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## Doctoral Students 2000-2010

### From the Chair...

The Soil and Water Science Department (SWSD) is one of the few departments in the world that offers comprehensive interdisciplinary research, teaching, and extension/outreach programs in soil, water and environmental sciences. The department offers graduate programs with emphases in soil science, environmental science, hydrologic science, and wetland science, and offers an MS program via distance education. In addition the department actively participates in the interdisciplinary ecology graduate program. At present 154 graduate students (including 66 on-campus, 12 School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE), and 76 distance education) are advised by our faculty. Since its establishment in 1925, the SWSD has provided a home for a large number of post-doctoral associates, graduate students, undergraduate students, visiting scientists, and staff. Graduates of our department are well placed in academic institutions, industry, and governmental agencies. These graduates have advanced in their professional careers and now hold high level positions. For example, our graduates with BS and MS degrees are employed by state and federal agencies, agricultural industry, and environmental consulting firms. A good number of these students have pursued advanced degrees. Our PhD graduates are employed as faculty members in universities, senior scientists and managers in state agencies, federal agencies, and agricultural industry, and as environmental scientists with leading consulting firms. Some of our former students are now recognized as Fellows by the Soil Science Society of America and the American Society of Agronomy and have won numerous awards.

In this newsletter we highlight a few examples of the 75 doctoral students who graduated during 2000-2010. A complete list of these alumni will be made available on the SWSD web site. These alumni serve as excellent ambassadors for the department and for the University of Florida. The SWSD is proud of these alumni and derives some satisfaction that the department made a small difference in shaping their lives and careers.



**EDITORS:**  
 Susan Curry  
 scurry@ufl.edu

Michael Sisk  
 mjsisk@ufl.edu

Dr. Vimala Nair  
 vdn@ufl.edu

<http://soils.ifas.ufl.edu>





### **Abdullah Alshankiti**

**PhD 2000**

Abdullah is an on-farm Soil and Water Management Consultant at the International Center for Agriculture Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA)-Arabian Peninsula Regional Program (APRP), Dubai, UAE. He worked as an Assistant Director General of the National Agriculture and Animal Resources Research Center, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia until May 2006. Abdullah's work is in research for development.

### **Christopher Appel**

**PhD 2001**

Chip is Associate Professor of Environmental Soil Chemistry at the California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. He teaches a variety of courses in Earth Sciences and Soil Science. He is married and has twin 21-month old daughters. He says he is grateful for the training and preparation he received in the Soil and Water Science Department at UF.



*Chip with family - enjoying the water?*



### **Hector Castro Gonzales**

**PhD 2003**

Hector is currently working as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Department, University of Tennessee and Biosciences Division, Oak Ridge National Laboratory. His research interests include environmental microbiology, soil microbial ecology and molecular microbial ecology; predominantly targeting climate change, bioenergy and plant-microbe interactions.

### **Raymond Snyder**

**PhD 2003**

Raymond is currently the Product Manager for Harrell's Fertilizer based in Lakeland, FL. He is responsible for the development and marketing of Harrell's proprietary products to the golf and nursery markets worldwide. He also provides technical support and training to the Harrell's sales team located throughout the US.



*In Beijing, China representing Harrell's at the international sports turf conference*



### **Gina Kertulis-Tartar**

**PhD 2005**

Gina is currently an Assistant Professor of Biology in the Department of Natural Sciences at Dalton State College (Dalton, GA). Her main responsibilities include teaching major and non-major undergraduate courses in general biology, plant biology and environmental science.

## John Leader

PhD 2005

John is an Assistant Professor of Biological Science at Wor-Wic Community College in Salisbury Maryland. He is the course coordinator and primary instructor of Microbiology at the school and also teaches anatomy & physiology, primarily to nursing students.



*John with family  
- close to soil, close to water!*



## Ilker Uz

PhD 2005

Ilker is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition at Akdeniz University, Turkey. His research interests include: Microbial ecology of aerobic and anaerobic ecosystems; microorganisms involved in important nutrient cycles; molecular and biochemical approaches to characterize microbial communities and monitor their activities to assess and improve soil productivity.

