

Tupper seminar

Joseph B. Yavitt, Cornell University
Methane in peatland ecosystems, insights using molecular techniques

Peatland ecosystems cover 400 million hectares of land in northern latitudes, store roughly one-third of the organic carbon found in soil worldwide, and harbor methane-producing microorganisms that are a large source of the world's atmospheric methane. However, no one has been able to isolate and grow a methane producer from a peatland ecosystem, and thus we know almost nothing about the physiology of these microorganisms and their role in soil carbon cycling. I will describe how molecular techniques provide a powerful tool in this regard. Specifically, I have been using Restriction Fragment Length Polymorphism (RFLP) analysis of 16S rRNA genes as method of comparing the methanogen community structure among different peatland systems with different methane production dynamics.

Bambi seminars

Next week we will have two Bambis. Mon, May 9: Laura Flores, Jorge Ventocilla, Beth King, Oris Acevedo and Annie St-Amand:
Linking research with responsible tourism: strengthening the BCNM Visitors Program

Thu, May 11: Bernd Degen, SILVOLAB, French Guyana
The simulation model ECO-GENE: applications to tropical tree populations



Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panamá

May 5, 2000

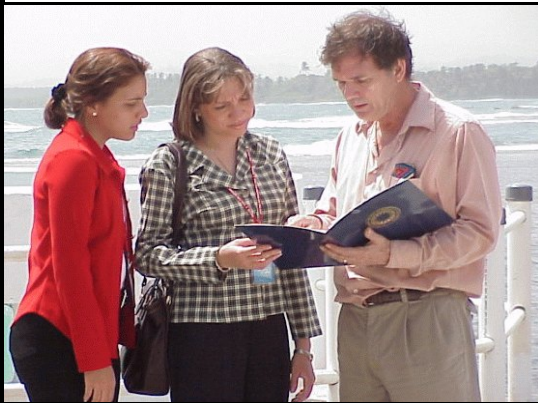


Photo: Sabina Walker

Stanley Heckadon provides information materials and a copy of STRI's Galeta bibliography to Kathy Chen and Maria del Carmen Barrios, marketing officials at *Manzanillo International Terminal*, during their visit to Galeta's restored aquaria in Colón, on Friday, April 28. The renovation of Galeta's aquaria (in the back) was made possible thanks to a generous donation from *Manzanillo International*.

Stanley Heckadon entrega material informativo y una copia de la bibliografía de Galeta de STRI a Kathy Chen y María del Carmen Barrios, de la vicepresidencia de *Manzanillo International Terminal*, durante su visita al recién renovado acuario de los laboratorios de Galeta en Colón, el viernes 28 de abril. La restauración de este acuario fue posible gracias a una generosa donación de esta empresa.

STRI administration's representatives to the CE

The STRI administration appointed as its representatives to the Company Committee CE, Luis D'Croz and Gloria Zelaya and as alternates Mireya Correa and Rosa Zambrano. They will join the employee representatives Angel Aguirre and Nelida Gomez and alternates Plinio Gondola and Erick Lam elected at the elections held in March. STRI also appointed Natacha Chandler and Fernando Santo Granero as advisors to the CE.

Representantes de la administración de STRI en el CE

La administración de STRI nombró como sus representantes ante el Comité de Empresas CE, a Luis D'Croz y Gloria Zelaya, y como suplentes a Mireya Correa y Rosa Zambrano. Ellos se unen a los representantes de los empleados Angel Aguirre y Nérida Gómez y suplentes Plinio Góndola y Erick Lam, elegidos por votación el pasado mes de marzo. STRI también nombró a Natacha Chandler y a Fernando Santos Granero, como asesores del CE.

Irma Echeverría leaves STRI

Development program assistant Irma Echeverría in the STRI DC office, left the Institute on Friday, May 5, to pursue a new development in her career. Irma started working at STRI in April 1997 and since then has greatly contributed to the functioning of the DC office. Among her most important achievements are her support to the Procurement Office in its mail and parcel delivery functions during the transition and her contributions to various special events such as the successful visit of Fundación Smithsonian to SI, presidential visits from Honduras and Panama, and the Cacao conference in Panama. We wish her the best in her new career.

Irma Echeverría, asistente de programas en la oficina de STRI en Washington, D.C., dejó STRI el viernes 5 de mayo para seguir nuevos intereses en su carrera. Irma empezó a trabajar en el Instituto en abril de 1997, y desde entonces ha contribuido grandemente al funcionamiento de la oficina en Washington. Entre sus logros más importantes está el apoyo brindado a la oficina de compras en sus funciones de correos y entregas durante la transición y sus contribuciones a varios eventos especiales como la visita de la Fundación Smithsonian a SI, visitas presidenciales de Honduras y Panamá, y la conferencia sobre el cacao realizada en Panamá. Le deseamos lo mejor en esta nueva etapa de su carrera.

