S.J. and Jessie E. Quinney Foundation Gives $5 Million to Natural Resources

The S.J. and Jessie E. Quinney Foundation formally announced its donation of $5 million to Utah State University’s College of Natural Resources during a February 12 campus gathering.

The announcement was made by The Very Reverend Frederick Q. “Rick” Lawson, grandson of the late S.J. “Joe” and Jessie Quinney and a foundation trustee, at a luncheon celebrating the family’s longstanding support of the college and the university.

“I remember my grandparents’ vision for Utah and their vision for USU’s College of Natural Resources,” said Lawson. “They wanted the people of Utah and the world to be able to enjoy and protect the state’s natural resources and pass them on to future generations.”

USU President Stan L. Albrecht said gifts made by the family and foundation “allow Utah State to become a great university.” He noted that today’s gift announcement raises support received from the Quinney family and its foundation to nearly $22 million. Much of that support has funded student scholarships.

Luncheon speaker Thad Box, CNR dean from 1970-89, said Joe Quinney made his first gift to the college in 1970. “Joe told me he didn’t want the money spent on things; he wanted it to be spent on people, programs and ideas.” Box said, “Joe wanted to make Utah a better place.”

Speaker Fee Busby, professor in the Department of Wildland Resources and also a former dean, said the Quinney Foundation’s faithful support “has made the college immeasurably better.”

About $2 million of the gift will provide continued funding for the Quinney Scholars program. Established in 1989, the program has provided scholarships to more than 200 undergraduate students and fellowships to 50 doctoral students.

The new gift enables the college to also offer fellowships to master’s students.

Featured speaker Amanda Murray, a doctoral student and Quinney Fellow, thanked the foundation “on behalf of all the undergraduate and graduate students who have benefited from the Quinney Scholars program.”

The next largest portion of the gift – $1.2 million – will go to the college’s S.J. and Jessie E. Natural Resources Quinney Library. Established in 1992, the library houses more than 60,000 items and supports the programs and research of the college’s academic departments, institutes and centers.

The remainder of the Quinney Foundation gift supports the college’s program development in Bioregional Planning, the Aspen Alliance, Utah’s Rivers and Riparian Restoration, Sustainable Living in Utah and Great Basin Restoration, along with the college’s Academic Service Center, distance education programs and technological facilities.

“This gift will be redeemed as we create opportunities for students and as we pursue discoveries that change the very quality of our lives,” said Nat B. Frazer, CNR dean. “We express our humble appreciation for the foundation’s support and the trust it reflects.”

Both Joe and Jessie Quinney were alums of USU, then known as the Agricultural College of Utah. Joe earned a degree in 1916; Jessie in 1917. Passionate supporters of Utah’s educational and cultural endeavors, as well as its natural resources, Joe and Jessie generously donated their time and resources to a variety of causes. Joe was a founder of Utah’s famous Alta Ski Resort which, he was proud to say, converted land used and abandoned by one industry into another of equal value to society.
For the second consecutive year, undergraduate scholars at Utah State University captured the top award at an international gathering of range scientists. USU Range Club team members Casey Addy, Ashley Hansen and Katie Santini won the Rangeland Cup at the 61st annual Society for Range Management meeting held Jan. 26-31 in Louisville, Ky.

“We’re proud of our Range Club for its outstanding performance at the SRM conference,” says Johan du Toit, head of USU’s Department of Wildland Resources. “The members are shining ambassadors for our department, college and university.”

Mentored by Wildland Resources faculty member Chris Call, the USU group bested teams from throughout North America. The team received a plaque and a traveling trophy that will, once again, make its home in the College of Natural Resources.

Preparation for the undergraduate team problem-solving competition started last September when the SRM presented this year’s challenge to competitors: “What role does livestock grazing play in the long-term conservation of rangelands? What are the benefits and consequences of livestock grazing in this contemporary conservation-livestock production interface? Explain your answer using scientific literature and design an educational program to inform the public.”

“That’s a very broad topic,” says Santini, Natural Resources senator and a member of last year’s team that won the SRM’s inaugural Rangeland Cup. “I knew that we shouldn’t focus too much in a specific area. We needed to keep a broad approach.”

Call says a number of conference participants urged the USU students to further investigate ways to implement their educational outreach ideas.

“That is an honor in itself,” he says. “The USU team was the only team to use case studies and bring the topic to life. Our team had a sense of camaraderie and direction from the start,” he says. “Katie is a wildlife major and Ashley and Casey are both conservation and restoration ecology majors. They complemented each other in terms of skills, experience and knowledge.”

“We had a lot of help from our faculty,” says Hansen. “No one ever said ‘no’ to our requests. Roger Banner, Fee Busby, Mark Brunson, John Malechek and others helped us a lot with the project.”

