

WEDNESDAY 7 DECEMBER 2011 at 7:00 pm at [DESS](#)

Speaker: Dr. Edward Barrows, Director of the Center for the Environment and Professor of Biology, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., USA

Presentation Topic: Dr. Barrows' research work on the arthropods of Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve, a rare freshwater tidal marsh in the eastern United States. The speaker will also show a professional film about Dyke Marsh, its conservation and the people who work there.

This presentation will be highly relevant to the preservation of our own waste water wetlands in Qatar and the rich biodiversity of fauna and flora that is sustained by them.

Speaker Profile: Dr. Edward Barrows is paying a short visit to Qatar this month and has generously agreed to give us a presentation on his work. He studied at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, from which he earned a B.S. in botany and zoology, and earned his doctorate in entomology from the University of Kansas in Lawrence. In 1975 he joined the Georgetown University Department of Biology in Washington, D.C. where he currently undertakes research, teaches, and administers as a Professor of Biology and Director of the Laboratory of Entomology and Biodiversity, Director of Environmental Studies, and the Director of the Center for the Environment. His research focuses on the behavior, ecology, evolution, and conservation, usually involving arthropods and plants as study organisms.

Some information about Dyke Marsh: Before European settlement of North America, much of the Washington, D.C area was a biologically rich, teeming, freshwater-tidal marsh. Unfortunately, when the European settlers arrived they destroyed almost all of this beneficial ecosystem in the area as well as throughout the Eastern U.S. The largest remaining freshwater-tidal marsh near Washington, D.C., is Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve on the western shore of the Potomac River, which probably formed about 3000 years ago. It's estimated that there may be as many as 18,000 species inhabiting Dyke Marsh, including locally rare birds and insects.

The Marsh was relatively undamaged until 1951, when it began to be devastated by the large-scale removal of sand and gravel and the dumping of building rubble and garbage. In 1959 the US Congress designated Dyke Marsh as part of the National Park System but unfortunately sand and gravel continued to be removed until the early 1970s. In 1976 conservationists established Friends of Dyke Marsh to help the National Park Service guard the marsh from any further depredations. In 1996, the Laboratory of Entomology and Biodiversity at Georgetown University started an investigation of arthropod biodiversity at Dyke Marsh with an online database.

<http://biodiversity.georgetown.edu/files/informationfile.cfm?title=dykemar>