Cedar Point alumni event August 16-19!

This year will mark Cedar Point’s 50th year of operations. With those first classes in 1975, the early days set us on a road to being an important site for long-term research, field- and place-based education, and a gem in the NU system. And while people have come and gone, the Cedar Point experience has remained: an immersive field experience with a lifetime of impact. Regardless of what you studied at Cedar Point, be it ornithology, parasitology, or watercolors, Cedar Point experiences help shape us and our futures.

So as we celebrate a half-century of success, now is the time to consider coming back out!

Email us at cpbs2@unl.edu to RSVP for the event. We will send out lodging information and a schedule as the event gets closer. Plan for some canoeing, bird-watching, and trips around the area, and to re-live a little of your Keith County glory. See you there.—John P. DeLong

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Above: Sunset from over Kingsley Dam from near the NutNet site at Cedar Point Biological Station, June 8, 2022. Photo by George Wheeler. Below right: Six-lined racerunner, photo by Megan Francis Snow.
Still crazy - for snails - after all these years!

Parasitology has long been a core research focus at Cedar Point. Since the earliest days, student and faculty parasitologists have hunted snails, fish, dragonfly larvae and a host of other things to monitor parasites and even discover new species. The article on the right was from 1977 and shows John Janovy Jr. (on the right) with students from the parasitology class collecting snails in the (likely South) Platte river (thanks to Keith County News for permission to reprint the photo and story; see their website here). Second from the right is Mike Duggan, who now sits on Cedar Point’s newly-formed Advisory Board.

Snails figure heavily in parasitology still today. Students from today’s Field Parasitology and Field Epidemiology courses routinely collect snails. Says Janovy, “The snails have larval trematode parasites, and [...] those are good indicators of what kind of wildlife has been defecating in the river and shedding worm eggs. But snails also have external annelids that live in their mantle cavity, and students have done quite a few projects on those worms, too”.

Below. Stagnicola snail collected near Cedar Point. Photo by Scott Gardner. Below right: Students collecting aquatic organisms such as snails, hydrophilid beetle larvae, and amphipods along the North Platte river near Sarben. Photo by Devin Nickol.

CPBS classes are scheduled for 2024, see them at https://cedarpoint.unl.edu/course-list.
D. All of the above. Cedar Point Works student Megan Francis Snow does a little of everything.

So, how do you keep a field station running? Cedar Point Works student Megan Francis found out first-hand during three summers at the station. Originally from Omaha and a soon-to-be graduate of the UNL Fisheries and Wildlife program, Megan Francis first came to Cedar Point in 2021 to take LIFE 121 and Field Herpetology, returning in 2022 to work in the kitchen.

Back again in 2023, Megan Francis became the quintessential Cedar Point Works jack-of-all-trades, developing a strong sense of what it takes to keep the station running in good shape. Among the many daily jobs were: working in the kitchen on meal planning and prep (“really hard to find meals that meet different dietary needs”, they said), cleaning (“surprisingly important”), landscaping (“reseeding to get more than just sunflowers”), trail maintenance (“removing tripping hazards and dealing with washouts”), organization (“making sure class and project supplies were in the right place”), mail runs (“daily”), and pest management (“maybe something you don’t want to mention”). In retrospect, Megan Francis didn’t anticipate the breadth of skills they would improve upon as part of the effort to keep the station running.

Another thing it takes to keep Cedar Point running? People like Megan Francis. We can’t do it without them.

Megan Francis also proved to have a knack of being in the right place at the right time with a camera. Whether catching the sunset over the station from the NutNet site (see top) or stumbling upon a pair of mating bull snakes by the lodge (see right), they were a regular contributor to our social media accounts as well as the Nebraska Through the Lens Facebook community.
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.

Art @ Cedar Point

Cedar Point has been inspiring artists since the beginning of time, or well 1975 at least. Long-term researcher-instructors at the station have produced a lot of beautiful work over the years. Here is a painting of the amazing Marsh Wren by none other than John Janovy Jr. Today, the Cedar Point art program hosts 8-12 artists-in-residence each summer. Run by Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Art’s Kat Morrow and Aaron Holz, summer 2024 promises another wave of great art, so keep an eye out for more new work! We hope to be displaying more artist-in-resident work at the station in the near future.

2024 Summer schedule

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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.