

Proposal for the University of Florida to Host the 2015 International Symposium on Ranaviruses

A) Location: University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

B) Approximate Dates: April 22nd-24th, 2015 following C (see below)

C) Concurrent meeting: Florida Marine Mammal Health Conference

D) Co-organizers:

- Thomas B. Waltzek, Co-director of the UF Aquatic Animal Health Program
- Mike T. Walsh, Co-director of the UF Aquatic Animal Health Program
- James F. X. Wellehan, Assistant Professor, Zoological Medicine
- Samantha Wisely, Assistant Professor, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
- Susan Cameron Devitt, Assistant Professor, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
- Bruce J. Morgan, Environmental Designs Inc.

E) Proposed activities:

- Ranavirus Diagnostic Testing Workshop
- Florida Museum of Natural History Tour
- Paynes Prairie State Park Nature Walk
- Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park Trip

F) Explanation why you think your venue is most ideal:

The University of Florida has a longstanding tradition of preeminence in herpetological research. Infectious disease research of poikilotherms, including the Field of Ranavirology, is the focus of several UF programmatic units including: The Wildlife and Aquatic Veterinary Disease Laboratory, Zoological Medicine Laboratory, Emerging Pathogens Institute, and the Wildlife Ecology and Conservation laboratories of Drs. Wisely and Devitt. The recent *Ranavirus* outbreaks in anuran, squamate, and chelonians in Florida makes Gainesville a logical place to host the 3rd International Ranavirus Symposium. Gainesville is an attractive and economical site for hosting a conference, with a pleasant climate, excellent research and conference facilities, and exceptional recreational wildlife viewing.

Gainesville is a small yet cosmopolitan southern town featuring rolling forested hills with lakes, streams, and beautiful nearby springs. The city is so deeply green that it is nearly invisible from the air. Nearby Paynes Prairie State Park is a premier place to observe herpetofauna, including large alligators, as well as migratory birds and a wide variety of unique mammals including armadillos and bison. The downtown nightlife provides further recreational options, with diverse restaurants, a good live music scene, and an excellent local microbrewery.

The timing of this conference would allow it to be held together with the Florida Marine Mammal Health Conference, providing the opportunity to reduce costs, with potential beneficial synergy resulting from the interaction. Several of the 2013 International Ranavirus Symposium conference participants are engaged in marine mammal infectious disease research and health (e.g. including Drs. Miller, Duffus, Waltzek, and Wellehan).

On behalf of the University of Florida we thank you in advance for considering our application to host the 2015 International Symposium on Ranaviruses.

Sincerely,
Thomas B. Waltzek



James F. X. Wellehan

