

ATBI Quarterly

In partnership with Great Smoky Mountains National Park-Great Smoky Mountains Association-Friends of the Smokies

OVER 900 New Species to Science and Counting!!
THIS AMAZING PROJECT CONTINUES TO GAIN MOMENTUM

TAXA TALLY

New to Science = 907

Becky Nichols

New to the Park = 6,582

Science Advisory Panel

Dr. Dan Janzen,
University of Pennsylvania
Dr. Tom Lovejoy,
The Heinz Center
Dr. Ron Pulliam,
University of Georgia
Dr. Peter Raven,
Missouri Botanical Garden
Dr. Edward O. Wilson,
Harvard University
Dr. Sylvia Earle,
National Geographic Society

Board of Directors

Officers

Patricia Parr:
Chair, ORNL
Oak Ridge, TN
Charles Maynard:
Vice-Chair, Holston Methodist
Conference
Jonesborough, TN
Patricia Cox:
Secretary, TVA
David Scanlon:
Treasurer, Knoxville, TN

Staff

Todd P. Witcher,
Executive Director
Chuck Cooper,
Database Technician
Heather MacCulloch,
Administrative Assistant/
Volunteer Coordinator

A NEW YEAR AND A NEW BEGINNING!!

It is a new year for this amazing project and in many ways a new beginning. Thanks to everyone who has been involved with DLIA and the Smokies' ATBI over the years. DLIA accomplished so much with so little, but there is still much more to achieve. We are in transition working toward re-shaping our organization; we are calling it a "mid-course adjustment." Our adjustment is from a project focused on broad Park research, data and grant management, education, and volunteer training to an organization that must continue to do all of those things in addition to finding steady, diverse funding sources, and helping "fellow ATBI's" get off the ground. Additionally, adjustments to our internal processes are being made:

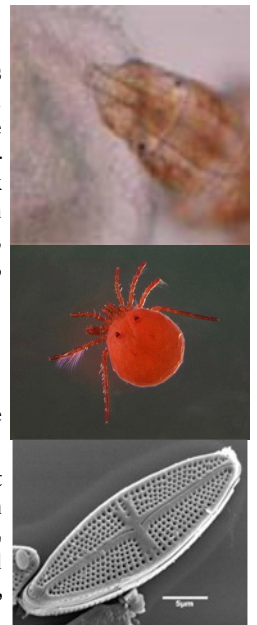
- addressing back-logged data
- honing research to fit Park priorities
- determining the most efficient and manageable way to serve up the information to the public with a new website

AND ,all of this with just two full-time and one part-time staff. WHEW! The great news is that this year IS a new beginning, and we ARE up for the challenge. With YOUR continued support through volunteering and financial contributions we WILL make this work. If you have ideas or suggestions about any of these issues or would like to get more involved please get in touch with us. Go to our website, www.dlia.org, for contact information, and thanks again for your support.

Todd Witcher- DLIA Executive Director



Left: ATBI Alliance panel from discussion at the ATBI



2009 DLIA/ATBI Conference and Salamander Ball a BIG Success!



Above:

The "wild" crowd enjoying the great music (Johnson Swingtet), food, drinks and company at the Salamander Ball

Our Conference and Salamander Ball were a huge success this past December in Gatlinburg bringing together the "old" and new to DLIA and the ATBI. With presentations from:

- "start-up" ATBIs from across the country
 - lectures documenting years of individual Smokies' research coming to a close
 - and brand new information on Smokies' projects just beginning
- this conference gathering is always exhilarating, refreshing, and fun. The Salamander Ball, our newest event, was a huge hit at Ripley's Aquarium of the Smokies. We look forward to doing it all again next year. We are planning the next conference and Ball and will be announcing some changes coming soon. Thanks for your support and participation.

Below:

The Hinds Family- Pat, Jeannie, Abby, Hannah and Eli with Big RED



ATBI QUARTERLY

Winter 2010

Notes from the Board



NEWLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICERS:

The Discover Life in America (DLIA) Board of Directors elected a new Chair, Patricia (Pat) Dreyer Parr, and a new Vice Chair, Charles Maynard, at their December meeting in Gatlinburg. Parr, of Oak Ridge, is the Natural Resources Manager for Oak Ridge National Laboratory and has been involved in resources management for 35 years. She is past President of the Association of Southeastern Biologists and the TN Exotic Pest Plant Council, and served as Chair of the Executive Committee for the Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere Cooperative. Maynard, who lives in Jonesborough, is an author and United Methodist minister. He was the founding director of the Friends of Great Smoky Mountains National Park and currently serves on the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Board of Directors and the National Parks Conservation Association Southeast Regional Advisory Council. He was on the original board of Discover Life in America.

