

Review of the twelfth annual meeting

by Alexandria Wenninger¹



Figure 1: Members present at the end of the meeting. Back row, from left: Stephen Burr, Giovanni Tundo, Robin Andrews, Shana Loshbaugh, Steve Swenson, Chris Fettig, Garret Dubois, and Jason Moan. Center row, from left: Julie Riley, Matt Bowser, Renee Nowicki, and Jessica Rykken. Front row, from left: Dana Brennan, Alex Wenninger, Adam Haberski, Roger Burnside, and Derek Sikes.

The twelfth annual meeting of the Alaska Entomological Society Meeting was held at the Alaska Department of Natural Resources building in Fairbanks on February 9, 2019. We are grateful to Stephen Burr of the USDA Forest Service - Forest Health Protection, for offering us the use of this space.

Presentations

Stephen Burr gave the highlights of the last year of insect activity in Alaska's forests in his talk "Forest Health Conditions Report 2018." This synopsis included the results of both aerial- and ground-survey work conducted throughout Alaska by the USDA Forest Service – Forest Health Protection in conjunction with the AK DNR, Division of Forestry – Alaska Forest Health Protection Program.

Matt Bowser gave a convincing talk entitled "Large worms at large: Nightcrawlers change Alaskan Forests," in which he showed the detrimental effects of European nightcrawlers, particularly *Lumbricus terrestris*, on the Kenai Peninsula. He ended his talk by leaving the audience to ponder the question, under what circumstances should managers intervene to eradicate invasive species?

In his talk, "Climate change in Alaska: Impacts on the entomofauna," **Derek Sikes** addressed some of the con-

sequences of a rapidly changing climate on our Alaskan insect species, including current evidence that changes are already taking place.

The ongoing spruce beetle (*Dendroctonus rufipennis*) outbreak occurring throughout southcentral Alaska was addressed by **Jason Moan** in his talk, "Southcentral Alaska spruce beetle outbreak: Observations from the field."

This year we were grateful for the opportunity to hear from guest lecturer, **Chris Fettig**. Chris is a research entomologist for the USDA Forest Service, currently stationed at the Pacific Southwest Research Station. He has worked extensively with bark beetles throughout the United States and Canada, and has interest in the indirect effects of climate change on invasive bark beetles and their forest habitats. His talk entitled "The effects of climate change on invasive species and their impacts on forests and rangelands" brought a unique perspective to the AKES meeting, and we thank him for attending!

Jessica Rykken followed with an overview of the diversity of pollinators present at the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, through her talk "Gates of the Arctic pollinators." Her talk included wonderful photographs and descriptions of the life history of the several species of bumble bees, solitary bees, syrphid flies, and other pollinating insects inhabiting the park.

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We had several fantastic student presentations this year as well. UAF student **Adam Haberski** presented the preliminary findings of his Master's work, "Beetle, spider, and bumblebee communities differ across an elevational gradient in Denali National Park and Preserve." Unfortunately **Megan Booyesen**, a West Valley High student, was unable to make it to the meeting to present her work "Earthworms (Oligochaeta: Lumbricidae) of Interior Alaska." However, Derek Sikes stepped up to give an overview of the results of her efforts to document the distribution and diversity earthworms in Alaska's interior. Finally, we congratulate **Robin Andrews** (UAF, PhD student), recipient of the 2019 Student Presentation Award for her talk entitled "Microarthropod abundance and community structure along a successional chronosequence within the Tanana River floodplain." Through her presentation and responses to audience questions, Robin showed a great depth of scientific knowledge (and enthusiasm!) for her study organisms, despite the taxonomic and logistical challenges of studying microarthropods. Congratulations, Robin!

Business items—highlights

- New members will now automatically be opted-in to the listserv when they register (but can opt-out at any time).
- This year more focus will be put on advertising the student presenting opportunity/award (both talks and posters). We discussed sending out emails via the UAF Biology and Wildlife department listserv prior to next meeting, and finding a similar mode of contact through UAA, to increase student participation.
- Prior to the next meeting, set up video conferencing capabilities if there is interest, perhaps through Google hangouts or Zoom. That way those in Fairbanks or Juneau who are unable to travel could still participate in the meeting.
- Election results: Alexandria Wenninger (president), Robin Andrews (vice president), Renee Nowicki (secretary), and Roger Burnside (treasurer).

The minutes from our business meeting will be provided on our website.

