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Pacific Southwest Research Station, Albany, CA 94710

Flooding Puts a Damper on Work at Albany

PSW's Albany headquarters flooded out in the early hours of Saturday morning, Aug. 1—and no one could blame El Niño, although the wet-weather phenomenon has been named in almost everything else that's gone awry in California this year.

The water that flowed through the West Annex Building sprang from a leaky water pipe on the facility's third floor, where a line that is used to water the animals housed in the laboratories of the USDA's Western Regional Research Center burst at about midnight. When the laboratories' floor drains overflowed, the water ran unchecked for more than 7 hours down the stairs, through the ceiling panels, and into the elevator shaft, from the third floor down to the first floor. It was discovered around 7:30 a.m. by a USDA employee as he arrived to feed the animals. The resulting damage gave many Albany employees an unexpected week off, with administrative leave, while the challenging task of cleanup began. Most of the water damage occurred in the work spaces of the Forest Genetics Research Unit, Research Information Services Group, and Personnel Management Group.

Carol DeMuth, Assistant Director—Planning, Operations and Application, was one of the first PSW employees called into the building. "There were a couple of inches of water on the first floor, and my initial thought was, 'Where to start?'" said Carol. "All of the ceiling tiles around RIS and Personnel were either down or coming down, and my first priority was to move new PC harddrives off the floor. My next thought was to rescue peoples' personal belongings, and then move paperwork off of floors. I contacted a lot of people, who came to help and jumped right in—including Tom Conkle, Mike Haverty, Jim Baldwin, Kim Marshall, Lori Nelson, Rosanne Hunt, Vince Dong, and Kathy Stewart. Their cooperation and immediate response really show the high caliber of people we have working here."

In the aftermath, says Station Safety Officer Chuck Richmond, "By far our largest expense is the cleanup. PuroFirst, a contract-cleaning firm in Oakland, finished the cleanup the weekend of Aug. 8-9. It was expensive, but the workers did a great job—removing all of the damaged ceiling panels, drying out the carpets, removing the debris, and monitoring air quality. They will have to reinstall new ceiling panels, which are on order, in the next few weeks. The second largest expense so far is administrative leave. The smallest expense, about \$1,000, is actual damage done to PSW or employees' property. It looks like we lost an IBM computer, a Macintosh computer keyboard, and

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Air Pollution Unit Receives Funding

Members of the Air Pollution/Global Change Research Unit, Riverside, have been awarded funds from the joint research program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Biological Program, to research the ecological effects of environmental stressors using intensive sites (Demonstration Index Site PROgram, or DISPRO). The project's investigators are Nancy Grulke and Pam Padgett, co-principal investigators, Mark Fenn, Mark Poth, Mike Arbaugh, all with the Riverside unit, and Bob Heath of the University of California at Riverside. The demonstration sites are all located within National Parks, such as Sequoia National Park near Porterville, Calif. Much of their research at Sequoia National Park and other sites will center on the relationship between nitrogen deposition and ozone exposure, and the effect it has on Jeffrey pine.

Riverside Lab Stands Down for Safety

The Station's Forest Fire Laboratory, at Riverside, went through an intensive Stand Down on Safety July 20-24, as did the rest of PSW's field locations. Dave Hamilton, Location Safety Chairman, organized the program. Because many employees at Riverside also work in the field, the program was strongly geared toward safety in the field. The safety stand down included sessions on responsibilities of supervisors and employees; clothing and personal equipment; what to do when injured in the field; foot travel; tool safety; weather hazards; and plant and animal hazards. In addition, Evelyn McCaffery, Research Support Services, conducted a session on accident reporting, and Warren Hanna, also with Research Support Services, talked about vehicle maintenance.

Open Season for Transferring to FERS

An open season will run from July 1 to Dec. 31, to give those employees who are currently covered by the Civil Service Retirement System the opportunity to transfer to the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS). For more information, contact Personnel Management Group in Albany at (510) 559-6350.

