

## Media Relations

March 28, 2013

### Going Underground: April 10 Science Café Looks at Soil and Climate



Serita Frey, professor of soil microbial ecology at the University of New Hampshire.

DURHAM, N.H. – From climate regulation to rain forest clearing to water pollution, dirt has a bigger impact on the world's ecosystems than most of us imagine. Soil and the processes it carries out is the subject of the next Portsmouth Science Café Wednesday, April 10, 2013, at 6 p.m. at the Portsmouth Brewery's Jimmy LaPanza Lounge.

Serita Frey, professor of soil microbial ecology at the University of New Hampshire, and Alix Contosta, a postdoctoral research scientist at UNH, will present their most recent soil research and lead a discussion

about how the quality of the soil determines the capacity of land to support natural ecosystems and human society. As humanity becomes increasingly urbanized, the researchers say, fewer people have close contact with the soil, and individuals tend to lose sight of the many ways in which they depend on soils for their prosperity and survival. This forum will explore the roles soils play in ecosystems, with a focus on how they affect climate.

Frey's research focuses on how human activities are affecting the Earth's ecosystems, with an emphasis on soil microbiology and nutrient cycling. In addition to her robust research agenda, she is editor-in-chief of the journal *Issues in Ecology*. Contosta works with Frey and with the Trace Gas Biogeochemistry and Terrestrial Ecosystem Analysis Laboratories at UNH's Earth Systems Research Center. Her research investigates how climate change, acid deposition, land use, and agricultural management affect soil processes.

Other cafés in the spring series are:

May 8: Warmer Water, Riskier Coasts: How Climate Change is Affecting Shellfish and Recreation presented by Steve Jones, Vaughn Cooper and Adam Markham

May 15: The Science of Beer presented by Tyler Jones and Steve Parkes

Portsmouth's Community Radio, WSCA 106.1 FM, will record each event for replay on The Environmental Show, Tuesdays 9-10 a.m. Tune in for the café discussion about Soil and Climate broadcast on April 23, 2013. The Warmer Water, Riskier Coasts will be broadcast May 21, 2013. The Science of Beer will be broadcast May 28, 2013. Podcasts are archived on the web at

<http://nhepscor.org/sciencecafe>.

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](mailto:Evelyn.Jones@unh.edu) or JT Thompson of the Portsmouth Brewery at [jt@smuttynose.com](mailto:jt@smuttynose.com).

Seacoast Science Cafés, co-sponsored by University of New Hampshire and NH EPSCoR, 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. The Science Café, which is free and open to all, is in the Portsmouth Brewery's Jimmy LaPanza Lounge.

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.

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.

**Photographs available to download:**

<http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2013/mar/Frey.jpg>

Serita Frey, professor of soil microbial ecology at the University of New Hampshire

<http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2013/mar/india.jpg>

Alix Contosta, postdoctoral research scientist at the University of New Hampshire

-30-

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UNH Experts available for comment:

- [Serita Frey](#)

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