



May 2008

NEERS News

Spring 2008



A publication of the New England Estuarine Research Society

“Tipping Points” is theme of NEERS Spring 2008 Meeting



Cruising Portsmouth harbor on the Saturday afternoon field trip.



Bob Radulski and Sandy MacFarlane at the Saturday night banquet.

The Spring 2008 NEERS meeting started on Thursday afternoon, with beautiful sunny weather outside and Norah Jones and Jack Johnson playing as NEERSians checked in. We had 92 attendees to this Spring’s meeting. The meeting was held in the Hugh Gregg Coastal Conservation Center at the Great Bay NERR in Greenland, NH (next door to Portsmouth, NH.) The Gregg Center is a green building with geothermal heat and composting toilets, among other features, and will soon have a porous pavement driveway. It also includes a small “green store” where one can buy eco-friendly products, including *Phragmites* pens and green toilet paper.

The Thursday talks were kicked off by Peter Wellenberger, manager of the Great Bay NERR. GBNERR comprises 13,000 acres and includes the tidal portions of five different rivers, as well as extensive salt and freshwater wetlands and upland. After Peter’s introduction to our beautiful host location, we began our symposium on Ecological Tipping Points. John Brawley presented the first talk, having been ~~coerced~~ specifically asked by Dave Burdick, one of the symposium organizers. Phil Trowbridge to Fred Short was not invited by Dave but contributed anyway with a discussion of the decline of eelgrass in Great Bay. As part of the symposium we broke into

groups and were assigned questions about tipping points to consider while we ate Cindy DeI Papa’s delicious chocolate chip cookies, such as how a tipping point could be forecasted, what the roles of scientists and managers should be in dealing with tipping points, and what this all means for restoration and management. Each group then reported out their conclusions, most of which were not conclusive but suggested many avenues for future consideration. After all of the wonderful speakers finished teaching us about ecological tipping points, alternative stable states, and hysteresis we had our welcoming social, during which we tipped back oysters (provided by Alex Mansfield and John Brawley) and possibly drank to an alternative, but not as stable, state.

Friday’s talks were followed by the poster session and judging (3 salt marsh posters and 3 posters with the word “eel” on them, plus others) and the NEERS business meeting. Sara Grady and Eric Hazelton volunteered to improve the NEERS “logo” (possibly naively but game for the challenge), which resulted in an abundance of warnings, suggestions, and pleas. We discussed the next meeting, which is in Block Island, RI from October 16-18. It is directly preceded by the Restore America’s Estuaries (RAE) meeting in (cont.)

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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>

Come to the CERF meeting in Fall 2009!

'Coasts and Estuaries
in a Changing World'
is the theme for
CERF 2009
Conference in
Portland, Oregon
1-5 November 2009



NEERS Spring 2008 meeting (cont.)

Providence, so you can spend the whole week hanging out in Rhode Island with estuarine scientists, if you so desire. At the very least you should come to Block Island, because the ERFtones (NEERStones?) will be performing again. We also discussed other meeting venues for the future (Cape Ann, Bar Harbor and/or possibly somewhere that Canadians could attend).

As is our custom, Friday evening concluded with the NEERS banquet and dancing at a local watering hole. The banquet was held at the Portsmouth Hilton Garden Inn. Student presentation and poster awards were presented. Cindy Fonseca won the Warren Award for best undergraduate poster, Caitlin Fogarty took home the Ketchum Prize for the best graduate research presentation and the Dean Award for the best graduate poster went to Nora Beem. Congratulations!

After the banquet we headed over to Muddy River Smokehouse for music and dancing. The opening band was so loud that a crowd moved upstairs to enjoy beer and conversation at the bar. The second band was better for dancing, and quite a few people stayed until the bitter end in pursuit of the coveted "Stickleback Award". In the end, the award went to Wade Elmer, for not only his commitment to dancing but his attendance on Saturday morning for the

first talk (his own!) and his service to NEERS.

Saturday morning we wound down the meeting with some talks on *Fusarium*, *Phragmites*, the tiny and rare Eastern grasswort, *Didemnum*, and a roundabout way to map the parcels of Nassau County, NY before a small and intrepid group headed out for a Portsmouth Harbor Cruise. We had the benefit of two tour guides – the boat tour guide who focused on “forts and points” and Dave Burdick, who filled in the gaps with facts relevant to NEERSians (e.g. locations of eelgrass restorations, the primary sewage treatment plant) as well as some lore about Walt Disney being at the naval prison. We saw two nuclear fast attack submarines and a lot of loons and cormorants. We pulled into shore examining the pilings for tunicates then rapidly dispersed, but we’ll all be back together on Block Island in the fall!

Thanks to the conference organizers - Dave Burdick, Susan Adamowicz, and Cindy Delpapa, and to our meeting donors; Battelle, ENSR, Hach Environmental, MIT Sea Grant, WHOI Sea Grant, New Hampshire Estuaries Program, Normandeau Associates, Saquish Scientific, LLC and YSI, Inc.

- Sarah Grady



The NEERS Historian & some NEERS history-makers: Dave Franz, Alan Young, Bernie McAlice, Rob Radulski

More Spring 2008 NEERS photos



*Some past, present & future NEERS presidents:
Back row L to R – Robert Buchsbaum, Dave Franz,
Fred Short, Bernie McAlice, Sandy MacFarlane
Front row L to R: Pam Arnofsky, Pam Morgan and
Veronica Berounsky.*



Enjoying oysters at the Thursday night social.



Invasive or native? NEERSians on a Phragmites walk.



Ketchum prize winner Caitlin Fogarty receives award from president Robert Buchsbaum.

Other News: Block Island in October!

Next October NEERSians will return to **Block Island** for our **Fall 2008 meeting**. This meeting is always a real treat, and Veronica Berounsky is leading the organizing committee for us. We will be staying at the Spring House, a grand old hotel with views of the water. The Thursday symposium will focus on climate change and estuaries. Veronica is also organizing a workshop to help us improve our skills in translating science for managers and the media. And rumor has it that the ERFtones (soon to be CERFtones?) will be performing sometime during the meeting. Student travel awards will be given again, so students, submit your abstracts! And think about bringing your bikes – Block Island is a great place for an early morning or late afternoon ride.