

12th Annual RISE Symposium includes Student Poster Contest Winners

University of Arizona, Tucson, Marley Building, Rm. 230

On Saturday 17 October 2015, over 60 people attended the 12th Annual RISE (Research Insights in Semi-Arid Environments) Symposium in the Marley Building on the University of Arizona (UA) campus (<http://www.tucson.ars.ag.gov/rise/index.htm>). The objectives of the symposium are to share recent results of scientific research in semiarid environments, with an emphasis on work conducted at the USDA-ARS Walnut Gulch Experimental Watershed (WGEW) and the University of Arizona Santa Rita Experimental Range (SRER), and to encourage future research and outreach activities. Attendees came from far and wide, including UA alum Raul Romo and four others from the University of Sonora as well as folks from Colorado, New Mexico, and China.

Eleven invited speakers covered topics ranging from the National Ecological Observatory Network, the new USDA-ARS Long-term Agricultural Research Program, potential new NSF Long-term Ecological Research site in semi-arid region, new far-remote sensing of soil moisture from satellites and near-remote sensing of plant productivity with drones, reconstruction of seasonal precipitation patterns using tree rings, deep soil moisture use by creosote, big data processing to detect management influences on vegetation productivity, the history of field research and researchers in the southwest, and Petey Mesquiety's songs and poems about the plants, animals and granddaughters in the southeastern Arizona.

The highlight was the two-hour poster session where 15 presenters led a cacophony of discussion in the Marley Building foyer. Through a generous contribution from long-time supporter Mr. Malcolm McGregor, there were monetary awards for the Best and Honorable Mention posters reporting research performed by graduate students working at WGEW or SRER, or using data collected at those facilities. Best Poster and \$500 was awarded to Mallory Barnes from UA School of Natural Resources and the Environment (SNRE) with the title "Consideration of sub-annual climate conditions improves understanding of vegetation response to drought in the Southwest"; and two Honorable Mention awards of \$200 each were awarded Mark Kautz from UA SNRE with the title "Development of long-term, Landsat-based canopy cover record for a semiarid grassland in southeastern Arizona" and Cheryl McIntyre from UA SNRE with the title "Do biocrusts differentially influence non-native and native grass establishment?".

Members of the Tierra Seca Club, which is the student chapter of the Society for Range Management provided coffee, juice, fruit and baked goodies for attendees before the talks began at 9 am. They also raffled honey from the SRER that was donated by the USDA ARS Bee Lab. The Club will use donations for these goodies to help cover travel expenses to the national meeting of the Society for Range Management this February 2016 in Corpus Christi, Texas.