

PRSSS NEWSLETTER



Pacific Regional Society of Soil Science, C/O Faculty of Agricultural Sciences,
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, V6T 1Z4
Visit us at www.prsss.ca Email: prsss@vcn.bc.ca FAX: 604-822-2184

President's Message

I would like to begin this message by stating how grateful I am to be part of an organization that brings together such a diverse group of inspiring individuals who, like myself, have a fetish for soil!

Thanks to the 2005 PRSSS Executive for their great work, and a warm welcome to the new Executive Members for 2006! This year's Executive Members include: Lesley Dampier, Mike Shum, Art Bomke, Andy Jakoy, Maryam Mofidpoor, Amber Daniels, Beth Brocket, and Tanya Turk.

This year, two of our primary goals are to increase communication and advocate soils research that is occurring in the province. To achieve these goals we plan on updating and maintaining the PRSSS website (www.prsss.ca), acknowledge soils research occurring in universities, government and/or private sector, and inform members of forthcoming soil conferences. Staples of the society that will continue are the fall field tour (location TBA), and spring workshop.

I would like to encourage members to become involved with planning and goal setting this year. If you have ideas or suggestions please forward them to us via email at prsss@vcn.bc.ca or write to us at:

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On behalf of the executive I welcome you to an eventful year of PRSSS membership!

Rachelle Lalonde
President

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THE PRSSS EXECUTIVE

President: Rachelle Lalonde
President-Elect: Beth Brocket
Secretary: Lesley Dampier
Treasurer: Maryam Mofidpoor
Newsletter Editor: Tanya Turk
Bookstore Coordinator: Andy Jakoy
Website Coordinators: Mike Shum & Amber Daniels
Director: Art Bomke

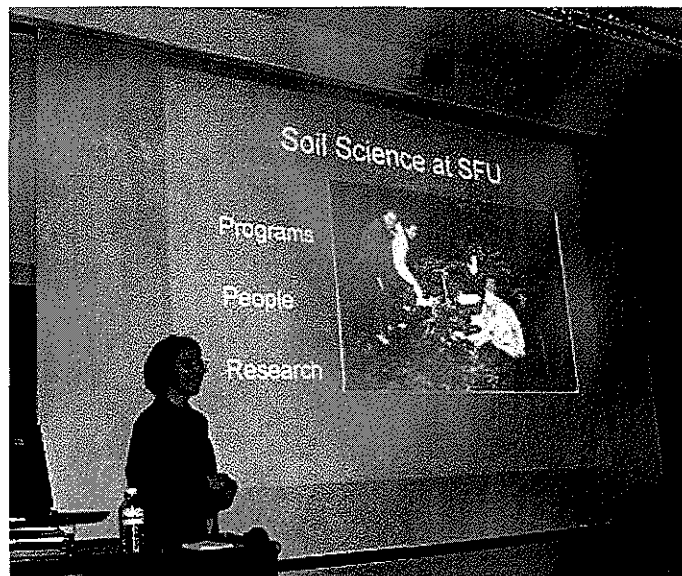
PRSSS and SWCS-BC Annual Workshop 2006:

A Student's Perspective

By Kelley Hishon and Cynthia Bendickson

On Saturday March 11th, soil enthusiasts from all over the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley gathered at UBC for the PRSSS & SWCS-BC Annual Workshop. The event, organized by the Pacific Regional Society of Soil Science and the Soil & Water Conservation Society, featured many interesting speakers and posters, not to mention great food.

The day started with a talk by **Margaret Schmidt (Geography Department, SFU)**. Currently, forest soils research at SFU is focusing on three main areas. Margaret and her grad students are looking at how tree species, particularly bigleaf maple and vine maple, may influence soils; information that will be valuable to forest managers. The group is also using spatial statistics to study species influence on forest soils, specifically using transects to look at soil pH. Additional research being conducted includes mechanical site preparation, landing construction/harvesting methods, and how these affect soils and tree growth.



Margaret Schmidt talks about soil science research at SFU.

