

RMC GEOLOGY PROFESSOR ADDRESSES MONTANA GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BILLINGS – Rocky Mountain College Geology Professor Lawrence S. Jones, Ph.D., will speak Wednesday, Oct. 8, 2008 to the Montana Geological Society at its luncheon meeting in the Billings Petroleum Club.

Jones's topic will be the "Effects of Holocene Forest Fires on Sedimentation Rates in the Geologic Record."

His speech summarizes the results of undergraduate student research on arroyo development in western Colorado and concludes that natural fluctuations in climate probably controlled when the arroyos filled up with sediment or eroded downward.

Studies of other arroyos in the southwestern United States have also recognized a probable correlation between climate and arroyo processes. According to Jones, arroyos develop in unconsolidated dirt and typically have a flat-topped terrace or bench, vertical walls, and flat floodplain. Although generally considered a landform of the arid southwest, arroyos are found elsewhere, including central and eastern Montana.

In addition to the findings regarding climate, Jones noted, "Charcoal was found in many layers of the arroyo deposits. In fact, charcoal was so abundant that we now suspect forest fires may have triggered deposition of sediment in the small Colorado arroyos. The possibility exists that forest fires had a similar effect on arroyos in Montana."

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