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Digital Commons @ Colby: Best Practices for Undergraduate Research

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Best Practices for Undergraduate Research

bepress Webinar Series

April 16, 2015



Suzi Cole
Sciences Librarian
Scholarly Resources and Services



Marty Kelly
Assistant Director for Digital Collections
Digital & Special Collections

Outline

- About Colby
- Birth of Digital Commons
- Examples of collections

Colby College Waterville, ME



- Liberal arts, 1820 undergrads
- Founded 1813
- Emphasis on faculty / faculty student research
- Community engagement

2008 + Honors Theses

- Retrospective scanning
- Paperless permission form
- Electronic signature (student and mentor)
- Moodle site > research process and submission

Value: honors theses

“My group is interested in the resuscitation and rescue of patients after inhalation of toxic deadly gases, including chlorine, mustard gas, and methyl isocyanate (Bhopal agent). The Bhopal agent was one of the chemicals being investigated by [your student]. If the material is public record, we would love to obtain a copy of the thesis, whether electronically or by hard copy. We will also be contacting [the faculty advisor] to determine if he is still interested in this area of research.”

“[This] work was also published in Mol. Cell. Biochem. in 2012.”

Criteria:

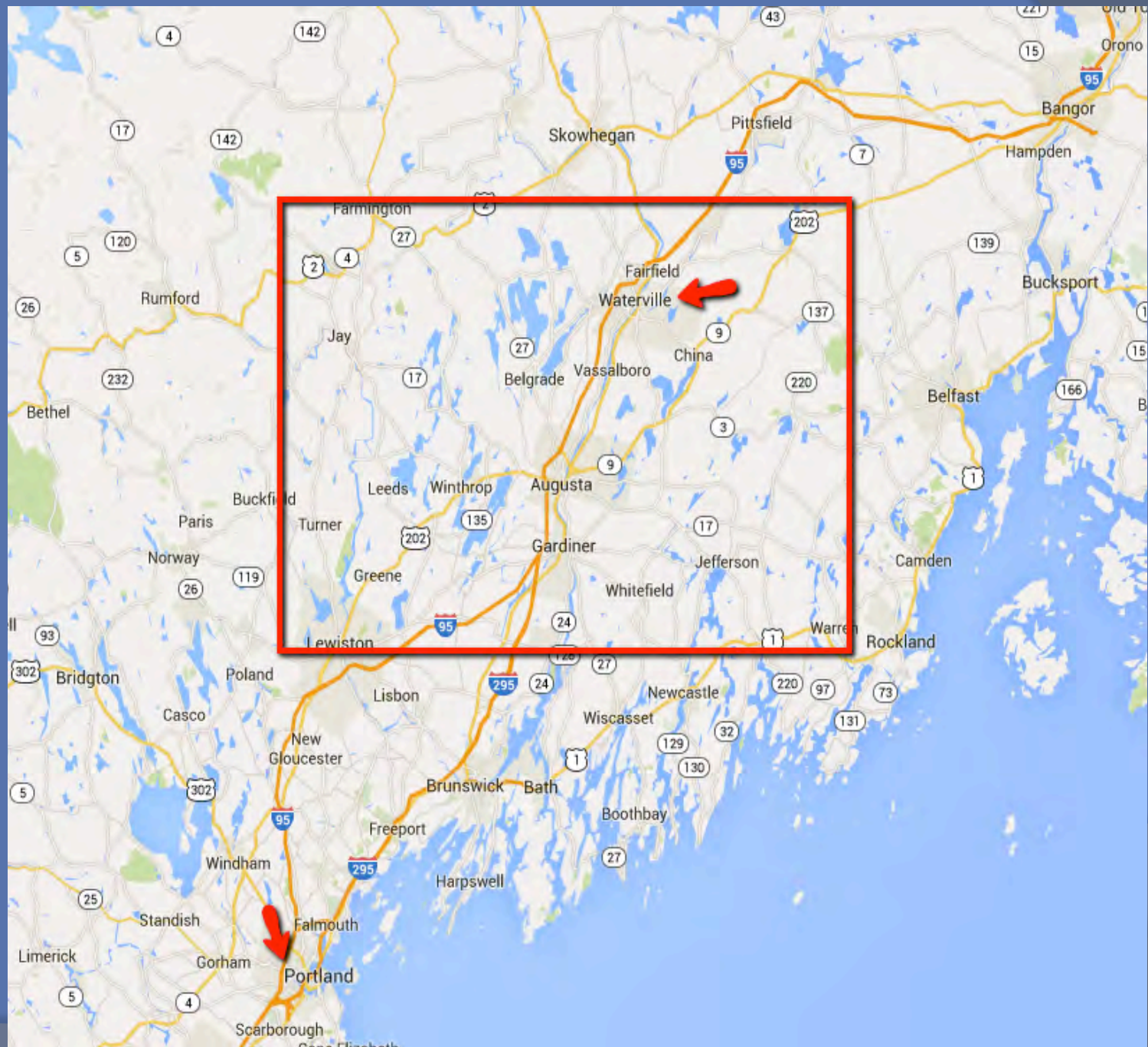
- Unique, born digital, student research
- Information relevant to region and state

