

ANNOUNCING THE 55th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE OF PARASITOLOGISTS

The 55th annual meeting of the Rocky Mountain Conference of Parasitologists will be held on September 5th, 6th, and 7th, 2024 at the Cedar Point Biological Station (University of Nebraska). Cedar Point is located on the south shore of Lake Ogallala about eight miles northeast of the city of Ogallala, in beautiful western Nebraska. The welcoming reception will be on Thursday evening (September 5th) from 7-9 P.M. at Goodall Lodge. Posters may be set up Friday morning before the meeting starts or over the lunch break Friday afternoon.

Poster and paper sessions will convene Friday and Saturday morning following breakfast at Goodall Lodge. Highlights of the meeting will include the Newton Kingston Memorial Lecture, an evening banquet, and the Gerald D. Schmidt Memorial Lecture. The Saturday morning paper session will be followed by a short business meeting, with adjournment scheduled for around 11:30.

Housing is available at Cedar Point. Faculty housing units are \$180 for two nights. Rooms include a private or semi-private bath and are air conditioned. Most have twin beds, but a few have a full-size bed. Student units house 4 individuals per cabin and everyone shares a central wash facility. The rate for student housing is \$80 for two nights. You must supply your own toiletries and linens (sheets, blankets, pillows, towels). Cedar Point housing costs include all meals— breakfast (starting at 7:00) on Friday and Saturday), lunch on Friday, and the Friday night banquet. Alternatively, hotels are available in Ogallala and include Days Inn, Quality Inn, Rodeway Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Super 8, and Travel Lodge. Rates vary from \$75-\$130 per night. The conference rate without on-campus lodging is \$90.

If you plan to stay at Cedar Point, **Reserve Housing** by using the following link: <https://cedarpoint.unl.edu/rmcp>. **Students desiring** reduced cost for housing and food may apply to work in the kitchen by contacting Jon Garbisch jgarbisch2@unl.edu prior to the meeting.

Meeting registration (\$20) and annual membership dues (\$10 regular, \$3 students) are payable separately to the RMCP secretary/treasurer during the meeting. Registration fees help pay for student awards and housing costs for guest speakers.

Abstracts for oral papers and posters should be sent as a Microsoft Word Document in an e-mail attachment to the Program Chair, Brandon Ruehle, bruehle@peru.edu. Along with the abstract, specify in the accompanying e-mail if the presentation is an Oral Paper or a Poster, and if the individual presenting the paper or poster is an Undergraduate or a Graduate student. The deadline for receiving abstracts is **Friday, August 23rd**.

Guidelines for abstracts:

Use Times New Roman with a font size 12. That style and size is easily readable without taking up extra space.

The entire title should be in capital letters and **bold** face type. The name(s) of author(s) and their affiliated institution(s) should be in lower case and immediately follow the title.

If a paper has more than one author, designate the individual presenting the paper with an asterisk.

Double space between the title/author heading and the abstract text. Begin the abstract text at the left margin and do not divide the abstract into paragraphs.

Abstracts should contain fewer than 300 words.

Adherence to these guidelines ensures a uniform appearance of the program.

Sample Abstract:

ACCOUNTING FOR HOST DISTRIBUTION IN PARASITE ECOLOGICAL NICHE MODELS: A CASE STUDY WITH *ECHINOCCOCUS MULTILOCULARIS*

(LEUCKART, 1863). S. Botero-Cañola*, P. Lowe, and S.L. Gardner. Harold W. Manter Laboratory of Parasitology, University of Nebraska – Lincoln

Understanding and predicting geographical distributions of various parasites presents a big challenge given their complex life-cycles, lack of broad geographic-scale systematic sampling, and taxonomic uncertainties. Nonetheless, predicting and projecting actual or estimated geographic distributions of parasites on useable and available maps would provide critical information to proactively manage emergent and endemic human and animal parasitic diseases under rapid environmental change. Given the unique relationship among parasites and their hosts, incorporating spatially explicit host-data on distribution models can add an important layer of information relative to the ecological requirements necessary for a parasite to be maintained in an ecosystem. Here, we present the example of an approach we have developed to account for host assemblage information in the prediction of parasite-distribution. Our approach consists of generating spatial layers describing the proportion of potential hosts comprising a free-living species assemblage. These layers