After Margaret's presentation, we had a coffee break and poster presentations. Posters showcased the wide variety of soil science research going on in BC and around the world, with excellent posters on subjects like the contribution of wildlife to *E. coli* levels in the Northern Okanagan watershed, the use of GVRD yard trimmings in compost piles in the Fraser Valley, and the projected effects of climate change on irrigation needs in the Okanagan.

Also speaking was **Geoff Hughes-Games (Professional Agrologist, Ministry of Agriculture)**. Proving that the government is indeed keeping its employees busy, Geoff and colleague **Grant Kowalenko (Professional Agrologist, Ministry of Agriculture)** are working to determine if the continuous application of large quantities of N, P and K as fertilizer, as well as the application of manure or organic wastes, to the Lower Fraser Valley agricultural fields are causing problems, such as water pollution, physical and chemical degradation of the soils, as well as poor quality and quantity of produce. A preliminary report is due in the spring of 2006.

From a biology perspective, **Mike Pearson (Professional biologist, Pearson Ecological)** spoke to the group regarding habitat restoration for endangered fish species. Working in Aldergrove Lake Regional Park in Langley and Mountain Slough in Agassiz, Mike is looking at fish habitat restoration, including habitat and agricultural drainage impacts. Working with a team of dedicated volunteers in those areas restoring fish habitat, Mike is hoping that we can move towards integrated watershed management plans that will

Please see *PRSSS Workshop* on page 4

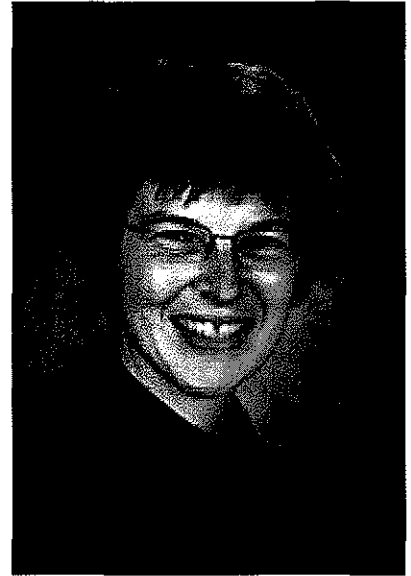
Soil Biography

Margaret Schmidt

Margaret Schmidt is an associate professor in the Geography Department at Simon Fraser University. Having an extensive background in the field has led her to teach all core soil science classes at SFU, aimed at both undergraduates and graduates. Students taking her classes come from a variety of departments and programs, including Resource and Environmental Management, Earth & Atmospheric Science, Environmental Science, and various disciplines in the Geography Department, making the courses she offers in high demand. She is also hoping to create a new course in the near future that will cater to students interested in soils and their important role in the world, but have no science background. She hopes this will spark new interest and appreciation on a subject that is otherwise not given much attention to non-science students, due to the lab component of her other courses.

Margaret has a particular interest in forest soils and forest ecology. Her current research interests include: the impact of hardwoods (in particular vine maple and bigleaf maple) on soil properties, nutrient cycling and growth of surrounding conifers in southwestern B.C. Recent work on vine maple revealed that the species may enhance Douglas fir growth in mature forest stands within a temperate rainforest. Rather than hindering growth of commercial trees, the gaps formed by vine maple create a natural spacing and allow the boles of crowns of Douglas fir to grow larger. This lead to further research on a seldom-studied tree; bigleaf maple. This native species is Canada's largest maple, and is commonly found along the coast. It may improve soil quality due to its abundant nutrient-rich litterfall, in the same way vine maple does. Bigleaf maple may play an important role in the long-term fertility of forest ecosystems where it is established. Research that focuses on understanding the role of non-commercial native plants is essential for ensuring a sustainable and diversified forest ecosystem.

The work conducted in her research lab at Simon Fraser University will build a foundation for future studies examining the role of bigleaf maple on ecosystems, and will add to studies examining species influence on soils.



Margaret's other research interests include the impacts of harvesting and site preparation on site fertility and tree growth; and the rehabilitation of degraded forest soils.

