

in the MARGINS

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL AND APPLIED ECONOMICS

Faculty Profile: Ben Rashford

By Ben Rashford, Assistant Professor

I first came to Laramie in the summer of 1996 – arriving at 2:00 a.m. after a long car ride from my childhood home in upstate NY. Cresting the summit that morning and seeing the lights of town for the first time, I wondered what I was thinking when I agreed to move west. For a small town boy from back east, the glowing lights of Laramie make it appear both large and isolated, very isolated. More than ten years later now, I am grateful I made that drive.



I came to the University of Wyoming unsure of what I would study, but quickly developed an interest in economics and the decision-making insights it provides. I completed a BS and MS in Economics, and being a glutton for punishment, decided to pursue a PhD in Agricultural and Resource Economics at Oregon State University. After five years in the clouds and rain of Oregon I was ready to get back to Wyoming, and consider myself very fortunate to have a faculty position in the Department of Agricultural & Applied Economics here at UW.

My work here focuses on research and extension in natural resource economics. Much of my research focuses on the management and conservation of wildlife in agro-ecosystems. I am currently examining the role of economic incentives in agricultural land use change in the Prairie Pothole Region and Northern Great Plains. The objective of this work is to understand private land use incentives so policy-makers can design more effective habitat conservation programs that benefit both wildlife and producers. I am also working with colleagues from South Dakota to examine the impact of climate change on agricultural land use, wetlands, and waterfowl habitat.

I am also working with departmental colleagues (Dannele Peck, Roger Coupal, John Ritten and John Hewlett) on several projects related to the economics of wildlife-livestock disease. We currently have three projects on the impacts and management of brucellosis (see Dannele Peck's faculty profile in the Fall 2009 edition of *In the Margins*—agecon.uwyo.edu). I am most involved with MS student Mandy Kauffman's project, in which she is building a statistical model to simulate the impact of elk feed ground management policies on demand for guided elk hunts. Mandy's project will be completed this summer, and we expect it to add valuable new insights to the brucellosis management discussion.

My extension efforts focus primarily on small-scale renewable energy options in Wyoming. With the help of Milt Geiger (UW CES) and Natalie Macsalka (MS student), I am developing outreach materials on several Wyoming-relevant options, including small wind systems, geothermal heat pumps and solar hot water systems. We are also developing user-friendly economic calculators to help citizens determine whether a renewable energy system makes sense for their individual circumstances. We expect to begin distributing education materials soon via the Cooperative Extension Service's upcoming Renewable and Efficient Energy website.

In addition to research and extension, I also co-teach a graduate-level quantitative methods course and coordinate the Department's graduate program. One of the most fulfilling aspects of my job is working with our graduate students. If you haven't visited the Department in a while, we have experienced some exciting growth in our graduate program. Our graduate student offices (three of them now!) are nearly overflowing, with 16 MS students from six states and six countries. The graduate committee is currently reviewing

Head's Column

Roger Coupal, Head and Associate Professor

Welcome and Happy Spring! We are heavily into the semester work now with around fifty students preparing to graduate this semester or next December. As part of our bachelors of science program, we require a thesis topic presentation—the slides from recent presentations are on our senior thesis web page: agecon.uwyo.edu/agecon/whatwedo/programs/seniortheses.htm. Please take a look at them (and send comments to me at coupal@uwyo.edu).



On the graduate student side of the department, we have more graduate students than we have had in years. They are finding careers in the private and public sector or moving on to PhD programs. Offers from PhD programs for some of our students include Minnesota, University of California at Davis, and Washington State University. A recent graduate in our program, Milt Geiger, is now the Energy Extension Coordinator for Cooperative Extension Service in Wyoming, www.uwyo.edu/renew-energy. Our current students are working on projects that include traditional agriculture to energy development. The broad range of applied projects include:

- Brucellosis impacts,
- Conservation easement economics,
- Crop and Livestock management,
- Energy reclamation economics,
- Carbon capture and storage technology analysis,
- Economics of wind power development,
- Nutrition decision making in families, and
- Wildlife disease and international trade.

