



Fall 2002

RMA

Resource Modeling Association

Newsletter

www.resourcemodeling.org

www.resourcemodelling.org

Report from Greece, 2002 World Conference

For most of us Greece is a remote part of Europe. For most Greeks Lesvos Island is a remote part of Greece. In a remote location on this island lies a beautiful little town called Sigris. This is where more than 70 delegates gathered together in June for the 2002 meeting in the RMA's series of World Conferences. Most delegates stayed in rooms rented from local villagers and walked through the charming, narrow, winding streets each morning to the Museum of Natural History of the Sigris Petrified Forest. Here a superb breakfast was enjoyed overlooking the beautifully, blue Aegean Sea before the day's proceedings began.

The theme of the conference was "Modelling Biotic and Natural Resources in a Changing Planet" and the keynote speakers expanded on this theme in three well-presented talks. The keynote speakers were Wolfgang Cramer (Germany),

(Continued on page 3)



President's Letter

Jon Conrad

This is a note of appreciation and welcome. I specifically want to thank Tony Charles, our out-going president, Rollie Lamberson, the out-going editor of *Natural Resource Modeling*, and former board members Tony Smith and Stein Steinshamm for their dedication and efforts within the RMA and to our journal. It is also a time to welcome and thank John Hearne for his willingness to serve as the new editor of *Natural Resource Modeling*, and Keith Criddle and Catherine Roberts who be serving as new members on our Board of Governors. So, this is a time of transition, and we need to ask ourselves what we can do make the association and journal more attractive to applied mathematicians, ecologists, and economists with interests in the modeling and management of natural resources. I'd like to offer some suggestions with the hope that they will lead to a discussion among RMA members and to specific improvements.

With regard to our journal, *Natural Resource Modeling*, I would like to work with John and the associate editors to see if we can move manuscript submission, review, and revision to an exclusive, PDF-based, format. This will greatly speed up the review process and will eliminate the need for

photocopying and costly postage. It will allow the editor and associate editors to tap the best reviewers without being delayed by national postal systems. The downside is that it will require contributors and reviewers to be able to convert and send files as PDF, email, attachments.

A second idea, the result of a proposal by Catherine Roberts, is to try to introduce natural resource modeling to other associations and perhaps pick up new members and submissions to *Natural Resource Modeling*. Catherine offered to organize a special session in Natural Resource Modeling that would be comprised of a series of 1/2-hour presentations held at the Joint Mathematics Meetings, in Phoenix, Arizona, January 7-10, 2004. She would need to identify five or more "established" scientists willing to commit to participating. If the proposal is accepted by the American Mathematics Society, additional slots would be available and abstracts would be submitted to Catherine to complete the session. (If you are interested, please contact Catherine at croberts@holycross.edu before December 31st, 2002.)

(Continued on page 2)

Student Winners

Thanasis Kizos received one of the awards for outstanding student talks at the Lesvos meetings. His talk, co-authored with I. Spilanis, was titled "The Transformation of Landscape: Modeling Policy and Social Impacts on the Agricultural Landscape of Lesvos". Kizos is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Environmental Studies at the University of the Aegean. His forthcoming Ph.D. thesis is titled "The Dynamics of agricultural landscape: Evaluating rural development measures in the Aegean islands". He has several other publications related to agricultural landscape and agrotourism. His e-mail address is akiz@env.aegean.gr.

The other winner was **Peter Baxter** who is completing his Ph.D. dissertation, "Modeling the impacts of African elephant on woody plant diversity in Kruger National Park, South Africa," under the guidance of Professor Wayne Getz at the University of California at Berkeley. Peter began his modeling career in quite a different setting, working as an actuarial trainee in a life assurance office in his native Ireland. After receiving a Diploma in Actuarial Techniques from the Institute of Actuaries in London, he left the business world to pursue topics closer to his heart, enrolling in the Natural Sciences degree program at Trinity College Dublin. Specializing in Environmental Sciences, he was awarded a first-class honors degree, together with Henry Ford Prizes for exam performance and thesis quality. He arrived at Berkeley seeking to apply his previous demographic modeling experience to the recent advances being made in the theoretical ecology and conservation biology fields. A previous visit to South Africa whetted his appetite for conservation research in that region and his research project, motivated by a new elephant management plan in Kruger National Park and a collaboration with Professor Norman Owen-Smith at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, provided an ideal opportunity to meet these goals. His studies in South Africa have been facilitated by a Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, Regents' Fellowship, and the Andrew and Mary Rocca Travel Scholarship from U.C. Berkeley.

