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New Mexico State Professor Frey Awarded \$100k Grant from IALC

July 8, 2005 - Las Cruces, NM - Professor Jennifer K. Frey, of New Mexico State University, was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the International Arid Lands Consortium to study methods for identifying and prioritizing semidesert grassland regions for conservation.

Assistant Adjunct Professor Frey is a graduate faculty member in the Department of Fishery and Wildlife Science at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. Co-investigators are Assistant Professor Gary Roemer, Department of Fishery and Wildlife Science at New Mexico State University; and Assistant Professor Eli Geffen, a researcher at the Institute for Nature Conservation Research at Tel Aviv University. The project is expected to take two and a half years.

Nearly \$400,000 was approved by the International Arid Lands Commission board to fund three research proposals and a demonstration project that were proposed by collaborating arid land researchers from American universities, Israel and Jordan.

The proposals were recommended by scientists from the IALC Research and Demonstration Advisory Committee, which reviewed 46 proposals submitted from Arizona, Illinois, Israel, Jordan, Nevada, New Mexico, South Dakota and Texas. The proposals were collaborations between two or more principal investigators. Funding of all IALC projects is contingent upon receipt of federal funding.

"The research that we were able to fund today offers the prospect of results that will have an important impact on arid land management and the world we live in," said Dr. Colin Kaltenbach, President of the IALC Board of Directors. "However, we would not have been able to support such work without the generous assistance of the USDA CSREES."

Professor Frey's project attempts to isolate keystone indicators such as the important species in an ecosystem whose health can indicate the health of the ecosystem in which they live. This study will prove most useful in aiding the sustainable management of semiarid grasslands and may have further implications for the conservation of other ecosystems.