

### President's Column

Stephen Hale

#### The little estuary in the middle of the Atlantic Continental Shelf

Great Salt Pond is an island of estuarine water on Block Island, which sits out on the continental shelf because Wisconsin-era glaciers left a high spot on a terminal moraine. Then the glaciers retreated and the sea rose and washed around and through the high spot but not over it and formed two islands. Later, currents and longshore drift connected the two islands with long sandy beaches that enclosed and created the Pond. Rain fell on the upland parts of the island and dropped down into the porous soil and came out in the Pond and created a salinity gradient between the fresh water in the southeast corner and the saltwater elsewhere.

The story of Great Salt Pond is a saga of the breach in the western beach battered open by storms, then closed again by the inexorable drift of sand. Salinity in the Pond was low when the breach was closed and rainwater filled up the Pond and then high when the ocean forced its way in. The mix of species, with different salinity preferences, changed each time this happened. In 1895, a permanent breachway was installed so now most of the Pond stays salty all the time. Great Salt Pond is a coastal lagoon, or salt pond, that receives a bit of freshwater in Harbor Pond and Trim's Pond in the southeast corner. That freshwater supports stands of native *Phragmites*, as well as the invasive one. There's not another estuary on the island.

Few studies have been conducted in the Pond. Not much has been quantified about physical circulation, residence time, freshwater input, water or sediment chemistry, habitats, salt marshes, sediment types, phytoplankton, zooplankton, benthos, or primary and secondary production. In the summer of 2008, NEERSians **Varekamp** and **Thomas** took sediment cores to study geochemistry and benthic forams.

(President's Column cont. pg 2)

### Spring 2012 Meeting Plymouth, MA, April 12-14

The Spring 2012 meeting brought NEERS to Plymouth, MA, where our NEERS President-Elect, **John Brawley**, and Secretary, **Sara Grady**, hosted us on their home turf. The meeting was held at the John Carver Inn, just uphill from historic Plymouth Rock and the Mayflower.

Thursday featured a symposium on Shellfish Aquaculture, Restoration, and Conservation, and covered topics from economic and social implications of aquaculture to the impact of disease and ocean acidification on shellfish. The symposium was followed by the NEERS welcoming social and dinner out in Plymouth.

On Friday, talks focused on nutrients, biogeochemistry, coastal vegetated communities, and estuarine fauna. We learned at the business meeting that this meeting broke attendance records for a non-joint meeting with 170 people (coming in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, Hull [142] and Eastham [140], respectively, in Spring 2006 and Spring 2005. Massachusetts meetings are popular!) NEERS also decided to provide a travel award for a student to attend the CERF international meeting in Mar de Plata, Argentina, in Fall 2012.

The poster session was lively and full, with a potentially record-setting 31 posters. On Friday night, the banquet was

held at the hotel and included a presentation by **Marshall Pregnull** on his trip to coastal Patagonia, as well as awards, as usual, for the best graduate and undergraduate posters and oral presentations.

The winners were:

- Warren Prize (Undergrad Poster) - **Benjamin Chebot**, Dept. of Environmental Studies, Bates College. "Annual timing of growth line deposition and comparative growth analysis of modern and archaic *Mya arenaria* from the Penobscot Bay region, Maine"
- Rankin Prize (Undergrad Oral) - **Kayla Smith**, Marine Science Department, U. of New England. "Evaluating the Saco Bay estuarine system as a nursery ground for commercially valuable and ecologically important fish species"
- Dean Prize (Graduate Poster) - **Troy Hill**, School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Yale University. "Sediment flux between an urban salt marsh and Long Island Sound"
- Ketchum Prize (Graduate Oral) - **Shelley Brown**, URI. "Hypoxia in Narragansett Bay: A driver for a hidden nitrogen positive feedback loop? Part II: The genetic evidence"

(Spring Meeting cont. pg 3)

# NEERS News

## Summer 2012



NEW ENGLAND  
ESTUARINE RESEARCH SOCIETY

<http://www.neers.org>

NEERS is an affiliate society of the  
Coastal and Estuarine Research  
Federation (CERF)

