the UA Integrated Geography Program as administrative assistant. See page 4 for more on the geography program.

After 20 years at the Fairbanks Experiment Farm, **Steve Spores** has moved on to Spokane, Washington. He was most recently facilities manager at the farm, where he was in charge of maintenance. Spores began work at the farm as a temporary employee in 1985, then accepted a permanent position. He is shown on page 5 participating in a recent winter volleyball match.

The **annual report** covering the previous year's research (2004) has been published and is now on line at: [uaf.edu/snras/afes/pubs/misc/MP\\_05\\_09.pdf](http://uaf.edu/snras/afes/pubs/misc/MP_05_09.pdf). The printed version will be distributed to the mailing list this month. The topically arranged report includes research by our partners at the Alaska Agricultural Research

*Miranda Plumb, a fisheries graduate student, teamed up with pre-med student Jennifer Dewar on the two-person cross-cut saw contest at the 2005 Forest Sports Festival.*

—UAF PHOTO BY  
TODD PARIS



Service [www.ars.gov/](http://www.ars.gov/) and the Boreal Ecology Cooperative Research Unit [www.becru.uaf.edu](http://www.becru.uaf.edu).

The Alaska Farm Bureau has presented its second Ag Appreciation Award to **Milan Shipka**, honoring him at this year's Ag Expo luncheon on November 12. Shipka is a professor of animal science at SNRAS and Cooperative Extension Service livestock specialist.

Today in Alaska the term *livestock* has expanded to incorporate such untraditional species such as bison, elk, muskox, and yak. Reindeer projects and the work of **Milan Shipka** are a UAF website news feature this month. You can read about it and check out the reindeer links at: [www.uaf.edu/news/featured/05/reindeer/index.html](http://www.uaf.edu/news/featured/05/reindeer/index.html). Another recent story on the website featured the work of **Norm Harris** (Plant, Animal, and Soil Sciences) with the Bicamera Observation Blimp (B.O.B.) at the Palmer Research and Extension Center.

Two students are recipients of the 2005 SNRAS Reindeer Research Program Scholarships: **Jennifer Brorson** and **Brian Mork**. Brorson is a sophomore majoring in natural resource management (NRM) under the plant, animal, and soil sciences

option with a geography minor. She works with the reindeer herd at the Fairbanks Experiment Farm and reports that "I love reindeer!" Mork is a senior NRM student specializing in forestry. He expects to graduate next spring and hopes to continue his forestry career in Alaska. More on the reindeer program at [reindeer.salrm.uaf.edu/](http://reindeer.salrm.uaf.edu/)

**Eva "Ia" Wiklund** is the new research associate professor with the Reindeer Research Program. She is a meat scientist with a research background in Scandinavian reindeer husbandry and the deer industries in New Zealand and Australia. Several current projects include work on various aspects of reindeer meat production and quality. Wiklund can be reached at (907) 474-7101; e-mail: [ffemw2@uaf.edu](mailto:ffemw2@uaf.edu).

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