

WILLIAM S. COOPER AWARD



Christopher L. Fastie

The William S. Cooper Award is given by the Society as a memorial to one of the founders of modern ecology. It was established to honor the author or authors of an outstanding contribution in geobotany, physiographic ecology, plant succession, or the distribution of organisms along environmental gradients. The 1996 recipient is Dr. Christopher L. Fastie for his 1995 paper, "Causes and ecosystem consequences of multiple pathways of primary succession at Glacier Bay, Alaska," which appeared in *Ecology* 76:1899–1916. This paper is the outcome of Chris'

doctoral research, which was completed in 1994 under the guidance of Professor F. S. Chapin at the Institute of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Presentation of this award to Chris Fastie is especially noteworthy because his paper on succession at Glacier Bay, which surely will become a classic, was stimulated in part by the classic papers on Glacier Bay written by William S. Cooper himself, beginning in 1923. To this day, the story of primary succession worked out by Cooper and subsequently elaborated by others is told in nearly every ecology textbook. Succession at Glacier Bay will continue to be described in textbooks, but now Fastie's paper will be featured, as it provides a dramatically different interpretation for a phenomenon that for many years was thought to have been fully explained. Fastie's results indicate that the simple chronosequence paradigm at Glacier Bay is not valid. Rather, there are multiple pathways of succession that are determined by landscape context and species life history traits. The results are based on synthesis of several approaches, including dendrochronology, manipulative field experiments, ecosystem-level analysis, and landscape ecology. Chris' research shows how clear thinking and careful observation, coupled with

new methods, new concepts, and a multidisciplinary approach can lead to new insights in our discipline. William S. Cooper would be excited by Chris' results, though perhaps a bit dismayed by how long it took our profession to get the story straight.

Prior to his Ph.D. work at Alaska, Chris Fastie received a B.S. in art history from John Hopkins University and an M.S. in botany from the University of Vermont. He did postdoctoral research with dendrochronologist Tom Swetman in the Tree Ring Laboratory at the University of Arizona from 1994–1996. Currently he is an NSF Post-doctoral Fellow, working with paleoecologist Steve Jackson in the Department of Botany at the University of Wyoming, learning and applying yet another approach to the study of primary succession and vegetation dynamics.

William S. Cooper Award Subcommittee

Paul Harcombe (Chair)
Steve Archer
Antoni Damman
Janet Franklin
Dennis Knight
David Roberts
Joan Walker