



## *Ecological Society of America* **Rapid Response Team Update**

*Serving Society through Ecological Expertise*

*Summer 2007*

### **\* Informing Congress...**

- In January, Jason Neff and Alan Townsend, members of the biogeochemistry RRT, responded to a request from Senator Dianne Feinstein's (D-CA) office to evaluate ideas regarding climate change legislation.
- Also in January, climate and biogeochemistry team members Lisa Graumlich, Alan Townsend, Jason Neff, and Lou Pitelka, assisted the Congressional Research Service—a congressional support agency—in reporting on climate change effects on ecosystems, biodiversity, and wildlife.
- In May, RRT member Bill Schlesinger provided testimony at a Joint Subcommittee Oversight Hearing: “The Future of Fossil Fuels: Geological and Terrestrial Sequestration of Carbon Dioxide.” The hearing involved the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands, and the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources.
- Also in May, invasive species RRT member Richard Mack met with congressional offices, personnel from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, U.S. Forest Service officials, and the Congressional Research Service to promote ESA's position paper “*Biological Invasions: Recommendations for U.S. Policy and Management.*”



Dick Mack meets with Legislative Assistant Chrissy Poe in the Office of Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) about invasive species issues.

- In early June, RRT member Gary Lovett, along with Charley Driscoll from Syracuse University, met with five congressional offices to highlight concerns about proposed budget cuts for Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) surface water monitoring programs.



Gary Lovett speaks with his Congresswoman, Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), about restoring funding for EPA surface water monitoring programs.

### **\* *Supporting Funding for Science...***

- RRT members responded to an ESA Action Alert to ask Congress to exempt the National Science Foundation (NSF) from the Continuing Resolution freeze and to fund NSF at the fiscal year 2007 levels passed by the Appropriations Committees. Congress did provide NSF's Research and Related Activities with a 7.7 percent increase.
- Science Education RRT members Alan Berkowitz and Carol Brewer participated in this year's Spring 2007 Congressional Visits Day event sponsored by the Biological Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC) and the Coalition on Funding Agricultural Research Missions (CoFARM). The group of 40 scientists, broken into small teams, met with over 70 Congressional offices to bolster support for agricultural and biological research and education at NSF and through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Research Initiative.



On Capitol Hill: ESA Director of Education Jason Taylor with Science Education RRT members Carol Brewer and Alan Berkowitz

### **\* *In the Media...***

#### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions...**

In November, 2006, members of the climate RRT helped ESA prepare a statement on climate change that was released when the Supreme Court began hearing oral arguments in the case of *Massachusetts et. al. vs. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)*. In a 5-4 ruling on the case, the Supreme Court determined that the EPA has the authority to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from new motor vehicles. ESA's statement is available at:

<http://www.esa.org/pao/newsroom/pressReleases2006/11292006.php>

## Climate Change...

In February, National Public Radio's Earth & Sky program asked scientists "What would you like to tell the American public, right now, about global climate change?" Two of the 26 featured quotes were from RRT members Alan Townsend and Lisa Graumlich:

### Alan R. Townsend ... "no longer on the distant horizon"

*"Global climate change is no longer just a threat on the distant horizon. It is with us today, and it is already affecting the lives of people around the world. We can do something about it, but now is the time for nations everywhere to begin those efforts in earnest. The more we delay, the more we increase the probability of abrupt and truly significant changes in climate that would have enormous social and economic consequences."*



### Lisa Graumlich ... "national parks"

*"For the past 25 years, I have been doing field work at high elevations in the mountains of the western US. I have worked in the premier national parks, including Glacier, Yellowstone, Mt. Rainier, Yosemite, and Sequoia. In all of these parks, we are seeing the fingerprint of global climate change. Glaciers are disappearing and plants, animals and insect pests are moving upslope at unprecedented rates. Our national parks can no longer be protected from human influence by building a fence or hiring park rangers. Recall that national parks are an American invention. In fact, the writer Wallace Stegner often remarked that the idea of national parks was the best idea that we ever had. It's my fervent hope that we find the will to address global climate change in order to ensure that the parks and wild places of the West continue to delight and inspire future generations."*