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UNH's Whittemore School Economics Seminar Explores Valuing Recreational Use in a Protected Marine Area

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DURHAM, N.H. - George R. Parsons, professor of marine studies and economics at the University of Delaware, presents his research investigating the value of recreation in a protected marine area as part of the Economics Seminar sponsored by the University of New Hampshire's Whittemore School of Business and Economics.

Parsons will discuss "Valuing the Recreational Use of a Marine Protected Area in the Caribbean," Friday, April 25, from 2:10 to 3:30 p.m. in Room 318 McConnell Hall. The lecture is free and open to the public. Visitor parking at UNH is located just off Route 152A Mast Road and a free shuttle bus service is available to campus locations.

Parsons and graduate student Steve Thur are studying the Caribbean island of Bonaire, located about 50 miles north of Venezuela. Bonaire is noted for its scuba diving in a protected marine park with a thriving coral reef system. According to Parsons, many reef systems are being lost as a result of fishing practices, land-based pollution and natural changes. The study is seeking to estimate the economic loss of a potential decline in Bonaire's reef system that might impact recreational scuba diving by surveying Bonaire divers and inferring economic values for various levels of loss. The study results will be useful for benefit-cost analysis, setting dive tag fees that finance the park, and damage assessments.

Parsons received his Ph.D. in economics from the University of Wisconsin. He is currently the associate editor of the journal *Marine Resource Economics* and serves on the board of directors for the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists.

The Economics Seminar is a weekly event of the Whittemore School's graduate degree program in economics that highlights the research of the school's faculty, graduate students and visiting academics. The presentations are interspersed with questions from the audience.

For more information about the seminars, contact Karen Conway, graduate program director and associate professor of economics, at 862-3386 or ksconway@cisunix.unh.edu. Advance copies of Parsons' paper are available by calling Sinthy Kounlasa at 862-3457 or sending an email to: sinthy.kounlasa@unh.edu.

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