## Myrlene Chrysostome

PhD 2007

Myrlene is the Natural Resources and Environmental Manager for USAID/Haiti. As such, she supervises two watershed management projects worth >\$150 Million (US Dollars) over 5 years. She also leads a watershed sectoral group including several donors such as IDB, World Bank, CIDA, UNDP, UNEP, FAO, French and Spanish cooperation, European Union and of course USAID.



*En route Islet du Bas Limbé, one of the rare spots where the endangered rhinoceros iguana *Cyclura cornuta* can be found.*



## Matt Fisher

PhD 2007

Matt is an independent environmental consultant living in Olympia, Washington. A few of his recent projects include monetary valuation of ecosystem services provided by wetlands, cradle-to-grave analysis of environmental impacts due to manufacture, transport, and disposal of food service items, and assistance with research on hybrid wetland treatment techniques. He also participated in a technical review of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) under development for the Florida Everglades.

## Daniel Herrera

PhD 2007

Daniel works for ENLASA ([www.grupoenlasa.com](http://www.grupoenlasa.com)) in scientific development and validation of new products, review and evaluation of technical information, presentations to farmers and commercial representatives, interpretation of soil and tissue analysis, and recommends (and designs when required) products to meet farmer's technical and economical needs. In the photo, Daniel (far left) is shown with farmers in a dairy farm in Colombia.





**David Hornsby**

**PhD 2007**

David is a Technical Program Manager at the St. Johns River Water Management District. He manages the District's water supply planning program which identifies the sustainable limits of groundwater and recommends alternative water supply options in regions of the District which cannot meet projected water demands from groundwater.

**Melissa R. Martin**

**PhD 2009**

Melissa works as a Biologist with the Army Corps of Engineers in Miami, Florida. She collaborates with local, state, and federal agencies to use the best available science to minimize the impact of human development on wetlands and aquatic resources of South Florida.



**Lauren Serra**

**PhD 2009**

Lauren is a Biologist with the Hole-in-the-Donut wetland restoration project in Everglades National Park. She earned her degree while working full-time for the National Park Service. Lauren's job focuses on native plant establishment, exotic plant eradication, and research agreements with universities.

**Elizabeth (Liz) Hodges Snyder**

**PhD 2009**

Liz is now an Assistant Professor of Public Health in the Department of Health Sciences at the University of Alaska, Anchorage. She teaches courses in Environmental & Occupational Health, and Research Tools & Methods. Her research interests include Health Impact Assessments (HIAs), fate and transport of organic contaminants, waste management, and environmental justice.



**Gustavo M. Vasques**

**PhD 2009**

Gustavo is an Assistant Professor at the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, in Seropédica, RJ, Brazil. His position is focused on digital soil mapping, pedometrics, and GIS. Research focuses on carbon assessment, geospatial soil risk analysis, and land use dynamics across multiple spatial and temporal scales. Gustavo's research and teaching programs address emerging topics interfacing soil science and global climate change, deforestation, land degradation, and urban pressures.

## Dr. Ian Pepper



Dr. Ian Pepper was the keynote speaker at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Soil and Water Science Research Forum on September 10, 2010. His presentation was entitled “Soil Health and Human Health Nexus.”

Dr. Pepper is a Professor and Environmental Microbiologist in the Department of Soil, Water and Environmental Science at The University of Arizona. He earned his BS degree at the University of Birmingham in England, and his MS and PhD degrees from the Ohio State University. Dr. Pepper’s program focuses mainly on potable water quality and the fate of pathogens in soil, water and municipal wastes. He has also evaluated the sustainability of long-term land application of municipal biosolids. Dr. Pepper has been the Director of the National Science Foundation Center on Water Quality since 1999. State-of-the-art research at the Center has included real-time detection of pathogens and the fate of emerging pathogens in potable water. He is a member of three National Academy Science Committees and a former

member of an EPA FIFRA Science and Advisory Panel.

