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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

—BY RHONDA STRUMINGER

Dear OBFS Community,

I hope this newsletter is a welcome distraction from the news, and provides some assurance that we are part of a larger scientific community working diligently to protect the research we care so much about. Field stations and marine laboratories continue to do amazing things to advance science, educate the next generation of researchers, and to support the local communities in which they operate. Though funding challenges continue (as they always have and always will) the important work goes on and the environments in which we work and the ecological systems of which we are a part, will survive, if not thrive, under our tutelage.

To help address recent funding challenges in the U.S., OBFS has signed onto several initiatives. In March, through the American Institute of the Biological Sciences (AIBS) we signed onto an AIBS community letter to Congress in support of science funding and scientific research; this letter was from 52 scientific societies and organizations representing over 106,000 scientists.

We also signed onto a letter, along with 73 other organizations, in support of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). A third letter OBFS signed was organized by the Union of Concerned Scientists and demanded that Congress protect federally funded scientific research and federal scientists.

We hope Congress will read these letters and recognize what we all lose if the funding cuts continue.

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ANNUAL MEETING —PAGES 3 AND 11!

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Banner photo: Gothic Rainbow, Rocky Mountain Biological Lab, Colorado.

Photo credit: Conner Philson.

RESEARCH WITH CARE —BY LUKA SILVA

In a surprising window of sun, over 20 guests gathered in the Naa Kahidi house. Surrounded by ornate paddles and arcs of formline art, they listened and learned from each other and the history and culture of Sheet'ká.

This was the "Researching with CaRE" workshop, co-hosted by Sitka Sound Science Center and the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska under an NSF science and communication grant. Its goal: gathering an array of researchers working in or around Sitka, with diverse backgrounds, to strengthen the relationship between scientists and the Tribal governments and Indigenous people of this region. The workshop focused specifically on working with the Sheet'ká Kwáan Tribe / Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Over three days researchers discussed Tlingit cultural norms and relevant engagement, the Tribal governance landscape in Southeast AK, and frameworks for respectful and reciprocal exchange. After visiting with staff from the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, learning about approaches to ethical research and Indigenous Data Sovereignty, and discussing power dynamics in ways of knowing and types of Indigenous Evaluation techniques, the group moved on to discuss applications of approaches through co-production frameworks, case studies, and funding agency processes. The group wove over 200 cedar roses under the instruction of colleagues who generously taught their dexterous folding techniques, to be gifted at the upcoming herring koo.éex'.

Above: Woven cedar roses.

On the last day, groups walked along Totem Park and the Harbor, discussing what actionable steps they could bring into their work. What barriers need to be broken down to facilitate reciprocal research? What changes had to be made within their assumptions and approaches? What difficult conversations need to be held, and with whom? Whispers of trust and excitement–a foundation for future projects and relationships–leaving as the smell of herring arrived, a portent of their imminent migration to Sitka. Knowledge, like herring, coming and going home.

For more information, contact: Lauren Bell, Research Director, Lbell@sitkascience.org. Luka Silva is Interdisciplinary Science and Community Integrator with the Sitka Sound Science Center.

OBFS 2025 ANNUAL MEETING IN COLORADO

The annual OBFS roadshow continues into the Rocky Mountain West!

In 2025, the OBFS Annual Meeting will be hosted at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory (RMBL; pronounced "rumble"). Located near Crested Butte, Colorado, RMBL calls the remainder of a 19th century mining town home and facilitates long term research, snow science, and so much more.

The 2025 OBFS Annual Meeting will take place Monday 15 September through Friday 19 September. Workshops will take place Monday and Friday with field trips on Tuesday and the primary bulk of the meeting being Tuesday afternoon through Thursday night. Call for presentations, meeting registration, on-site accommodation details, and travel recommendations **coming soon**! Keep an eye out on the OBFS website and email listserv, and see page 11.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(continued from page 1)

AIBS has compiled additional talking points you can use if you want to take individual action on any initiatives that have been closed down – we want to make these closings temporary.