<http://www.erf.org>

### JOIN NEERS

Student dues are \$5.00 and regular dues  
are \$20.00. To register, see

<http://www.neers.org/main/join.htm>

### Team NEERS

**President - Stephen Hale**, US EPA Atlantic  
Ecology Division

**Past-President - Pam Morgan**, Univ. of New  
England

**President-Elect - John Brawley**, Saquish  
Scientific, LLC

**Secretary - Sara P. Grady**, Mass. Bays Program

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**Student Representative - Leanna Heffner**,  
Univ. of RI Graduate School of  
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**Historian - Alan M. Young**, Salem State  
University

**Newsletter Editor - Sara P. Grady**, Mass. Bays  
Program

**Webmaster - Jamie Vaudrey**, Univ. of  
Connecticut

## President's Column (cont.)

**Pratt and Hale** sampled benthic macroinvertebrates during the 2010 Bioblitz of the Rhode Island Natural History Survey. The Pond slowly gives up its secrets: shellfish middens reveal the life of the Island's first humans; rumors of buried pirate treasure rouse fortune-hunters. At our fall meeting, we will be able to gaze down upon this little estuary from the porch of Spring House.

### Meetings is what we do

*Spring 2012.* **Sara Grady** and **John Brawley** ran a terrific meeting in Plymouth, Massachusetts. The only thing askew was the town's slogan "America's Hometown." The truth of the matter, if we accept the Bering Land Bridge hypothesis, is that the first humans entered somewhere in Alaska.

*Fall 2012.* The dynamic quartet of **Veronica Berounsky**, **Walter Berry**, **Charlie Roman**, and **MJ James-Pirri**—joined by newcomer **Autumn Oczkowski**—is at it again: igniting another meeting on Block Island. It will be October 11-13. Current excitement on and around Block Island includes proposed offshore wind farms and the resulting Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Plan, with associated studies in Block Island and Rhode Island Sounds. The next time **Berounsky et al.** get us back to Block Island, we may be using power from wind, rather than fossil fuel, to run our projector.

*Spring 2013.* **Bev Johnson**, **Sue Adamowicz**, and others are making plans for a meeting in Portland, Maine.

Grad students bewildered by scientific meetings may wish to consult "Field Guide to Scientific Conferences: An Ecological View" in the July *Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America* ([www.esajournals.org/toc/ebul/current](http://www.esajournals.org/toc/ebul/current)), p. 223-228.

### Weaving a new web

Many thanks to Webmaster **Jamie Vaudrey** for a prodigious reorganization of the website. Check it out at [www.neers.org](http://www.neers.org).

### Not for profit

NEERS has been reinstated as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization again, with an effective date of May 15, 2010. We won't have to pay taxes on purchases and any donations to our meetings and student accounts are tax-deductible for the donors. A big thanks to our current and former treasurers **Cindy Delpapa** and **Ed Dettmann** for sweating and sorting this all out.

## Election reminder

Would you like to join the ranks of the amazing people listed to the left and their predecessors? Elections will be held this fall, so throw your hat in the ring or nominate someone for President, Secretary, or Treasurer!



## Spring Meeting (cont.)

Niering travel awards were given to **Ryan Kingston**, **Troy Hill**, and **Leanna Heffner**. Woods Hole Sea Grant travel awards were given to **Lindsay Brin** and **Shelley Brown**.

After the banquet, NEERSians headed downhill to T Bones Roadhouse for some dancing and to find out what the advertised “Minute to Win It” involved. After some confusion involving underage undergraduates and finding the mood unsatisfactory for dancing and typical NEERS fun, the crowd moved down to the harbor to dance at “Cabby Shack”. NEERS befriended and delighted the DJ, who took napkins full of requests. Due to his enthusiastic dancing, presence at the first talk the next morning, and much overdue recognition of service to NEERS, the Stickleback Award was given to **Marshall Pregnall**.

The meeting concluded on Saturday with a continuation of the session on coastal vegetated communities and a session on estuarine assessment and management, and then attendees had the option to go birding at Duxbury Beach with **Robert Buchsbaum** or attend a tour of restoration sites along Town Brook led by Plymouth Environmental Manager David Gould.

Thank you to our local hosts for another wonderful NEERS meeting. We are headed back to Block Island this fall, followed by a return to Maine for a meeting in Portland in Spring 2013.

