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Media Relations

April 24, 2013

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DURHAM, N.H. – The effect of climate change on shellfish and recreation is the topic of the next Science Cafe at the Portsmouth Brewery Wednesday, May 8, 2013, at 6 p.m. Doors will open at 5 p.m. for food and drinks. University of New Hampshire microbiology professor Vaughn Cooper; Steve Jones, a research associate professor of marine sciences at UNH; and Adam Markham with the Union of Concerned Scientists’ Climate Impacts Initiative are the speakers.

Vibrios are bacteria that are found worldwide in coastal waters, but only a small fraction cause human disease. Pathogenic strains are more common in warm water and have been virtually absent in New England, until recently. Vibrios respond positively to the large influx of warmer freshwater caused by heavy rainfall; such storms are increasing in frequency. We have been studying genetic relationships among Vibrios in the Great Bay and their relationship to pathogens, and find few strains in common, but increasing numbers of Vibrio-related disease in the Gulf of Maine and Cape Cod suggest otherwise. Are these new infections the sign of things to come with global climate change?

Cooper is an associate professor of microbiology and genetics as well as a microbial ecologist and evolutionary geneticist. In addition to studying the ecology and genetics of Vibrios, his laboratory studies how bacteria adapt to persist in novel environments, including chronic, biofilm-associated infections.

Jones is a research associate professor of marine sciences and natural resources who has been conducting research at the Jackson Estuarine Laboratory for 25 years. His research focuses on the ecology of Vibrios and other bacteria in coastal ecosystems, pollution source identification and fate, impacts of mercury and other toxic chemicals on marine species, and after-harvest processes to remove pathogenic microorganisms from shellfish.

Markham directs the Union of Concerned Scientists’ Climate Impacts Initiative. Before joining UCS in February 2013, Markham was president of Clean Air-Cool Planet, a Portsmouth based climate change solutions nonprofit for 13 years. He is particularly interested in the impacts of climate change on wildlife and biodiversity.

The last café in the spring series May 15 is on The Science of Beer presented by Tyler Jones and Steve Parkes.

Portsmouth’s Community Radio, WSCA 106.1 FM, records each event for replay on The Environmental Show, Tuesdays 9-10 a.m. The Warmer Water, Riskier Coasts discussion 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 or JT Thompson of the Portsmouth Brewery at jt@smutynose.com

Portsmouth Science Café, co-sponsored by UNH 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.

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