

Special UW Student Social, Presentation by Dr. Derek Booth on Rivers and Cities

By Arden Thomas, UW Graduate Student

On June 1st, the state chapter hosted a joint meeting between AWRA members and University of Washington students. AWRA members joined students from Civil and Environmental Engineering, the College of Forest Resources, the School for Marine Affairs, and the School of Aquatic, Fishery Sciences at the South Campus Center and Earth and Space Sciences on the University of Washington campus.

Introductions from the 50 or so attendees revealed many U.W. alumni in the crowd, and memories of campus life were lightheartedly shared. Students and AWRA members alike quickly discovered refreshments, beverages, and much to talk about, and conversation filled the room from the start of the evening.

AWRA Washington State Chapter President Mona Thomason called the meeting to order and provided opening remarks. Student chapter President Chris James provided an overview of the year's activities, which included restoration work on a cold rainy day along the Duwamish river estuary; a field trip to Roza dam where students observed the first spring Chinook of the year; demonstrating a watershed model at the Engineering department's annual open house, a float trip down the Skagit river, and times to socialize when students could connect with the diversity of people at the U involved in water-related studies.

Dr. Derek Booth, professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Earth and Space Sciences shared his recent sabbatical travels to cities throughout the world. He reflected on peoples' relationship with the rivers that many cities have been build upon. He revealed that sometimes the phrase "built upon" is a figurative one, rivers providing transportation crucial for commerce, but other times "built upon" is quite literal. In the case of Nice, France, the main river running through town disappears beneath the city all together. Views on the relationship between a river and its close inhabitants were brought back home with the observation that the Pacific Northwest has an interactive relationship with its larger rivers not commonly seen. Professor Booth's entertaining and lively talk inspired many questions and comments from the audience. Enjoyment of food and drink then resumed, providing students the opportunity to connect with AWRA members.

Many thanks to Arden Thomas and Steve Foster for organizing this event, Dr. Booth for taking time to speak, and all in attendance for creating a successful joint meeting. Also thanks to the firms that sponsored and provided the refreshments: Bender Consulting, LLC; HDR Engineering Inc.; Preston Gates and Ellis LLP; and Brown and Caldwell Environmental Engineers & Consultants. We look forward to similar events in the future.