

Heather Axen Receives Travel mini-grant and Suitor Travel Award



Heather Axen (middle) with two undergrads from Cornell

I went to the Evolution meeting (a joint meeting between the Society for the Study of Evolution, American Naturalists, and Society of Systematic Biologists) in June held in Minnesota and presented a paper, I also went to the North American Section of the International Union for the Study of Social Insects (NAS-IUSSI) meeting held in Puerto Rico in October. The evolution meeting is international, and the IUSSI meeting had people from The US, Canada and the Caribbean. I presented a talk concerning phylogeographic patterns of movement of a potentially fire ant, *Solenopsis geminata* (the same study was presented at each, though the evolution meeting was a poster and the IUSSI meeting was my first conference talk. I got a travel mini grant to go to the evolution meeting, and a Suitor Travel award to go to IUSSI.

Nilanjan Lodh Presents at the North American Benthological Society Meeting



Nilanjan Lodh presented on May 20th at the North American Benthological Society Meeting in Grad Rapids, Michigan. The meeting went from May 17th through the 22nd.

Nilanjan is working on the Whirling Disease. Stream sediment dwelling worms, *Tubifex tubifex*, are the intermediate host of the parasite that causes Whirling disease (WD) in salmonid fishes. The parasite *Myxobolus cerebralis* is native to Europe, but has been introduced into at least 25 states since 1950 with large impacts on trout populations in the Western United States. Host biodiversity can impact disease risk and influence the transmission of parasitic disease. Genetic diversity of *T. tubifex* is correlated with variation in WD virulence and susceptibility, and two major lineages (I and III) are found in the Madison River, Montana, USA. The relative abundance of the lineages varies among sites and lineage III shows higher rates of infection. These results suggest that spatial variation in the worm communities may be correlated with the wide range of infection in natural streams. In addition to providing information on a disease with high ecological and economic importance, the study shows these sediment dwelling worms provides an excellent experimental venue to test hypotheses about biodiversity and parasite transmission.

Pedro Alvarez-Ortiz Presents a Poster at SACNAS in Utah



Graduate student Pedro Alvarez-Ortiz presented a poster at the Annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), held in Salt Lake City, UT, October 9-12, 2008. The title of the presentation was 'Immunocytochemical localization of a tracheal like protein in *Drosophila*: Evidence for diversity of extracellular matrix'. Undergraduate students Shawna Guillemette and Rachel Humphrey, and Professor Jim Vigoreaux co-authored the presentation.