



# EREN

ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH AS EDUCATION NETWORK

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## Newsletter #16

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Dear EREN Members,

Spring has sprung here in Ohio and the woods are full of wild leek, trout lily, trillium, and garlic mustard (which is a woodland invasive and not as welcome a sight as the others). The change in seasons has inspired a lot of activity among the EREN Lead Scientists and the EREN Board of Directors. You can read some brief EREN Project updates in this newsletter. Activities by the board of directors include:

- Discussions on strategies for updating our EREN Members database
- Discussions on developing a protocol for reviewing new EREN projects
- Plans for an EREN Brown Bag Lunch at the Ecological Society of America Meetings in Portland, OR, in August 2017

I will remind you that EREN will not hold a summer meeting in 2017 in order to regroup and develop our organization in our post-NSF funding phase. However, we remain active and committed to our mission of advancing science and education through engaging undergraduate faculty and students in collaborative ecological projects. I hope you are enjoying the signs of spring in your own forests, grasslands, and deserts across the country and the world, even as we move into the intense work phase of the spring semester.

Thank you for your continued interest in EREN, and look for more information from us in the coming weeks and months.

Laurie Anderson  
President, EREN Board of Directors

## II. EREN Updates

The **Milkweed Adaptation Project** is recruiting participants for an expanded pilot study in fall 2017 and is working on revising project protocols. A preproposal was submitted to NSF in January 2017 to fund the project. Lead Scientist: Emily Mohl, St. Olaf College ([mohl@stolaf.edu](mailto:mohl@stolaf.edu)).

The **Bird-window Collisions Project** is nearing the final stages of manuscript writing. Lead Scientists: Steve Hager, Augustana College ([stevehager@augustana.edu](mailto:stevehager@augustana.edu)) and Brad Cosentino, Hobard and William Smith College ([cosentino@hws.edu](mailto:cosentino@hws.edu)).

The **Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Impacts Study** has split into two related subprojects: the EAB Impacts Study focused on understory vegetation changes in forests affected by EAB and cVeg, which will address a range of understory vegetation questions. A total of seven institutions have contributed data so far and the project is seeking additional contributors. There are plans to work on a manuscript this summer. Lead Scientists: Ben Dolan, University of Findlay ([dolan@findlay.edu](mailto:dolan@findlay.edu)) and Jason Kilgore, Washington and Jefferson College ([jkilgore@washjeff.edu](mailto:jkilgore@washjeff.edu)).

**TurtlePop** is working on a manuscript with the intention of publishing it by the end of the semester. Two offshoot projects are also developing. In TurtleNest, undergraduate students at Elizabethtown College, Moravian College, Meredith College, and Wilmington College are testing the influence of local land use on predation of simulated turtle nests. Kristen Genet at Anoka Ramsey Community College is developing a teaching and research module on using imagery analysis to examine differences in the pattern and coloration of painted turtle plastrons. She is developing this project with Jeremy Wojdak (Radford University) who has a NSF grant to create a set of modules for an AIMS project (Analyzing Images to teach Math and Statistics). Anyone interested in learning more about this project should contact Kristen at [kristen.genet@anokaramsey.edu](mailto:kristen.genet@anokaramsey.edu). Lead Scientist: David Bowne, Elizabethtown College ([bowned@etown.edu](mailto:bowned@etown.edu)).

## II. EREN Updates

The **Earthworm Distribution Project** has been extended to increase sample size and geographic coverage. The project has 14 active collaborators in 10 states and new participants are welcome. Lead Scientist: Tim McCay, Colgate University ([tmccay@colgate.edu](mailto:tmccay@colgate.edu)).

The **DATIS** team has drafted a white paper with the intent of finishing it by May 2017. It is titled, "Strategies for incorporating long- term, distributed-network research projects into the undergraduate curriculum: Lessons from the EREN-DATIS project". Lead Scientists: Tracy Gartner, Carthage College, [tgartner@carthage.edu](mailto:tgartner@carthage.edu), Carolyn Thomas, Ferrum College, [cthomas@ferrum.edu](mailto:cthomas@ferrum.edu).

## III. Upcoming EREN Events

EREN has applied for a Brown Bag Lunch time slot at the Ecological Society of America annual meeting, August 6<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>. Stay tuned for more info.

The EREN Board of Directors will be holding a conference call May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017. Please contact [erenteam@gmail.com](mailto:erenteam@gmail.com) to suggest agenda items.

## IV. Featured EREN Member

Kristy Hopfensperger has been a member of EREN since 2012 and has enjoyed working with students on several of the EREN research projects including the Earthworm project, Permanent Forest Plot project, and Bird-Window Collision project. Currently, she is working with others on methods for the Garlic Mustard project. Kristy is the Director of the Environmental Science program and an Associate Professor in Biology at Northern Kentucky University.

Kristy has a research background in ecosystem ecology, wetland restoration, and plant community dynamics. Local projects include studies on relationships between invasive species and ecosystem properties, greenhouse gas fluxes in green infrastructure, and water quality issues in urban systems. Currently, she is on a sabbatical researching connections between wetland mitigation, ecosystem function, and policy. Mentoring students in undergraduate research is at the core of her research and is what led Kristy to academia.

Kristy enjoys incorporating real life research data and opportunities into her lecture and lab courses – especially those geared towards non-science majors. Some of her favorite teaching moments come from exposing these students to something new. In her role as the director of the ENV program, she loves the time she gets to spend advising and mentoring students as they navigate their way through their undergraduate degree. Working to shape the program into what will best serve the students has been a recent highlight for Kristy. An example is the creation and launch of a brand new B.A. in environmental science at NKU.