Why?

- Outlet for student scholarship
- Not rare, but unique
- Multiple formats

Examples:

- Annual “publications”
- Undergraduate Research Symposium > CLAS
(Colby Liberal Arts Symposium)
- Data



Search

Enter search terms:

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Belgrade Lakes Watershed Sustainability Project

Belgrade lakes groups tap towns for funds to fight milfoil

Environmental Studies Program

SENIOR CAPSTONE IN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Environmental Studies 494: Problems in Environmental Science (2011-)

Biology 493: Problems in Environmental Science (1999-2010)

Since 1989, the senior research course in environmental science has produced annual ecological assessments of selected lakes in Central Maine. This capstone course, originally Biology 493, has been designated Environmental Studies 494 since 2011. Beginning in 2004, reports have carried the designation Colby Environmental Assessment Team.

Paper copies of earlier reports are available in Colby College Special Collections and in the Colby College Libraries' circulating collection.

BROWSE THE *Senior Capstone in Environmental Science* COLLECTIONS:

[Belgrade Area Streams](#)

[CEAT Watershed Study: China Lake](#)

[CEAT Watershed Study: East and North Ponds](#)

[CEAT Watershed Study: Great Pond](#)

[CEAT Watershed Study: Long Pond, North](#)

[CEAT Watershed Study: Long Pond, South](#)

[CEAT Watershed Study: Pattee Pond](#)

[CEAT Watershed Study: Salmon Lake and McGrath Pond](#)

[CEAT Watershed Study: Threemile Pond](#)

[CEAT Watershed Study: Togus Pond](#)

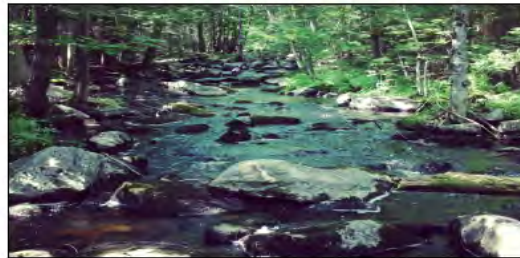


THE MISSING LINK:
THE ECOLOGY OF THE SERPENTINE AND THE
IMPLICATIONS FOR
EAST AND NORTH PONDS



COLBY COLLEGE
PROBLEMS IN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
WATERVILLE, MAINE 04901
2012

**THE IMPORTANCE OF
HEADWATER STREAMS IN
PRESERVING WATER QUALITY:**
A CASE STUDY OF THE KENNEBEC
HIGHLANDS AND LONG POND



COLBY COLLEGE
PROBLEMS IN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
WATERVILLE, MAINE 04901
FALL 2013

- ★ Annual research project
- ★ Multiple file formats
- ★ Regional / state interest
- ★ Student resume enhancement



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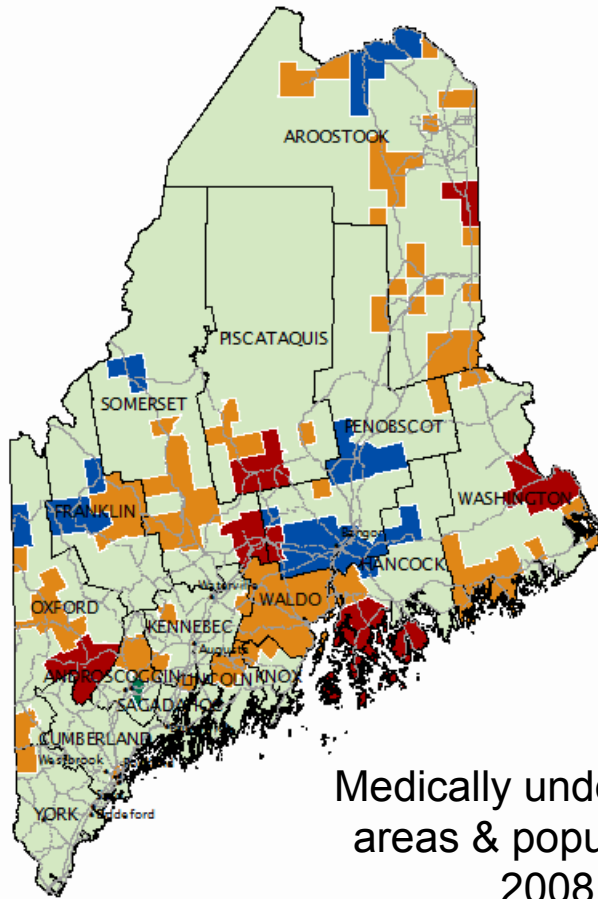