## Spring Meeting Photos



Sara Grady & Cindy Delpapa check Debbie Rutecki's registration (Photo by S. Hale)



Ten NEERS Presidents (Photo by V. Berounsky)



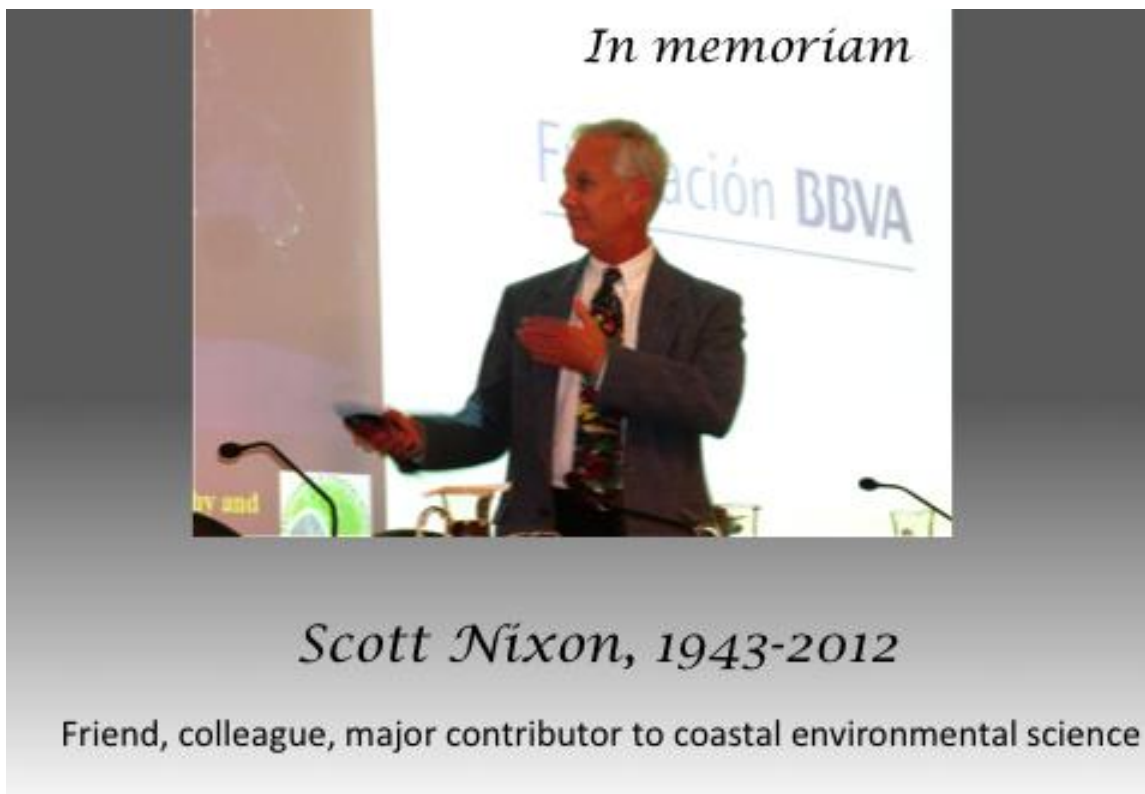
Sr. Paoella and students from Sacred Heart Academy with their posters (Photo by S. Hale)



President Stephen Hale with student award winners (L-R, Shelley Brown, Troy Hill, Kayla Smith; Benjamin Chebot not pictured) (Photo by V. Berounsky)

# Remembering Scott Nixon

Scott Nixon passed away May 21, 2012. Below are contributions from NEERS members in his memory.



Slide from talk at the ECSA meeting in Venice – Ivan Valiela, Marine Biological Laboratory

## A brief review of a full life cut too short: Scott W. Nixon Veronica M. Berounsky, URI/GSO

The oceanographic and coastal ecology community is strong and close so by now you have probably heard the sad news that we have had a death in the family: Dr. Scott W. Nixon died of an apparent heart attack on the evening of Monday, May 21, 2012. On the previous Friday, May 18, Scott had attended the GSO graduation and reception (below) and many of us talked to him there. Despite some previous heart problems, he seemed to be in good health, was working actively as usual, and his death is still a shock to us all.



Scott Nixon contemplates the shoreline while I take a break during a sampling routine aboard a Malaysian trawler.