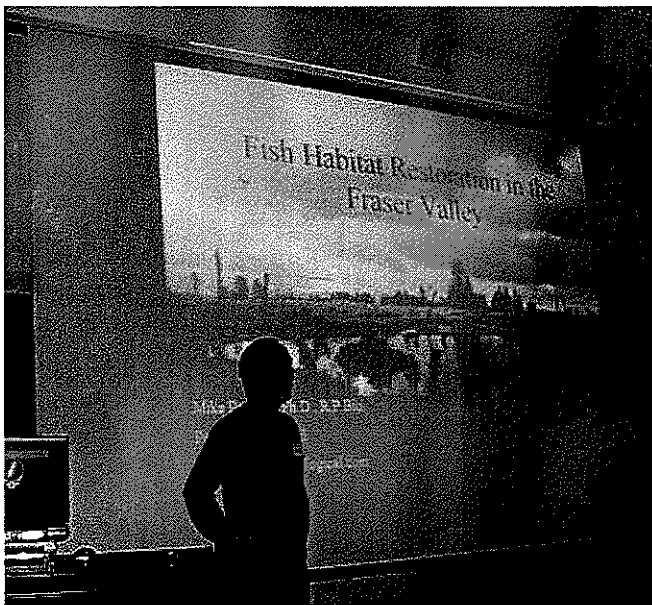
Born and raised in Ontario, Margaret received her B.Sc. in Agriculture (resources management) from the University of Guelph in 1983. She completed an M.Sc. in Forestry (soils and site productivity) at Lakehead University in 1986 and then spent a year in Germany where she studied and worked in the Department of Silviculture and Soil Science at Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich. Soon after, she moved to Canada to pursue a Ph.D. in Soil Science at UBC which she completed in 1992. Her PhD research concerned forest land use dynamics and soil fertility in a mountain watershed in Nepal. In the summer of 1992, she was a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Forest Science at the University of Alberta, and was soon after hired in the Geography Department at SFU. She is also a registered Professional Agrologist (PAg). Aside from all the above, Margaret is an associate editor for the Canadian Journal of Soil Science, and has 2 lovely children.

Do you know anyone doing interesting work in the area of soil science? We are always looking to feature interesting articles on people in soil science, and welcome write-ups for future newsletters. Please send entries to tturk@sfu.ca.

PRSSS Annual Workshop 2006

...continued from page 2

include fish habitat, as well as some financial incentive to farmers to secure agricultural riparian zones. Mike estimated that it would cost \$2.77 million to compensate farmers for securing riparian zones for endangered fish such as the Salish Sucker.



Mike Pearson of Pearson Ecological discusses habitat restoration in the Fraser Valley

Gerry Neilsen (Scientist, Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre) demonstrated the beauty of the Okanagan, and presented some challenges to sustainable soil management in the North Okanagan. Gerry highlighted the difficulties of water and nutrient management, as well as some results on organic matter addition trials.

Interestingly, the widely-used herbicide strips in tree fruit production was shown to perform the worst out of all of the amendments that were tried in terms of moisture-holding capacity and yield. Gerry also mentioned that composts were difficult to work with for nutrient enhancement because there are tremendous ranges in the properties of composts. Everyone was ready to join his team for a chance to spend time in the Okanagan.

Rounding out the day was Lone Smith (SWCS-BC) and Dave Sands (ALR-PEC). They outlined the steps that have been taken since the conference last year, including meeting Carole James of the NDP, and Pat Bell, the Minister of Agriculture and Lands, to discuss the ALR and a proposed Soil Conservation Act. A discussion was held into the next steps for the project, and a consensus emerged around greater public involvement and education, and the creation of a working group for a Soil Protection Act. Concerns were raised over plans for a soil inventory of BC because of the time-consuming nature of the project. Many good ideas were brought forward, and all those interested in the topic are encouraged to get more information from www.greenbelt.bc.ca. If you are interested in participating in a working group on the topic, please contact Lone Smith lon smith@hotmail.com.

Many thanks go out to everyone who helped to organize this year's workshop. We're looking forward to another excellent conference next year.

