

## William A. Niering 1924 - 1999

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### Things to checkout

- Spring Meeting in Portland, ME.
- Notes from the ERF Meeting
- Slightly new Editor, Slightly new Look
- NEERS new web presence
- Marine Animals of NE North America—Book Review

William A. Niering, Lucretia L. Allyn Professor of Botany at Connecticut College, died suddenly on 30 August 1999 at the age of 75. He collapsed back-stage shortly after delivering a lecture to incoming freshmen on citizenship and environmental stewardship, while his audience continued a standing ovation. At Connecticut College Bill Niering was a gifted, inspiring teacher whose classes have been over-subscribed for more than 20 years. He also served on almost every major committee and innumerable *ad hoc* task forces. He was Connecticut College Arboretum Director for 23 years, Botany Department Chair for one, and acting President for a semester. He was also our environmental conscience.

Bill Niering was known to most NEERS members for his work on tidal wetlands, both their ecology and conservation. Beginning in the mid 1950s, he authored numerous papers, bulletins, and popular books and articles on tidal marshes. He also was a key player in the passage of Connecticut's Tidal Wetlands Protection Act in 1969 and has testified at U. S. Congress and Connecticut legislative hearings on protection of coastal waters and wetlands.

Bill Niering's experience and expertise,

however, went far beyond coastal wetlands. He was productive scientist, an active and effective conservationist on a broad range of issues, and a pioneer in developing the disciplines of conservation biology and restoration ecology. Alone and with numerous colleagues he published extensively in the peer reviewed literature while teaching undergraduates full time. His first paper appeared in 1951; the latest, still in press will bring the total to 78 or 79. He also authored nearly 100 scientific reports, short notes and bulletin articles, over two dozen book reviews and journal editorials, on top of six books aimed at a non-science audience.

The breadth of this published work is rare and impressive. The revolution he helped foment in our understanding of biotic change was based on his early work on vegetation dynamics in the Eastern Deciduous Forest – a biome on which he continued to publish for the next 48 years. His papers on the ecology of Pacific atolls are considered classics, forming the foundation literature for a large part of what we now call ethnobotany and a 1963 *SCIENCE* article with Bob Whittaker on Saguaro cactus of Arizona's Sonoran Desert won Ecological Society of America's Mercer Award

for the best paper published that year. He went on to write eight more papers on vegetation ecology of the southwest and when he died was working on the ninth, based on 1999 re-surveys of his initial plots. He also published on spruce-fir forest in Minnesota, vegetation studies from Australia and dune restoration in South Africa.

Bill Niering was an inspired and inspiring teacher, a scientist of extraordinary vision and breadth – and a scholar whose research and writing gave powerful credibility to his work in the field of conservation.

The Connecticut College Arboretum has posted a web page honoring Bill Niering. It includes more extensive information on Bill as scientist, teacher, and citizen of the planet. The URL is <http://www.conncoll.edu/ccrec/greennet/arbo/niering/memorial.html>.

## Spring Meeting to be held in Portland, ME.

You probably have received the invitation already, but in case you haven't or if you have already lost it, be aware that the Spring NEERS meeting will be held in Portland, ME. The meeting will be jointly hosted by the University of Southern Maine and ENSR Marine and Coastal Resource Center, Woods Hole, MA. As always, the meeting begins Thursday the 18th of May with the traditional beer blast at a non-traditional time, 5-7:00. This will be held at the Eastland Hotel. The blast will be preceded by a "narrated" tour of the Fore River Estuary, Portland Harbor, and Casco Bay. The cost of this trip will be \$10/person. We need at least 20 people for it to go, so get out your checkbooks, people. After the blast, Neersians will be allowed to stagger, stumble,

trip, or fall down the hill to the Old Port area for dinner. Reservations are on your own. If you are planning on giving a paper and haven't gotten an abstract in yet, you are probably too late. You still might want to check with Pat Kerner ([pkerner@uconnvm.uconn.edu](mailto:pkerner@uconnvm.uconn.edu)) just in case there have been some cancellations. The accommodations for the meeting will be in the Eastland Hotel. Contact them by the 25th for the special room rates. Their numbers are: (207)-775-5411 and FAX (207)-775-1066.