By being more active with the OBFS community, by volunteering to work on a committee or by participating in our Virtual Cafés or other programming, we can discover new ways to support each other as we weather this storm together. We are also going to be pulling together a new strategic plan in the coming months. If you are interested in working with OBFS leadership on this, please let us know. Members' ideas and contributions are invaluable for keeping OBFS strong and relevant – we can't exist without you!

Rhonda

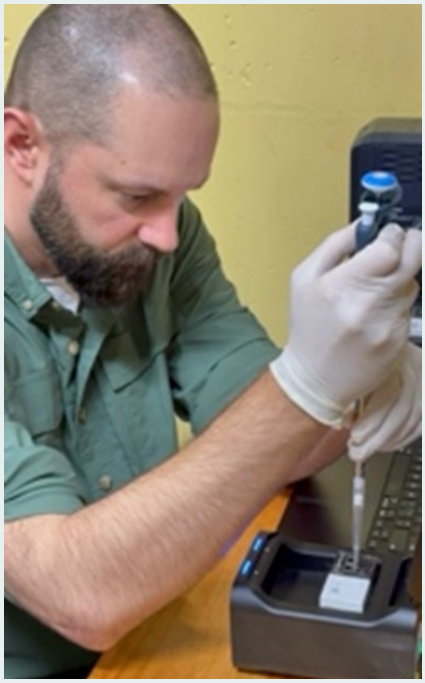
Rhonda Struminger, Ed.M. Ph.D. President@obfs.org

GENOME SEQUENCING OF COLLARED TROGON AND RESPLENDENT QUETZAL ACHIEVED — BY CAIO MARTINELLE FRANÇA

We are thrilled to announce a groundbreaking achievement at the Quetzal Education and Research Center (QERC): the successful sequencing of the *first-ever genomes* of the Resplendent Quetzal (*Pharomachrus mocinno*) and the Collared Trogon (*Trogon collaris*). This historic milestone marks a major step forward in the conservation genomics of two iconic birds of the Neotropical cloud forests.

Above, Left: Juvenile male quetzal specimen. Below: Graham Wiley loading the Quetzal's sequence library on the ONT P2 sequencer.

The genome sequencing was recently completed through a remarkable international collaboration led by QERC Director Dr. Caio França. The team included ornithologist Dr. Luis Sandoval from the University of Costa Rica, mosquito ecologist Dr. Jose Loaiza from the University of Panama, genomics expert Dr. Graham Wiley from the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, and avian specialist Dr. Matthew Miller of Reneco Wildlife and Oikos Genomics.



This project not only provides the first complete genetic blueprints for both species but also opens the door for in-depth studies on evolutionary history, population structure, and species-level distinctions across Central America. In particular, genome data from the Collared Trogon may help clarify long-debated taxonomic boundaries between subspecies found in Costa Rica and Panama. The effort underscores QERC's growing role as a regional hub for collaborative, cutting-edge biodiversity science. The sequencing work will be followed by extensive bioinformatic analysis in the coming months, with plans underway to publish the findings and make the data publicly available for researchers worldwide. We are grateful to all our collaborators and institutional partners who helped make this milestone possible. As we continue to expand our genomics research at QERC, we remain committed to advancing conservation efforts through science, education, and international partnership.

Contact: Caio França, Director, cfranca@snu.edu.

THE PATHWAYS TO PARKS INTERNSHIP — BY BREEZY JACKSON

The Pathways to Parks Program is a collaboration between the University of California Merced Natural Reserve System and Yosemite National Park. The program utilizes the Cooperative Ecosystems Study Unit agreement to pay UC Merced students to provide support for operations and programs in Yosemite National Park.

Above: Student interns tabling at an event.

Internships are available in a variety of operational areas and include real-world experience in park administrative support, facilities management and operational assistance, natural and cultural resource management, visitor support, interpretation, and education.

Student interns apply their classroom knowledge to real situations and learn the inside realities of park employment, preparing them to be competitive applicants and effective future employees.

