Algonquin

“California trees, they’re unforgettable Giant Sequoias, bristlecone pines on top (of the mountains)”

Okay, so Katy Perry wasn’t really singing about the trees, but after attending the Section’s annual International Night, many folks could agree that maybe she ought to! Section members, family and friends had their sights set on sunny California, and not even a snowstorm could keep them away. For a second year in a row, McCoy’s Tavern and Restaurant on Trout Lake in North Bay was host to our International Night—an evening of socializing, great food and a little learning thrown into the mix.

After an amazing California-themed dinner consisting of Szechwan noodle salad, sushi, pork and fruit ragout, grilled chicken kebabs and rice casserole with artichokes, Dr. Jeff Dech, Assistant Professor of Biology and Forest Bioproducts Research Chair at Nipissing University, gave a fascinating account of a recent trip he took to California. The title of his presentation, “in search of the oldest and largest living things on earth,” really was his motivation for going. Jeff was in search of answers to two main questions: how do bristlecone pines get so old and how do giant sequoias get so big?

In August 2010, Jeff traveled to California to take part in the 20th Annual North American Dendroecological Fieldweek. The first stop was the Crooked Creek Research Station, nestled in the bristlecone/limber pine forest of the White Mountains, and situated at an elevation of 10 200 feet. The group’s mission was to measure and date a series of tree ring samples that in turn might extend the bristlecone pine chronology. They were looking for wood samples that were older than 8000 years! Jeff says they’re still waiting to hear the results of their cross-dating

Algonquin Section Council (L-R): Jeff Dech (councillor), Jeff Muzzi (councillor), Peter Nosko (councillor), Megan Smith (Chair), Nancy Young (Director), Stephen Mitchell (councillor), Andrée Morneau (councillor).

efforts. In the meantime, he did find an answer to his first question—how do they get so old? He says studies indicate it may have to do with the curious habit of maintaining only a thin strip of living tissue on their stems as they age. And although Jeff can’t say for sure, while the group was hiking the Methuselah trail, he thinks they might have identified the Methuselah tree—the oldest living tree on earth!

After a week at the research station, Jeff ventured out to view the Giant Sequoias of the Sierra Nevada. He described the importance of fire in redwood forests and how past fire regimes have allowed the trees to become so large by keeping competing vegetation in check. He highlighted the importance of fire in the management of both Giant Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks, where he came across a pre-

scribed burn, which was being used to promote redwood regeneration. Jeff’s talk ended with a walk through the famous Mariposa Grove where he saw a few favourites such as the Grizzly Giant, California Tunnel Tree, Fallen Monarch and the Bachelor and Three Graces.

With a record-breaking audience at this year’s International Night, Jeff had all of us on the edge of our seats. The story he told was unbelievable at times, the photos he took were spectacular, and I think it made us all think about dusting off our hiking boots and heading to California in search of our own living heroes!

Algonquin Section would like to give a big thank you to Jeff for including us in his California adventure.

Megan Smith, Chair

Central Ontario

Pub Night in the Sault

On January 20th Al's Corner Pub in the Sault was the venue for what is sure to become an annual tradition for the Section. The first ever *Pub Night* featuring the amazing musical talent of three bands—The Great Lakes Vagabonds, Crystal Creek, and the Institute's very own—Tom Foolery—was a rousing success, bringing out close to 50 members including many new student members from Sault College.

National Executive Director John Pineau made the trek across Highway 17 from Mattawa, not only to join his fellow “fool” Guy Smith in making some great music (at least in their own minds), but also to give a presentation on Forests without Borders and to premier the Institute's new promotional video to the receptive and fun-loving

crowd. The Section arranged for pizza to be brought in for everyone, and also sold raffle tickets for a respectable collection of CIF/IFC swag and memorabilia—\$200 was raised for Forests without Borders as a result. “It was a fun and informative night,” said Al Cameron, Section Director. “It was great to see our members come out for a good time, and to have all the students from the college take part. They got to see what their membership in the Institute is all about—great networking, good causes and good times!”

Other highlights of the evening included excellent impromptu drum-

ming by Sault College professor and member John Clement, as well as several of his students taking the stage to play music and sing their hearts out. All in all, a great way to spend a cold January night in Central Ontario!

Stalwart Central Ontario Section members at Pub Night.

Central Ontario Section member Guy Smith tunes up at Pub Night.

Drummer John Clement keeps the beat.

Rocky Mountain

Things have been busy for the Section (RMS) and we have much to share with you. First, a heartfelt congratulation to the HAMPCO committee for organizing and hosting a very successful CIF/IFC AGM in Jasper last September. The event, co-chaired by Mark Kube and Keith McClain, was well

attended. Feedback has been very positive so thank you to everyone who helped make it a success!

The RMS co-hosted a technical session with AFEX (Alberta Forest Extension Network) in early January 2011 in Edmonton on *Regenerating Forests on Small Industrial Sites*. It was well

attended, with 144 people registered in Edmonton and another 62 registered to attend the same session in Peace River two weeks later. The Section Council wanted to provide professionals from other parts of the province an opportunity to participate and decided to hold a second session with the same guest

Danielle Lussier, Anand Pandarinath, Lorne West, Jason Proche.

Council members Anand Pandarinath and Jason Proche judging the UofA/NAIT Chili Cook off.

speakers at the later date. Both sessions were a success and the rooms were packed with forest practitioners and members from other professions such as agrologists and biologists.

On January 29th, Council hosted the "Great Chili Cook-off and Chili Night" for University of Alberta and NAIT (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology) students. The event kicked off in Edmonton at McKernan hall. Although originally a student night, an invitation was extended to all Section members. Both UofA and NAIT faculty and student teams submitted batches of chili. There were five batches in total, ranging from the traditional ground beef to chicken to vegetarian. Section Director Anand Pandarinath and Councillor Jason Proche did the judging. It was a tight competition, but in the end the winning chili went to students Jesse Klym and Brad Baumgartner, both currently in their second year of Forest Technology studies at NAIT. When asked what their secret to success was, they revealed it was adding "beet juice" to their recipe. In addition to the cook-off, a game of shinny hockey had been organized and there were free refreshments and hot chocolate provided. It was a fun and successful evening with about 50 people in attendance and some donations made to the "Forests without Borders Foundation". Special thanks go to Sarah Gooding and Sara Cosgrove for putting so much effort into making this event a success.

Wendy Crosina
CIF/IFC RMS News

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