Our work in applied energy development has expanded substantially. Much of that work involves looking at local economic and environmental issues surrounding development, and we have several projects on energy development and the related economic issues. Projects include fiscal and economic impacts of wind, carbon policy, reclamation, biofuels, and others.

We recently added an endowed chair in collaborative practice to the faculty. Dr. Steve Smutko is an internationally known expert in dealing with environmental conflicts. He has a joint position with the Ruckelshaus Institute for the Environment and Natural Resources and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. His home department is with us.

So all in all, we are doing well. We would like to come talk to school groups about Agribusiness as well as discuss the possibilities of our degree program with high school counselors and business teachers. We would love to have your assistance in making that connection. We work hard to offer our students the training needed to navigate in this uncertain world. So any way you can help us get the word out about getting a degree in Agribusiness would be much appreciated.

Sincerely,
Roger Coupal
Department Head

Interview with Vanvig Awardee

Graduate student Eric Cropper is the winner of the 2009 Vanvig Graduate Fellowship. We're pleased to share this interview about him and his work. The Andrew and Connie Vanvig Award consists of recognition and a stipend for high quality graduate work and was created in honor of former Department Head (from 1957 to 1982) Andy Vanvig.

Q: What is the focus of your thesis work?

EC: My current research interest is primarily natural resource economics. I am currently completing a dual masters degree in Environmental and Natural Resources in addition to a masters degree in Agricultural and Applied Economics. My thesis addresses open space land conservation. The focus of my thesis work is to examine land trusts' preferences in order to better understand the demand for conservation easements. Specifically, my research focuses on identifying the determinants of land trusts' demand for conservation easements. I am using data collected from a stated choice survey that was sent to land trusts a few years back. This research builds on previous research that has been done in our department on landowner's preferences for conservation easements.

Q: Do you have results you can share – key findings?

EC: Some of my preliminary findings suggest that land trusts have heterogeneous preferences. For example, land trusts that focus on preserving ecosystem services are influenced by a unique set of factors in their conservation easement decisions. Research has also revealed that land trusts in general desire conservation easements that have terms in perpetuity, protect wildlife habitat on the land, and that provide the land trust with control over production practices that are implemented on the land. Another interesting finding is that land trusts that have a higher "sense of place" attachment or bond with the land are more likely to choose conservation easements. It is hoped that this research will help reduce matching risks and transaction costs in the conservation easement markets by connecting landowners interested in conservation easements with the right land trust.

Q: Who is your advisor?

EC: I am lucky to have two great co-chairs and advisors on committee. Both Dr. Bastian and Dr. McLeod have been very helpful in pointing me down the right paths in my research and assisting me at every turn. They have buoyed my hopes when I have been in the pits of research despair. They have focused not only on helping me finish my thesis, but also on assisting me to think like and become an applied economist.

Q: What do you aim to do when you finish (and when will that be)?

EC: I am currently planning on finishing my thesis and masters degree this semester (Spring 2010). After which I hope to find a job using my skills as an applied economist to manage natural



We want your news! Alumni, faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students are welcome to submit news and photos. Send them to Cole Ehmke at cehmke@uwyo.edu.

Continued on back page.



~Special Section~ AgEcon's Scholarship Awardee Profiles

BRAND OF EXCELLENCE

In the Agricultural and Applied Economics Department, we're very proud of our students. In this special section, we're profiling those who were awarded scholarships for the 2009 school year. We asked them to respond to four questions, and as you can see there is plenty of achievement, dedication and enthusiasm. Not all the profiles are in this section — more are at agecon.uwyo.edu. As alumni and stakeholders, it is your contributions and faith that help support these students' fine efforts. — Roger Coupal, Head, Agricultural and Applied Economics