Arrivals

James Norton, University of Illinois, May 8-17, to work on the molecular conservation genetics of Baird's tapirs, *Tapirus bairdii*, on BCI and Gamboa.

A. Stanley Rand, and Pat Rand, May 9 - Aug 31, to continue research at STRI, in Gamboa.

Clark Ovrebo, University of Central Oklahoma, May 10-31, to study the agaric fungi of Barro Colorado Nature Monument, on BCI.

Deborah Buehler, York University, Canada, May 12 - Aug 22, to work with Jennifer Nesbitt, University of Illinois, on the reproductive ecology of two species of Formicariidae: demographic parameters and environmental influences, in Gamboa.

Anthony Ranvestel, Southern Illinois University, May 12 - Aug 18, to study the foodweb structure and habitat use dynamics along a Panamanian stream, on mainland.

Karen Lips, Southern Illinois University, May 12 - Aug 15, to investigate the spread and causes of amphibian decline in tropical America, on mainland.

Departures

Héctor Guzmán, May 11-23, to Venezuela, to continue research on coral reefs.

Teachers workshop at Culebra

Marine Exhibition Center coordinator Argelis Ruiz addresses teachers during the opening session of the workshop: "Bridging the Gap between the Panamanian Curriculum and STRI's Marine Education Program," held at Culebra on Friday, April 28. This program, supported by SI's Educational Outreach Fund, aims to coordinate informal educational efforts at Culebra with needs and interests of Panamanian teachers and students at various educational levels and develop educational activities.



Photo: Marcos A. Guerra

Argelis Ruiz, coordinadora del Centro de Exhibiciones Marinas, se dirige a educadores durante la sesión de apertura del taller: "Un puente entre el curriculum de Panamá y el Programa Marino de Educación de STRI", que se llevó a cabo en Culebra, el viernes, 28 de abril. Este programa, financiado por el Fondo de Extensión Educativa de SI, tiene como objetivos el coordinar los esfuerzos informales de educación en Culebra con las necesidades e intereses de educadores panameños en diferentes niveles de educación, y desarrollar actividades educativas.

Seminario para educadores en Culebra

For sale... for rent.. se vende...

Toyota Land Cruiser 1990. Interested can make an offer inside a sealed envelope addressed to STRI at Pastor's House until Thursday, May 11, at 10am.

Furniture at Playa Blanca: sofa, love-seat, easy chairs, living room table, lamp, 6-chair dining, 2 rocking chairs with table, bar-B-Q, hamacas, 2 mattresses, plants, etc. Interested please call Mercedes Denis a.w.h.

Apartment for rent in Edificio Panorama, Avenida Manuel Hurtado, La Cresta, 2 bedrooms, 2 baths, beautiful view, partially furnished. \$900/month, Tel. 269-2659.

Samsung microwave, MG 6920W, 1.1 cubic foot, ten energy levels and broiler. Interested please call Laura Flores, a.w.h.

More departures

Richard Condit, May 12 - Jun 5, to the U.S. on vacation, and to Singapore, to attend the CTFS network meetings.

STRI publications

Cheetham, Alan H., Jackson, Jeremy B.C., Sanner, JoAnn, and Ventocilla, Yira. "Neogene cheilostome Bryozoa of tropical America: Comparison and contrast between the Central American isthmus (Panama, Costa Rica) and the North-Central Caribbean (Dominican Republic)". *Bulletins of American Paleontology* 357: 159-192.

Bybell, Laurel M. 1999. "Neogene calcareous nannofossil biostratigraphy of the Caribbean coast of Panama and Costa Rica". *Bulletins of American Paleontology* 357: 42-59.

Correction!

Levin, Simon and Müller-Landau, Hélène C. 2000. "The emergence of diversity in plant communities". *Comptes Rendus de L'Academie des Sciences, Sciences de la Vie* 323: 129-139.

Tobin, Michael, López, Omar R. and Kursar, Thomas A. 1999. "Responses of tropical understory plants to a severe drought: tolerance and avoidance of water stress." *Biotropica* 31(4): 570-578.

Yanoviak, Stephen P. 1999. "Community structure in water-filled tree holes of Panama: effects of hole height and size." *Selbyana* 20(1): 106-115.