Peter's research interests lie particularly in consumer-resource interactions, the role of spatial heterogeneity in ecological dynamics, and the consideration of biodiversity issues. He hopes to eventually return to Europe to pursue further research in these areas. In his spare time, he likes to play piano and scuba dive. When a piano is available, Peter is the life and soul of lab parties, able to play any song on request that he has heard before. After a few glasses of Guinness stout, he has also been known to sing while he plays. Fortunately by then all other party goers have also had a few glasses of stout. Peter will be sorely missed by advisors and lab mates when he graduates from Berkeley next year.

RMA Board

Jon Conrad, President
Applied Economics & Mgt
Cornell University
455 Warren Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853
JMC16@cornell.edu

Tony Charles, Past-President
Finance and Mgt Science
Saint Mary's University
Halifax NS B3H 3C3
Canada
t.charles@stmarys.ca

Kenneth S. Lyon, Treasurer
Department of Economics
Utah State University
Logan, UT, 84322-3530
U.S.A.
klyon@b202.usu.edu

John Hearne
Journal Editor
School of Mathematics
University of Natal,
Private Bag X01
3209 Scottsville
Pietermaritzburg
SOUTH AFRICA
Hearne@math.unp.ac.za

Rollie Lamberson, Executive
Secretary
Department of Mathematics
Humboldt State University
Arcata, CA 95521-4957
RHL1@axe.humboldt.edu

Robert R. Alexander, Director
Dept of Applied & Intl Econ
Massey University
Private Bag 11222
Palmerston North
NEW ZEALAND

R.R.Alexander@massey.ac.nz

Keith Criddle, Director
Department of Economics
Utah State University
Logan UT 84322-3530
kcriddle@econ.usu.edu

Catherine Roberts, Director
Dept of Math & Comp Science
College of the Holy Cross
Worcester MA 01610
croberts@holycross.edu

Karl & Diane Beres
Newsletter Co-editors
Dept of Math & Comp Science
Ripon College
P.O.Box 248
Ripon, WI 54971-0248
U.S.A.
beresk@ripion.edu
beresd@ripion.edu

RMA WEBSITE:
www.resourcemodell.org
OR
www.resourcemodeling.org

President

(Continued from page 1)

As I write this I must confess that I have not had a chance to study the finances of the RMA or our journal. I suspect more subscriptions to *Natural Resource Modeling* and more members in the RMA would be welcomed, but I am not advocating a large increase in membership. Quite frankly, I like the size of our conferences. I like not having five concurrent sessions that I must choose from. I like the small collegial nature of our association where everyone can make fun of economists (we're easy targets!). What I want to see is the interest and involvement of new, "younger" (yes, I'm old) members who share our view that mathematicians, statisticians, ecologists, and economists can talk meaningfully to each other on important resource management problems and have fun doing it.

Lesvos, 2002

Michel Loreau (France) and Marten Scheffer (The Netherlands). The quality of these talks inspired outgoing NRM editor, Rollie Lamberson, to request the authors to write up the presentations in a form suitable for publication in a special issue of Natural Resource Modeling. So all members will eventually get to enjoy these presentations.

In keeping with tradition at RMA meetings the contributed papers comprised a rich diversity of fields, problems, and issues from around the world. From modelling small squirrel populations on Lesvos Island to managing elephant in Africa, from modelling wolf-scavenger food webs in Yellowstone to the sustainable agrosilvopastoral system in Bangladesh. Nearly 50 papers were presented in all, and several posters.

The local organising committee comprising Yiannis Matsinos, Andreas Troumbis and Nicholaos Zouros did a superb job and the programme ran like clockwork. Admittedly, the clock was always 10 minutes behind. But Andreas proudly told us that is a Greek tradition! In addition to the work programme there was a relaxed and interesting social programme. This included a tour around the museum, a trip to a petrified forest, a banquet followed by an impressive display of traditional Greek dancing, a talk on Ouzo production, and apparently some late night beach activities for those still awake in the small hours.

This was a conference that will be remembered and talked about for a long time. For some the talks will linger in the memories, for some it will be the social activities, for others the food alone made the trip worthwhile. For most of us it will be remembered for all these things and the superb setting.

—John Hearne