Following the Saturday morning session, there will be another field trip, this one to the Shipyard brewery. This will be a one-half hour tour, followed by tasting and

"perhaps" lunch. I never had "perhaps" for lunch, so I'm really looking forward to that tour.

On site organizers for this meeting are Mike Mazurkiewicz and Terry Theodose at the University of Southern Maine. If you have any questions their phone and email particulars are:

207-780-4262 [mazurkie@maine.edu](mailto:mazurkie@maine.edu)

207-780-4074 [theodose@maine.edu](mailto:theodose@maine.edu)



*Message from your President*

Some sure signs of spring: *Spartina* (and *Phragmites*) shoots are starting to green up, snails and amphipods are moving on the marsh, a phytoplankton bloom will soon appear as a spike on total chlorophyll graphs, sediment metabolism rates are beginning to increase, estuarine scientists are checking tides and scheduling field work for the next few months, and another NEERS meeting will soon be upon us.

I hope that you are planning to attend - and that you have taken advantage of our new on-line registration! I represented NEERS at the recent ERF Governing Board meeting in Seattle and it was clear to this unbiased participant that NEERS remains one of the stronger affiliated societies. This judgment is strongly supported by everything we know already about our upcoming meeting. Without members willing to present their work at our meetings NEERS would cease to exist, so congratulations and great thanks to ourselves; together we submitted 40 (!) abstracts (28 talks, 12 posters and a total of 20 student presentations) for NEERS Spring 2000. Meeting hosts Mike Mazurkiewicz and Terry Theodore from the University of Southern Maine and program chair Pat Kremer from the University of Connecticut also deserve great credit for organizing both the logistics and the scientific presentations. The meeting agenda and the abstracts are now posted on our NEERS web site - a month before the meeting itself!

On-line registrations and abstract submissions and timely information postings do not happen by magic. Thanks and credit here to our web masters, Ron Rozsa and Larry Spencer. To really appreciate the quality of our site, visit those of the other ERF affiliates after you review the meeting agenda and abstracts.

A full complete report on ERF Board meeting actions will be presented at the Spring Business Meeting. The place and future of the Federation's journal, ESTUARIES, was a major topic of discussion, however, and some points raised deserve a brief mention here. The next few years will be critical for scholarly publications and ESTUARIES, like other society journals, faces a variety of challenges. Electronic publication and distribution of scientific information is already here and growing rapidly. Libraries are canceling journals in response to rapidly rising journal prices charged by for-profit publishing houses. Commercial publishers also compete with society journals quality papers as well as subscription dollars.

The editors and board are aggressively working to see that ESTUARIES will thrive in this new electronic landscape. While they are looking a few years out, however, there is also a lot of immediate good news as well. The new managing editor has greatly streamlined publication logistics, saving both money and time. In addition, ESTUARIES is now published six times a year. One happy result of these changes is that time between acceptance of a manuscript and its appearing in print now averages less than six months. The journal is now available to members on-line and in that format includes a searchable data base, and the CD of all back issues of ESTUARIES and CHESAPEAKE SCIENCE will be out in May.

One last meeting note, we have not had this many student presentations for a while and we will need JUDGES! Please say "Yes" if you are asked to be a judge; we need a full complement in place by 8:30 Friday morning. Even better, volunteer ahead of time! Contact Mike, Terry, or me. Thank you!

*Message from the editor*

When I published this newsletter last Summer, I promised a newsletter in the Fall. Well, Fall has come and gone and no newsletter. Why, might you ask? Well, in that same newsletter I asked the members for articles, news,

even bad jokes. My mail box, both email and snail mail, has remained empty of submissions. If I don't get news, then I can't publish newsletters. Perhaps this go around, my plea will not fall on deaf ears. Perhaps the next

time I check my mail boxes, I'll be overwhelmed by submissions. Doubt it, but one can always hope.