New to PSW

Dalice McIntyre is the new resource information specialist with the Station's Fire Management Research Unit, at Riverside. Dalice is located at the Rocky Mountain Research Station, at Missoula, Mont. Her work experiences with the University of

(continued)

(Albany flood, contd.)

some Station publications suffered extensive water damage. The fire alarm panel was also damaged and is not currently functioning. We've set up interim fire-safety procedures for the building until it's repaired, which is expected in 2 to 3 weeks.

"We learned several things from the flooding," Chuck continued. "The most important is that we should all keep our cubicles neat, and our floors clear. Most of the items that were damaged were in boxes on the floors, such as books and manuscripts. Secondly, we learned that the emergency 800 phone number does work great. We did have some trouble with callers receiving unclear messages. A third party was paraphrasing what I said, and turning my message into the recorded message. We'll improve communications in that area for the future. We also need to update our employee phone and address lists more frequently, to make contacting everyone easier. Finally, we now have the opportunity to seal up our ceiling insulation better, now that it's been exposed and the ceilings are clean.

"We've now had four floods and two fires in the seven years that PSW has been at Albany," added Chuck. "We'd better keep improving our safety standards and emergency response plans, because the odds are that something will happen again in the future."

International Travel

* Brian Boroski and Bill Laudenslayer, Sierra Nevada Montane Ecosystems Research Unit, Fresno, attended the Euro-American Mammal Congress, July 19-24 in Santiago De Compostela, Spain. Brian presented a paper, "Implications of fisher and marten distribution for conservation planning in a managed forest of the southern Sierra Nevada of California," as part of a symposium on "Mustelids in a modern world." A book on the conservation of mustelids in a modern world, written by the international group of scientists who participated in the symposium, will be published in 1999. Bill helped coordinate a workshop on "Searching for the grail: a sampling method that accurately portrays small mammal communities." He also presented papers on "A standard sampling protocol for small mammals: an attainable goal or a pipe dream?" and "Assessment of small mammal abundance: difficulties and solutions?"

(New to PSW, contd.)

Montana School of Forestry's riparian research programs as well as the Bitterroot Ecosystem Research Project make her a valued member of the Riverside group. She earned a B.S. degree in natural resource conservation from the University of Montana, Missoula, and plans to complete a master's degree in range science from Montana State University, Bozeman.

Dalice grew up on a sizeable farm and working ranch in rural eastern Montana, just 15 miles from the Yellowstone National Park community of Glendive. She has also lived in Wyoming and North Dakota. Dalice enjoys such traditional outdoor activities as hunting, fishing, and camping.

Meetings/Conferences/Seminars

* Karen Pope, a PSW cooperative-education student, and Kathleen Matthews, both with the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Research Unit, Fresno, traveled to the University of Guelph in Canada to make presentations at the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, on July 19-22. They presented papers on "A telemetric study of the habitat use of *Rana muscosa* (mountain yellow-legged frog) in Kings Canyon National Park" and "A PIT tagging study of the movement behavior of *Rana muscosa* (mountain yellow-legged frog) in Kings Canyon National Park."

* Malcolm North, Sierra Nevada Montane Ecosystems Research Unit, Fresno, gave a talk on "Efficient field sampling: A comparison of methods with spatially explicit data" at the 7th International Congress of Ecology, July 19-25 in Florence, Italy.

* Jim Allen, Tropical Forested Wetland Research Team, Honolulu, presented a paper on "Woody debris in Micronesian mangrove forests" at the annual meeting of the Society of Wetland Scientists, held in Anchorage, Ak., on June 8-12. The paper was co-authored by Katherine Ewel, Honolulu; Tara Tara, Kosrae Department of Land and Agriculture; and Bob Keeland, U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division.

Job Vacancy

Sierra Nevada Science Integration Team Leader,
GS-0401-14/15, Davis/Sacramento

Closes

9-10-98

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