Five students have interned with this program thus far and one student has since moved into a position with the National Park Service.

Contact: Breezy Jackson, UC Merced, Yosemite and Sequoia Field Stations Director, bjackson10@ucmerced.edu.

RMBL NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR —BY ERICKA BREMER

The Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory (RMBL) is one of the oldest and most respected field stations in the country, located in Gothic, Colorado. For nearly 100 years, RMBL has supported high-elevation ecological research, long-term data collection, and hands-on education, serving as a hub for scientists, students, and environmental leaders from around the world.

Dr. Jenifer Blacklock was appointed as RMBL's new Executive Director. With a background in biomedical engineering, program development and institutional leadership, she brings a strategic vision as RMBL enters its centennial phase. Blacklock holds a PhD from the Max Planck Institute in Germany, and recently served as the Colorado University director and Western Colorado University dean of the Engineering Partnership Program.

Above: Jeni Blacklock.

RMBL continues to be a vital space for studying biodiversity, climate, and mountain ecosystems. Blacklock's appointment signals a new era at the launch of RMBL's Centennial Campaign. To learn more, see the Gunnison Country Times article.

Contact: Ericka Bremer, RMBL Development Manager, ericka@rmbl.org.

OBFS ON CAPITOL HILL & NSF UPDATES —BY CONNER PHILSON

In this dynamic time for science at large, and specifically for field stations and marine laboratories (FSML), five OBFS members traveled to Washington, DC to communicate the value of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and FSML to science, education, conservation, and the public.

Above: OBFS at Congressional Visits Day.

The participants came from Thomas More University Biology Field Station (Kentucky), Rinker Rock Creek Ranch (Idaho), La Selva Research Station (Organization for Tropical Studies; International), Kellogg Biological Station (Michigan), and the UC Santa Barbara Natural Reserve System (California). As part of the annual American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS) Congressional Visits Day (CVD) program, OBFS members participated in 34 meetings with congressional offices.

FSMLs facilitate the effective and efficient use of federal funds for research and education, foster globally important research, boost local economies with high skill jobs and visitors, and train the next generation of scientists, leaders, and citizens. OBFS participants communicated this important message in their meetings with congressional offices and backed AIBS's ask for a $9.9B NSF budget for FY25-26 (which substantially differs from the US President's recommendation for a $3.9B NSF budget, a 55.8% cut from FY24-25).

Despite broad scale cuts to the NSF, the outlook for the NSF FSML program appears steady. Thanks to the efforts of OBFS members and others, FSMLs are mentioned in the 2021 CHIPS & Science Act (Sec. 10349): "*The* [NSF] *Director shall continue to support enhancing, repairing and maintaining research instrumentation, laboratories, telecommunications and housing at biological field stations and marine laboratories*". Thus, NSF support for FSMLs is a federal statute, unlike most NSF programs which are supported by internal NSF decisions.

While the 2021 CHIPS & Science Act does not authorize or appropriate funds for FSMLs, this mention means the NSF has to, by law, support FSMLs. OBFS's Outreach & Communications Committee will continue to communicate with the NSF to ensure the FSML program stays active.

While the AIBS Congressional visits only happen once a year, you can still engage your field station in advocacy all year round! For more information on field station advocacy at local, state, or federal levels, visit the OBFS Advocacy page or contact OBFS Board Member & Chair of OBFS's Outreach and Communications Committee, Conner Philson (philson@ucsb.edu).

Conner Philson is Executive Director of the University of California at Santa Barbara Natural Reserve System.

JRBP DOCENT COMMUNITY TURNS 50 —BY JORGE RAMOS

Above and right: Dawn Neisser and Julien Wright-Ueda are presented the Award of Merit at the Stanford Associates Awards Ceremony and are joined by family, fellow docents, and JRBP ('O'O) staff.

