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## Seacoast Science Café Explores the Role of Forests in Earth's Ecosystem Nov. 14, 2012

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*UNH Media Relations*

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## Media Relations

November 7, 2012

### **Seacoast Science Café Explores the Role of Forests in Earth's Ecosystem Nov. 14, 2012**

DURHAM, N.H. -- We all know that the importance of a forest doesn't stop at leaf peeping season, but how important are tree populations in the functioning of our planet's biosphere? The third event in the Seacoast Science Café series will explore that question Wednesday, Nov. 14, 2012, at 6 p.m. when Scott Ollinger, professor of ecosystem ecology and remote sensing at the University of New Hampshire, presents his most recent research to the public for both education and discussion in The Portsmouth Brewery's Jimmy LaPanza Lounge.

Ollinger's research interests span a variety of topics within the fields of ecology and biogeochemistry including regional analysis of forest productivity across the northeastern U.S. He is also a director of the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) and a co-investigator of the NASA-led North American Carbon Program, which examines the role of North America's ecosystems in regulating the Earth's climate.

The Science Café format brings the discourse out of the university and into the larger community. Cameron Wake, UNH research associate professor of Earth sciences and the director of Carbon Solutions New England, initiated the partnership with Portsmouth Brewery to sponsor the series. "Organizing the Seacoast Science Café is important because it provides a new opportunity for researchers to engage in dialogue with seacoast residents about the science that directly impacts all of our lives," said Wake. "We hope café goers will take away not just information, but also an understanding of just how important these issues are."

Hosting the event at a brewpub puts the science café in a great tradition of people gathering together over a pint to discuss issues of the times. "There's a great equalization that takes place when people sit down to chat over a beer," said Peter Egelston, president of Portsmouth Brewery and café co-host. "A setting like this whittles away the feeling of a lecture and, we believe, encourages folks to feel like they can join the conversation, even if they don't know much about the topic right away. Engaging the issue is the whole point and we hope people of all different viewpoints and backgrounds will join in." In other words, everyone is welcomed to come and learn more about the world around them. No reservations or tickets.

The Café series is co-sponsored by UNH and EPSCoR, New Hampshire's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research. Each of the four cafés focuses on a regional topic and how it relates to global climate change.

Another partner of the Seacoast Science Café is WSCA 106.1 FM, Portsmouth's Community Radio. The station will record each event for replay on the radio, as well as for download as a podcast. The

broadcast of this particular café will be aired Dec. 4 at 9 a.m. You can find the podcast archive on the web at: <http://nhepscor.org/sciencecafe>.

The Portsmouth Brewery is New Hampshire's original brewpub serving award-winning beers and creative cuisine featuring locally-sourced ingredients in the heart of Market Square since 1991. We serve all types and are proud to enable folks to do good while drinking well through a number of philanthropic activities.

NH EPSCoR is a program funded by the National Science Foundation to build research capacity in the state. Its current project, "Ecosystems and Society," brings together scientists to better understand the environment and the complex interactions of the climate-ecological-human system, as well as to provide essential information for state decision makers. Ecosystems in New Hampshire and the surrounding northern forest region provide a wide range of services that are critical to the region's inhabitants. The research effort is led by UNH in collaboration with Dartmouth College, Plymouth State University's Center for the Environment, and St. Anselm College.

For further information contact JT Thompson, minister of propaganda at Portsmouth Brewery [jt@smuttynose.com](mailto:jt@smuttynose.com) or Evelyn Jones with NH EPSCoR at [evelyn.jones@unh.edu](mailto:evelyn.jones@unh.edu).

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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