Big things in this issue are the Spring meeting and notes on our changed presence.

See you in Portland,  
Larry

*Book Review: What was that odd creature you collected at Sandy Hook?*

Pollock, Leiland W. 1998. *A practical guide to the marine animals of Northeastern North America*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

This volume which for many years was only available in "mimeographed" form has finally made it into the world of formal print. Leland covers the creatures of northeastern North America in 17 chapters and one appendix.

Chapter 1 discusses the morphology of marine animals; are they soft and sheet-like, are they cylindrical, are they attached, etc. Chapters 2-6 then delve into the animals somewhat on the basis of form, function, and location. The remaining chapters take a more standard phylogenetic approach beginning with the sponges and ending with the chordates. Each chapter has tons of illustrations and keys. The keys are somewhat

atypical from most keys that you might use in that each is associated with a diagram, some couplets (often triads or quartets of characters) and a table. To be truthful, I didn't have anything to identify at the time I wrote this review, so I am somewhat ambivalent as to whether this approach is better or worse than the standard key. Of course, everyone knows that a key is primarily only to confirm what you already know!!

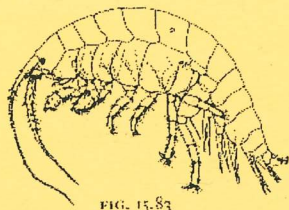
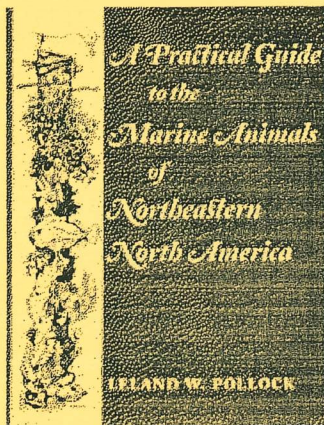


FIG. 15.83





## WEB NEWS

At the spring 1999 meeting, the web committee was charged with revamping the website to improve the ease of navigation and expand the content. Two different versions of general format, frames and no-frames are being tested to evaluate Society members preferences. Major additions to the website include the constitution, history of NEERS compiled by Alan Young, New England tidal wetland restoration bibliography and the geolibrary providing links to geographic data for New England. The production of a regional tidal wetland bibliography was an objective established at the spring '97 symposium held in Wells, Maine.

The website was moved from the Plymouth State College server to an new internet provider thus providing all web committee members access for editing and updating, but more importantly server software to support the use of forms. In preparation for the Spring 2000 meeting, an abstract submission form and preregistration form have been created and activated. The abstract form, mod-

eled after the ERF form created by Jim Hagy - the ERF webmaster, was put to the supreme test on Friday, March 31, the deadline for spring abstracts. When a form is submitted, the data are added to an html file and a text file, the latter is used to import the data into a spread sheet and a copy of the data are emailed directly to the Program Chair. This has the potential to greatly simplify the development of the final hardcopy abstract document for meetings and it's web counterpart.

It is too early to gage the success of the preregistration form since the deadline is several weeks away. A membership registration form has been created but has not yet been put online. A draft form has also been developed for the submission of job postings. The form creates a web page and each new posting is added to the bottom of the page thus automating the process and reducing demands on the web committee.

With the help of several individuals, an electronic copy of the elusive meeting guidance document was found. The document has been web-enabled but has not been posted as some key revisions are

needed and hopefully the Portland meeting organizers will have some constructive suggestions to make it Y2K compliant.

Meetings abstracts and announcements are maintained on the website. If you have the good fortune of volunteering to organize a NEERS meeting, the meeting announcements are an indispensable source of information and ideas.

In less than a year, the form and the content of the NEERS website has greatly surpassed that of our affiliate societies. Watch the website for the final announcement of Spring 2000 meeting and activities in the Portland area.

