



# Newsletter

July 2012

Sierra Nevada  
Research Institute  
UC Merced  
5200 North Lake Road  
Merced, CA 95343

P: (209) 228-7674  
F: (209) 228-4158  
snrirequests@ucmerced.edu  
snri.ucmerced.edu

### In this issue:

- SNRI Director's Council Holds Inaugural Meeting
- Three New Research Awards
- Capacity Building Funding
- Two New Units in SNRI
- Private Support Grows for SNRI
- Environmental Indicators
- Visiting Scholars
- New PIO for SNRI

## SNRI Director's Council Holds Inaugural Meeting

Nine people with interest and expertise in SNRI's research areas have been named to an external advisory group that met for first time before SNRI's Open House on July 6.

Mike Chrisman, Mike Eaton, Caryl Hart, Gary Freeman, Jaymee Marty, Richard Moss, William Phillimore, Tim Quinn and Kim Stanley



*Working in the YLP this summer, former SNRI intern Alex Lin talks about his experiences as a mentor.*

Robinson bring experience that ranges from resource management to hydro energy and vernal pools. The Director's Council will meet twice a year and provide assistance to further SNRI goals between meetings.



*Yosemite National Park Supt. Don Neubacher welcomes visitors to SNRI's Open House.*

At the open house, the council heard from Park Superintendent Don Neubacher about the relationship between UC Merced and Yosemite and students from the Yosemite Leadership and

Adventure Risk Challenge Programs.

## Three New Research Awards

SNRI faculty members received grants in June for research into soil science, adaptive management and climate warming. Asmeret Behre is P.I. for a \$75,000 NSF grant to study fire-prone ecosystems in the Sierra. Martha Conklin is P.I. for a \$150,000 grant from the California Department of Water Resources in support of UC Merced's Adaptive Management Program. And Qinghua Guo is P.I. for a U.S. Department of the Interior grant, shared with UC Berkeley, to measure giant Sequoias' vulnerability to moisture stress caused by climate change.



*Dr. Asmeret Behre*

## Capacity Building Funding

SNRI is receiving \$398,000 from a pool of capacity building funds established by Chancellor Leland in the FY13 budget process. The proposal, submitted by SNRI Director Roger Bales, will support new research positions in climate adaptation. Two other positions will bring new resources to seek and execute NSF grants, including SNRI having its own MSO. A portion of the funding is earmarked to keep a full-time maintenance staff member at the Yosemite Field Station and replace some of the general campus support for the Environmental Analytics Laboratory.

The pool was more than \$3 million, a step toward merit-based budgeting next fiscal year. The Spatial Analysis Center will also receive funding from the same pool. The Vice Chancellor for Research's office will oversee the center.



*Environmental Analytical Laboratory*

## Two New Units in SNRI

The number of entities under the SNRI umbrella is growing with the start of a new fiscal year.

With campus approval this spring for creation of a vernal pools reserve adjacent to the campus footprint, funding will come from the interest generated by the remainder of the founding Hewlett Foundation grant.

A search is now underway for a reserve manager, who will collaborate with a working group and an oversight committee to prepare an application to the UC Natural Reserve system later in the year.

A business plan prepared last year is guiding the planning process and additional funding will be sought to carry out research and outreach programs.

The National Parks Institute, which has been incubated in SNRI for several years, will now have its \$400,000 annual budget administered by SNRI. A three-year business plan is being developed this summer in partnership with the National Parks Service. The plan explores expansion of NPI to include a research focus, other seminars here and abroad, and, possibly, a degree program in cooperation with a consortium of American universities offering courses in parks management.

Erik Rolland, Roger Bales, David Hosley, Armando Quintero and intern Brian Weikel are working with NPS staff member Ashley Adams on the business plan.

With incubation slated to end in 2016, NPI might become a part of a new management school or a stand-alone institute.



*Professor Andy Aguilar shows a fairy shrimp to April's NPI attendees on the proposed vernal pools site.*

## Private Support Grows for SNRI



*ARC's 40-day immersion program*

The largest amount of private support in SNRI's history came as FY12 drew to a close. Two \$100,000 grants — one from the Bechtel Foundation and the other from Southern California Edison — resulted from proposals prepared by SNRI Development Officer Armando Quintero.

The Bechtel grant supports NPI and examination of models for alternative management of California State Parks in danger of being closed. The SCE grant is for scholar ships and fellowships throughout the university, one of which will come to SNRI. A private individual also gave a \$25,000 grant in June to support the Yosemite Leadership and Adventure Risk Challenge programs.

## Environmental Indicators

SNRI, in cooperation with the Great Valley Center, has released a new report that shows the Valley's environmental health is getting better — slowly and in stops and starts.

New laws and policies, better information and some unintended consequences of the weak economy all contributed to the trend. See the full report [here](#).

SNRI Director Roger Bales contributed the centerfold essay on a sustainable water supply for California, which he discussed on Capitol Public Radio's *Insight* on July 18. Listen to him [here](#).



*Recovering wetlands*

## Visiting Scholars



*Dr. Gara Villalba  
Mendez*

SNRI is hosting two visiting faculty members this summer, one from Spain and the other from India.

Dr. Gara Villalba Mendez, sponsored by Elliot Campbell, is on sabbatical from Autonomous University of Barcelona. She has been in Yosemite this summer measuring and establishing an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions and applying ways to increase energy efficiency.

Dr. Aditi Bhadra, sponsored by Roger Bales, is studying snow hydrology in the Sierra to enhance the applicability of the RHESys model globally by simulating and forecasting snowcover, snowmelt and runoff. She is on the faculty of North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology in West Bengal.



*Dr. Aditi Bhadra*

## New PIO for SNRI

Lorena Anderson is now supporting SNRI's communication efforts. She may be familiar to some from an earlier stint at UC Merced. Lorena left to work for a McClatchy paper in South Carolina, but missed UCM. Before joining the university in 2006, she worked for the Merced Sun-Star and the Modesto Bee, and spent more than a year here on campus before heading east. She is also Public Information Officer for Engineering, Natural Science, UC Solar and Athletics, and is available to help publicize research and assist with communications projects.



*PIO Lorena Anderson*