

# Friends of Acadia and Acadia Partners Announce Research Grant Winners

**Winter Harbor, ME. -- March 28, 2006.** Friends of Acadia and Acadia Partners for Science and Learning today announced the list of proposals that will receive funding for scientific research in Acadia National Park over the coming year. Five of the proposals will be supported through the LL Bean Acadia Research Fellowship program. An additional two proposals will receive funding from Acadia Partners.

The winning proposals were selected from a pool of 23 applications that Acadia National Park's Schoodic Education and Research Center (SERC) received in response to the program announcement last month. Jim McKenna, NPS coordinator at SERC, said "We were extremely pleased and even a little surprised at both the number of proposals we received and their quality. For a program in its first year, where researchers aren't planning ahead for a submission, this is a very strong response. The research fellowship program is clearly tapping into a lot of talent and into a real need."

The selection process involved a panel of research scientists and NPS resource managers, along with representatives of Friends of Acadia and Acadia Partners. Selection was based on the technical and scientific merit of each proposal, the significance of the research to Park management issues or resources, demonstrated ability of the investigator to carry out the proposed research, and availability of other financial and in-kind support for the project.

Researchers and projects receiving funding include:

**Natalie L. Cleavitt, Cornell University.** "Bryophytes and lichens in select habitats of Acadia National Park: Does substratum chemistry explain distribution?" Examines the importance of substratum chemistry for communities of mosses, liverworts, and lichens on cliffs and trees in Acadia National Park and expands the baseline inventory of these organisms in the Park. The research will increase understanding about management of vulnerable habitats and will amplify public appreciation for and enjoyment of these often over-looked organisms.

**Holly A. Ewing and Kathleen C. Weathers, Bates College and the Institute for Ecosystem Studies.** "Soil as a mediator between atmospheric deposition and streamwater." Soil sampling to collect inputs to a large-scale ecosystem model, calibrating the model and improving our understanding of the potential response of Acadia National Park to long-term atmospheric deposition.

**Amanda Little, University of Minnesota, Duluth.** "*Sphagnum* in Acadia National Park." An inventory characterizing the diversity of *Sphagnum* species present in ANP, describing the dynamics of *Sphagnum* moss communities in response to beaver and human activity, and establishing a baseline of *Sphagnum* species composition and abundance for future studies on the impacts of air pollution on *Sphagnum* in Acadia National Park.

**Katherine McPhee, University of Maine.** "The significance of relationships and invasive species: the European fire ant and *Homopterans*." Research into the relationship between aphids and the invasive European fire ant, looking at the impact of the invasive ant on aphid populations, including whether there is a shift in aphid species.

**Sarah J. Nelson, University of Maine, Senator George J. Mitchell Center for Environmental and Watershed Research.** "How much is enough? Developing a citizen-based monitoring plan for mercury in gauged watershed streams at Acadia National Park." Continues the long-term record of mercury data in paired research watersheds at Acadia National Park while determining the appropriate timing and frequency of sampling to capture the essential data used to calculate mercury budgets in the watersheds and developing a long-term monitoring plan for mercury in these watersheds that includes high school students as citizen scientists.

**Aimee Phillippi, Unity College.** "Monitoring the abundance and distribution of the invasive Asian shore crab, *Hemigrapsus sanguineus*, on the Schoodic Peninsula and its effects on intertidal crab and bivalve populations." *Hemigrapsus sanguineus* (Asian shore crab) is an invasive species that is a potential threat to area ecosystems and to the shellfish industry. This study quantifies the current Asian shore crab population at its present northern boundary, the current populations of other intertidal crab species, and the bivalve populations in the same areas. The project will also develop public outreach materials.

**Nishanta Rajakaruna, College of the Atlantic.** "Conservation Biology of Rare Plants of Acadia National Park: A proposal to conduct ecological and physiological studies to better inform rare plant monitoring and management protocols." Provides information on the localities and size of extant populations in ANP for five rare species of plants. The completed project will recommend monitoring protocols and management responses for the five species and will provide much-needed biological and ecological data currently lacking for these species.

Stephanie Clement, Conservation Director for Friends of Acadia, said, "LL Bean funded this research fellowship program with the goal of encouraging research that can have a direct impact on what we know about the Park and on our ability to preserve this wonderful place."

Speaking to the value of the research to the Park, Denny O'Brien, Executive Director at Acadia Partners, said, "When we saw the quality of the work that people wanted to do, it was instantly clear that it would be a shame to fund only five of these proposals. Supporting science for the Park is our mission, and we are very pleased to participate. We thank LL Bean and Friends of Acadia for getting the ball rolling."

For more information contact Stephanie Clement at Friends of Acadia (207-288-3340) or Bill Zoellick at Acadia Partners (207-963-2023), or see the Acadia Partners website at [www.acadiapartners.org](http://www.acadiapartners.org).

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