Tupper seminar

Tuesday, March 12, noon
seminar speaker will be Egbert G. Leigh, Jr., STRI
Why are there so many kinds of tropical trees?

Arrivals

Sibylle Sigrist, University of Basel, Switzerland, Mar 10 - Apr 30, to work with Gerhard Zotz on the ecology of tropical epiphytes, on BCI.

Gerhard Zotz, University of Basel, Mar 10, to continue research projects, on BCI.

Geoffrey Parker, Kevin Bach and Michelle Berger, SI Environmental Research Center, Mar 10-21, to do canopy research at Sherman, BCI and Metropolitan Park.

Ryan Norris and Bradley Feddy, Queen University, Mar 11-24, to study the population connectivity of migratory birds, at Bocas del Toro.

David King, UK, Mar 11 - Apr 1, to study stem orientation in relation to growth rate and light in tropical vs. temperate deciduous saplings on BCI and Costa Rica, on a Mellon Exploratory Award.

Robert Bonnell, McGill University, Mar 12 - Apr 7, to teach in McGill-STRI's Neotropical Environmental Option (NEO) field study semester, at Clayton.

Robert Stallard, US Geological Survey, Colorado, and Elise Pendal, University of Colorado, Mar 13-30, to work on long-term monitoring of biochemical cycles in watersheds on BCI.

Hans Schnitzler and Annette Denzinger, University of Tuebingen, to study echolocation and foraging behavior of neotropical bats, on BCI.

STRI news 2002

Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panamá www.stri.org March 8, 2002

New research at Galeta

Nuevas investigaciones en Galeta

Twelve students have benefitted from the Elektra Marine Sciences Fellowship Program for STRI's Laboratory at Galeta Island in Colón. The program, established in 2000, offers fellowships for fieldwork at the laboratories to support bachelor´s theses, master papers and Ph.D. dissertations. In the photo, Aida Amalia Vargas, senior biology student from the University of Panama, and her assistant (snorkeling) examine the sea floor inside an enclosure, as part of her research on the biology and ecology of the Strombus genus. Her thesis project "Growing and assimilation rates of the Strombus genus in the Caribbean at Colon, Panama", is directed by STRI staff scientist Helena Fortunato *(Photo: Marcos A. Guerra)*

Doce estudiantes se han beneficiado del Programa de Becas Elektra para Ciencias Marinas en el Laboratorio Marino de Galeta en la ciudad caribeña de Colón. El programa, establecido en 2000, ofrece becas para hacer trabajo de campo en los laboratorios de Galeta, para tesis de licenciatura, maestría y doctorado. En la foto, Aida Amalia Vargas, graduanda en biología de la Universidad de Panamá y su asistente (buceando) examinan el lecho marino dentro de un cercado, como parte del trabajo de campo para su tesis "Tasa de crecimiento y asimilación en el género Strombus del Caribe, en Colón, Panamá", el cual es dirigido por la investigadora de STRI, Helena Fortunato.

Paton launches TESP website

Steve Paton from STRI's Terrestrial Environmental Science Program completed and launched the internet site http://www.stri.org/tesp/ this week, with the collaboration of webmaster Peter Brumwig. The databases include the Avian Dynamics Monitoring program, the Insect Monitoring program, the Lizard Monitoring program, the Mammal Monitoring program, the Meteorology and Hydrology program, Climate summaries for BCI, the Plant Phenology program, the Tropical Tree Seed Dynamics program, a TESP list of publications, and a high-resolution map library.

Staff arrivals

Also arriving to STRI to attend the Fellowship Selection meetings are:
Fernando Santos Granero, Mar 12-16
Stanley Rand, Mar 12-21
Ira Rubinoff, Mar 13-17
Bill Eberhard and Mary Jane West-Eberhard, Mar 13-16.
Jeremy Jackson, Mar 14-19

Congratulations

To Darren Crayn, former STRI postdoctoral fellow with senior Mellon Fellow Andrew Smith (Oxford University) and STRI staff scientist Klaus Winter, who just landed a permanent position of botanist in Tropical Systematics at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Sydney, Australia. He will continue to collaborate with STRI. We wish him success.

