



2007 E. Lucy Braun Award Daniel Laughlin Northern Arizona University

E. Lucy Braun, an eminent plant ecologist and one of the charter members of the Society, studied and mapped the deciduous forest regions of eastern North America and described them in her classic book, *The Deciduous Forests of Eastern North America*. To honor her, the E. Lucy Braun Award for Excellence in Ecology is given to a student for the most outstanding poster presentation at the ESA Annual Meeting. The 2006 recipient is Daniel Laughlin for his poster “Climate-induced temporal variation in the productivity-diversity relationship.”

Mr. Laughlin’s poster is based on his doctoral research conducted at Northern Arizona University under the supervision of Margaret Moore of the School of Forestry. The goal of the project was

to evaluate the influence of temporally variable environments on the nature of the productivity–diversity relationship. Mr. Laughlin evaluated the influence of precipitation in different years using existing data on plant productivity and diversity. Judges commented that the research was high in quality and creative, and that Mr. Laughlin answered questions with knowledge and authority.

Mr. Laughlin established clear predictions about the nature of the productivity–diversity relationship in wet years and dry years. Specifically, he predicted that competitive exclusion and recruitment limitation would only be detected in productive (i.e., wet) years. The results suggest that climatic variation can affect species interactions in semi-arid plant communities, and that climate-induced changes to the productivity–diversity relationship can change the interpretation of diversity models from year to year. Judges were impressed by Mr. Laughlin’s recognition of the limitations of his data and his forthrightness in discussing them.

Mr. Laughlin received his M.S. in Ecology from Pennsylvania State University in 2002 and his B.S. in Biology from Calvin College in 1999.