Kimberly Kuhn, supported by the National Western Stock Show Scholarship

1. I graduated from high school in Cheyenne, Wyoming in 2007. Our family ranch, however, is on upper Powder River in NE Johnson County and SE Sheridan County. We also have mountain land up west of Kaycee in Johnson County in the Big Horn Mountains. I was Miss Frontier for Cheyenne Frontier Days in Cheyenne, Wyoming in 2009 and enjoyed the experience greatly.
2. I was drawn to UW's AgEcon department as a 5th generation ranch owner. I have always been very passionate about agriculture, and I knew from the first day of orientation that this was the college and department for me. I absolutely love my fellow college classmates and the professors too. My advisor, Dale Menkhous, has been outstanding, and I have also really enjoyed the entire staff of the College of Agriculture.
3. I will graduate in May of 2011, and I plan to help manage our family ranch as well as prepare for graduate school, and eventually a professional career.
4. I am a member of the Ag Ambassadors and the Rodeo Team (my event is breakaway roping). I really enjoyed Agroecology, Rural Banking, Ag Law, and Range Resource Economics. I have been extremely impressed with the professors and their interest in the subjects they teach. It is so nice to walk into a class where everyone knows your name. I am so comfortable in the College of Agriculture, and I would recommend it to anyone interested in enjoying their college experience.



This summer I plan to study abroad in Angers, France, studying Viticulture and Agribusiness—what an opportunity I never would have had without the College of Agriculture!

Casey Sorenson, supported by the UW Jack Radichal Scholarship

1. I am from Deaver, Wyoming. Population 177. Obviously a small town because most Wyomingites have not ever heard of it. I grew up on a farm in the same town, and our family also had a ranch in the Pryor mountains in Montana with about 230 head of cattle. I grew up working on the farm and ranch and wouldn't trade a day of it for any other way of life. I have my own herd of cattle. The breed is a new breed developed in Billings, Montana and is known for its high weaning weights, low birth weights, and great milking abilities. This breed is called Black Maximizers. I am married and I have a two year old child and another on the way. I have two associates degrees, one in Ag Education and one in Ag Business.
2. First of all, my dad graduated from the UW Ag college with a degree in Ag Engineering. This drew me here initially. Second, I think that there is not a better college out there in terms of value. The Hathaway scholarship program has also drawn me in by reducing my costs immensely.
3. I am still unsure about what I will do after my degree. Originally I was going to be an agricultural engineer with my focus being on making high-end agricultural equipment affordable for the common agrarian. Now I am looking more towards being an ag loan officer. This is another way to help agriculturalists get into the business and stay in the business. If I attained this career, my focus would be on helping people get their farms and ranches even if they do not have any kind of inheritance of land, livestock, or cash to help them along. I have also looked into getting my masters degree in AgEcon and possibly teaching at a junior college. I also would possibly like to own a ranch. This has and always will be a dream of mine. Finally, I have a great opportunity to take over my family's powerline construction business. This is looking to be my best option thus far. I hope to finish by Spring of 2011.
4. I have enjoyed the classes that have financial or investing backgrounds in them. Especially in this economy, it is extremely important to be financially savvy. I was also very impressed with the professors in the Ag College. At this college, I have found that these professors have been the most helpful of anyone at the college. For the most part these professors have a love for teaching and a passion for transferring their knowledge to the students here.

Four Questions for AgEcon Students

1. Where are you from? What is your background?
2. What drew you to UW AgEcon?
3. What do you aim to do when you finish?
4. What activities/classes have you enjoyed the most? What do you like or have been impressed by?

Jessie Berry, supported by the Jack Radichal Scholarship

1. I grew up in Cheyenne, Wyoming. My great grandparents homesteaded our family ranch in 1910 and we have been raising Hereford cattle ever since.
2. I originally came to the University of Wyoming as a requirement to stay in state while serving as a Wyoming State FFA officer. It didn't take me long to fall in love with the College of Agriculture, faculty and staff. My course work began in communications until a friend recommended I try an economic class. Since then I have been hooked and enjoyed the program.
3. I will graduate this coming May. I am still not sure what I would like to do so I am investing my last semester as intern for Representative Cynthia Lummis in Washington DC. I am interested in rural community development, agriculture policy and conservation of land and natural resources.
4. I will forever be an advocate for the College of Agriculture because of the people and investment of time I received in the classes I took and the faculty that cared. The scholarships the college has made available to students has enabled me to have an affordable, quality education. I have enjoyed the classes that I have taken and the real life experience that professors have been able to apply in the classroom. I am also very thankful for faculty and my advisor that would help me pursue options and find solutions.



