

MDC Hosts Talk By Microbe Expert

Perhaps the microbe will be as key as the microchip among the tools people use to improve life in the decades ahead, including conservation of fish and wildlife resources. The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) will co-host a free presentation by author and botany professor Nicholas P. Money about the extraordinary diversity of the microbial world 7 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 28, at the Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center, 4750 Troost Ave., Kansas City. His talk is entitled "The Amoeba in the Room and the Fungus in the Sky."

Money is a professor of botany at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Among his recent books is *The Amoeba in the Room – Lives of the Microbes*. Science is making significant new discoveries about microscopic life such as fungi, bacteria and protozoans found in soil, water and in forms of life visible to the human eye, including people. Money will discuss the diversity in environments from the backyard pond to the ocean floor. He will also describe his recent research linking fungal spores to rainfall.

Scientists have long studied microbial life, but how those life forms interact with each other and plant and animal life remains a frontier. For example, botanists are beginning to examine how specific fungi that help plant roots absorb water and nutrients are needed along with seeds and seedlings in prairie restoration efforts.

The public is welcome to walk in to the Discovery Center for the program. A social hour will begin at 6 p.m. before the 7 p.m. presentation. Reservations are not required. For information, call 816-759-7300. For information about the Discovery Center, visit <http://mdc.mo.gov/discoverycenter>.

MDC is presenting this program in partnership with the Big Muddy Speaker Series, a lecture series based on Missouri River issues supported by a coalition of private conservation groups and public agencies. For information, visit <http://bigmuddyspeakers.org/about/>.