During the Louisville conference, team members and other USU students participated in a variety of competitions, lectures and activities, including SRM’s “On-the-Spot” job interview program. Federal agencies, including the USFS and BLM, conduct a 4-day application process with graduating college students and recent graduates in which the agencies provide entry-level job offers to successful applicants.

“Utah State had a strong contingent at Louisville and I was delighted to learn that USU received the highest number of job offers out of all other universities participating in the On-the-Spot interviews,” du Toit says. (Mary-Ann Muffoletto, Utah State Today, February 2008)

**USU Alum Receives National Award**

Doug Johnson, a USDA scientist at Utah State University, is the 2007 recipient of the Frank N. Meyer Medal for Plant Genetic Resources. Administered by the Crop Science Society of America, the award recognizes distinctive service to the National Plant Germplasm System.

Johnson is a plant physiologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Research Service Forage and Range Research Laboratory on the USU campus and serves as an adjunct professor in the university’s Department of Wildland Resources and the Department of Plants, Soils and Climate. He received the Meyer Medal in a November 2007 ceremony during the CSSA annual meeting in New Orleans.

**USU Student Fisheries Group**

Utah State University’s student subunit of the Western Division of the American Fisheries Society was named Subunit of the Year at the society’s 137th annual meeting September 2-6 in San Francisco.

“Student Subunits of the Year are selected on the basis of their effectiveness in aquatic stewardship, member services and information transfer and outreach,” Robert Hughes, WDAFS president.

Hughes praised the Aggies’ conservation work with the Cache Anglers Chapter of Trout Unlimited, which includes the annual salmonfly relocation project led by the USU-based National Aquatic Monitoring Center.

“Our AFS student subunit has done an amazing job of developing and maintaining a series of educational workshops for fisheries professionals,” said Chris Luecke, head of USU’s Department of Watershed Sciences. “During the past five years, this group has provided up-to-date methodologies in statistical analyses, bioenergetics modeling and geographic information sciences to our state and federal biologists.”

The consequences of these activities, he said, have improved management of aquatic resources in Utah and throughout the Intermountain West.

The group is part of Utah’s statewide Bonneville Chapter of the AFS. (Mary-Ann Muffoletto, Utah State Today, October 2007)

**Fall Valedictorian, 2007**

Congratulations to Spencer Garland Allred, CNR's Fall 2007 Valedictorian. Spencer chose Dr. Christopher Call of the Wildland Resources Department to be his escort during the graduation ceremonies.

Spencer has accepted employment with the BLM as a Range Management Specialist. Spencer shares that he is excited to be promoting the concept of using natural resources for multiple purposes, while ensuring future generations can enjoy the wonders of the outdoors.
The Department of Watershed Sciences welcomes Jiming Jin. Jin received a BS in meteorology from Nanjing University of Information Science & Technology, P. R. China, and an MS and PhD in atmospheric sciences from the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He also received a PhD in hydrology and water resources with a minor in remote sensing and spatial analysis, from the University of Arizona in 2002. He worked for the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory as a postdoctoral researcher and scientist prior to accepting a position with the Departments of Watershed Sciences and Plants, Soils and Climate. He still holds a guest scientist position at the Berkeley Laboratory.

His research interests include regional weather and climate modeling and prediction and land surface processes modeling with a particular focus on the interactions between the land surface and atmosphere. He has been improving current climate and hydrological computer models to better understand and predict our environment changes by combining observations and satellite data. He enjoys playing basketball, ping-pong, and hiking. Welcome Jiming!

**New Faculty in CNR**

Jiming Jin

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At the Utah Chapter of the Wildlife Society meeting, February 2008, Chris Perkins and Leah Smith, masters students studying with Terry Messmer, had their essays chosen by the Board of the Utah Chapter of The Wildlife Society and they were each awarded $1,000 scholarships to help support them in furthering their educations. "Great job Leah and Chris!"

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The Society for Range Management made three presentations for Outstanding Young Range Professional, and two of those went to USU alums!

Cynthia (Driggs) McArthur, who earned a B.S. in Environmental Studies in 1998, was recognized for her work as a range management specialist for the USDA Forest Service. The citation includes this statement that illustrates how her ENVS education benefited her: "Cindy's role extends beyond knowing the appropriate scientific principles to apply. Cindy works with a broad range of individuals and groups and has facilitated resolutions in contentious situations while always maintaining professionalism and decorum." She is now part of the range staff in the agency's Washington office.

Cody Scott, who earned a Ph.D. in Range Science in 1995 working with Fred Provenza, was honored for being "a great research scientist and extraordi¬nary range management instructor." He is a Professor of Animal Science at Angelo State University in Texas.

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**Student & Alumni Awards**

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Ben Baldwin, project leader for the Tehabi internship program in USU's Department of Environment and Society, was named Outstanding Young Range Management Professional of the Year by the Utah Section of the Society for Range Management.