Patricia Cox, of Knoxville, a Botanical Specialist with TVA was re-elected Secretary of the Board. David Scanlon, of Knoxville, a retired TVA employee was re-elected Treasurer. Additionally, we are so excited to add two, fantastic, new board members, Mary Thom Adams and Shelaine Curd-Hetrick, both of Knoxville. Mary Thom is a noted fundraiser, consultant and activist. Shelaine is a manager for Information International Associated (IIA).



Pat Parr,	Charles Maynard	Pat Cox	David Scanlon	Shelaine Curd-Hetrick	Mary Thom Adams
Board Chair	Board Vice Chair	Board Secretary	Board Treasurer	New Board Member	New Board Member

A SPECIAL NOTE OF GRATITUDE

We praise and add members to the DLIA Hall of Fame with outgoing Board Chair, Dr. Ernest Bernard, whose time commitment and dedication to this project has been astounding. Dr. Bernard has served as Board member and Chair as well as a long-term researcher whose work on springtails is beyond belief. Dr. Peter White gets his spot in the Hall as another long-term Board member and former Board Chair who is now rotating off the Board. Peter was one of the original DLIA Board members, and is given the highest accolades for his service to this organization above and beyond the call of duty. Thank you so much for your service to DLIA. We acknowledge and thank Dr. Gillian Bowser and Rebecca Shiflett for their service to Discover Life in America as they also rotate off the board!

Database and Technology Update-Chuck Cooper

I am taking off my data hat and donning my news hat. This winter we are putting the final touches on a new web site. But, you may ask, "Why do you need a new web site? The current one looks so good ..." Yes, it is quite informative, and is loaded with interesting pictures and text. However, all of those pages have been basically independent and had to be maintained one-page-at-a-time with web development software utilizing Hypertext Markup Language (HTML). This process required many hours of staff time.

The new web site is considered a content management system (CMS), and backed by a database housed at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. Most of the content will be entered by staff, interns, and volunteers, without having to understand the inner workings and programming of web page HTML code. This CMS has been developed via the cost-free, open source, content management software called Drupal. Cindy Lancaster, Technology Coordinator at the School of Information Sciences, University of Tennessee, has graciously taken on the task of setting up our Drupal web structure. As of mid-January, DLIA staff, with Cindy's expert help, are learning the system and starting to compose the content for our new web site. At this time we cannot give you the exact date when the new site will be unveiled, but DLIA Executive Director, Todd Witcher, has declared that it is "coming soon!"

SPECIAL NOTE: We are looking for a summer intern with knowledge of Drupal and the desire to learn more.



WISH LIST:

- *Camera lens—
(Canon Digital model EOS40D)
- *Silent and Live auction items
- *Newer computers for the office
- *Refrigerator for office
- *TV/DVD Player for exhibits
- *PowerPoint projector

Oribatid Mites (Oribatidae)

In the Smokies, oribatid mites are one of the “understudied” groups that we are looking to researchers to tell us more about. We suspect this group is very diverse in the Park, but need to verify this through research.



The following is excerpted from Wikipedia.com and www.fcps.edu:

Oribatida are one of the most numerically dominant **arthropod** groups in the organic horizons of most **soils**, where their densities can reach several hundred thousand individuals per square meter. Undisturbed soils can easily yield examples of 50-100 species.



Oribatid mites have five active **postembryonic instars**: **larva**, 3 **nymphal** instars and the adult. All these stages feed on a wide variety of material including living and dead **plant** and **fungal** material, **lichens** and **carrion**, some are **predaceous**; and feeding habits may differ between immatures and adults of the same species.



Oribatid mites eat fungi, algae and dead plant matter. They also eat dead springtails (tiny insects that live in the soil) and live nematodes (tiny worms). These mites are extremely important. They break down old material, such as dead leaves, and put the nutrients back into the soil. This allows plants to pull the nutrients back into their roots so they can grow and feed other animals.



Soil mites are also a food source for soil predators, including; small salamanders, beetles, ants, centipedes, larger mites, spiders, and others.

