Taxonomic survey of earthworm species in Minnesota

Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description

Bemidji State University (BSU) is a public university in Bemidji, Minnesota. BSU is a part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MinnState) system. Approximately 5,100 undergraduates and 300 graduate students are currently enrolled at BSU. BSU provides high quality, accessible, affordable higher education to northwestern Minnesota.

Primary investigator 1, Dr. Richard Koch, received his PhD from University of Louisville in 2001 and has been a faculty member at BSU since 2002. Dr. Koch specializes in ecology, wetland ecology, aquatic plants and invertebrates. Dr. Koch is also the Neilson-Cram Endowed Chair of Wetland Ecology and is currently concluding year 3 of a 3-year longitudinal survey of water quality and plankton of Bad Medicine Lake, MN. During this proposed taxonomic earthworm survey, Dr. Koch will be responsible for providing scientific expertise, mentorship of PI2, advise on managing a multi-year project, quality assurance, office and lab space, proofing of reporting documents, writing collaboratively with P2, and assist in information dissemination.

Primary investigator 2, Lisa Dawn “Dawn” Pepper, holds a BS in biology, and will defend her masters’ thesis on soil pH and habitat selection of two earthworm species found in Minnesota at BSU in the fall of 2019. During graduate school Dawn focused on earthworm ecology, physiology, and behavior. Further, Dawn brings 20+ years of experience as a library professional. She has 15+ years of experience managing all aspects of a library materials budget (>$200,000/yr), a work/study personnel budget (>$145,000/yr), and hiring and supervising student workers (staff>24). During this proposed project, Dawn will be responsible for collection, identification, documentations, and statistical analysis of data. Dawn will also be responsible for the daily operations and needs of the survey. She will be providing timely and sufficient reporting, monitoring budget, writing collaboratively with P1, and disseminate findings. Dawn will also hire, train, and supervise the 2 student research assistants.

The student researchers (advance undergraduate or graduate) will assist with sampling, preservation, identification, documentation, and other tasks as directed. The invertebrate specialist will be an academic professional who can advise on difficult identifications and can help put novel findings into context.