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The University of Montana

NEWS RELEASE

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March 8, 1996

EXPERT ON WHIRLING DISEASE TO VISIT UM, GIVE FREE SEMINAR

MISSOULA --

A leading international expert on whirling disease will visit The University of Montana—Missoula Tuesday, March 12, to meet with faculty researchers and give a free public seminar on the parasite-borne disease, which poses a major threat to game fish populations.

University of California at Davis Professor Ronald P. Hedrick will discuss "Whirling Disease of Salmonid Fish: A Complex Host/Pathogen Relationship" at 4:10 p.m. in Room 204 of the Chemistry/Pharmacy Building. Salmonid fish include trout, whitefish, grayling and salmon.

Hedrick was among the first U.S. scientists to conduct research on the parasite that causes whirling disease, said UM parasitology Professor Bill Granath, describing Hedrick as "probably the international authority on the parasite."

The disease, first detected in Montana in December 1994, can have devastating impact, Granath said. Last summer in the Madison River, he said, 90 percent of the year's population of young rainbow trout were killed by the parasite. In western Montana, the parasite has been found in fish in the Clark Fork River near Missoula and in the Swan River, he said.

Granath and other UM scientists are conducting research on varied aspects of whirling disease, including the conditions that affect its spread and the tiny worm that serves as an intermediate host for the parasite. Hedrick's visit to UM will result in research collaborations, Granath said.

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While in Montana, Hedrick will also visit the Rocky Mountain Laboratory in Hamilton and meet with state fisheries managers in Helena.

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Contact: Bill Granath, 243-2975.

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Local, Ravalli Republic, Daily Inter Lake

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