Sean Ridgeway, supported by the Lee Wiegand Excellence Fund in Agriculture

1. I am from Bayard, Nebraska, a small town in western Nebraska. I have a strong background in rural Nebraska farming and ranching. My family has a small farm/ranch that raises alfalfa, Angus beef, and corn. I have a small Angus herd myself consisting of four cows and four calves, and two heifers. I have shown market steers for seven years at the county fair. I have also shown my heifers at the National Western Stock Show as well as participating in the Catch-A-Calf program. I work around the family farm/ranch as a hired hand.
2. When I came to visit for the first time my advisors knew my name and were willing to show me all the options I had in Ag Econ, whether it be in Farm and Ranch Management, International Trade, or the Business option. I chose the business option so I can go to a small town bank and help families' dreams come true. It was nice not being just another number, but a name — a first name.
3. I have also chosen to add a Ag Education major to my program. I would like to either teach or bank in a small town. In either situation I will be able to give back to the community what it has given me. I would like to teach Ag Education along with FFA. I also hope that sometime in my life I will be able to also become a banker in a rural America, the heart of this country, and I am looking forward to starting these plans in the fall of 2013.
4. I enjoy being able to go to Half Acre Gym with its many different activities, from lifting to running as well as the many fitness classes and outdoor activities. I have enjoyed the Agroecology class that I took last semester; I also am enjoying the political science class I am in. Even though it is tough, it offers a challenge to make you learn things that you needed to know as a United States citizen. I like that when you go to talk to your advisors, they know your first name. Professors would rather be called by their first name, and before midterm will know your first name and call you it when they see you.



Lyndi Apolius, supported by the Amanda and Oscar Schmale Scholarship

1. I am from Paxton, Nebraska. Paxton is a town of about 650 people that is located between Ogallala and North Platte on I-80. My family has always lived on a farm or ranch. It is just a part of our lives. The best was when we lived in the Sandhills of Nebraska. Most people would think of it as being pretty lonely up there, however I just enjoyed the quiet. I guess it just has to be "in your blood."
2. Before attending UW, I earned my associates degree in Ag Business from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis, Nebraska. At NCTA my advisor was Krystle Friesen, whom had graduated with her bachelors degree at UW. She had mentioned transferring to UW to me, and it was at that time I began considering it. I came to a couple campus visits as well as the Transfer Orientation Day (which was very helpful) and found that UW was the best fit for me. The Ag College was a good size, and I felt had a great program. When I graduated from high school I was just positive I would only get my associates degree and be done with college. Well, obviously my ideals changed; I will be graduating in May with my bachelors degree in Ag Business and wouldn't change a thing!
3. I will be graduating in May of 2010 and plan to move back to North Platte, Nebraska. I am seeking some banking positions and hope to possibly move up to an ag lender some day. I am also interested in crop insurance. I feel that crop insurance is a very interesting field and would love to be involved with farmers and ranchers first hand.
4. The classes I have enjoyed the most would have to be Ag Law with Alan Schroeder and Ag Finance with Matt Andersen. I like that the Ag College is small enough that I can get that one-on-one help from a teacher, yet the courses are challenging enough that I feel like I am getting a good education.



Brian Lee, supported by the NW Hilston Scholarship

1. I'm from Imperial, Nebraska, which is in the southwest corner (about 45 minutes from Kansas and 30 minutes from Colorado). I have lived there my entire life. I grew up hunting and fishing which sparked my love for the outdoors. I didn't grow up on a farm, but agriculture has always been a big part of my life. My family co-owns a small hay farm which doubles as a great turkey and deer hunting place. I've completed two summer internships with Helena Chemical Company, assisting salesmen with fertilizer and chemical applications and sales. I started my undergraduate degree in 2006 and finished in four years. I majored in Agricultural Business at UW, and picked up minors in Economics, Banking and Financial Services, and Statistics. I was active in the Sigma Chi Fraternity and WYOS as an undergrad.

2. I believe agricultural economics is a very important part of our everyday lives. The interactions between markets, firms, and growers fascinate me. UW has a great AgEcon department with great experience and expertise, which has drawn me to want to study here.

