Title: **Strengthening Interdisciplinary Graduate Education for Biodiversity Sciences at Cornell University**
Host: Matthew Hare
Date: June 12, 2012

Objectives
Interdisciplinarity is a broadly recognized goal within academia and at Cornell to best address the complex socio-cultural and environmental problems of today. Because the PhD degree is first and foremost about building disciplinary expertise, a practical model for interdisciplinary training is to broaden fluency across disciplines while building collaborative skills. Within the existing structure of graduate fields at Cornell, we are interested in exploring ideas for building capacity to facilitate, incentivize and succeed at interdisciplinary training of graduate students, particularly in the case of programs like IGERT that involve multiple graduate fields. The timing of this discussion is motivated by an NSF IGERT proposal on "Integrating Genomics and Science Communication for Biodiversity Research and Conservation" being prepared for the July 2 deadline, but the issues are not new and any potential for improvements at Cornell will be realized gradually. We invite you to help identify barriers to interdisciplinary training (e.g., few team-taught interdisciplinary courses, disparate field requirements) and brainstorm ideas to increase interdisciplinary leadership, communication and team-building skills in graduate students. In particular, the "papers option" provided for by the Cornell Graduate School (allowing multi-authored manuscripts as dissertation chapters), bears some discussion because not every field allows this and those that do may have different criteria for what qualifies as a "substantive contribution" on a collaborative paper.