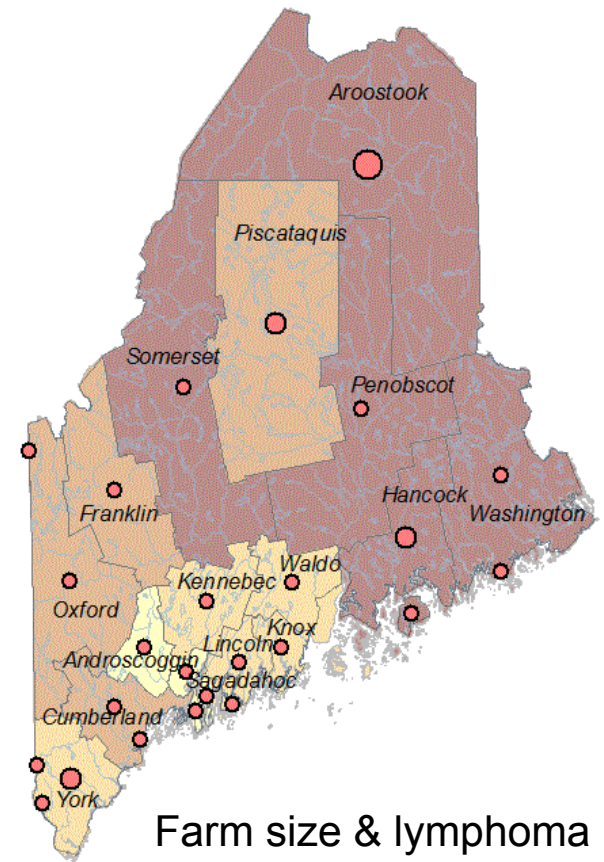
Maine Lighthouses
& Shipwrecks



Maine Wetlands &
Conservation Areas



Medically underserved
areas & populations,
2008



Farm size & lymphoma
cancer

Lessons learned:

- Use a stable and secure server
- Eliminate intermediate platforms if possible
- Explore lab or classroom instruction



“Digital Commons is a powerful motivator for student scholarship. Students work harder and take projects more seriously when they know material will be viewed by others. They are also inspired by metrics identifying how many views past student projects have received.”

- Philip Nyhus, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies



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- Philip Nyhus, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies





Journal of Environmental and Resource Economics at Colby

Volume 01
Issue 01 *Spring 2014*

2014

Invited Introduction

Amy W. Ando

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, amyando@illinois.edu

This new journal does much to enhance the research and learning experience for students involved in it. Research is more rewarding if the audience of readers for the work is larger than the single professor who usually reads student papers. A student who expects her research to appear in an open-access journal has the promise (and threat) of a wide range of readers that provides extra motivation for excellence in the research process. Of course, many professional journals exist. However, student publication in typical professionally-reviewed journals can be stymied by demands for methodological perfection that may not be reasonable for an undergraduate with limited time for the project. JEREC can offer peer-reviewed publication with standards that



Digital Commons @ Colby



Journal of Environmental and Resource Economics at Colby

Volume 01

Issue 01 *Spring 2014*

“The journal originated from efforts to help students understand and appreciate the research and publication process behind the journal articles they regularly read in classes.”

2014

Introduction by the Editor-in-Chief

Sahan T. M. Dissanayake
Colby College, sdissan2@gmail.com



Digital Commons @ Colby



"I shared referee reports that I received, rejections that I got from journals and some referee reports that I wrote so that the students can understand that the articles they read are the end product of a long (and sometimes frustrating) process." – Prof. Sahan Dissanayake



*“We couldn’t have done this without the site (I still can’t believe some students wrote 5-7 page reviews of each others work and a big part of this was that **they felt they were part of something bigger than just writing a paper for a class**).” --Prof. Sahan Dissanayake*

- Turnkey platform
- Peer review tools
- Stability
- Search engine optimization
- Custom design options
- Excellent support!



