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**EEB Seminar Aug. 22, 2014**

**NatureServe: How Science and Technology Inform Conservation Decisions**

**Abstract**

NatureServe is a non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to provide the scientific basis for effective conservation action. NatureServe and its network of state natural heritage programs and conservation data centers, including the Tennessee Division of Natural Areas, are a leading source for information about rare and endangered species and threatened ecosystems. More than 1,000 scientists, data managers, and other professionals participate in the NatureServe network. As such, we are one of the largest, private sector employers of conservation biologists and species taxonomic specialists in the U.S. Our dedicated network staff collect and manage the most comprehensive resource for biodiversity data in the Americas, containing nearly a million mapped locations of at-risk species and providing extensive information on more than 66,400 species and almost 6,700 ecosystems. Across its network, NatureServe responds to over 6 million data requests each year – helping to improve the effectiveness of decisions that impact the Earth's biodiversity, by guiding scarce conservation resources towards protection of the most vulnerable species and ecosystems.