Dr. Pepper is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Microbiology, the Soil Science Society of America, and the American Society of Agronomy. He is the recipient of the 2010 American Society of Agronomy Environmental Quality Research Award. Dr. Pepper has authored or co-authored 7 textbooks and 200 book chapters and journal articles. He has graduated 19 PhD students and 22 MS students. For additional information: <http://wqc.arizona.edu/> [ipepper@ag.arizona.edu](mailto:ipepper@ag.arizona.edu)

## Welcome... Incoming Students Fall 2010

### MS

Joseph Andress (Todd Osborne)  
Anne E Baker (Patrick Inglett)  
John P Derbish (Ramesh Reddy)  
Jonathan Diller (Samira Daroub)  
Wen Gu (Zhenli He & Lena Ma)  
Rebecca Hellmuth (George Hochmuth)  
Jeffrey S Hudgins (Larry "Rex" Ellis)  
Kassidy Joseph Klink (Zhenli He)  
Jamie L Lewis (Alan Wright)  
James Henry Lindsay (Zhenli He)  
William Mahler (Larry "Rex" Ellis)  
Kyna E. Mallery (George Hochmuth & Amy Shober)  
Sara Mechtensimer (Gurpal Toor)  
Thomas C Ponce (Todd Osborne)  
Zhixuan Qin (Amy Shober & Vimala Nair)  
Jason C Seitz (Mark Clark)

### MS

Shane A Smith (Larry "Rex" Ellis)  
Deborah Spalding (Sabine Grunwald)  
Bryce Van Dam (Todd Osborne)  
Amanda Noelle Wells (George Hochmuth)

### PhD

Julius Adewopo (Maria Silveira & Sabine Grunwald)  
Pooja Ahuja (Amy Shober & Rao Mylavarapu)  
Chumki Banik (Willie Harris)  
Baijing Cao (Sabine Grunwald)  
Rajendra Gautam (George Hochmuth)  
Jing Hu (Ramesh Reddy)  
Jorge Armanda Leiva Sanabria (Peter Nkedi-Kizza)  
Rishi Prasad (George Hochmuth)  
Shashi Kiran Reddy Yellareddygari (Maria Silveira & George Hochmuth)

## Faculty, Staff, & Student News

Congratulations on your accomplishments.

**Yuncong Li** was elected as a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy and a Fellow of the Soil Science Society of America.

**Sabine Grunwald** was elected as a 2010 Fellow of the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA).

**Julie Padowski** (James Jawitz, Faculty Advisor) has been selected as the recipient of the National Water Research Institute (NWRI) Ronald B. Linsky Graduate Fellowship for Outstanding Water Research.

The following graduate students have won the best presentation awards at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual SWSD Research Forum held on September 10, 2010.

Best Oral Presentation: **Casey Schmidt** (Mark Clark)

Best Poster Presentation: **Rupesh Bhomia** (Ramesh Reddy), **Debolina Chakraborty** (Vimala Nair), **Lisa Gardner** (Ramesh Reddy), **Jason Lessl** (Lena Ma), and **Jennifer Marriott** (Amy Shober)

Congratulations to each one of them and to their advisors.

### Congratulations!

#### Summer 2010 Graduates

##### BS

Nicholas Sanzone

##### MS

Elena Azuaje (Nick Comerford & Willie Harris)

Maninder Kaur Chahal (Gurpal Toor)

Moshe Doron (Patrick Inglett)

Mike Jerauld (Jim Jawitz)

Kamaljit Kamaljit (Gurpal Toor)

Henrique Mayer (Yuncong Li)

##### PhD

Alexander Cheesman

(Ramesh Reddy & Benjamin Turner)

Pauric C Mc Groary

(John Cisar & George Snyder)

Augustine Obour

(Maria Silveria & George O'Connor)