New publications

Coates, Anthony G. 2001. "En la historia geológica, Panamá ha cambiado mucho." In Stanley Heckadon Moreno (Ed.), *Panamá: puente biológico*: 18-25. Panamá: STRI.

Cooke, Richard. 2001. "La pesca en estuarios panameños: una visión histórica y cultural desde la Bahía de Parita." In Stanley Heckadon Moreno (Ed.), *Panamá: puente biológico*: 45-53. Panamá: STRI.

Fortunato, Helena. 2001. "Los moluscos y la historia natural de Panamá." In Stanley Heckadon Moreno (Ed.), *Panamá: puente biológico*: 26-31. Panamá: STRI.

Steve Paton del Programa Terrestre de Ciencias Ambientales (TESP) de STRI puso en línea la página de web http://www.stri.org/tesp/ esta semana, con la ayuda de Peter Brumwig, de la Oficina de Informática. El sitio incluye bases de datos de los censos de aves, iguanas, mamíferos e insectos en STRI, el programa de Meteorología e Hidrología, resúmenes climáticos de BCI, el programa de Fenología de Plantas, el programa de Dinámica de Semillas de Arboles Tropicales, una lista de publicaciones de TESP, y una mapoteca de alta resolución.

Paton completa página de web de TESP

Laurance's paper debate and "dEbate" in *Science*


William F. Laurance

The debate initiated last year by STRI staff scientist William F. Laurance (and colleagues) on the environmental impacts that would result from the development plans in the Brazilian Amazon (*Science,* January 19, 2001) continues to rage. The online *Science* "dEbate" and printed articles in *Science* and other sources include contributions by a wide variety of specialists and journalists. On January 25, 2002, a group of scientists with the Instituto de Pesquisa Ambiental da Amazonia (Nepstad *et al.*) published another article in *Science* defending the paving of the Cuibá-Santarém highway corridor (see map in Nepstad *et al.*). The authors believe that with recent advances in Brazil´s environmental management, the project will foster economic development without threatening most Amazonian forests.


Philip M. Fearnside

Laurance and collaborator Philip M. Fearnside, from the National Institute for Amazonian Research in Brazil responded to Nepstad *et al.* in the *Science* issue of March 1 (vol 295, no. 5560: 1643-1644) with the letter "Issues in Amazonian development." The letter indicates that major highways bisecting large forest tracts are likely to promote large-scale invasions by farmers, miners, loggers and hunters, and dramatically increase rates of forest loss and fragmentation. Laurance and Fearnside fear the project could easily open a Pandora´s box of exploitive activities that are beyond the government´s capacity to control. They do accept that economic development is needed in Amazonia, but paving the Cuibá-Santarém highway would mainly benefit wealthy soybean exporters in central Brazil, not the Amazonian poor. For subscribers to *Science*, the whole electronic "dEbate" can be seen at http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/eletters/291/5503/438

Improving our trails on BCI

STRI's Visitors' Program provided the funds to restore the first 200 meters of Snyder-Molino nature trail (photo at right) and a bridge on Alley stream in Barbour-Lathroop nature trail (below), on Barro Colorado Island. These nature trails are heavily used by researchers and one-day visitors. Only last year BCI received 3387 day-visitors. Of those visitors 60% were local students. *(Photos: Oris Acevedo)*

Mejorando nuestros senderos

El Programa de Visitantes de STRI suministró los fondos para restaurar los primeros 200 metros del sendero natural Snyder-Molino (foto a la derecha) y el puente sobre la quebada Alley en el sendero natural Barbour Lathroop (izquierda). Estos senderos son usados constantemente por investigadores y visitantes. Solo el año pasado BCI recibió 3387 visitantes de un día, de los cuales 60% fueron estudiantes de colegios locales.