



Long-Term *Ecological Reflections* Art Exhibit at NSF

By Gayle Pugh, GEO/OCE

Ecological Reflections is an outstanding collection of science translated into artistic form and is on display on the 3rd floor. The exhibit is composed of work created from artist and scientist collaborations at three of the NSF supported Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) sites: Harvard Forest, North Temperate Lakes and Bonanza Creek.

The Long-Term Ecological Reflections network developed as a result of outreach activities at several of the LTER sites. The artists' creative responses to the research reflect each site's diversity of scientific-research goals and historical and cultural contexts. The goals of Ecological Reflections are to connect the arts and humanities with science, to bring these combined perspectives to bear on complex ecological questions, and to connect the public to science on aesthetic, emotional, and philosophical levels.

The exhibit begins by the North elevators with a

beautifully embroidered quilt colorfully covered with graphs, maps, animals and definitions inherent to lake ecosystems. Artist Bonnie Peterson spent eight months working on the quilt following time in the field with the researchers at the North Temperate Lakes LTER site. On the wall opposite the quilt, a large screen monitor continuously plays a kiosk video of Freshwater Futures featuring water-related research themes being explored at several LTER sites across the US. The footage in this montage was collected from the Harvard Forest, North Temperate Lakes, Andrews Forest and Coweeta LTER sites.

As you round the corner, beautiful pastels and watercolors depict past, present and future scenarios of the ecosystems of the Northwoods of Wisconsin. The color of water is explained in the watercolor "Seven Lakes Color Impressions" by Ann Singsaas. Then a meticulously crafted wooden sculpture of loon diving for a small school of yellow perch amidst a sunken log





will capture your attention. Poetry weaves through the visual images as you continue down the hall.

The next section reflects research from Bonanza Creek LTER. Orange walrus amidst a beautiful blue background of Thin Ice appear to be playing a game with endangered species, corporations, oil companies, trees ... "Who will win?" is the question posed by artist Fred Freer. In the bright silk quilt appropriately titled Red-Winged Blackbird, artist Karen Franzen explores the future scenario of interior Alaska as increased warming cause habitat changes that will expand the range of some species. On the opposite wall are two small quilts of Deneki Lakes: Now and Deneki Lakes: Then, a landscape image of the same scene 50 years apart. A moose and her calf roam the landscape crossing the lake. The decreasing water level of the lake and resulting habitat changes are well articulated in this eye-catching quilt duo. As you turn right, a sculpture made of wooden shoes, leather, wolf bones, lynx claws, glass beads, and buttons decorates the wall representing a Metaphor for the Future: Hoping for Well-Adapted Children.

Pastels, photographs and paintings from Harvard Forest LTER finalize the exhibit. A graphite and pastel of Chestnut Skeletons and Hemlocks reminds us of the vulnerability of even the most abundant and robust species. On the opposite wall hangs a photograph of a former stand of Eastern Hemlocks. The photograph shows the results of an on-going field experiment to determine the future of New England forest ecosystems if the woolly adelgid continues north killing millions more Eastern Hemlocks. Paintings of the Eastern Newt, commonly found in New England forests, depict the animal in the red eft stage. Data collected by artist David Bryant included soil moisture and ambient temperature to investigate correlations between eft color and micro-climate.

The show opened at NSF on February 29 with a reception and tour of the artwork by Terry Daulton and Bonnie Peterson, visiting artists, and Gayle Pugh, NSF. LTER scientists from most of the twenty-six different sites were at the opening along many with NSFers including Cora Marrett, Deputy Director. The exhibit will be on display through June 30.