### New SWSD Faculty Member

#### Stefan Gerber



Stefan Gerber was hired as an Assistant Professor of Landscape Biogeochemistry. Stefan obtained his graduate degree from University of Bern in 2003 and is working as a post-doctoral fellow at Princeton University. Stefan will join the modeling group of the SWSD in November 2010. He plans to conduct research on biogeochemical cycles across terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and how these cycles are influenced by anthropogenic and natural stressors. He is interested how field-scale dynamics of carbon,

nitrogen and other nutrients shape landscape biogeochemical cycles. His research will allow assessing effects of global change on the health and functioning of ecosystems across regional landscapes e.g. Florida, and globally. He plans to teach undergraduate and graduate courses with emphasis on biogeochemical modeling. Stefan is planning to move to Gainesville in November 2010 with his wife, Franziska, and their son, Felix (3.5 years) and twin daughters (Eleanor and Olivia, 1.5 years). For additional information about Stefan's research program activities contact: [sgerber@ufl.edu](mailto:sgerber@ufl.edu)

## PhD Students (2000-2010)

Abdullah Al-Shankiti (2000) (Graetz)  
Mark Clark (2000) (Reddy)\*  
Tait Chirenje (2000) (Ma & Harris)  
Teresita Chua Ona (2000) (Reddy)  
Dirceu De Mattos (2000) (Graetz & Alva)  
Juan Perez Bolivar (2000) (Collins)

Christopher Appel (2001) (Ma)\*  
Alan Wright (2001) (Reddy)  
Lingzheng Wu (2001) (Ma)

James Bonczek (2002) (Nkedi-Kizza)  
Kanika Sharma (2002) (Ogram)\*

Eric Brown (2003) (Sartain)  
Christine Bliss (2003) (Comerford)  
Hector Castro (2003) (Ogram)\*  
Ronald Corstanje (2003) (Reddy & Portier)\*  
Shinjiro Sato (2003) (Comerford)  
Raymond Snyder (2003) (Sartain)

Travis Hasselman (2004) (Graetz & Wilkie)  
Nadine Kabengi (2004) (Daroub & Rhue)\*  
Konstantinos Makris (2004) (Harris & Obreza)\*\*  
Kelly Morgan (2004) (Obreza & Scholberg)  
Fernando Munoz (2004) (Mylavarapu)  
James Sanchez (2004) (Mylavarapu)  
Travis Shaddox (2004) (Sartain & Graetz)

Noel Cawley (2005) (Harris)  
Myrlene Chysostome (2005) (Nair)  
Abioye Fayiga (2005) (Ma)  
Patrick Inglett (2005) (Reddy) #\*  
Gina Kertulis-Tartar (2005) (Ma)  
Ioannis Ipsilantis (2005) (Ogram & Sylvia)  
John Leader (2005) (Reddy)  
Todd Osborne (2005) (Reddy)  
Ilker Uz (2005) (Ogram)

Sampson Agyin-Birikorang (2006) (O'Connor)\*  
Larry Ellis (2006) (Collins)  
Wonsook Ha (2006) (Stanley & Mansell)  
Sanjay Lamsal (2006) (Grunwald)  
Olawale Oladeji (2006) (O'Connor & Sartain)

Park Dara (2006) (Daroub)  
Rosanna Rivero (2006) (Grunwald)  
Deoyani Sarkhot (2006) (Comerford & Jokela)  
Maria Silva (2006) (Ma)

Yun Cheng (2007) (Ogram)  
Millard Fisher (2007) (Reddy)  
Daniel Herrera (2007) (Harris)  
David Hornsby (2007) (Graetz)  
Mahomoud Kamal (2007) (Nkedi-Kizza)  
Gabriel Kasozi (2007) (Nkedi-Kizza & Li)  
Angelique Keppler (2007) (Reddy)  
Min Lin (2007) (Sartain)  
Josan Manohardeep (2007) (Nair)\*  
Lynette Malecki (2007) (Reddy & White)  
Daniel Perkins (2007) (Jawitz)  
Thomas Saunders (2007) (Collins)  
Isabela Torres (2007) (Reddy)

