
Society Actions

ESA Awards for 2009

2009 Murray F. Buell Award

Elizabeth Mary Wolkovich

Murray F. Buell had a long and distinguished record of service and accomplishment in the Ecological Society of America. Among other things, he ascribed great importance to the participation of students in Annual Meetings and to excellence in the presentation of papers. To honor his selfless dedication to the younger generation of ecologists, the Murray F. Buell Award for Excellence in Ecology is given to a student for the outstanding oral paper presented at the ESA Annual Meeting. The 2009 recipient is Elizabeth Mary Wolkovich for her presentation “Invasive annual grasses enhance native shrubs and their arthropod communities through abiotic soil effects.”



Elizabeth’s presentation was based on her doctoral research at Dartmouth College under the supervision of Douglas Bolger and Kathryn Cottingham. Her research demonstrated that invasive grass litter decreases soil temperature and increases soil moisture. These changes in ecosystem properties increase native shrub growth and lead to larger, more diverse arthropod communities.

Her work elegantly links ecosystem and community ecology. The Buell judges noted that Elizabeth’s study on invasive grasses, native shrub growth, and arthropod communities was novel and contained significant findings. Elizabeth justified her study without presenting unnecessary or distracting information. Elizabeth received her B.A. from Wellesley College and will receive her Ph.D this fall.