3. I plan on finishing graduate school with a Masters degree in the Spring of 2012. I would like to pursue a position within the USDA, possibly with the National Ag Statistics Service. Also companies like Farm Credit Services and Helena Chemical interest me and have a lot to offer.

4. I really enjoy going to the Cowboys and Cowgirls athletics. Not many schools offer high quality Division I sports so close and inexpensive. Also with Laramie's close locality to the Rocky Mountains I love to go snowboarding and hiking. I have really liked the town of Laramie and its size. It's just about the perfect size for me.



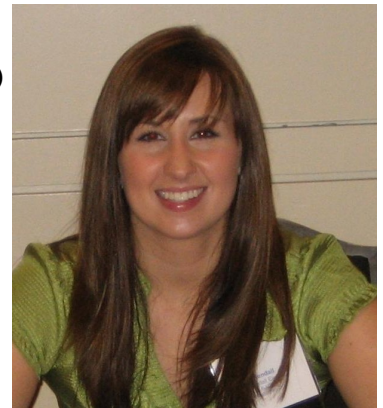
Kendall Eisele, supported by the Joe and Arlene Watt Graduate Scholarship

1. I grew up in Cheyenne, Wyoming on a ranch called the King Ranch. We have a cow/calf operation consisting of 300 Angus and Red Angus cross bred cattle, and we put up about 250 acres of alfalfa grass mix hay in the summer. I helped my family on the ranch during the summers haying, the fall with weaning calves, and the winter/spring with calving season. We run cattle during the summer on USFS allotments and at the USDA Grasslands Research Station where I ride horseback (sometimes by four-wheeler) to check the pastures and cattle. I was a 10-year member in Laramie County 4-H and very active in my Cheyenne FFA chapter, competing in all types of animal showmanship and other related events. I played basketball from grade school all the way to college, and stayed active in other organizations like DECA Marketing Club, the Wyoming Stock Growers Association., and collegiate organizations like Sigma Alpha Professional Ag Sorority and Alpha Kappa Psi Professional Business Fraternity.

2. The things that drew me to UW Ag Econ were my background, undergraduate experience and my internships. I have lived in Wyoming my whole life, and I wanted to get my college education in my home state. I wanted to get an Ag Business degree here at UW, and I had heard so many great things about the College of Agriculture. Furthermore, after spending a semester internship in Washington, DC at the National Association of Conservation Districts and at the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, I was able to experience first hand the policy, economics and agriculture issues that I learned about in my undergraduate courses. But I wanted more, so that is when I decided a graduate program in Ag Econ was right for me.

3. I can honestly say that I see myself in a few years from now working on our family ranch doing the things that I love, but applying more of what I have gained here to better our operation. Also, I would like to become more active in the decisions our state makes related to ag economics and policies. So this might include researching and representing an ag or land focused organization and perhaps working in the Wyoming Legislature.

4. I have enjoyed the seminars that are held by the department. It gives us an opportunity to learn about what is going on in the department as well as spark some new ideas for research in the future. So far, all my classes have been a great learning experience, and I have gained so much from them. I am most impressed by the atmosphere of the AgEcon Dept and how everyone really works together and assists one another, for what ever the reason may be. We are all working for the same cause and that by far is the thing I like the most.



Currently, I am also serving a two-year term as a National Board Director for National Sigma Alpha Professional Agriculture Sorority. In this position, I focus on the importance of woman pursuing professional careers in agriculture and promote scholarship, leadership, service and fellowship among collegiate and honorary members.

Descriptions of College of Agriculture and Natural Resources scholarships can be found at www.uwyo.edu/agprograms/Scholarships.asp

Sydney Burek, supported by the CHS Foundation Scholarship

1. I am currently a junior in Agricultural Business, working on minors in Rangeland Ecology and Watershed Management, and Farm and Ranch Management. I am from eastern Colorado, a little town called Elizabeth to be specific. Throughout my childhood and teen years I have helped out on cattle ranches where I could, with various brandings and simple day work. I would still consider myself “green” though when it comes to ranch work.

