

April 1, 2005

UWSP undergraduates to display research in Capitol Rotunda

Three University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP) undergraduate students plan to showcase their research at the State Capitol on April 7.

Jessica Orlofske of Oak Creek and Christopher Tyrrell of Hales Corner will present research findings on species diversity as indicators of the overall health of suburban wetlands. Their research project is titled, "Odonate (dragonfly and damselfly) Species Diversity as an Indicator of Human-Induced Wetland Disturbance." Nicholas Jensen of Two Rivers will present findings on understory prescribed fire research on the Menominee Reservation. His presentation is titled "Short-term Understory Response to Prescribed Fire on Menominee Reservation."

"Posters in the Rotunda: A Celebration of Undergraduate Research," will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Thursday, April 7, in conjunction with the April meeting of the UW System Board of Regents. The event will bring students and faculty from 15 UW System campuses to the Wisconsin State Capitol Rotunda to share findings from research projects with state elected officials, regents, government representatives and the public.

"UWSP is fortunate to have these outstanding student researchers representing the university in Madison's Posters in the Rotunda event," said UWSP Provost and Vice Chancellor Virginia Helm. "And they, in turn, are fortunate to be engaged in collaborative research with faculty who are noted scholars and caring mentors."

Orlofske is a senior majoring in wildlife and biology. She has been involved with a number of student organizations over the past four years including the Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society and the Herpetology Society. Orlofske is currently the co-chair for the CNR Student Research Symposium Committee. She also is a member of Tribeta, the Biological Honor Society. She has presented this and previous research both on campus and at the National Conference for Undergraduate Research and the annual meeting of the Entomological Society of America. Employed at the campus Tutoring Learning Center, as well as a peer adviser for the CNR Student Success Center, she also is the co-editor for the weekly "CNR Reporter." Her plan is to attend graduate school for entomology at Iowa State University and to become either a professor and/or researcher.

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Tyrrell is a senior majoring in biology and ecosystem restoration with a 3.72 cumulative grade point average. He has received numerous awards including two research grants and various scholarships. He has a peer-reviewed piece on oak woodland succession published in the March 2003 "The Michigan Botanist." Tyrrell is the co-chair for the CNR Student Research Symposium Committee. He is the past president for the UWSP Society for Ecological Restoration, and former treasurer for the UWSP Society of American Forester's Research Committee. He also is a research assistant for the UWSP Herbarium under Mike Dombeck, former chief of the U.S. Forest Service. A 2000 graduate of Charles B. Whitnall High School and an Eagle Scout, he is the son of Mary Tyrrell.

Orlofske and Tyrrell's research is tied to the worldwide decline in wetlands. Their study tests the effectiveness of using dragonfly and damselfly species diversity as indicators for healthy or not-so-healthy suburban wetlands. Eric Anderson, professor of wildlife, is the faculty adviser/mentor for both Orlofske and Tyrrell.

Jensen is a senior majoring in forestry management with a minor in conservation biology. Upon graduation in December, he plans to pursue a master's degree in ecology with a focus on sustainable forestry practices and restoration. His research looked at the vegetation cover under eastern white pine forests on the Menominee Reservation during June and August of 2002 and 2003. In spring 2003 four areas in the reservation were treated with prescribed fires (fires set on purpose to lessen chances of even larger forest fires), and compared those sites to unburned areas. He also intends to share his research at the UWSP Student Research Symposium. A 2001 graduate of Two Rivers High School, his faculty adviser is James Cook, professor of forestry and forest ecology.

More details are available at www.wisconsin.edu/posters.