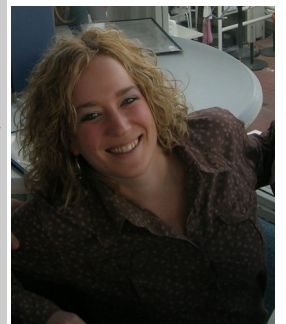
Oribatid mites generally have low **metabolic** rates, slow development and low fecundity. Species are **iteroparous** with adults living a relatively long time; for example, estimates of development time from **egg** to several months to two years in **temperate forest** soils.



DLIA Volunteers-Heather MacCulloch

Thanks to everyone for helping during the conference, which was a great success this year! We were at a new venue, with new events, and the amount of time that many of you donated was greatly appreciated! It could not have happened without you, so THANK YOU very much!

DLIA is looking for some volunteer “part-time” help. We have several traveling exhibits which consist of 15-20 of our high-resolution scans. These scans are making their way around east TN and western NC. They are usually at one location for about a month and then need to come down. If you would like to tap into your “inner artist” and help set up and take down these exhibits, we could really use the extra hands. Depending on the location; it would probably be 8 hours a month or less. So if you would like to see places like nature centers, arboretums, galleries, etc., and use your creativity to set up the exhibit, we could use you. Contact Heather for more details, (865) 430-4756.



Just a few other quick things to keep your eyes on: we are getting a new website. The new website will allow you to create a login and password to sign in, which will allow for much more interactive activity. Also, watch the events calendar...exhibit opening @ UNC Botanical Gardens March 1, 2010; booth at the ASB (Association of Southeastern Biologists) Conference in Asheville, NC, April 7-10, 2010. Also, DLIA is beginning a new series this year; it's called Save the Planet and it's at the Hard Rock Café in Gatlinburg, TN. These evening programs will be citizen science-based programs that will take place quarterly throughout the year, so don't miss them! The first one is March 9, 2010 at 6:00 pm at the Hard Rock Café, Gatlinburg.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES in 2010

Help to staff our conference booths at upcoming events:

ASB Conference, April 7—10 in Asheville

Wildflower Pilgrimage, April 21—24 in Gatlinburg

National Marine Educators Conference, July 20—24 in Gatlinburg

Volunteer to be on any of the DLIA committees or help with other events and in the office:

*Conference Planning Committee -meet the first Tuesday of each month

*Fundraising and Marketing Committee— meet the second Monday of each month

*Firefly Festival—June 12

*Biodiversity Days in the Smokies—June 16—19

DLIA CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2010

January:

8—Mini-Grant RFP

9–16—Wilderness Wildlife Week

February:

5–6—Townsend Winter Heritage Festival (DLIA booth and program)

15—Mini Grant Proposals Due

27—DLIA Board Meeting

March:

2—Exhibit Opens at UNC Botanical Gardens with DLIA Presentation

9—Save the Planet Series at Hard Rock Café Gatlinburg

19—Park Science Colloquium at Twin Creeks

April:

1—Mini Grant Awards Announcement

2—Exhibit Opens at Tomato Head in Knoxville

7–10—ASB Conference in Asheville (DLIA booth)

21–24—Wildflower Pilgrimage in Gatlinburg (DLIA booth)

May:

2—Exhibit Opens at Tomato Head in Maryville

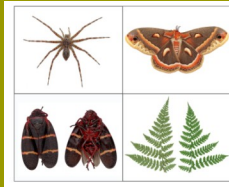
22–23—International Biodiversity Day and Citizen Science Weekend at Purchase Knob

June:

8—Save the Planet Series at Hard Rock Café Gatlinburg

12—Firefly Festival

16–19—Biodiversity Days in the Smokies



July:

20–24—National Marine Educators Conference in Gatlinburg (DLIA booth)

August:

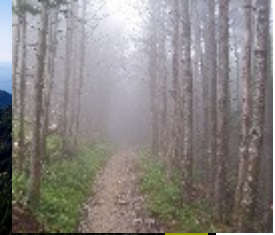
28—DLIA Board Meeting

September:

1—Exhibit Opens at Bliss in Knoxville

4–5—Biodiversity Hike to Mt. LeConte and Overnight at the Lodge

7—Save the Planet Series at Hard Rock Café Gatlinburg



ATBI Quarterly

Discover Life in America

1316 Cherokee Orchard Road

Gatlinburg, TN 37738

865-430-4756

www.dlia.org

DLiA
Discover Life in America

Non-Profit Org.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Knoxville, TN
Permit No. 127