Scott came to GSO in September of 1969 as a research associate, having been recruited by GSO faculty member Nelson Marshall and they worked together on several projects, including one in Malaysia (left). GSO Dean John Knauss saw Scott's potential and made him an assistant professor as soon as Scott received his Ph.D. in Botany (Ecology) from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1970. Scott was a couple months shy of 27 at the time! Soon Scott accepted his first Ph.D. candidate, Patricia Kremer, and then his next student Jim Kremer. The Master of Science's candidate, Stephen Hale, NEERS president, was Scott's first student to receive a degree in 1974 and then both of the Kremers received their Ph.D. degrees in 1975.



## Remembering Scott Nixon, cont.

### A brief review of a full life cut too short: Scott W. Nixon by V. Berounsky, cont.

In July of 1975 Scott received tenure at GSO and was promoted to associate professor. In July of 1980, Scott was promoted to full professor. Scott remained at GSO for the rest of his life but he continued to take on new roles. In March of 1984 he became Coordinator of the Rhode Island Sea Grant College Program and in 1986 Scott became the Director and continued in that position until 2000. He often mentioned that one of the best parts of being Sea Grant Director was being able to fund people to investigate an idea so they could gather evidence for a larger proposal. In 2004 he was appointed UNESCO/Cousteau Chair in Coastal Ecology and Global Assessment and was still in that position at the time of his death. In Scott's own words, his area of specialization throughout his professional life was coastal ecology, with emphasis on estuaries, lagoons, and wetlands; ecosystem-level experiments using mesocosms; comparative and historical ecology; and numerical simulation models. Despite, his untimely death, Scott was an active and vibrant member of the local and international scientific community for over four decades!

Scott was respected worldwide for his knowledge and his studies of how coastal and estuarine ecosystems work. He investigated ecosystems that were as far away as Kenya and Malaysia and as close as Rhode Island. He studied or served on the panels investigating ecosystems and their problems that were as varied the lagoons of Venice, the restoration of the Everglades, algal blooms in the Potomac Estuary, the fisheries of Egypt's Nile, and nutrients in the Massachusetts Bay Wastewater Outfall. He was a member of the National Research Council (NRC)'s Ocean Studies Board, a national associate of the National Academies of Science; the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography, and was very active in the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation, previously serving as co-editor-in-chief of their journal, *Estuaries and Coasts* for many years. Narragansett Bay and the RI Coastal Ponds (Lagoons) were his professional "home base" and currently he served on the Scientific Advisory Committee of the RI Bays, Rivers, and Watersheds Coordination Team and the RI EPSCoR Steering Committee.

In addition to his huge amount of research and numerous professional talks, Scott also taught official classes at GSO. These were not your standard lecture classes, but were discussion-based and usually required the students to research and present a scientific paper or research topic. Scott asked probing questions and also chimed in with facts and knowledge about whatever ecosystem was under discussion. For the past several years, Scott and Candace Oviatt co-taught a course on the "Ecology of Narragansett Bay". As part of that, there was a field trip on April 5, 2012 to the Fields Point Wastewater Treatment Facility to help understand inputs to the Bay. The photo on the left is of this class, taken underground in the "pump room" where Providence's newly completed 3 mile long combined sewer overflow (CSO) tunnel ends and where water is pumped to the facility. In the photo on the right, Scott posed at the very end of the tunnel and at the time we joked that he might need it to add it to one of his talks about the Bay and being at "the end of the line".



## Remembering Scott Nixon, cont.

### A brief review of a full life cut too short: Scott W. Nixon by V. Berounsky, cont.

Over the years, Scott gave numerous talks ranging from “Seminars over Beer (SOB)” in the Mosby Center at GSO, to invited talks at institutions and many talks at the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) and other professional societies, to this past April when he was the plenary speaker at the International Association for Landscape Ecology, and he gave what we now know was his last scientific talk. In 1992, he gave a lecture called “Could Verrazzano See His Toes?” when he received the B.H. Ketchum Award for outstanding coastal research from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Scott updated this landmark talk, discussing the impact of historical and present nutrient inputs to Narragansett Bay and the resulting water clarity in the Bay, and presented it in April. As always, Scott took a complex scientific issue and discussed it in terms understandable to most everyone.

