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Sent: Wednesday, January 11, 2006 12:34 PM  
To: pabiodiv@webmail.upb.pitt.edu  
Subject: PABIODIV: Conference announcement

Containing Invasives: Closing Pandora's Box

The Pennsylvania Bureau of State Parks - Kings Gap Environmental Education and Training Center, and Shippensburg University will co-sponsor the seventeenth annual environmental issues conference on Wednesday, March 15, 2006 at Shippensburg University.

Invasive species are wreaking havoc as they displace natives and compromise the biodiversity of our state, country, and planet. Increased travel and expansion in global trade are the main culprits in the rapidly escalating rate of invasion, with costs being high. In the U.S. alone, the price tag of battling this menace while protecting our native habitats and croplands is estimated at 137 billion dollars each year.

The potential damage to timber resources, to the recreational and aesthetic values of terrestrial and aquatic landscapes, and to human health challenges the abilities of land managers and private landowners to provide natural resource stewardship for public and private lands. "Containing Invasives: Closing Pandora's Box" will address this issue through an array of sessions offering practical information, useful to both field personnel and invasive control program planners.

Bernd Blossey, Associate Professor in the Department of Natural Resources, and Director of the Ecology and Management of Invasive Plants Program at Cornell University, will give the opening address. Some of the reasons for the competitive advantage of introduced species include lack of natural enemies, the evolution of increased competitive ability and novel weapons hypotheses. Dr. Blossey's presentation will explore the evolutionary and ecological reasons for such differences and how they affect aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

Post-luncheon speaker will be Randy Westbrooks, USGS National Invasive Plant Coordinator. In developing the National Early Detection and Rapid Response System for Invasive Plants, Dr. Westbrooks has become an outspoken advocate for the development of a coordinated framework of interagency partner groups at the local, state, regional, and national levels to more effectively address invasive species. His presentation will highlight the importance of prevention, strategic planning, partnerships, and leadership in these efforts.

Concurrent sessions will cover national and state programs and projects being implemented by various agencies and organizations. Topics include: the use of plant pathogens as a control measure, DCNR's invasive species action program, aquatic invasive plants in eastern PA lakes, herbicide use, the Invasive Exotic Plant Management Tutorial, organizing volunteer "strike forces," mechanical and biological controls, and management techniques, tools and equipment. The conference will provide enrichment for environmental professionals including land managers, municipal officials, students and others with environmental interests.

The early registration fee of \$30 will include lunch, break, and all registration materials. Full-time students may register for \$15. For registration information, contact Kings Gap at (717) 486-3799 or e-mail [kingsgapsp@state.pa.us](mailto:kingsgapsp@state.pa.us).

Thank you.

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