The docent community of Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve ('Ootchamin 'Ooyakma) has been recognized with the Stanford Alumni Associates Award of Merit for its 50 years (1975-2025) of dedicated volunteer service in natural history research and education at the preserve. This award highlights the specific contributions to digitizing and researching various ecological projects, including the digitization of over 5,300 plant specimens in the Oakmead Herbarium (earliest vouchers date from the 1860s) and the publication of long-term avian research.

Since its inception in 1979, the bird monitoring effort at the preserve has engaged around 200 volunteers, providing invaluable data on local bird populations and trends (Wright-Ueda et al. 2023). The JRBP ('O'O) docents not only support research projects but also lead educational tours for thousands of visitors.

The award was presented at a ceremony on March 29, 2025, where docent leaders Dawn Neisser and Julien Wright-Ueda accepted their award on behalf of the entire JRBP ('O'O) docent community.

Contact: Jorge Ramos, Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve ('O'O), jramosh@stanford.edu.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE NEWS

Is there a subject you wish you could discuss with other field stations but haven't made the time?

Is there a speaker you have wanted to hear from but haven't had the opportunity?

Do you want other field stations to learn more about what is happening in your corner of the world?

Are you looking for help with a particular challenge?

Let the International Committee know and together we can organize a one-hour Virtual Café on the topic of your choice!

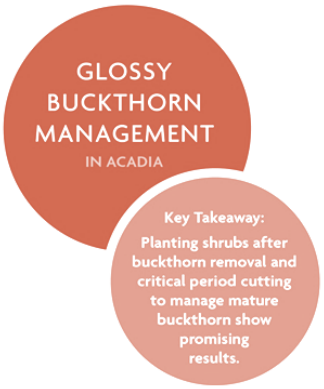
Send an email to david.maneli@mcgill.ca with your ideas or suggestions.

Events Calendar

Stay in the know: scroll to the bottom of the OBFS Events webpage https://obfs.org/events/ and click "Subscribe to Calendar." It's easy!

EXPANDING THE MANAGEMENT TOOLBOX IN ACADIA — BY AMINA WILSON AND CHRIS NADEAU

Invasive shrubs are non-native species that have a significant impact on native vegetation. Forests in 70% of eastern US national parks are at imminent risk of failure, in part because invasive shrubs are preventing regeneration of native plants. Biologists with Acadia National Park, Maine work to prevent the spread of invasive shrubs, helping to maintain and strengthen the health of Acadia's forests and other ecosystems.



Currently, glossy buckthorn *(Frangula alnus)* is the most problematic invasive shrub found in Acadia, requiring a large investment of time and resources from the park's invasive plant management team. Since glossy buckthorn was introduced to the United States from Eurasia as an ornamental shrub in the mid-1800s, this hardy plant has become severely invasive across the region. Glossy buckthorn easily sprouts in wetlands and young forests, reducing habitat for native shrubs and insects.

In partnership with NPS and Friends of Acadia, Schoodic Institute scientists are evaluating the effectiveness of glossy buckthorn management approaches and testing alternative methods through five ongoing experiments. More information on these experiments is available at www.schoodicinstitute.org/expanding-the-management-toolbox-for-glossy-buckthorn-in-acadia.

Although monitoring is in the early stages, planting shrubs after buckthorn removal and critical period cutting to manage mature buckthorn show promising results. Scientists will monitor all five experiments through at least 2026 to expand the data sets and refine the results.

Above: Restoring grasses in Bass Harbor Marsh. Credit: Amina Wilson.

Amina Wilson is the Restoration Research Associate and Chris Nadeau is Climate Change Adaptation Scientist at Schoodic Institute.

T.R.E.E.S– A DYNAMIC FIELD STATION IN THE HEART OF THE MAYA MOUNTAINS —BY IAIN TELFER

Above: T.R.E.E.S Biological Field Station, Belize.

Nestled in the foothills of the Maya Mountains, the Toucan Ridge Ecology and Education Society (T.R.E.E.S) is a non-profit biological field station and eco-lodge in central Belize. Our mission is to foster research, conservation, and education through accessible, hands-on experiences in one of the world's most biodiverse regions.