He was recognized for his significant contributions to the professional training of professionals in range management and other natural resources fields as director of Tehabi internship program. Tehabi is a USU program that provides students with opportunities to participate in mentored, value-added internships offered by the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and non-governmental land management organizations.

Baldwin is known to students in USU's College of Natural Resources for his advising talents and willingness to "go the extra mile" for students. Ben is also conducting various technical assistance projects for federal agencies and taking courses toward the PhD in Human Dimensions of Ecosystem, Science and Management.

(Contributed by Mark Brunson)

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**Restoring Sagebrush Steppe**

Twenty years ago universities in the West were sending graduate students out to find ways to eradicate sagebrush. Now these same universities, including Utah State University, are searching for ways to restore the sagebrush environments they helped destroy.

Professor Thomas C. Edwards of the Department of Wildland Resources said, "There are several overarching reasons why the attention on sagebrush steppe has increased: The explosive population in the Intermountain West, energy development, and serious disturbances such as fire, and the conversion from perennial to annual grasses such as cheatgrass."

Edward's has assembled a team of USU students to analyze the impacts of sages-steppe restoration methods on plants, birds and mammals for the ShrubMAP Project. These students will spend the next few years analyzing the effects of different restoration methods.

More than 500 animals, including insects, depend heavily on the sagebrush. "Pygmy rabbits feed on sagebrush year-round but depend on it in winter when it makes up 90 percent of their diet," wrote Tammy Wilson, USU graduate student on the ShrubMAP project.

Over the years, the researchers of this project and others hope to bring about the successful rejuvenating of the West's sagebrush environment.

To read the full article published in the federal publication People, Land & Water go to: http://www.peoplelandandwater.gov  (Shauna Leavitt)

ShrubMap Project team, from left: Dr. Thomas C. Edwards, U. S. Geological Survey, and his graduate students Tammy Wilson, Julie Ripplinger, Russell Norvell, Roger Stringham and Craig Faulhaber.
Alumni Profile - Don Bermant
1978 B.S. in Range Science

Don Bermant came west to USU in the mid '70's to study range science in the College of Natural Resources. In 1978, while a student, he saw an opportunity to use his entrepreneurial spirit along with his growing interest and knowledge of range science. Congress had just passed a law requiring mining companies to replant and reclaim their diggings. The mining companies needed large amounts of seeds to accomplish this and Bermant knew where to find them. He rounded up fellow students and pointed out the plants that he needed seeds from and offered to pay by the pound for the seeds they collected. The students literally beat the bushes with tennis racquets and brooms, collecting seeds from the native plants on tarps and in bags for cleaning and sale.

Today this enterprise has grown into Granite Seed Company, located in Lehi, Utah. Granite Seed Company is now the largest conservation seed company in the west, selling millions of pounds of seeds from both native and exotic plants to government agencies, private landowners and Indian reservations. Dean Nat Frazer toured Granite Seed Company in October with Bermant, who is CEO of the company. As the public land wildfire problem in the West continues to grow, so does the demand for fire resistant plant seed. The recent Milford Flats fire, one of the largest in Utah's history, is a prime example of this. Bermant sold the Bureau of Land Management most of the seed to reclaim this 300,000-acre burn.

Bermant described to Dean Frazer his appreciation for the range science training he received at USU and indicated that he requires all of his key sales personnel to have range science backgrounds.

Many USU CNR range science alumni end up working for public land management agencies, but Bermant points out that his business proves that there can be a vital private sector side to the field as well.

In the future, Dean Frazer hopes to establish internship opportunities with companies like Granite Seed to encourage CNR students to consider entrepreneurial business development opportunities as Don Bermant has done.

In Memory
1935, Basil K. Crane, Forestry
1937, Sherman Hansen, Forestry
1937, Doyle Lund, Forest Range Management
1937, Clyde Madsen, Fisheries & Wildlife
1939, Leon Sorensen, Range Management
1942, Lorin Dedrickson, Wildlife Management
1947, Burton Silcock, Range Management
1948, George Tripp, Fisheries & Wildlife
1948, Bud Simpson, Range Management
1949, Richard Hansen, Ecology—Rangeland
1950, Robert Eberhardt, Fisheries Management
1950, Lavar Ware, Fisheries & Wildlife
1951, Eugene Kridler, Fisheries & Wildlife
1955, Robert Ferguson, Wildlife Management
1959, William Davis, Forest Management
1959, Merle Prince, Forestry
1962, Terral King, Range Management
1975, Franklin Curtin, Range Science
1983, Issa Denda, Range Science
1984, Charles E. Harris, Fisheries & Wildlife
1984, Mark S. Rorick, Recreation Resources Mgt.
1989, Eugene Farmer, Watershed Science