

Summer 2023 Conference in Ithaca

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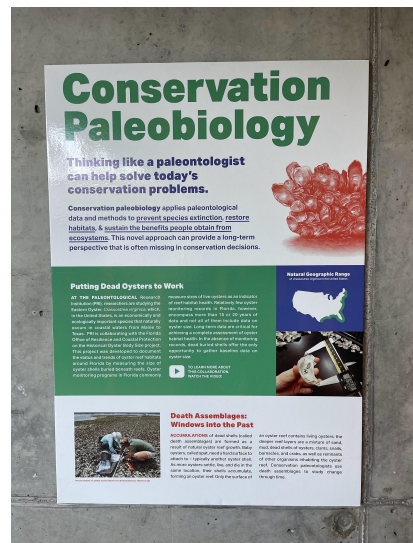
The 2023 NYESTA summer conference was held in Ithaca and was connected with the Paleontological Research Institute. I wish to thank the entire NYESTA board, Dr. Don Duggan-Haas and Dr. Rob Ross of PRI for their immense help in facilitating our conference and giving us a tour of the vast



private fossil collection, talks on climate studies and a trip to [CUBO](#) (Cornell University Borehole Observatory). I also wish to thank Dr. Teresa Jordan of Cornell and a vital member of



the science and engineering team studying the feasibility of using geothermal energy to heat Cornell's campus, and for a detailed talk about CUBO. I'd also like to thank Dr. Gregory Dietl of Cornell and PRI for his speech on paleobiology, ongoing study on oyster reefs, and building a database measuring changes to oyster reefs over



various time scales (mostly decadal).



During the past year, I've heard this question from a potential conference attendee: is attending a NYESTA conference worth it? To answer that within this conference's framework, studying past climate systems and the effects of greenhouse gasses on the planet is one of the biggest challenges to maintaining our economy and current way of life. This past conference went into detail about how we, as educators, have a significant role in teaching students and others about how to be scientifically literate in a way that enables students and educators to wrap our heads around the problem and move down a doable path to tackle the problem immediately. Every NYESTA conference I've attended has made me a better Earth Science teacher, and my students benefited from that. So if you want to be a better science educator with up-to-date scientific knowledge and science tools, I know that NYESTA conferences do provide that. We can't compare these immersive experiences to classroom-style meetings; they are not even close. We also provide CTLE credit and with proper documentation, most schools will pay for it as a conference expense.



I'd also like to congratulate our 2023 NYESTA Award recipient Ken Abbot. I should say that Ken is no stranger to teaching awards, but as one of the founders of NYESTA, he clearly deserves a NYESTA award. Ken is famous for his teaching triangles game that he uses for Earth Science Review, as well as doing numerous STANYS workshops, being a wrestling coach, and just an outstanding educator and person. Congratulations Ken!

On a personal note, as I get closer to retirement from teaching Honors Earth Science at Montauk School (and what an honor it has been!), and as I phase out of public education, I'm transitioning into becoming a Master Beekeeper. Being an

Earth Science teacher has made me keenly aware of past extinctions and species loss over grand time scales. I did not expect to see any in my lifetime. There is some debate about whether we are at the beginning of a sixth extinction right now. If we go back to the start of the Holocene, the loss of the megafauna, then factor in the current loss of species in the past two centuries, then the answer to the question stands out from the background noise. That is why I got into beekeeping. From native solitary bees to commercial honey bees, bees struggle with various problems. This kind of work is essential as pollinated food sources are at least $\frac{1}{3}$ of the world's food supply. Dyce Labs of Cornell is one of the leading research facilities in this area. So after visiting the engineers at Cornell's power facility and CUBO, I drove to Dyce Labs to meet some of the bee researchers, and I'll leave you with some magnificent photos taken at Cornell's Dyce lab. See you at the next conference!





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