T.R.E.E.S serves as a hub for students, researchers, and eco-tourists. Our facilities include modest but comfortable accommodations, lab space, a teaching classroom, and access to a variety of lowland and mid-elevation tropical forest habitats. We're situated on 200 acres of broadleaf rainforest and bordered by multiple protected areas, making it ideal for long-term biodiversity monitoring and ecological studies.

We run a popular field-based internship program that draws students and early-career professionals from around the world. Interns receive hands-on training in tropical ecology, wildlife monitoring, and sustainable agriculture. With mentorship from experienced biologists, interns help support our long-term monitoring projects and gain practical field experience that prepares them for careers in conservation and research.

Our long-term vision is to expand opportunities for collaboration across the OBFS network, share data, and support global change research in tropical ecosystems. Whether you're looking for a site to run a course, conduct fieldwork, or pilot a conservation initiative, T.R.E.E.S offers a flexible, field-based platform with a strong focus on mentorship, inclusivity, and sustainability.

Contact: Iain Telfer, itelfer@ecorana.ca

INTERNATIONAL MATCHING PROGRAM NOW OPEN!

The International Committee is thrilled to announce the reopening of the Matching Program!

This initiative connects participants from two or more field stations to:

- Collaborate on research
- Compare experiences
- Share students and resources
- Launch joint projects
- Build friendships, partnerships, or mentorships
- Or explore entirely new opportunities!

Interested? Complete the **Matching Program registration form** **by June 30th**.

Once registered, you'll be invited to a virtual workshop where participants can get to know one another and begin the matching process.

Participation Expectations:

- Stations must meet virtually at least once a month
- Develop a partnership plan by the end of the third month
- Commit to a match lasting a minimum of one year
- Eligibility: OBFS membership in good standing is required.

Above: Matching program participants in a shared learning setting.

Hear directly from one of the Matching Program's successful partnerships about the benefits and impact of international collaboration:

OBFS YouTube channel (available in English and Spanish)

For more information or with questions, contact:
David Maneli
Chair, OBFS International Committee
david.maneli@mcgill.ca

HOW TO FIND US

www.obfs.org/

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@obfs_org

YouTube

The Virtual Field

OBFS 2025 ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE

The call for concurrent sessions is out now! Calls for lightning talks and posters will come out soon, along with travel details and more on RMBL's website. The auction theme will be announced before the end of the US fiscal year along with registration info. We have an exciting lineup of half-day workshops for Monday or Friday, including:

- Field Station Public Engagement—SCRREE Framework
- Expand Your FSML Horizons with The Virtual Field
- Small Boat Safety Network
- Ecoinclusive

OBFS Meeting Theme: Resilience and Adaptation, Fear and Triumph: A RAFT to Field Station success in a turbulent world

Look for more details in May! We hope to see you there.

Hannah Weber and Conner Philson, OBFS Annual Meeting Committee

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STACY MCNULTY, EDITOR

CONNER PHILSON, OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS
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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Click the link to access

Useful literature for all who teach in the field:

- Campbell, L. G., B. R. Montgomery, M. R. King, J. Hall, and L. Struwe. 2025. Students in the wild: safety instruction practices in distance-taught biological laboratory and field classes. The American Biology Teacher 87(1): 13–19. https://doi.org/10.1525/abt.2025.87.1.13.
- Stoner, E., S. C. Salina, E. Johnson. E. R. Whitman, S. K. Archer, B. S. McPherson and Z. Cranmer. 2025. Use of virtual reality to engage undergraduate students in environmental field experiences. Future in Educational Research DOI: 10.1002/fer3.70003.
- Osborne, T. R., Abeyrathna, W. A. Nimanthi Upeksha, Shea, E. K., Martin, K. R., Li, J., Kocot, K. M., and Davis-Berg. E. C. Centering Inclusivity in Invertebrate Fieldwork: An Argument for Modernizing Malacological Practices. American Malacological Bulletin, 41(1). https://doi.org/10.4003/006.041.0109.

For a comprehensive list of field station-related articles, click here.