DGE Newsletter, May 2008

Field & Berry Lab Groups

Adam Wolf attended a workshop at the Max Planck Institute for Biogeochemistry in Jena March 15-19 on the topic of biogeochemical changes in Northern Eurasia. Then he visited the Laboratoire des Sciences du Climat et de l'Environment in Paris during April and May as a guest of Philippe Ciais. He is working on data assimilation of remotely sensed reflectance into an online land-surface model. While in Europe, Adam presented two posters at the European Geosciences Union meeting in Vienna, Austria.

May 23: Ulli Seibt returned from Paris briefly to tell us about her recent research in the form of a practice seminar titled: Isotopic fingerprints reveal terrestrial carbon and water exchange across scales. Using isotopes of carbon and oxygen, she has been able to quantify ecosystem/climate interactions. Terrestrial carbon fluxes are sensitive to climate, and her experimental results will help to improve the predictions of future climate models.

Sharon Robinson, Assoc. Prof. at the Univ. of Wollongong, Australia is visiting for six weeks (until June 21). She is working with Berry on a liquid phase system to measure isotopic changes during plant respiration.

May 28: Our Staff Technician, Rob Genova is temporarily moving back to Massachusetts while his partner, Wendy has a baby due early in September. Rob plans to have his work day there mirror his 9-5 day here and move back to this area early next year. He’ll be in constant touch via email <rgenova@stanford.edu> and phone. Our best wishes go with Rob & Wendy.

Asner Lab Group

May 15: The Asner Lab has a New Web page accenting the Mapping biodiversity from plant biochemistry using the Airborne Observatory (CAO) as well as the spectroscopic properties of plants. They are completing a month-long study of Kruger National Park, using the CAO and a network of field plots set up to understand how animals, especially elephants, and fire management decisions are changing the biodiversity and carbon storage in African savanna.

May 24: It was reunion time here while our sibling Dept. of Plant Biology staged a Symposium in honor of Winslow Briggs' 80th birthday. Scientific papers presented by eight of Win's former students and associates were an impressive tribute to his leadership and creativity. The day ended with cake and champagne in DGE's foyer plus more tributes including the fact that Win, as Director of Plant Biology, brought Chris Field to Carnegie years ago.

Seminars

May 27: Prof. Gretchen Hofmann, Dept. Ecology, Evolution, & Marine Biology, UC Santa Barbara spoke about Using gene expression to explore the impacts of ocean acidification on larval sea urchins. The larvae of different urchin species react differently to varying concentrations of CO2 (acidity) and temperature. Because these larvae are significant members of the fish and shellfish food chains, her research is important both economically and politically.

2nd Harvest at Jasper Ridge

May 13: Todd Tobeck, Yuka Estrada, & Chris Andreassi (shown below) plus Rob Genova, Noel Gurwick & Nona Chiariello scraped the above ground plant material from small areas in each quadrant. Back at the lab, the material will be further separated into five groups for analysis. The groups are annual & perennial, grasses & forbs, and litter.

Caldeira Lab

May 7: Ken Caldeira returned from a meeting at the Council on Foreign Relation in Washington, DC where political scientists were discussing international governance issues associated with intentional climate engineering. Meeting participants included Ralph Cicerone (President of the National Academy of Sciences), Paul Wolfowitz (former head of the World Bank and former Deputy Secretary of Defense), as well as other influential people. The next day, he gave a pair of talks at the EPA offices in DC on ocean acidification and climate engineering.

May 19: Various commercial entities have proposed fertilizing the ocean with iron or other nutrients with the intent of making money by selling carbon credits for the carbon that might be stored in the oceans by this approach. Governments are deciding how and whether to regulate these activities under the London "dumping" Convention, which is an international framework designed to protect the marine environment. As part of this process, the London Convention contacted the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) for scientific input. The IOC is a part of UNESCO, a branch of the United Nations. As a result, the IOC developed an Ad Hoc Consultative Group on Ocean Fertilization and appointed Caldeira as chair. This group developed a statement which has been submitted for consideration by the parties to the London Convention. Furthermore, Caldeira was the official representative of the Intergovernmental IOC at the "31st meeting of the Scientific Group under the London Convention and the 2nd meeting of the Scientific Group under the London Protocol" that took place in Guayaquil, Ecuador from 19 to 23 May 2008.

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