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IWU Alum to Speak on Research in the Rainforests of Costa Rica

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September 16, 2008

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IWU Alum to Speak on Research in the Rainforests of Costa Rica

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Tropical plant ecologist Jeff Klemens, an Illinois Wesleyan University class of '98 alum, will discuss the modernization of research and conservation efforts in the rainforests of Costa Rica in a seminar on Thursday, Sept. 18 at 7 p.m. Klemens will also deliver a natural science colloquium titled “Why Aren’t the Lowland Oak Forests of Costa Rica Regenerating?” on Friday, Sept. 19 at 4 p.m.

The lectures, free and open to the public, will be held in room C101 of the Center for Natural Science Learning and Research (201 E. Beecher St., Bloomington).

Klemens is the founder of Investigadores del Área de Conservación Guanacaste (*iACG*), a volunteer organization that promotes the study of Costa Rican rainforests and provides internet-based tools designed to coordinate the efforts of independent researchers. *iACG* works through the Área de Conservación Guanacaste (AGC), one of the oldest, largest and most successful habitat restoration project in the world. Geographically, the AGC is a United-Nations-protected World Heritage site comprising three national parks and a wildlife refuge over nearly 1,500 square kilometers of land in northwestern Costa Rica.

Since 1999, Illinois Wesleyan students have had the opportunity to travel to the AGC research site through a yearly May Term class, “Tropical Ecology: Costa Rica,” which Klemens co-teaches with Professor of Biology Given Harper. The physically demanding course introduces students to the tropical ecology of Costa Rica and allows them to see field ecologists conduct research first-hand. Klemens also hosts graduate students from across the United States.

Graduating Illinois Wesleyan with a B.S. in biology and a minor in Spanish, Klemens earned a Ph.D. in biology from the University of Pennsylvania in 2003. There, he studied under Daniel Janzen, the world-renowned evolutionary ecologist who initiated the AGC project in the early seventies. Currently, Klemens is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Minnesota in the department of Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior.

For additional information, contact Harper at (309) 556-3056.