

## AINA NEWS

*2015 Scholarship Winners*

Jeffery Ross Werner, a doctoral candidate with the Biodiversity Research Centre, Department of Zoology, University of British Columbia, is the 2015 recipient of the Jennifer Robinson Memorial Scholarship. Jeffery's research seeks to understand the causes and consequences of a near-total population collapse of Arctic ground squirrels (*Urocitellus parryii*) since 2000 in the boreal forest of southwestern Yukon. His research project, based at AINA's Kluane Lake Research Station, is being conducted in conjunction with Parks Canada, the Kluane First Nation, and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations.

This year's Lorraine Allison Scholarship was awarded to Chandra Brietzek, who is currently a Master of Science student in the School of Environmental Studies, University of Victoria. Chandra's research involves monitoring changes in muskrat health, habitat, and abundance in the Mackenzie Delta. She is working with Inuvialuit and Gwich'in land users to document their traditional knowledge of muskrat population dynamics, health, habitat, and trapping practices.

Our thanks go to the members of the two scholarship committees for their time and effort in assessing the applications and to AINA Administrative Assistant Melanie Paulson for facilitating their work.

*2015 Grant-in-Aid Recipients*

This year the selection committee received 25 applications for grants-in-aid and awarded grants for 2015 to 12 successful applicants. Razak Abu, University of Saskatchewan, is studying the changing livelihoods of the Cumberland House Metis and Cree Nation; Alix Conway, University of Saskatchewan, is examining how mammalian herbivores affect tree growth and forest composition in the boreal forest; Kelly Eldridge, University of California Davis, is documenting an Early Contact Period migration in Norton Sound, Alaska; and Caitlin Holloway, University of Alaska, is carrying out a paleoethnobotanical study in the Tanana River Basin, Central Alaska. Laura Kelvin, Western University, is conducting a community-based archaeological project on Banks Island, Northwest Territories; Jordan Munizzi, Western University, is using isotopic zooarchaeology to reconstruct muskox and caribou ecology on Banks Island; Courtney Scerbak, University of Alaska Fairbanks, is focusing on the outreach component of a study of Alaskan botanicals and neuronal aging; and Erin Siracusa, University of Guelph, is studying adaptive behavioural plasticity in the highly territorial red squirrel. Sarah St. Germain, University of Calgary, is researching the evolution of supraglacial streams; Rebecca Stubbs, Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, seeks to understand Arctic flora by using a model plant group to study evolution at high latitudes; Julianne Yip,

McGill University, is using an anthropological perspective to investigate what we can learn from Earth's melting cryosphere; and Scott Zolkos, University of Alberta, is studying the influence of massive permafrost thaw slumps on the carbon balance in streams of the Peel Plateau, Northwest Territories.

The members of the Grant-in-Aid Selection Committee for 2015 were Alexander Braun, Mark Johnson, Tom and Abbe Dunning Newbury, Mary Stapleton, Ken Tape, and John Yackel. Proposals for 2016 are due on 1 February. Please refer to the AINA website for application information.

*New AINA Postdoc*

This March, Annie Quinney became the most recent addition to the Arctic Institute's team. Annie joins the Institute as a Postdoctoral Associate focusing on science education and public outreach. Through the Institute, Annie will be collaborating with the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Calgary to engage the public in classifying a large dataset of aurora images. The citizen science initiative will not only promote scientific literacy, but also unite citizens and researchers in an ongoing effort to understand the cosmic processes that lead to space weather and the aurora. In tandem, Annie will be developing an interactive, web-based museum of literature, legends, and art that will unite the science, history, and culture of the aurora.

Prior to joining the Institute, Annie was completing her PhD at Monash University in Australia. For her doctoral studies, Annie and her supervisors discovered and described four new amber deposits from within the Arctic and Antarctic Circles. This amber is important because it not only contains some of the highest latitude amber deposits in the Southern Hemisphere, but it also represents the terrestrial realm during a time of globally elevated sea levels, for which terrestrial fossils are lacking. Annie has also used fossil soils to reconstruct the ancient



Annie holding a natural cast of a dinosaur footprint from Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia, June 2014. (Photo: Malcolm Williamson.)

environments and climates that existed during the time of the dinosaurs in Alberta. Although Annie's educational pursuits have focused on research in the natural sciences, it was the public outreach and educational aspects of

her program that she was particularly drawn to. Annie is thrilled to be part of the Arctic Institute and to help promote AINA through educational programming and outreach initiatives.