**Michael Barger, Department of Natural Science, Peru State College**

Barger’s work is committed to a continuing study of the parasites of fishes and aquatic herpetiles from the Primitive Big Thicket Area of Texas. He was one of the first researchers for the Thicket of Diversity, established in 2007. His work focused on the aquatic ectotherms and their parasites. Two week-long collecting trips in 2007 provided the preliminary data necessary to make predictions regarding future sampling; a 3-week collecting trip in 2008 and a 2-week collecting trip in 2009 provided data for the first empirical estimates of species diversity of parasites in the Big Thicket. In 2006-07 Barger received $1259, with an additional $1000 and $1800 in 2008. These grants were primarily managed by Executive Director Linda Brindle.

In 2010, Barger spent 7 months on sabbatical in Texas working on the project, and collected approximately 85 species of parasites from 421 fishes representing 39 species. Many of these have been identified and deposited in the Harold W. Manter Laboratory of Parasitology. Others are new and are being described currently; 2 have been described already (Barger 2010 a ,b) and 1 has been redescribed (Barger, 2011). He was funded $5390 in 2010.

In 2011, no collections were conducted and Barger proposed “Biodiversity Survey and Inventory of Parasites of Aquatic Ectotherms in the Big Thicket Continued Survey” to continue the strategy implemented in summer of 2010 during collections in the spring and late summer in 2012. It was funded for $2103.

Barger was able to receive funding from other sources and continued researching and reporting findings.

Much of Barger’s data has been shared by Mona Halvorsen with NPS for inclusion in their database. He is one of the ToD’s most prolific researchers.

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