

Meeting Management and Planning Committee Report (MMPC) - RENO 2015

Committee members: Marlis Douglas, David Green, Ed Heist (Chair), Henry Mushinsky, Kyle Piller, and Marty Crump (Program Officer)



The MMPC met in Reno, NV on 9 – 12 April 2015 to plan the professional program. There are over 600 oral and poster presentations scheduled for the Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (JMIH). Recall, this year JMIH is meeting sans the SSAR that is holding a separate meeting. The JMIH meeting will be held at the Grand Sierra Resort (GSR) and Casino, located about 15 minutes from the airport. A free GSR airport shuttle will meet you at door D in the baggage claim area; it arrives 15 minutes before and after the hour from 5:15 am to 12:15 am, every day. You enter the GSR on the main floor of the casino that is immense and filled with various gaming devices, restaurants and bars. Hotel rooms are very nice and all have been recently upgraded. Rooms in the Summit Level (109.00 per night) are equipped with a refrigerator, microwave, and small sink and can be occupied by up to four persons. Lower level rooms (79.00 per night) don't have a refrigerator or microwave, but refrigerators are available for rent (first come, first serve). At check in each room will receive a GSR food voucher for \$30.00 (three \$10.00 vouchers) which can be used at any GSR restaurant. Parking at the hotel is free as are two bottles of water in each room per day. A health club (fitness room, outdoor pool and heated Jacuzzi) is available for free and the internet in your room and in the meeting space is free. Rooms can be booked at conference prices for three days before and after the meeting.

The Grand Sierra Resort is filled with distractions beyond the traditional gaming devices, gaming tables, and sports book. Fifty. A fifty lane bowling alley, an outdoor putt-putt (miniature golf) course, a large swimming pool, a volley ball court, a bungee jumping facility, a driving range (balls are hit into a lake and can be aimed at targets that can earn various gifts, if hit with your golf ball), a wedding chapel, a gift shop, a Starbucks, live entertainers, a night club, and nine restaurants. We sampled several restaurants on the casino level and found each to be unique and reasonably priced; the food was very good if not outstanding. Foods range from fast food to a high-end steak house. Fast food is available in the bowling alley and on the lower floor (Spa Level) one can find a Johnny Rockets and a Port of Subs. An all-you-can eat buffet is available for less than \$12 for lunch - an option that will likely be popular with students; dinner is a few dollars more. A smoke-free portion of the casino is available for those who want to gamble but prefer to avoid smoky areas. Drinks are free while gambling. One can easily navigate from the sleeping rooms to the meeting rooms and completely avoid any smoky areas. All breakout rooms are on the same floor (above the casino floor) and not too distantly located from one another.

A Walmart is located within walking distance of the GSR that sells beer, wine and liquor. There are no bars or restaurants in the immediate area surrounding the GSR, but a bus is available to get to downtown (\$2.00, exact change is required) and taxis are available for about \$10.00 to get to town. Most taxis are small SUV's and can carry up to five passengers, so any small group might consider a taxi rather than the bus. Downtown Reno has much to offer. Our opening reception will be at a fantastic automobile museum that is filled with about 200 truly collectible cars, motor cycles and various go-fast machines. The Truckee River flows through the city and provides the central attraction for the "river walk" where one can find numerous brewpubs and a large variety of restaurants. The river itself is an attraction to many devoted kayakers who dare run the rapids through the city. An arts festival (called Art Town) is concurrent with JMIH as it runs all through July, and it features many visual and music arts with many events featured along the river walk. Fabulous Lake Tahoe is located about 45-60 minutes south-west of Reno for those who want to venture out of the city. Two field trips are planned, a herp trip to Pyramid Lake, and a mountain bike ride above Lake Tahoe; check the JMIH website for updates, costs and registration.

Dick Tracy and Chris Feldman are our local hosts, be sure to thank them when you see them for their efforts on behalf of the three JMIH societies. It promises to be a very good meeting.

We hope to see you all in Reno!