



**INVASIVE-SPECIES SYMPOSIUM
OCTOBER 14–16, 2003
SACRAMENTO RADISSON HOTEL**

COMPILED EVALUATIONS

The following represents the ratings and comments received from attendees at the recent symposium. Responses to comments are also included where appropriate. Out of 109 attendees, only 7 evaluation forms were submitted or 6.4%. We appreciate those who took the time to fill out and submit their evaluations.

To what extent were your personal/professional objectives satisfied? (5=highest; 1 = lowest) 5=3 (42.9%), 4=3 (42.9%), 3=1 (14.3%), 2=0, 1=0

Comments:

- “Came for the more general overview presentations; less interested in the very specific papers.”
- “Speakers were very good.”
- “I enjoyed this conference, many of the presentations, and the attendees who made an effort to mix.”
- “Interesting to see a variety of perspectives.”
- “Some topics were repeated in the talks.”
- “This was a wonderful gathering of articulate professionals. It contrasted greatly with the CTS Workshop 10 days earlier by virtue of its professional feel and inclusion of unbiased speakers.”
- “Shorter presentations. Presenters need to practice their lectures.”

Responses:

Thank you for the comments. We apologize for some repetition of talks. We did our best to ensure that papers varied.

To what extent did the environment contribute to the learning experience? (5=highest; 1 = lowest) 5=2 (29%), 4=1 (14%), 3=4 (57%), 2=0, 1=0

Comments:

- “Nice facility.”
- “Room was bit too cold; everything else was nice; however, keeping better time would be appreciated.”
- “The air conditioning was used inappropriately. The free coffee was terrible.”
- “The temperature was very low. It made it difficult to concentrate since I was so cold. Additional, more food should have been provided.”
- “Very cold in the conference room.”
- “It was relaxed but professional.”

Responses:

We apologize if the room was uncomfortable. Our experience with events is that you can't please everyone. We checked with several who mentioned that the room temperature was just fine, while others felt it was too cold.

Regarding offering additional food, the food expense for this event was nearly \$6,000; total cost for the event was nearly \$24,000! In order to provide additional food, we would have to increase our registration fees substantially, which would undoubtedly result in complaints from students and young professionals who are on a tight budget. Even with several sponsors and vendors, the event barely broke even for the Section. We apologize if the “free coffee” was not satisfactory; however, very little can be done as we are under contract with the facility.

To what extent did the written materials contribute to the learning experience? (5=highest; 1 = lowest) 5=3 (42.9%), 4=3 (42.9%), 3=1 (14.3%), 2=0, 1=0

Comments:

“Program and abstract = good idea.”

“I appreciate having the contact information for the speakers.”

“Not applicable, other than abstract booklet. ++: presenters who brought their own educational pamphlets.”

“Good to have all the abstracts.”

“Abstract booklet only written materials; other written materials would have been nice.”

“Clear, obvious.”

Responses:

Printing and copying all speaker materials is very expensive; however, for future events, we will ask that speakers bring copies of their presentations. In the past, we’ve found this to be somewhat “hit and miss” as some speakers don’t have their presentations completed until the last minute.

To what extent were the objectives stated in the promotional literature or those stated at the beginning of the symposium satisfied? (5=highest; 1 = lowest) N=5. 5=2 (40%), 4=2 (40%), 3=1 (20%)

Comments:

“Would have been nice to include invasive plants too but understand to narrow the topic.”

“Everything was summarized nicely in the panel discussion, and excellent questions were posed and addressed. Also, the array of speakers was broad.”

Responses:

We considered including invasive plants; however, the volume would have far exceeded our time constraints. The Section plans to offer another symposium on invasive plants in the future.

To what extent did the symposium contain significant and current intellectual or practical information? (5=highest; 1 = lowest) 5=3 (42.9%), 4=2 (28.6%), 3=2 (28.6%), 2=0, 1=0

Comments:

“It felt real ‘cutting edge’.”

“There was too much on wild boars. More time should have been spent on other topics, esp. fishes.”

“Lots of data and ideas that are used in management but not in life.” (? Couldn’t read)

“For what was presented, the information was great.”

“A bit much on islands and pigs and not enough info on herps or birds.”

“Some new insights gained but generally reinforcement of existing knowledge.”

How would you rate the registration fees for the symposium? (5 = Too High, 1 = Too Low) 5=1 (14.3%), 4=0, 3=5 (71.4%), 2=0, 1=1 (14.3%)

Comments:

“Compared to CTS it was a far more reasonable cost.”

“Charge a little more and have bag lunches or better snacks!”

“Fine.”

“About right.”

“Provide either lunches for participants or longer breaks so they may obtain food for themselves.”

“At the current workshop, there was no lunch provided and the hotel was far from restaurants and lunch break was only an hour. Thus, it was difficult to go get lunch and get back in time so...either provide a quick lunch, give longer breaks, or hold in a hotel close to restaurants.”

Responses:

We have recognized that the location of the hotel is not convenient for those going offsite for meals and will consider this for future events. Regarding providing free lunches, as mentioned above, the cost of lunches would have far exceeded our event budget (see comment above). Regarding better snacks, we can offer only what the hotel or facility offers and within a price range consistent with our event budget. Snacks at the break service are provided as a courtesy to our attendees.

I would like to suggest the following topics for workshops/conferences:

“Follow up on invasive plants and habitat impacts.”

“Fire ants and other invasive insects. Pollenators? Where were the pollenators? Urban ecology.

“In the future, I would like to see a similar intellectual gathering of people from wildlife, botanical, entomological, and fisheries experts to discuss the same topics of accidental vs. purposeful and trophic-level disruptions that result.”

“Urban ecology; adaptation of native spp. to land use change.”

Responses:

Thank you for suggesting topics for future workshops and symposia. Your suggestions will be passed on to our Professional Development Committee. Continue to check our website for information on future events.

**DON'T MISS OUR 50TH ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN
FEBRUARY 2004!**

We appreciate your taking the time to complete this evaluation form. Please make sure to return this form to the registration desk before you leave.