Andrea Albertin (2009) (Clark & Sickman)  
Jehangir Bhadha (2009) (Jawitz)  
Hector Castaneda (2009) (Popenoe)  
Kimberly Epps (2009) (Comerford)  
Elizabeth Hodges (2009) (O'Connor)\*  
Qin Lu (2009) (He & Graetz)  
Kirandeep Mann (2009) (Schumann & Obreza)  
Melissa Martin (2009) (Reddy)  
Michael Miyattah-Kporgbe (2009) (Rechcigl & Stanley)  
Lauren Serra (2009) (Comerford)  
Gustavo Vasques (2009) (Grunwald)

Alex Cheesman (2010) (Reddy & Turner)  
Jaya Das (2010) (Daroub & O'Connor)  
Yandi Fan (2010) (Mylavarapu)  
Ronald Gonzalez (2010) (Sartain)  
Hiral Gohil (2010) (Ogram & Thomas)  
Ha Ryun Kim (2010) (Ogram & Reddy)  
Sylvia Lang (2010) (Clark & Daroub)  
Shiny Mathews (2010) (Ma)  
Pauric McGroary (2010) (Cisar & Snyder)  
Augustine Obour (2010) (Silveira & O'Connor)  
John Rowland (2010) (Cisar)  
Rongzhong Ye (2010) (Wright & Reddy)

\* Excellence in Graduate Studies Award - Soil and Water Science Department

\*\* UF-IFAS Best Dissertation Award

# Emil Trouge Award - Best Dissertation, Soil Science Society of America

## Scholarships & Fellowships

Families and friends of Carlisle, Polston, Robertson, and Skulnick have established scholarships in support of graduate programs in soil and water science. We sincerely thank each for their generosity in establishing an endowment to support our graduate program. Sam Polston received his MS degree in agriculture in 1950. William Robertson served as a faculty member in the department from 1950 to 1982. Vic Carlisle served as a faculty member in SWSD from 1948 to 1990.



**Ben Skulnick** (April 22, 1976 - January 1, 2006) received his MS degree in Soil and Water Science in 1999. Ben was struck by lightning on Tuesday afternoon, May 24, 2005 while working in wetlands of NE Florida. Ben passed away on January 1, 2006. <http://www.benskulnick.com/index.html> In memory of Ben, the Skulnick family established an endowment to support an annual fellowship for graduate students pursuing MS degrees in soil and water sciences.

## Graduate Assistantships and Fellowships in Soil and Water Science

The SWSD offers research assistantships and fellowships for qualified students to pursue their research and educational goals. Students can conduct research at multiple scales (molecular to landscape level) on any of the department's research thrust areas related to water quality, climate change, and public health. For PhD students, typical funding is in the range of \$16,000 to \$22,000 per year plus approximately 90% of the tuition. For additional information, students can contact Andy Ogram at [aogram@ufl.edu](mailto:aogram@ufl.edu) or Michael Sisk at: [mjsisk@ufl.edu](mailto:mjsisk@ufl.edu).

## UF-ICRISAT – International Education Center

To help improve the sustainability of agriculture and natural resources in developing nations, the University of Florida (UF) has launched a new education center with the nonprofit International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). The center, known as the UF-ICRISAT International Education Center (IEC), is based at the ICRISAT headquarters in Hyderabad, the capital of the Andhra Pradesh state in South Central India. The IEC also serves as the platform for a broad array of educational programs pertinent to the region. The IEC is in the process of formulating a consortium of educational institutions and organizations in agriculture, natural resources, and environment. Additional information about IEC can be found at: <http://iec.ufic.ufl.edu> or contact K. Ramesh Reddy at: [krr@ufl.edu](mailto:krr@ufl.edu).



## SWS Alumni

In our newsletter, we would like to include news from our alumni and their success stories and accomplishments. Please provide highlights of your current activities, so that we can include them in future SWSD newsletters. Please e-mail information and a photograph to Michael Sisk at [mjsisk@ufl.edu](mailto:mjsisk@ufl.edu).