### Update:

The website now has a complete listing of presentations and abstracts. See who is going to talk about what even before they do it.

## NEERS Achievement Award

Fred Short, on behalf of the NEERS governing board, would like to announce that at the Spring Meeting the society will award the first NEERS Achievement Award "for significant contributions to estuarine science, research, and education. If you've been doing things in the estuarine

sciences, you had better come to the Spring meeting. For all you know, you might be the first recipient and I'm sure you would hate to miss having your photo in the next NEERS newsletter.

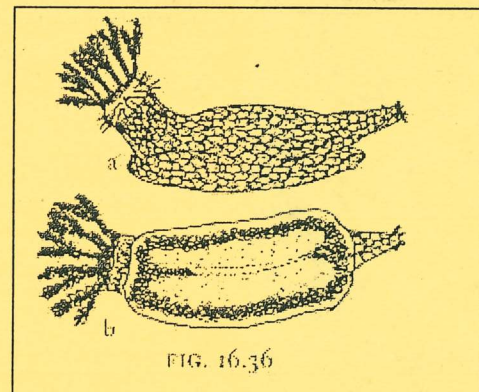


FIG. 16.36

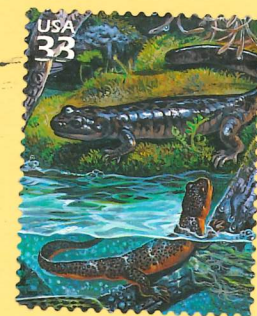
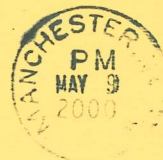
This and the diagram on the preceding page are just two of the many pen and ink drawings found in Lealand Pollock's book.



## New England Estuarine Research Society

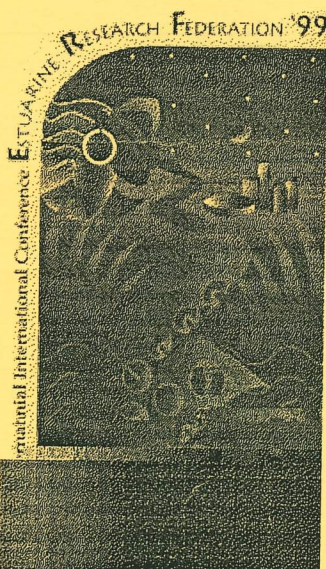
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WE'RE ON THE WEB AT  
[WWW.NEERS.ORG](http://WWW.NEERS.ORG)

Time and tide wait for no person



NEW ORLEANS

"Where THE River Meets the Sea"

## ERF Biennial Meeting In New Orleans

The 15th Biennial International Conference on estuarine research was held in New Orleans, LA. The meeting was titled, "Where the River Meets the Sea". Thematic sessions included:

- Eutrophication
- River Dominated Coastal Margins
- Value and Assessment of Estuaries
- Comparative Processes of Temperate and Tropical Estuaries

Fred Short, past president of NEERS was there and I'll take

his word, that the meetings were excellent. Fred participated in a presentation/workshop on his favorite flowering plant. If you ask him, he'll tell that it was the best session of the meetings. Was hoping to get some more news on the meetings, but that's all that I got that was "fit to print". Is really true that New Orleans can't hold a candle to East Machias for dance halls, Fred?

## DUES NOTICE

Pam didn't ask me to do this, but I'm going to do it anyway. Are you up to date on your dues? If you think this society can keep going without your dues, then you probably think that Jessie Ventura is a wrestler who wears a pink boa. Smarten up. Jessie's now a politician and he's looking for your contributions as much as we're seeking your dues. If you have any questions, please, don't hesitate to call Pam at 508-457-7900 or e-mail her at [parnofsky@ensr.com](mailto:parnofsky@ensr.com). She'll give you the skinny as to how far behind you are. Jessie?, for get him. Garrison Keeler's got him under his thumb!!