Environmental Economics

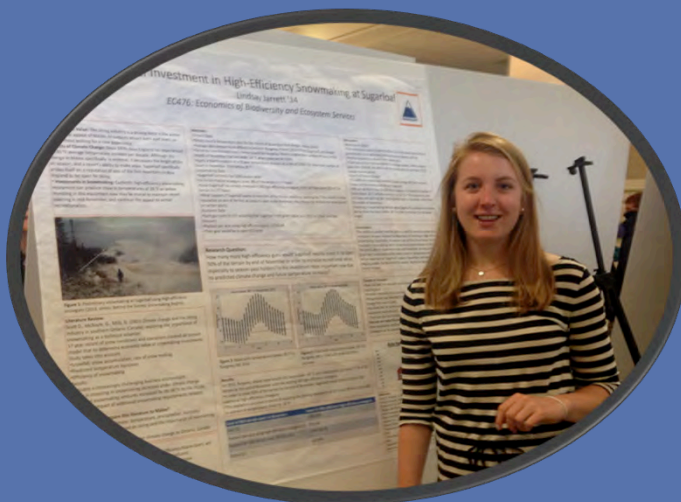
The Cromulent Economics Blog

August 14, 2014

Research experience for undergraduates

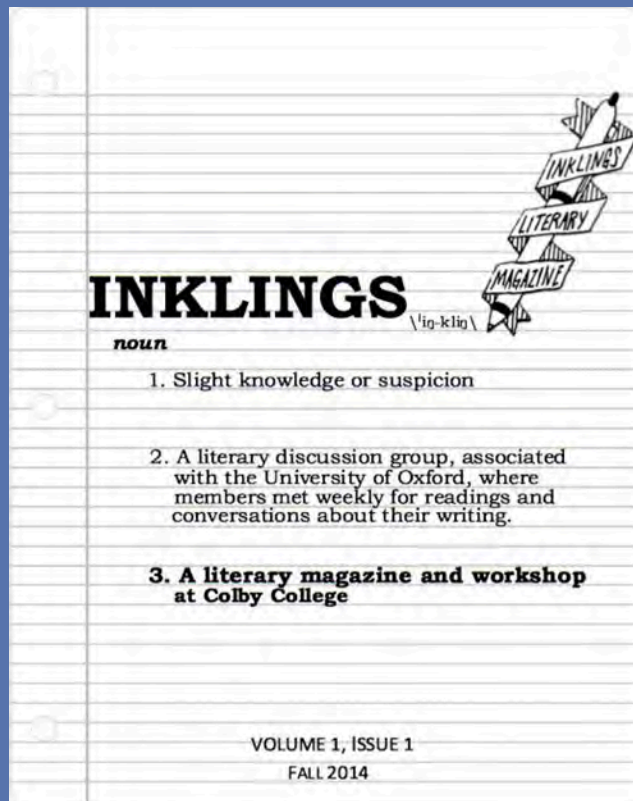
There will be an [AERE-sponsored session on this topic](#) at the Southern Economic Association meetings in November. Here is an example of, what I consider, best practices from Colby College. From the introduction to volume 1 of the [Environmental and Resource Economics at Colby](#) by the editor, [Sahan T.](#)

“Here is an example of, what I consider, best practices from Colby College.”



Digital Commons @ Colby

Inklings Magazine



- Student edited literary journal
- Student creative writing from semester long peer-led workshops
- Editors responsible for Digital Commons admin
- Library student worker as support liaison to editorial staff

Maine's Musical Soundscapes: Franco American Musicians

- Student-produced video profiles based on interviews and research
- Digital Commons submission as course assignment
- Interviewee permissions, video archiving, metadata entry as information literacy opportunity



Digital Commons @ Colby

CLAS: Colby Liberal Arts Symposium



- Day-long celebration of undergraduate research
- Live event support as well as archive
- Digital Commons site as primary online schedule
- Social media integration

Digital Commons @ Colby

Tips, Tricks, Lessons Learned...

Engaging Faculty

- Open to serendipity
- Model collections
- Always listening...



Engaging Students

- Course integration
- Student ambassadors
- Upload form as teaching moment



Digital Commons @ Colby

digitalcommons.colby.edu



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Contact!

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Martin.Kelly@colby.edu

