

**Idaho State University – University of Idaho
Taylor Ranch Field Station Collaboration**

Meetings at ISU on May 6-7, 2004
Summarized by Holly & Jim Akenson

ISU faculty Wayne Minshall, Chuck Peterson, and David Delehanty invited us to ISU to meet with faculty interested in involvement at Taylor Ranch Field Station. We gave presentations to faculty and graduate students on 1) Taylor Ranch Field Station facilities and programs and 2) our large carnivore research at Taylor Ranch Field Station. Then we met individually with faculty and graduate students who wanted to discuss their research interests with us and explore the possibilities for research at TRFS. We also met with an ISU geology graduate student who will be conducting research from Taylor Ranch this summer. There was solid ISU faculty interest in Taylor Ranch; several were interested in shifting or expanding their research to an Idaho based field station, while others were interested in developing new research projects in the undisturbed wilderness environment surrounding Taylor Ranch. After meeting with individuals, 7 of us discussed ways for UI and ISU to collaborate at Taylor Ranch Field Station.

Participants from ISU were: Wayne Minshall (Stream Ecology), Chuck Peterson (Herpetology), David Delehanty (Avian Ecology), Ernest Keeley (Fish Ecology), Marjorie Matocq (Small Mammal Ecology). Participant from UI were: Jim Akenson (Carnivore Ecology) and Holly Akenson (Large Mammal Ecology). The following is a summary of the discussion.

- Initial collaboration should involve a course at Taylor Ranch Field Station
- The Wildland Ecology 302 class, designed to be co-hosted by UI and ISU this summer did not have adequate enrollment, so it was cancelled
- We assessed reasons why some programs have been successful at Taylor Ranch Field Station and others have not.
- Problems with the 302 class model were:
 - The course is no longer required for CNR students
 - Students need to make money during summer
 - Students cannot afford high course fees
 - Students have difficulty taking 2 weeks off midsummer from their jobs
- TRFS Student Internship is very competitive (27 CNR applicants for 3 positions this year)
 - Students are paid for their summer and provided with funds for University credits
 - Students work at TRFS all summer
 - The Internship trains students on a variety of field research techniques
- We decided a modified Internship might be the most successful model for initial UI-ISU collaboration.

Ecology
Evol &
Cons Biol

3 Physiological & Behavioral
Ecol, Herpet.

Popl Genetics
Behav Ecol
Cons Genetics

Rosemary Smith
Behav Ecol,
Comm Ecol
Evol, Bio Educ

The following is a first draft of this idea for summer collaboration between UI and ISU at Taylor Ranch Field Station.

- **The course would have an ecosystem/landscape theme including geology, aquatic systems, terrestrial systems, and the relationship between people and the environment (native Americans, local history, and current wilderness issues). Ecosystem monitoring would be the foundation for hands-on learning. Students would be trained and collect data for the TRFS long term monitoring program. Technological tools such as GPS, remote sensing and GIS, remote data collection, and Internet would be utilized. The course would be taught by faculty/scientists from both universities.**
- An educational program would unite faculty and research staff at TRFS and lead to development of a cooperative research program(s)
- 10 undergraduate students would be selected to participate
- Grants will provide funding for 1) student wages and course registration, 2) 2 week summer salary for faculty+graduate student (5 positions), 3) meals and lodging expenses at TRFS, flying, travel and other expenses. Estimated grant \$100,000.
- Our first choice for seeking funds is the National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates Site program, which could provide multi-year funding for the new TRFS program. Other funding sources that could be pursued for segments of this summer program include IDF&G Wildlife Grants, USFS, private foundations, Eisenhower grants for teachers, other NSF programs (REU, monitoring, course curriculum development, or biological collections) or EPA educational grants, and a link with indigenous communities.
- ISU faculty is interested in participating in the NSF REU Site grant writing and David Delehanty said he would take the ISU lead. Jim and Holly plan to be involved in developing the grant proposal. We need interest and a lead grant writer from UI; Jeff Braatne's name came up as a likely prospect.
- Mechanisms for joint UI-ISU grant proposal submission and distribution of grant overhead among TRFS, CNR, and ISU will need to be discussed.
- Other ideas we discussed included:
 - Graduate students involved in presenting a course segment could stay at Taylor Ranch and continue with their own research during the rest of the summer.
 - Undergraduates taking the class could initiate their own research project the next summer to further explore one of the topics covered in the course (UI-CNR currently has several sources of funding for undergraduate research at Taylor Ranch)
 - Additional students could register for credit and pay for just one of the segments.
 - We could provide educational opportunities for students from the Shoshone-Bannock and NezPerce Tribes. An ideal topic would be the interrelationship between the Sheepeater Indians and the local natural history, with trips to examine cultural and biological resources of the wilderness. Connections with native people and/or "underprivileged" students are often required for NSF grant competitiveness.
- We selected mid August 2004 as the time for a 3-day grant-writing meeting at Taylor Ranch for those interested in participating in developing an NSF REU Site proposal. There will be information exchange and correspondence prior to that meeting, but we plan to draft the foundation of the proposal during the Taylor Ranch meeting.
- Please contact Holly & Jim if you are interested in participating in the grant writing and course development: tayranch@direcpc.com