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Recommended Citation

Center for International Education, "Spring 2012, Faculty Spotlight: Gregg Moore: Longstanding mangrove research leads to study abroad and renewed environmental stewardship in Grenada" (2012). *International Educator: the Newsletter of the UNH Global Engagement Editorial Board*. 132.

https://scholars.unh.edu/international_news/132

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International Educator

The UNH Center for International Education Newsletter

Spring 2012

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: GREGG MOORE

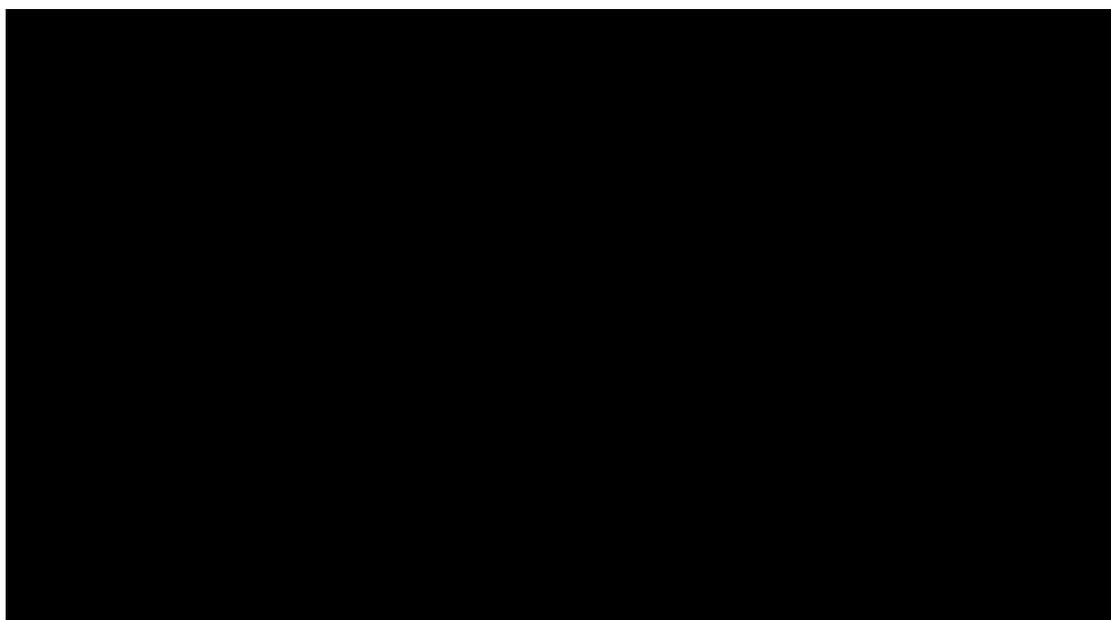
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LONGSTANDING MANGROVE RESEARCH LEADS TO STUDY ABROAD AND RENEWED ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP IN GRENADA



Gregg Moore, research assistant professor in biological sciences, started building his deep connection with Grenada and its mangrove forests even before grad school. He has been going back each year ever since—often 2-3 times—working on environmental issues with local community groups, NGO's and governmental agencies. “Grenada has become a sort of second home for me,” according to Moore. “I've made many dear friends and recently was appointed adjunct professor at St. George's University there. Their faculty continues to be dedicated collaborators in my efforts on the island and in the region.”

From 2003-2005, Moore headed up Earthwatch Expeditions, documenting plant diversity in the tiny volcanic islands of the southern Grenadines while continuing various mangrove restoration and conservation initiatives on the main island. Over the years, his projects have gotten a lot of recognition and have helped build community, environmental education, employment opportunities and stewardship. “Our efforts have received international grants and awards from organizations such as the United Nations Development Program, The Nature Conservancy, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,” Moore happily reports.



Working in Grenada also has had a valuable impact on his classroom teaching here at UNH. “I’ve been able to bring international perspectives on restoration challenges—successes and failures—that provide important comparisons and teaching moments, like unique examples of wetland plants and their adaptations to ecological extremes. In fact, my research served as the basis for my tropical ecology study abroad program (MEFB 616) that’s held on location in Grenada each January.”

Conducting basic field work is a core part of the J-Term class, whether it is collecting water chemistry data, vegetation surveys, or other parameters. UNH students partner with their counterparts at St. George’s University. They have guest lectures from St. George’s, local NGOs and community groups. “For one UNH student last year, her J-term experience led to a summer internship with one of the local conservation groups,” Moore recalls. “She focused on protecting endangered sea turtles that nest on a beach in front of one of the largest and most threatened mangrove forests on the island.”

Moore finds frequent comparisons and analogies between temperate and tropical communities: “When you get right down to it, Grenada and the NH Seacoast share many of the same issues—pressures from development, diminishing resources, challenges for land managers and conservation, and the growing threat of the effects of climate change and sea-level rise. We can apply similar logic and tools to think critically about them, regardless of whether it’s a salt marsh in New Hampshire, or a mangrove swamp in the Caribbean.”

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