



ISSUE 3 - SEPTEMBER 2021

Sunrise over a foggy Lake Ogallala, from Kingsley dam, June 19, 2021. Photo by Stella Uiterwaal.

CEDAR POINT TIMES

The Newsletter of Cedar Point Biological Station (CPBS)
School of Biological Sciences
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Cedar Point a relief to COVID weary students

In summer 2021, after a year of zoom classes, limited social interactions, and worry, CPBS welcomed students, researchers, and artists back to the banks of Lake Ogallala. Working closely with the UNL COVID task-force, we created a "bubble" at the station with extensive pre-screening, testing, and entreating our users to limit exposure and transmission risks both at the station and before arrival. With the help of our COVID coordinator (see page 2), we got back to the good work of running immersive, field-based, and experiential classes. From watercolors (see page 3) to ornithology, students were relieved to be some place safe and to start working with others again.

In some ways, 2021 felt like a restart for CPBS. With new courses and partners (e.g., Underwater Forensic Investigation out of the School of Global Integrative Studies) added to our slate of regulars, a growing Cedar Point Works student internship program, and physical changes like new roofs and erosion-resistant trails, CPBS is ready to grow and be a key part of UNL's new focus on experiential learning. We recently had some nice exposure as well, in a series of articles by Annie Albin in Nebraska Today on our experiential learning (see article at this [link](#)), our middle school art camp (this [link](#)), our hospitality program (this [link](#)), our resident artist program (this [link](#)), and our literature in the environment class (this [link](#)). Hopefully this renewed attention will raise awareness and the support we need to continue delivering experiential learning opportunities to students at CPBS.

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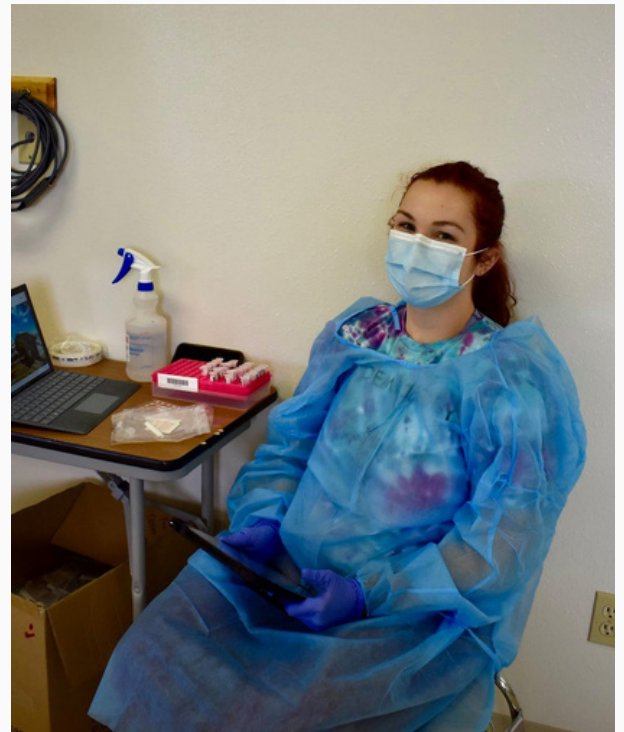
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Moonrise volleyball. With the COVID protections in place at the station and the high rate of vaccination, CPBS life was back to near normal by mid-summer 2021. Photo by John P. DeLong

Cedar Point Works student Francine Watkins takes on COVID

In 2018, Francine Watkins started her four-summer involvement with CPBS. She started as a TA for the Young Nebraska Scientists, then came back to take Field Epidemiology in 2019, and in 2020 was the season-long prep TA. In 2021, as we planned to open the station even as COVID-19 raged on, we needed to fill a new kind of position: COVID coordinator. We needed someone who knew the station, had the interest and background to work on managing disease risk, and who appreciated CPBS enough to take on a job that no one else knew how to do. Francine was up to the task. As a recent graduate (May 2021) in Veterinary Sciences and a student worker in the Veterinary Diagnostics Center, Francine checked all the boxes. As the spring moved along and we approached opening, Francine was the point person collecting pre-arrival COVID records from station-goers, managing private health information, and communicating with the wide range of health experts, users, and administrators that helped us create a COVID-free community this summer. Now, Francine has new plans. After her final summer here at Cedar Point (of course she can come back!), she will begin working on her DVM through Nebraska's Professional Program in Veterinary Medicine, which is a cooperative program between the University of Nebraska and Iowa State University. Each year at CPBS, Francine has learned new skills and contributed more and more to the station. So, here's a big thank you to Francine for all she has done, and we all hope that your time at Cedar Point prepped you for what comes next!