Scott was my major professor and served also as such for 36 other GSO students and four present students. He was on the committee of many GSO students, and mentored one post doc and a slew of lab technicians. I actually started in the Nixon lab in 1979 as then-student Jonathan Garber’s lab tech and I remember how inspiring Scott was. Scott continued to be a source of advice, scientific expertise, and “whole picture thinking” for many of us through his last day in the office. I am tremendously grateful that I had the opportunity to work with Scott and his entire lab. Scott was an active member of NEERS since the 1970’s. He gave numerous talks at NEERS meetings and encouraged many students to give talks and posters. Scott’s students all became NEERS members, some served on the NEERS Executive Board, and three have been NEERS Presidents (Steve Hale, Fred Short, and myself) and one AERS President (Mark Brush). In May of 2000 he received the NEERS Achievement Award for significant contributions to estuarine science, research, and education.

A memorial service was held in honor of Scott on a brilliant sunny morning, Friday June 8th, at The Towers, a historic stone building that spans Ocean Road in Narragansett, RI. It was attended by approximately 200 people, and we could look out over Narragansett Bay as we listened to speakers talk about different aspects of Scott’s life. The morning’s schedule was introduced and moderated by Stephen Olsen and speakers included Scott’s son, Carter Nixon, speaking on Scott as a father, Wally Fulweiler speaking on Scott as an advisor, Michael Pilson speaking on Scott as a friend and GSO colleague, and Walter Boynton speaking on Scott as a friend and colleague beyond GSO. This was followed by stories of Scott by anyone who wished to speak. The talks were a blend of memories and humor that helped us appreciate how full Scott’s life was. Scott also had an active life outside of work. For example, he designed his second home in Nova Scotia, loved to walk on trails and paths (particularly along stone walls), and was also a doting grandfather to 3 granddaughters! Scott’s daughter, Beth Nixon, provided the perfect ending to the memorial with a reading from Thoreau’s Walden.

There will be several opportunities to continue to celebrate Scott’s life. At GSO, there will be a scientific symposium in August 2013 in honor of Scott’s 70th birthday. There will be a symposium in honor of Scott on this coming Oct. 11 at the New England Estuarine Research Society (NEERS) meeting on Block Island, and several dedicated sessions at CERF 2013 in November in San Diego, CA.

To honor Scott’s lifelong and broad contributions to the knowledge and stewardship of our coasts and estuaries, his family asks that contribution be made to the Scott W. Nixon Memorial Fund at the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF). See [www.erf.org](http://www.erf.org) for more details. Scott was a longtime supporter, member and leader of CERF. To honor his service, CERF will use all funds contributed in memory of him to support student participation in CERF meetings and events, such as its biennial conferences. Any student, presenting or not presenting, will be eligible to apply for a scholarship to attend any CERF conference, workshop or other such meeting. Alternatively, contributions can be made to [Trustom Pond National Wildlife Refuge](http://www.fishwildlife.org), a place Scott loved to walk.

A website has been put together by Scott's family and students for information and tributes:

<http://scottwnixon.blogspot.com>.

Also, the GSO website has a section on Scott: <http://www.gso.uri.edu/narragansett-bay-campus/passing-scott-nixon>.

As one of the speakers mentioned at Scott’s memorial service, there is a folk saying that “you are not truly gone until no one speaks your name anymore”. Because of Scott’s remarkable intellect and willingness to share his expertise with others, that will not happen for many, many years – if at all.

## Remembering Scott Nixon, cont.

### A brief review of a full life cut too short: Scott W. Nixon by V. Berounsky, cont.

The statement below is from Alan Desbonnet, Interim Director of RI Sea Grant, and I think one cannot better describe Scott and his influence so I include this verbatim:

“Early in his career at GSO, Scott pushed the envelope of science – using Narragansett Bay as the laboratory – by employing mesocosms to measure respiration and production at a community level. This began a long and detailed exploration of Narragansett Bay, particularly with regard to nutrients and their impacts on Bay ecology. While his findings helped define our understanding of marine ecosystems locally, Scott applied his knowledge at broader scales, too, exploring marine ecosystems around the world, comparing and contrasting them to shape a global view that he then used to challenge himself to think in new ways and to challenge the scientific dogma of the times. The list of significant accomplishments and accolades for Scott would go on for pages, though he would humbly tell us they were based on nothing more than the observations of a modest, inquisitive marine ecologist who was building upon the work of others who really deserve the credit.”

