



2014 Whitney and Anna Harris Conservation Forum

Biodiversity Conservation and Human Development in Madagascar: Lessons from the 8th Continent

Wednesday, November 5, 2014
The Living World, Saint Louis Zoo
5:30 p.m. Registration and Exhibit Viewing

Session 1: 6:00-6:45 p.m.

“Conserving Biodiversity in Madagascar: Historical Context and Contemporary Challenges”

Mitch Irwin, Ph.D., Northern Illinois University

Mitch Irwin is a biological anthropologist specializing in primate ecology and behavior. His research focuses on the ecological adaptations of Madagascar’s lemurs, and how habitat disturbance affects the ecology, behavior and health of individuals and populations. He has studied feeding ecology, nutrition, body mass and condition, and parasitology, as well as how Madagascar’s abiotic and biotic environment have influenced the evolution of lemur traits. Mitch has an ongoing long-term field project in Tsinjoarivo, eastern Madagascar, founded in 2000; as an outgrowth of working with local communities he co-founded an NGO, “SADABE”, which directly promotes local research, conservation, and development.



Light Dinner and Exhibit Viewing: 6:45 -7:30 p.m.

Session 2: 7:30-8:00 p.m.

“A meeting of carbon and code: Using ants and Open Science as tools for conservation in Madagascar”

Brian Fisher, Ph.D., California Academy of Sciences

Often found hip-deep in Madagascar mud, **Brian Fisher** is a modern day explorer who has devoted his life to the study and conservation of ants and biodiversity around the world. His research sends him through the last remote rainforests and deserts of Madagascar and Africa in search of ants. Although his subjects may be small in stature, they make a huge impact on their ecosystems. And what they lack in size, they more than make up for in numbers. By documenting the species diversity and distribution of this “invisible majority,” Dr. Fisher is helping to establish conservation priorities for Madagascar, identifying areas that should be set aside to protect the highest number of species. Along the way, he has discovered 100’s of new species of ants.



8:00-8:30 p.m.

“Conservation at a Crossroads: Complex Intersections of Biodiversity and Human Needs in Madagascar”

Kristen Wagner, Ph.D., University of Missouri-St. Louis

Kristen Wagner, Assistant Professor of Social Work at the UMSL, serves as the Research Director of Creating Whole Communities, a community development initiative of the University of Missouri Extension Service. Dr. Wagner’s research, teaching, and service are grounded in the theories and scholarship of social ecology, institutional theory, and social work and the inherent trans-disciplinary investigation of people-in-environment with a particular focus on social inclusion, poverty alleviation, and community health. Her research asks how these intervention models assist in the promotion and/or constraint of healthy outcomes; in particular, food security, maternal/child health, and economic development.



Panel Discussion: 8:30-9:00 p.m.

Event is free and open to the public, but registration is required: Call: (314)-516-4246, email: hartem@umsl.edu.

Co-sponsored by: Whitney R. Harris World Ecology Center,
University of Missouri-St. Louis, Missouri Botanical Garden, Saint Louis Zoo,
and the Academy of Science-St. Louis.