Francine Watkins prepped for screening station users for COVID-19. Photo by Hailey Showalter.

If you would like to support students like Francine and help with priority needs at Cedar Point Biological Station, please consider a tax-deductible gift or pledge to our Cedar Point Biological Station Fund. You may donate directly online at [this link](#).

If you would like to learn about other ways to give to Cedar Point, please contact our Foundation representative Joye Fehringer at joye.fehringer@nufoundation.org or 402-875-0611.



Cedar Point used a big tent to foster safe outdoor dining early in the 2021 season. A short but powerful windstorm collapsed the tent on June 10 (left). Subsequently, the art class collaborated to depict the unusual sight (right). Photos by Aaron Holz.

Teaching Focus: Watercolor Returns to Cedar Point

In 2021, watercolor painting was the art course focus at Cedar Point. From carefully observed studies of plants and animals to expressionistic visions of the landscape, the course utilized a variety of strategies to empower students in the successful use of the medium while engaging in the unique environment that the station provides. The diversity of biomes, changing skies, and variable weather create unlimited opportunity to try new things from day to day and year to year. “Two years ago, the entire class would sit outside each evening and paint the sunset in their journals. This year, we have yet to do it. Each class has a different dynamic and set of interests; so the class is flexible enough to allow for a variety of projects that respond to different aspects of the station”, says instructor Aaron Holz, Professor of Painting & Drawing in the School of Art, Art History & Design.

One of the benefits of being at Cedar Point is the chance to respond to the unpredictable environment. This year, a huge storm came through at 2:00 am, knocking down a dining tent that was installed to increase social distancing during meals. When the students saw the tent, instead of heading into the canyons, they painted the mangled tent structure. The class was divided into groups of six to plan and create large collaborative watercolors of the fallen tent. Luci Packard, a student in the class, said “making something beautiful out of something tragic makes the tent’s destruction less sad”.

Watercolors ended with a show in the library for the whole station, continuing the tradition of bridging the arts and science in a field setting.



Collaborative watercolor: “A Mighty Wind” sixty by forty inches.

“IT’S POWERFUL TO SEE EVERYONE’S WORK MELD INTO SOMETHING THAT WE WOULDN’T BE ABLE TO MAKE BY OURSELVES” MYA LEVITCH



Sunset storm and lightning over Lake Ogallala. Photo by John P. DeLong.

About the Station

Cedar Point Biological Station is a site for research and experiential learning located along the banks of Lake Ogallala in western Nebraska. CPBS is surrounded by a wide range of habitats, ponds and lakes, and landscape features such as box canyons, making it an ideal place to learn about and interact with nature. CPBS is operated by the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. The station provides unparalleled experiential learning in the high plains through a wide range of courses and partnerships with the School of Natural Resources; the School of Art, Art History, and Design; the College of Architecture; the Department of Hospitality, Tourism, and Restaurant Management; and the School of Global Integrative Studies at UNL.



From the Vault

Nanci Ross was Diana Pilson's first field assistant at UNL, working the summers of 1995 and 1996 at CPBS with her on the evolution of wild sunflowers in response to herbivory. After Nanci graduated from UNL she went to the University of Connecticut where she received her M.S. and Ph.D. in Botany. Her dissertation work was on the impact of ancient Mayan forest gardens on present-day forest composition in Belize. She is now on the faculty in the Biology Department at Drake University in Iowa. Photo by Diana Pilson.

Summer 2022 schedule

May 11 to May 14

Grad Student Writing Retreat

Session 1 (full) - May 15 to June 3

Avian Biology

Fundamentals of Biology II

Session 1 (part) - May 22 to June 3

Literature and the Environment

Session 2 - June 5 to June 24

Predator Ecology

Field Herpetology

Art at Cedar Point

Session 3 - June 26 to July 15

Field Epidemiology

Fundamentals of Biology II

Session 4 (full) - July 17 to August 5

Field Parasitology

Ecology and Evolution

Session 4 (part) - July 17 to July 29

Underwater Forensic Investigation

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Cedar Point Works is supported by grants and donations. If you would like to support experiential learning at CPBS, please consider donating to one of our student-oriented funds.