Membership Renewal

Dear member,

Please submit your membership fees together with the form below to ensure that you are remaining on our mailing list. The due date of your fees is indicated on the address label on the envelope. If you have chosen to receive the newsletter in electronic form, you will receive a notice stating your due date shortly. In case of any questions, please feel free to e-mail us at prsss@vcn.bc.ca. We'd also like to ask you to indicate any changes of your contact information. Thank you very much, we greatly appreciate your contribution. Sincerely, *your PRSSS executive.*

PRSSS ENROLMENT / MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL / CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Name: _____

Employer: _____

Title: _____

Professional Interests: _____

Address: _____

City/Postal Code: _____

Telephone: Work: _____ **Fax #:** _____ **Home:** _____

Email address: _____

Comments/Suggestions: _____

Please Find Enclosed (check one):

Student Membership 1 Year \$5 _____ **Student Membership 2 Year \$10** _____

Regular Membership 1 Year \$10 _____ **Regular 2 Year Membership - \$20** _____

Please include me in the PRSSS Directory: **Yes:** _____ **No:** _____

Please send me the PRSSS Newsletter by: **E-mail:** _____ **Regular Mail:** _____

(Please make checks payable to Pacific Regional Society of Soil Science)
If you have any questions regarding your membership standing, please contact Lesley Dampier at 604-777-9788 or ldampier@sylvis.com.

Upcoming Soil Events

May 14–17 (Banff, Alberta)

Canadian Society of Soil Science (CSSS)

Annual General Meeting

<http://www.csss.ca/conferences.html#annual>

June 3–8, 2006 (Vancouver, BC)

"Social Sciences in Resource Management: Global Challenges – Local Responses"

12th International Symposium on Society and Resource Management

June 19–20, 2006 (Torrington, Wyoming)

Western Society of Crop Science Meeting

June 19–21, 2006 (Park City, Utah)

Western Regional Cooperative Soil Survey Conference & Western Society of Soil Science Meeting

July 9–15, 2006 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

18th World Congress of Soil Science – Frontiers of Soil Science: Technology and the Information Age

August 1–4, 2006 (Halifax, Nova Scotia)

Joint Colloquium of The Canadian Society of Animal Science (CSAS), The Canadian Society of Agronomy (CSA) & The Canadian Society for Horticultural Science (CSHS)

<http://nsac.ca/pas/conferences/>

August 20–23, 2006 (Ottawa, ON)

CLRA/ACRSD Annual General Meeting

(held in conjunction with the 9th Meeting of the International Affiliation of Land Reclamationists)

November 12–16, 2006 (Indianapolis)

The annual meeting of American Society of Agronomy (ASA), Crop Science Society of America (CSSA), and Soil Science Society of America (SSSA)

What's Happening at PRSSS

Fall Fieldtrip 2006

We're looking for ideas for our annual fall fieldtrip. Please email or fax us your suggestions – if we use your idea, you get to go FREE!

PRSSS Website (www.prsss.ca)

Our website is currently under construction, but PRSSS Newsletters will be available online soon. Newsletters from as far back as 1987 will be available. We also need more photographs so please send us any soils pictures that can be used on the website. Feedback and photos can be sent to mshum@pggroup.com or amberdaniels@telus.net.

PRSSS Bookstore

The PRSSS has a store of Soil & Land

Inventory Maps & Reports for BC. For further information on availability, inventory, or updated pricing, please contact Andy Jakoy at 604-736-7225 or andyalmadi@yahoo.ca or visit the PRSSS website (www.prsss.ca).

Listserve

Members are invited to submit relevant workshop, lecture or other event announcements for distribution on the PRSSS listserve. Send an email to prsss@vcn.bc.ca. Announcements should be sent early to ensure that it is forwarded to our members in time.

Future Newsletters

If you would like to contribute an article or have an idea for a future newsletter, please contact Tanya Turk at ttturk@sfu.ca.

*Do you prefer
electronic
newsletters over
paper format?
Send us an email
at
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them to you in
the future.*

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