iFAST: The International Forum on Advanced Environmental Sciences and Technology

A series of distinguished seminars by eminent scientists

8 a.m. CST, 9 a.m. EST, Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2026
2 p.m. GMT, 10 p.m. China, Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2026



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Sheri Fritz is an ecologist with broad interests in paleoecology, paleoclimate and aquatic ecology. She is best known for her research on using the diatom fossil record from lakes to reconstruct landscape evolution and patterns of climate variation. She has carried out research from the Arctic to the tropics and across time scales from historical to millions of years. Currently, she is the George Holmes University Professor in the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Fritz is a member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union, the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences, the Geological Society of America (GSA) and the International Biogeography Society. She has received the Hans Oeschger Medal of the European Geophysical Union for climate change research (2014), the GSA Israel C. Russell Award for achievements in limnogeology (2018) and the International Paleolimnology Association Lifetime Achievement Award (2018). She has served as president of the American Quaternary Association and she is the Co-Chair of PAGES (Past Global Changes), and currently the Chair of the International Continental Drilling Program (ICDP) Science Advisory Group.

A Multi-Million-Year Perspective on the Evolution of the Amazon Basin and It's Tropical Forests

Abstract The history of the Amazon region, including the evolution of its river system, climate and forests, has intrigued scientists for centuries. The Amazon forest biome hosts the highest biodiversity in the world – a product of a complex landscape and dynamic geologic and climatic processes across space and through time. Yet despite extensive study over many decades, critical aspects of how biotic diversification is influenced by the evolution of the physical landscape are not well constrained, interpretations of several key aspects of landscape history are controversial, and some intervals of geologic time are poorly documented. The Trans-Amazon Drilling Project is a large international project involving over 50 scientists from nine countries that seeks to address these issues by recovering long continuous drill cores for scientific study. The team has recovered nearly a km of sediment from each of two sites in the Brazilian Amazon that span nearly 4,000 km from the distal Andean foreland basin to the mouth of the Amazon River. This presentation will review current paradigms and outstanding questions about the history of the Amazon, provide an overview of the TADP team's field campaigns, and review some of the emerging insights on the history of this important and dynamic region.

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