



Daniel Sarr *In Memoriam*

September 2015

Notes

Featured Creature celebrates and highlights an element of biodiversity found in the Klamath-Siskiyou Ecoregion. This month, the Klamath Network staff remember their long-time leader, Dr. Daniel Sarr, whose broad enthusiasm and interest in Klamath species, large, small, consequential, inconsequential, or mythical (or maybe not...), have rarely been equaled.

Early Studies

Daniel received his B.Sc. from Humboldt State University in 1989 and his M.A. from University of California, Santa Barbara (1995), where he studied mountain meadows and streamside vegetation recovering from cattle grazing. He followed up in 2005 with a Ph.D. from Oregon State University, studying the riparian diversity of western Oregon. His work was both in aquatic and terrestrial systems and was oriented towards answering management questions, thus preparing him for his future role with the National Park Service (NPS) Inventory and Monitoring Network.

Inventory and Monitoring Leadership

In 2001, Daniel started his work as Inventory Coordinator for the Klamath Network (KLMN) parks while still working on his Ph.D. In 2003, this work evolved into the full I&M Network Coordinator position.

Daniel led the network in developing a broad-based monitoring plan; he enjoyed bringing together many different stakeholders and distilling the needs of the parks into an attainable monitoring plan. Daniel's leadership left an enduring mark on the network's monitoring plan and future, favoring the sampling of communities and the factors that affect their structure and function as a means to



better understand the complex Klamath-Siskiyou Ecoregion. His goal for many of the vital signs was the holistic integration of monitored parameters into measures of ecological integrity.

In the Klamath area, Daniel always had an eye to connections, even outside the NPS arena. He conceived of and organized a scientific scoping meeting that brought together the NPS, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Geological Survey, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify and prioritize research and management needs across the region. He was constantly aware of underserved resource managers, regardless of agency, and did what he could to help inform their decisions. He volunteered his own time to assist the local communities and NGOs to develop monitoring plans. For example, he helped develop monitoring plans for a local watershed forestry project that was using forest thinning to attempt to improve ecosystem resiliency.

In 2014, Daniel joined the U.S. Geological Survey in Flagstaff, Arizona, returning to his researcher roots and exploring the riparian ecology of the Colorado River and Plateau.

Mentorship

Daniel also brought his enthusiasm to the role of mentorship, a natural offshoot of being a scientific leader. Eric Dinger, KLMN aquatic ecologist, remembers him doing so 20 years ago – “I knew Daniel during my undergraduate studies at UC Santa Barbara. He worked on developing a position for me to learn and grow with The Nature Conservancy in Riparian Restoration at the Kern River Preserve.” Although that opportunity didn't pan out, Daniel was always looking to connect students with learning opportunities, even while he was still a student himself.

His mentorship in the Klamath Network continued with seasonal employees, interns, Southern Oregon University students, (and also SOU Faculty), and all of those who worked with him. He was always on the

lookout for training or developmental activities for his staff so that they could grow as scientists, federal employees, or whatever was in line with their personal career goals.

Not only did Daniel possess exceptional enthusiasm as a mentor, but he also had a contagiously positive and a stick-to-it attitude. When Sean Smith, KLMN botanist, first met Daniel in 2002 to discuss the development of *A Flora of Lava Beds National Monument*, Daniel was so excited about the idea because it was “doing right by the park.” Fast forward a couple of years to when Sean had finished his thesis and graduated, but not yet published the *Flora*. “I was becoming a bit discouraged at the lack of available funding to publish it. Daniel suggested I keep pursuing publication, and that I could be a ‘hero or a goat’. In December 2014, Daniel called to congratulate me, a copy of the published *Flora* that I had sent him in his hand. He was elated at what a terrific Christmas present it was.”

While we think he was proud of all of his staff as employees, he also took pride in the accomplishments of his employees after they left the network. He was thrilled when Sean Mohren, long-time network Data Manager, moved upwards and onwards to become the Crater Lake NP Supervisory Terrestrial Ecologist; he was delighted that a former “data miner” and program assistant, Bess Perry, is well on her way to becoming Dr. Perry. Certainly, all the successful people he mentored are too voluminous to detail here.

He was always quick with words of wisdom and his own special set of clichés and euphemisms. One of these phrases was, “as plain as a pig on a sofa.” Other times, when he saw a proposal with a mix-up of ideas, he called it “a dog’s breakfast.”

Irish Fulbright

Daniel once said he “threw a Hail-Mary” in reference to an opportunity to work with the Irish National Park system. In reality, he was a great wetland scientist and his help with a wetland inventory of Ireland’s parks was an important contribution.

Favorite Topics

The Klamath Network staff knew Daniel to have a fondness for certain topics, which were revisited in many a hallway conversation, to the delight and curiosity of all:

- Comets and Asteroids – how to maintain biodiversity in the face of global catastrophe
- The importance of the Scots-Irish in shaping American culture
- The ability of Myers-Briggs personality types to explain, well, darn near everything (Daniel was a ENFP, we think)
- Cryptozoology – especially Sasquatch and the myth
- Benjamin Franklin as a role model
- The Ashland, Oregon, real estate market and Baby Boomers
- The inherent strength of a Mediterranean diet

In Daniel’s absence, these topics bring a smile of remembrance to us. If you ever had a “short” talk with Daniel about one of these topics, you’ll probably be smiling too. If not, give us a call, and we will continue the conversation on any of these topics in honor of Daniel.

Daniel’s Legacy

Daniel’s scientific vision will endure through the Klamath Inventory and Monitoring Vital Signs Plan. This far-reaching document lays the foundation and guides the future of monitoring key resources in the Klamath Network. His stamp is on every aspect of the plan, from the conception to the final print.

The plan is available at:

<https://irma.nps.gov/App/Reference/Profile/650806>

Daniel had many other scientific contributions over his career. He has produced 50+ peer reviewed publications and technical reports at last count, a number that will grow even in his passing as

we and others work on seeing his current studies to fruition.

Some key publications:

Sarr, D., et al. 2015. Comparing ecoregional classifications for natural areas management in the Klamath Region, USA. *Natural Areas Journal* 35(3):360-377.

Sarr, D., and D. Hibbs. 2007. Multiscale controls on woody plant diversity in western Oregon riparian forests. *Ecological Monographs* 77(2):179-201.

Sarr, D., D. Hibbs, and M. Huston. 2005. A hierarchical perspective of plant diversity. *Quarterly Review of Biology* 80(2):187-212.

Sarr, D., D. Odion, and others. 2005. Riparian zone forest management and the protection of biodiversity: A problem analysis. Technical Bulletin No. 908. National Center for Air and Stream Improvement (NCASI), Inc., Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

Most of these and more are available at Daniel’s ResearchGate profile:

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Daniel_Sarr

Daniel is survived by his wife, Jocelyn and his son, Liam. A memorial fund has been set up and will be active until December 9th, 2015:

<https://www.youcaring.com/jocelyn-o-neill-liam-sarr-430466#.VfBikIH9Vx8.email>

