



Newsworthy Stuff

Brian, Briana and **Lisa** braved less than optimal weather at **CONG** to assist with the **2016 Wings Across South Carolina Bioblitz**. Superintendent Tracey Stakely stated “We were able to expose over 280 school children to ‘all things birding’ including the associated science, technical skills, and cultural connections,” making the bioblitz a huge success.

Paula was one of five NPS employees selected by the NPS Innovative Leadership Network to attend the three-day Network Leadership Training Academy (NLTA) hosted by the University of Colorado-Denver’s Center for Collaborative Governance, which took place 16–18 May 2016 and included over 80 participants (<http://inside.nps.gov/index.cfm?handler=viewnpsnewsarticle&type=Announcements&id=18818>). This opportunity was made possible by funding from the NPS Office of Relevancy, Diversity, and Inclusion (<https://www.nps.gov/rdi>).

Brian Mitchell, SER I&M chief, and SECN intern **Emily** headed over to **CHAT** to assist Oklahoma State researchers in a multi-agency effort to study a remnant population of shoal bass in the Big Creek tributary. Sampling of the genetically isolated population of this endemic species has been ongoing since 2013.



Shoal bass sampling at **Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area**.

What does *THAT* do?

Lisa Cowart Baron, SECN coastal ecologist, collects salt marsh elevation data and shows the new ladder plank assembled to access the rod surface elevation table location. The rod surface elevation table tracks sea level rise and marsh accretion.



Field Work

Completed in May

- Vegetation community monitoring was completed at **CUIS**.

Upcoming in June

- **Sarah** and **Emily** will be conducting vegetation community monitoring at **HOBE** in early June and **KEMO** in late June.
- **Pete** will be collecting water-quality data in Georgia and Florida parks June 14 and 15. He will also be visiting **CAHA** June 6–8 to recommission the fixed-station water-quality site at Ocracoke.
- Salt marsh monitoring will resume field work in June/July at **TIMU**, **FOPU**, **CAHA** and **CALO**.
- Shoreline Monitoring—**Lisa** is processing GPS data and completing the shoreline monitoring protocol implementation plan and standard operating procedures.

Employee Spotlight



This month’s employee spotlight is on Jason Gardner, who has been the coastal technician for the Southeast Coast Network since fall 2014. Jason primarily assists with salt marsh elevation and vegetation change monitoring, as well as shoreline monitoring.

Jason grew up in Quincy, Illinois and received a BS in Biology from Illinois State University in 2004. He then began his journey with the National Park Service, which took him across the country from Fossil Butte National Monument and Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming, to Shenandoah National Park in Virginia, to Cape Hatteras National Seashore in North Carolina, and finally here to the Southeast Coast Network in Athens. While Jason has enjoyed his work and travel adventures, he’s looking forward to an even bigger journey as he and his wife, Elizabeth, welcome their first child—a son—due to arrive this week!

Jason’s career helping the National Park Service protect and preserve special places suits him well, as he wants future generations of people—including his own son—to have the same opportunities he has had to visit and draw inspiration from these places. Jason spends much of his spare time in the outdoors and enjoys camping, birding, biking, rock-climbing, and surfing. He also enjoys playing and collecting music—he has been a drummer/percussionist since he was a kid—and he thanks his loving parents and many tolerant neighbors for letting him develop his musical skills!

Communications

The Athens editing squad is excited to announce the addition of three new graduate assistants. Ava Edmondson will be coming to us from UGA's Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, and Sandra McGill will be coming from the Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. Ava and Sandra will be coming on board in June. In August, we will be joined by Talia Levine, who hails from UGA's Odum School of Ecology. Talia will be replacing Shannon as she moves on at the end of the summer. Ava, Sandra, and Talia will be helping out with editing duties while they expand their science communication and natural resource experience.

We are really excited about this addition of resources, and the diverse skill sets these three students bring to the network, and we look forward to working more closely with the parks in the near future with some new and exciting projects.

On the reports front, we continue to plug away at natural resource condition assessment reports, vegetation mapping reports, and data summaries. New changes to the website have been put on temporary hold as we await more information on the switch to a new content management system for the I&M Division websites.

From the Program Manager



June is now upon us, and what that means—besides hot weather—is that the calendar year is halfway over and the fiscal year is quickly slipping away. Projects and efforts that we have planned to get done this year are, hopefully, well underway. If not, June's arrival should be an alarm clock sounding a call to quick action. Close-out deadlines for contracting and agreements begin soon, and reports and protocols that are due by year's

end need to be in the finishing stages or very close to completion. Of course, we are all busy this time of year, too. As I was looking over our Sharepoint field operations planning calendar (<http://share.inside.nps.gov/sites/nrss/div/imd/networks/secn/field/Pages/Home.aspx>) last week, I noted several days where almost every full-time staff member was either involved in work at one of our parks or in training somewhere. That is not uncommon, especially during summer field season. So, as we continue to stay busy here and in your parks heading into the final quarter of the fiscal year, I want to start a discussion about how we want to finish up our year. At our last steering committee meeting we discussed having the next meeting in November, and potentially at one of your parks. During the next few weeks, let me know if your park has the interest and capacity to host such an event. I'll be following up with each of you soon, but just wanted to get you thinking about this important annual network event.

— Brian Gregory



PHOTO BY EMILY MILBAUER

Citizen Science: A baby opossum takes notes on relative cover in a vegetation community monitoring plot at [Cumberland Island National Seashore](#).

What is it?

Can you identify this mushroom? Email your answer to SER_IM_publication@nps.gov. The winner will be announced in next month's newsletter, and will receive bragging rights as their prize!



PHOTO BY EMILY MILBAUER

Mushrooms at [Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve](#).

For More Information

SECN Home Page:

go.nps.gov/secn

SECN Reports & Publications:

<http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/SECN/publications.cfm>

About the NPS Inventory & Monitoring Program:

<http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/index.cfm>

Data Downloads via the Natural Resource Information Portal:

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