Scott also was the director of Rhode Island Sea Grant from 1984 through 2000, during which time he built a robust yet diverse program, all the while continuing a tradition of excellence in scientific research. Rhode Island Sea Grant’s indebtedness for his building and leaving behind a rock-solid organization focused on making marine research understandable and usable in the decision-making process goes beyond what words can express. Because of his thoughtful and challenging nature, Scott played a significant role in the lives of many, many graduate students who have since gone on to grand careers in the sciences, where they continue his tradition of exploring new avenues of thought and understanding. At his passing, a gaping hole is rent in the field of estuarine ecology; the void left here in Rhode Island is tremendous.”

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### All I need to know in life, I learned from Dr. Scott W. Nixon

By: Courtney Schmidt, Lindsey Fields, Leanna Heffner, and Brita Jessen, URI/GSO

With the passing of Scott Nixon, our adviser, mentor, friend, and confidant, we have been left with a large hole in our hearts and lives. He was our “Fearless Leader.” As Scott’s most recent students, we were privileged to know a man who not only loved science, but worked tirelessly for his graduate students, retreated to his vacation home in Nova Scotia to think, made it home for the nightly news, and spent as much time as possible with his children and grandchildren. Below are some of the lessons and bits of wisdom he bestowed upon us...

On graduate students:

- *Hiring grad students...* “You bet on the horse and hope the cart arrives.”
- *Going to his office for help...* Scott prided himself at distinguishing us by our individual gaits and the noise our shoes made on the floor.
- *On assistantships...* “We have to keep you watered and fed.” (Are we plants?)
- *Speaking of watering and feeding...* Scott would walk into our offices to find us eating (his “grazing graduate students”); if we wanted him, we would start snacking and he would magically appear.
- *On working from home...* “It’s OK. I know when you work from home you’re just watching soaps and eating bon - bons.” (Seriously, grad students do nothing but eat!)

On science:

- *Science...* is “complex and variable.”
- *Efficiency...* “Land the plane!” Scott would always advise us to get things done so we could take on more challenges. This meant doing good science the first time instead of bad science repeatedly.
- *Frustrating data...* “Walk away.” If we could not make a story of our data, he would advise us to take some time away from it.
- *Frustrating people...* “Some people believe science is a contact sport; not many, but some, so prepare yourself.” Scott always made sure we were prepared for anything challenging, even challenging people.



## Remembering Scott Nixon, cont.

All I need to know in life, I learned from Dr. Scott W. Nixon, cont.

On writing/speaking:

- *Data are...* beware the “skull and crossbones” lurking on your papers, hand-drawn by Scott himself, if you write “data is...”
- *The 3 C's:* clear, correct, and concise; worship these and you are on your way!
- *The Story...* “Set up the duck;” outline the story and give the necessary background so that the conclusions are impactful.
- *Acknowledgments...* Be sure to thank everyone who helps during research, even in some small way.

On life, in general:

- *Slowing down...* Some afternoons are better spent reminiscing and learning from the past than trying to predict the future.
- *Earning your keep...* Scott always asked us to work to our fullest potential each day.
- *Technology...* If a computer failed to do what he wanted, Scott would curse at it, then find a grad student to fix it. He always believed in the power of pen and paper.
- *Handling rejection...* No matter how many setbacks, rejected manuscripts or applications, Scott’s best advice was to continue “ONWARD!”

So, there you have it - the words and wisdom of Scott Nixon in a few bullet points. While there are lessons we didn't include, and many more lessons all of NEERS can add, we thought it best to not take up the whole newsletter! We miss him dearly. We think of him hourly. While Scott's passing has left a giant hole, Scott, himself, left us a legacy that has greatly enriched our lives. We, his students, colleagues, and friends, are that legacy. As Scott would say, “ONWARD!”



The Nixon lab enjoying a wonderful afternoon of friendship and good food. Pictured (L to R): Lindsey Fields, Autumn Oczkowski, Laura Windecker, Courtney Schmidt, Betty Buckley, Dave Adelman, Scott Nixon, Steve Granger, Amy Van Keuren, Leanna Heffner, and Brita Jessen.



