

Media Relations

February 4, 2013

Seacoast Science Café Explores Lyme Disease, Lead Poisoning Feb. 13

Durham, N.H. – Public health in New Hampshire is the subject of the next Seacoast Science Café at the Portsmouth Brewery Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2013, at 6 p.m. At the first in the spring series of cafes, University of New Hampshire professors Michael Palace and Rosemary Caron will discuss two health threats familiar to New Englanders: Lyme disease and lead poisoning.

Seacoast Science Cafés provide a unique chance for members of the public to learn about issues in contemporary science from scientists who lead the research in the relaxed atmosphere of a pub.

Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne disease in the world and infections can lead to severe health problems. Because of the complicated aspects of this disease, it requires knowledge of ecology of multiple host species, which is directly tied to vegetation structure and landscape characteristics.

Lead poisoning is a public health issue that predominantly persists in children residing in urban communities in New England. How common is childhood lead poisoning in New Hampshire? What are the consequences for children with elevated lead levels? How can we prevent children from being poisoned by lead?

Palace is an environmental scientist focusing on tropical ecology, landscape ecology, and geospatial science. His research ranges from field studies of forest structure to using satellite imagery in an effort to both predict disease and understand past human settlement patterns. He is an assistant research professor in the Earth System Research Center at the Institute of Earth, Oceans, and Space at UNH. He is a faculty fellow at the Sustainability Institute and coordinator for the environmental science interdisciplinary undergraduate major, both at UNH.

Caron is a toxicologist and epidemiologist who works with communities by using participatory research methods to reduce public health issues affecting their populations. She is an associate professor in the department of health management and policy and former director of the master's of public health program at UNH. She is also a UNH Carsey Fellow and faculty member in the UNH master's program in development, policy and practice. Prior to joining academia, Caron practiced public health at the Manchester Health Department; Department of Health and Human Services in Concord; and in an environmental-based consulting firm in Mass.

Their presentations will be in The Portsmouth Brewery's Jimmy LaPanza Lounge, but attendees should feel free to come in early for a bite and a pint.

Other cafés in the spring series are:

March 6: Sustainable Communities, Public Health, and Transportation: Connecting the Dots

April 10: Going Underground--How the Soil Beneath our Feet Affects Climate

May 8: Warmer Water, Riskier Coasts: How Climate Change is Affecting Shellfish and Recreation

May 15: The Science of Beer

The Seacoast Science Café provides a unique opportunity for researchers to talk with Seacoast residents about the science that directly impacts our lives. The casual environment encourages people to join the conversation, even if they don't know much about the topic right away. Everyone is welcome, and no tickets or reservations are necessary. The Café series is co-sponsored by University of New Hampshire and EPSCoR, New Hampshire's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research.

Portsmouth's Community Radio, WSCA 106.1 FM, will record each event for replay on the radio, as well as via podcast. Podcasts are archived on the web at <http://nhepscor.org/sciencecafe>.

NH EPSCoR is a program funded by the National Science Foundation to increase research capacity in the state. Its current project, "Ecosystems and Society," seeks to better understand the complex interactions between ecosystems, land use and climate, as well as to provide essential information for state decision makers.

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.

For further questions or to be added to a mailing list regarding future events and broadcasts, contact: Evelyn Jones NH EPSCoR at (603) 862-1804 or Evelyn.Jones@unh.edu or JT Thompson of the Portsmouth Brewery at jt@smuttynose.com.

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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