

[MISSOURI STATE]

Agency works to better water quality

Robert Pavlowsky has always viewed Missouri State University as a place of opportunity. As a young faculty member, he saw research opportunities in environmental areas and was encouraged to conduct research in areas of importance to the region.

Pavlowsky received his undergraduate degree in wildlife biology, and it wasn't until taking a graduate-level class in geomorphology that he truly became interested in geography.

"Being very broadly trained in science is not always perceived as good thing, particularly in academe," Pavlowsky said. "I agree to a point, but with my interests in environmental systems and the ways that humans interact with them, you need to be able to generalize and work across several fields. I think that's what attracted me to geography."

Pavlowsky was inspired by the support he received from the university to conduct research and by the need for a water-quality research center in the region. He became the first director of the Ozarks Environmental and Water Resources Institute in 2005.

The institute is mainly devoted to helping improve water quality in southwest Missouri and throughout the Ozarks, but it also completes a few projects out-



Robert Pavlowsky chats with Andrew DeWitt and Nicole Daugherty, two of his previous graduate students. MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

side of the region, including Jamaica. The goal of the institute is to combine the sciences to conduct successful water-quality research in Ozark watersheds.

There is also an opportunity to work with others to use the limited funds avail-

able to solve environmental problems.

"Our workday typically involves leaving the office or laboratory to work on projects with state and federal agencies, research partners, watershed groups and students from

other departments or universities," he said.

Pavlowky mentors master's degree thesis research projects in geospatial science and the interdisciplinary master of natural and applied sciences. He was one of three faculty recipi-

ents of the Board of Governors' Award for Excellence in Public Affairs in May 2013.

The institute functions as an outreach hub to aid Missouri communities, Pavlowsky said.

"I think this is an in-

stance where the university and greater Springfield community should be proud because we help support environmental initiatives," he said.

Story submitted by Missouri State University