Scott Nixon's current students spending a weekend cleaning the lab. Pictured (L to R): Scott Nixon, Courtney Schmidt, Brita Jessen, Lindsey Fields, and Leanna Heffner

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Long time ago when I was young, Scott Nixon gave me a chance to speak at URI at one of his special seminar courses and I spoke on #2 Oil Spills in Buzzards Bay. I regarded this as a gracious opportunity for me, which I have and will forever fixed in my mind. Scott had faith in me and at the time, I never knew him that well.

- George Hampson, WHOI

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When Scott Nixon of the Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island, passed away May 21, the world of ecology lost a great synthetic thinker and writer, coastal ecosystems lost a champion, and NEERS lost a true friend. Scott came to many NEERS meetings, gave a number of invited and contributed talks, participated on panels, and generously supported grad students. Among his many other awards, Scott was a recipient of the NEERS lifetime Achievement Award in 2000. We will celebrate his legacy at the fall meeting on Block Island by holding the sort of symposium that he would have liked to come to.

- Stephen Hale, EPA



## Remembering Michele Dionne

Michele Dionne passed away July 4, 2012. Below are contributions from NEERS members in her memory.



It is with great sadness that I inform you that Michele Dionne passed away on Wednesday, July 4, finally succumbing to the cancer she so successfully conquered after its discovery in 1996. Michele passed away in peace and in comfort at the Maine Medical Center in Portland.

As the Research Director of the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve since 1991, Dr. Michele Dionne was an inspiration to all of us at the Wells Reserve and Laudholm Trust, throughout the NERR System, and in the coastal and estuarine scientific, education, and conservation communities. As those of you who worked with her over the years know, she was an innovative and talented scientist with unlimited energy and ideas. And she was as practical as she was brilliant -- always ensuring that new-found knowledge was applied to coastal environmental issues.

Michele is survived by her husband Michael Wright and daughters Moira and Ciara.

- Paul Dest

I owe much of my personal and professional growth to Michele as she welcomed me into her research program as a young student intern and was a mentor, colleague, and friend for the next 9 years. I feel so VERY lucky to have had those years to study and grow under Michele's guidance and will never forget the impact she has had on my life.

She is sorely missed and her legacy will live on through the countless students, scientists, and educators that she has helped shape over the years.

-Jeremy Miller, Wells NERR



I heard you are collecting notes and photos about Michele Dionne for the NEERS newsletter. I'm looking through my personal photos to see what I may have, but in the mean time I'm sending along a photo of Michele from Earth Day 2004 that I found on the White House website. I would like to have been a greenhead fly on the marsh for that conversation! Michele was a talented scientist, great friend, and inspiration to all who knew her, she will be missed!

- Robert Vincent

Original photo title and caption: President Announces Wetland Initiative on Earth Day. President George W. Bush on speaks with Research Director Dr. Michele Dionne during a tour of the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve in Wells, Maine, Thursday, April 22, 2004. "Up to half of all North American bird species nest or feed in wetlands. About half of all threatened and endangered species use wetlands. There's some endangered species using the wetlands right here on this piece of property," said the President in his remarks.

## Remembering Michele Dionne, cont.



I first met Michele not in an office, classroom or at a conference, but in place that felt more like home to the both of us, a coastal salt marsh. I remember sitting on an overturned 5-gallon bucket covered in mud, fashioning chest waiters and a headlamp trying to sort out the difference between mummichogs and muddy chunks when I heard crunchy footsteps approaching. Michele had pulled herself out of bed well past midnight and driven more than an hour to the New Hampshire coast to help bolster the field crew on their “2nd shift”. We had just begun a study throughout coastal New England, surveying nekton (e.g., fish, shrimp and crabs) on consecutive tides in salt marshes. Not long after we were introduced by headlamp, I remember discussing the statistical benefits and cons of our project; a discussion likely not introduced by me.

I was more interested in any topic that would keep me awake and talking numbers was more akin to counting sheep. Although my body was in autopilot mode, I was eager to impress. I recently entered into a masters program and was currently enrolled in an advanced stats course. The discussion along with processing our catch continued and a bond was developed. That twilight meeting sparked several other collaborative projects between us and other colleagues from 2005 to 2012 that helped me develop as a scientist.

