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\$850,000 Fleischmann gift will finance construction of UM Freshwater Research Lab

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IMMEDIATELY

\$850,000 FLEISCHMANN GIFT WILL FINANCE
CONSTRUCTION OF UM FRESHWATER RESEARCH LAB

MISSOULA--

The Fleischmann Foundation, Reno, Nev., has awarded a grant of \$850,000 to the University of Montana Foundation to build and equip a freshwater research laboratory at the UM Biological Station at Yellow Bay on Flathead Lake.

UM President Richard C. Bowers says that the facility, the first of its kind in the world, is targeted for completion in December 1980. Construction cost of the 4,600 square-foot lab is estimated at \$572,700. The balance of the grant will be spent on equipment necessary to the program.

Dr. J.A. Stanford, director of the biological station, says that with the new facility the station will be able to produce the data needed to mediate the confrontation between energy-related resource development and eco-system development.

"The freshwater research laboratory can make the biological station a national focal point for ecological research," he said.

He added that the laboratory will have great significance for the local area because it will be an integral part of the Flathead River Basin Environmental Study. This study, now in progress under Stanford's direction, is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Stanford emphasized that the research made possible by the new lab will involve more than impact analyses. "All our work at the biological station stresses science not just for the sake of science but for the benefit of people and their environment."

Dr. John Tibbs, Stanford's immediate predecessor as station director and the author of the successful proposal to the Fleischmann Foundation, agrees that the new facility will have an impact on national --and international-- research.

\$850,000 FLEISCHMANN GIFT--add one

The UM zoology professor says that one of its effects closer to home will be to attract scientists and their students from all over to do research at the biological station. "The influx of talented people and of research money generated by the lab's programs will benefit the state immensely."

This will happen, he said, because the new laboratory and its location will provide an opportunity for freshwater research that is unique.

The laboratory will be designed for the study of pure, low-nutrient freshwater lakes and streams, he explained, and no other area in the world has so many of these clear, clean lakes as the Northern Rocky Mountain area. The quality of this water affects the entire continent because water flows from western Montana into three major North American drainages: the Columbia, Missouri-Mississippi, and the Saskatchewan River Basins.

These lakes of relatively pure water are rare, and according to Tibbs, becoming rarer because of man's carelessness. To manage such lakes properly, many questions must be answered. These include: How do dams affect insect populations? How do changes in insect populations affect the fish? What genetic mechanisms are involved in the evolution of separate populations of those fish species which meet in Glacier National Park? What environmental management information is needed to insure the preservation of rare or endangered species such as the West Slope Cutthroat Trout?

Tibbs noted that for decades Flathead Lake, one of the largest natural lakes in western North America, has been studied by limnologists - scientists who study the physical, chemical, meteorological and biological conditions of fresh waters. It is only recently, however, that the technology has been developed for dealing adequately with the characteristics and phenomena of relatively pure bodies of water like Flathead.

Tibbs explained that it is the nutrient elements and compounds in lakes that causes them to be clean or polluted, ugly or beautiful, clear or turbid. It is fairly easy to analyze bodies of water that have large amounts of these materials, but until recently it has been almost impossible to analyze relatively pure lakes because the quantities of these materials in them are so small.

(more)

\$850,000 FLEISCHMANN GIFT--add two

He said the new equipment at the freshwater laboratory will be able to measure these compounds in amounts as small as one part per billion. And, he said, "One part per billion is the equivalent of one pinch of salt in 10 tons of potato chips."

Stanford and Tibbs believe that the sophisticated new facilities will enable researchers at the biological station to learn the answers to many questions of state, national and international import in the coming years.

Dr. Raymond C. Murray, associate vice president for research at UM, is also enthusiastic about the new laboratory's implications for the University's research program.

"This gift is the largest the UM has ever received for research and provides us with an opportunity to continue and expand dramatically the work of the biological station," he said.

Summing up the University community's response to the gift, Bowers said, "We are genuinely grateful to the Fleischmann Foundation for its confidence in and generosity to the University of Montana. Thanks are due, too, to the UM Foundation and its director, Allan Vannini, for their part in obtaining the gift, and of course to Drs. Tibbs and Stanford, whose credentials enhanced the credibility of the proposal and who spent so much time in developing it."

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