2. For as long as I can remember my goal has involved the cattle ranching industry. From being six and having high hopes of becoming the “knocker” at the meat plant to being 12 and planning out all the details for my own cattle ranch. Although these details have drastically changed over the years, I still aspire to own and operate my very own cattle ranch. Due to my lack of background in this field I determined that Agricultural Business was the degree to acquire. My desire to attend the University of Wyoming started fairly young as well. I have always enjoyed the beauty of this extremely rural state and knew after graduating high school Wyoming was where I wanted to be.

3. After completing my Bachelors Degree, which will hopefully be in May of 2011, I plan to work for the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in Wyoming. I have been working with the agency for about a year now as a SCEP Student, which is basically an internship. Since I’m not independently wealthy and I don’t anticipate acquiring a ranch through an inheritance, work appears to be the best way of obtaining the necessary resources to achieve my ultimate goal.

4. I am currently a member of the Range Club, Food Science Club, and Block & Bridle Club, of which I am treasurer, and am on the Undergraduate Range Management Exam Team (URME). I have gained a wealth of knowledge as well as good times by being a part of these activities.



I would have to say my favorite AgEcon class would have to be both AGECE 2020 and 4640, Farm and Ranch Business Management and Advanced Farm and Ranch Business Management, with Professor Larry Held. I have also enjoyed my Range classes and my Livestock Production class.

I have had a wonderful two and a half years here at the University. The environment is perfect, especially for learning. In my experience the professors are always eager to help, even if they don’t personally know the answer to your question they will get you on the right track to figure it out. My advisor, Dale Menkhaus, has been a huge help to me throughout my college career as well.

Samuel Hansen, supported by the Oletha and Loren Likins Scholarship

I'm from Lingle, Wyoming. I was born in Torrington, and have been a Goshen County resident for all 21 years of my life. I first met face to face with agriculture when I was 16, and I decided to spend my summers out on a nearby ranch. While there, I found myself in the very heart of production agriculture. I guess it was the hard work and skills that I learned during those three consecutive summers that really made me want to understand what it takes to make an agricultural business run. With a father and brother working in rural banking and another brother working as an auditor, I guess you could say that I was destined for a career in AgEcon. I plan to graduate in the Spring of 2011 with an Ag Business Major and a Business minor. From there I hope to find a job that will allow me to pursue a career in agricultural lending. I'm enjoying my academic career at UW and am particularly impressed with the College of Agriculture's professors, teachers and staff. They cultivate an environment that is both friendly and engaging. I have enjoyed most of my AgEcon classes, but I have found Ag Finance, Ag Law, and Agribusiness Management to be most valuable to my degree. Most of all I appreciate the opportunities that the college of Agriculture offers to their students in terms of scholarships. It is very evident that a lot of time and money has been invested into College of Agriculture students such as myself.

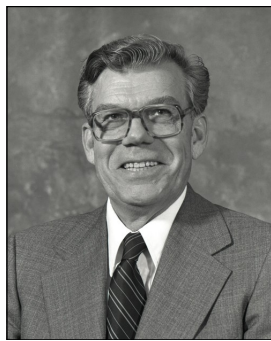


More Online

31 Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics students have Ag College scholarships. Read more profiles at agecon.uwyo.edu—click *In the Margins*.



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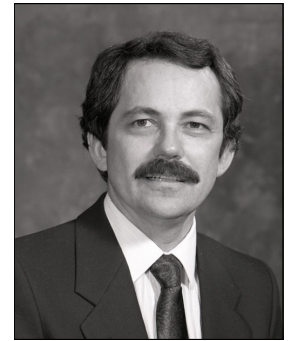


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90 Years of UW AgEcon

Portraits recognizing all the AgEcon Department Heads and their tenure are now on display in the department.