Michele is a remarkable individual to say the least. She was able to successfully juggle a flourishing career in environmental science with raising a family, all the while battling a terminal illness. I can only imagine accomplishing one of these challenges and not to the level she has reached. She has certainly stamped her mark on the scientific community and will continue to do so through her past and future contributions. Looking ahead, a handful of manuscripts she is co-authoring are currently in preparation and review, and I plan to present on her behalf at a conference later this year in Florida. Of course, Michele has also stamped her mark on me, beyond my profession. She is an inspirational scientist and person. She makes my problems appear trivial and my challenges achievable. Because of her, I have branched out beyond my habits and habitats. Michele will be dearly missed and never forgotten.

- **Christopher Peter, UNH**

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I was involved with Michele Dionne on a number of projects related to the Gulf of Maine Council for the Marine Environment (GOMC) when I worked at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, MA. Unlike myself who had hard money to support my activities that involved the GOMC, Michele had to take time out from her various research projects at the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve. EPA developed a workshop on ecological indicators for the GOMC, while the GOMC held a Summit which considered a variety of marine environmental issues relevant to the Provinces, States and Federal governments in the U.S. and Canada.

Michele participated in the fisheries and aquaculture team for both of these events. This involved conference calls and email exchanges proceeding the Ecological Indicators Workshop and GOMC Summit. In spite of her busy schedule, Michele was an active participant in the planning process and the events themselves. She had a lot of energy and many good ideas given the breadth of her research experiences. One of her strengths was ideas on how to involve the public in the policy implications of the science related to fisheries issues (which were not a focus area of the GOMC). She pointed out the importance of wetlands as Essential Fish Habitat, an area that is often under appreciated by quantitative fisheries biologist that conduct stock assessments.

I benefitted greatly from Michele's practical advice in leading the fisheries and aquaculture team. Her expertise and energy will be sorely missed in environmental science and its applications to public policy. - **Dr. David Dow, Northeast Fisheries Science Center**

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Michele Dionne was a dear friend and professional mentor who inspired my career as a coastal marine ecologist. I will miss her unwavering devotion to high quality scientific research, her passion for conservation, her brave support of research goals in light of opposition, and her loyal support of all committed individuals in her sphere. She built an unmatched coastal research center in southern Maine that will continue to influence people, creatures, and coastal landscapes for years to come. We will miss her dearly. - **Caitlin Crain**





# Fall 2012 NEERS Meeting

Thursday, October 11-Saturday, October 13

The Spring House Hotel

Block Island, RI



**Register by September 25th!**

## Important Dates

5 September 2012 – student travel award applications due

25 September 2012 – online meeting registration due

27 September 2012 – last day for conference rate at hotel

3 October 2012 – registration payment due to treasurer

This fall NEERS is headed back to Block Island!

Newcomers to the New England Estuarine Research Society (NEERS) have heard about the well attended 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008 NEERS meetings on Block Island and now we are giving you the opportunity to experience it yourself! Long time NEERS members are looking forward to returning to the island 12 miles out from the Rhode Island mainland that the Nature Conservancy calls "one of the world's last great places". We will discuss science, management, and education issues concerning estuarine and coastal ecosystems. You can do all this while gazing out over the Atlantic Ocean from the wraparound veranda of our meeting site, "The Spring House Hotel" – the same grand hotel where we met in 2000, 2004, and 2008. Just a 15 minute walk from the ferry landing, Block Island's oldest (but renovated) hotel is situated on a 15-acre promontory overlooking Old Harbor, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Block Island foothills.

**Special Symposium:** "Thinking Beyond Boundaries: Broader Perspectives in Coastal Ecology"

**"IGNITE" Session** featuring six speakers, 20 slides each, 15 seconds per slide

**For more details check out the NEERS website:**

<http://neers.org/MEETINGS/NEERSmeeting/MeetingOverview.html>

Hosted by The Graduate School of Oceanography, University Of Rhode Island

Local Organizers: Veronica Berounsky, Walter Berry, Charlie Roman,

MJ James-Pirri and Autumn Oczkowski