1. Alonzo Frederick Vass, 1920-1957
2. Andrew Vanvig, 1957-1982
3. James St. Clair, 1982-1983
4. Gordon Kearn, 1983-1985
5. Sam Cordes, 1985-1989
6. Glen Whipple, 1989-1992 and 1994-1997
7. James Jacobs, 1993
8. Edward Bradley, 1997-2004
9. Nicole Ballenger, 2004-2005
10. Roger Coupal, 2005-present



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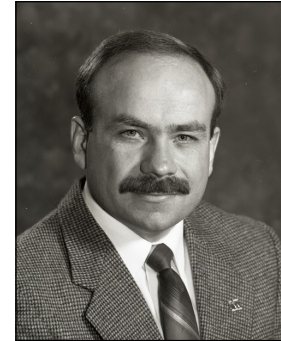
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Spring Seminar Series

The Department has created a monthly presentation series to feature its work. The series includes

February 26—Benjamin Rashford *Agricultural Land Use Change – Implications for Habitat Conservation.*

March 26—David “Tex” Taylor *Habitat Equivalency Analysis for the Pacific Connector Natural Gas Pipeline.*

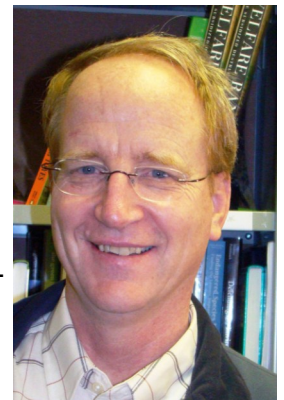
April 9—Tina Willson *The Potential Role of Management Regulations in Controlling Consumer Exposure to Mercury Contaminated Fishery Products.*

April 30—Roger Coupal *TBA*

All presentations are from 3:10 to 4:00 PM in AG 223. The series is organized by Graduate Student Liaison Eric Cropper. For details, contact Eric on ecropper@uwyo.edu. ■

New Faculty: Steve Smutko

We are pleased to welcome Steve Smutko as the new Wyoming Excellence Spicer Distinguished Chair in Environment and Natural Resources. Smutko joins the AgEcon Department in addition to his role as UW’s Spicer Chair, based in the Haub School and Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR). His research interests include natural resources and environmental economics, public decision making and negotiation. Steve has a 40 percent extension appointment. Smutko received his PhD (1995) in economics with a specialization in resource economics at Auburn University in Alabama, an MS (1982) in community and regional planning at North Dakota State University, and a BS (1978) in outdoor recreation from Colorado State University. He has received several honors and awards in extension education. His office is located in ENR - Ruckelshaus Institute, Wyoming Hall; Room #214; Phone: (307)766-5080; e-mail lsmutko@uwyo.edu. ■



In the Margins

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Ben Rashford, Faculty Profile, cont'd

applicants for next year's graduate class and the future looks bright.

Between research, extension, teaching and graduate students I stay pretty busy. But if you can't find me in the office, I am probably floating down a river with a fly rod in hand, bugling (albeit poorly) to elk, or working the upland fields and waterfowl blinds with my Labradors. In retrospect the isolation of Laramie isn't so bad — life is good. ■

AgEcon Fall 2009 Graduates

Nicholas Brauer, Sidney, NE

Amber Michelle Phillips, Dubois, WY

Matthew Rodney Strand, Akron, CO

Douglas Jolly, Hugo, CO



Eric Cropper, Vanvig Awardee Interview, cont'd

resources. I am interested in most natural resource fields including land, mining, forestry, wildlife, etc. I am looking at opportunities both in the private and government sectors of the market. I am exploring my options however, as the job market is currently very tight. I hope to be able to stay in the intermountain West.

Q: What brought you to UW AgEcon?

EC: After finishing my bachelors degree in Economics at Utah State I struggled deciding what direction to take my career. I considered options like getting an MBA, but was never really excited about the idea. Upon researching AgEcon, I found it to be a perfect fit for my interests. It allowed me to study two of my strongest interests — natural resources and economics. It has indeed been a good fit for both my interest and skills. I have loved the program here at UW. The thing I love the most about this program here in Laramie is the faculty. They have always been first class and have proved to be my strongest resource in my studies.

Q: How do you feel about being given the Vanvig Award?

EC: I am honored to have been a recipient of Vanvig Award. It puts me in great company with past Vanvig Award recipients, some of which I know and admire. I am humbled by the recognition given by the faculty in our department. I am very grateful for my advisors, professors, fellow graduate students, family, and friends who have helped me along the way. ■