



The Association  
for the Study of  
**Literature &  
Environment**



# ASLE News

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## ASLE 2011 Conference Updates

### Pre-conference Workshop & Seminar Pre-registration Open Until March 15

By Greta Gaard, Pre-conference Workshop Coordinator

What are you doing on summer solstice? For three hours in the afternoon of June 21, you could participate in a pre-conference seminar or workshop that introduces you to a new field of ecocriticism, gives you new eco-pedagogy tools, sparks your creative writing skills, prepares you for the job market, or keeps you going for the long haul.

The seminar on "Ecological Media" with Sid Dobrin and Salma Monani examines ecocinema and its interest in materiality, its intersections with animal studies, and its interest in risk narratives. In a pre-conference seminar with Simon Estok, participants will explore "Early Modern Literature" (including Shakespeare) through an ecocritical lens, investigating the relations between early modern scholarship and real ecological advocacy. With Kimberly Ruffin in "Human Natures," participants will explore the interfaces of human group identities and ecoliterature, drawing on environmental justice ecocriticism and meeting for part of the seminar with Joni Adamson and John Gamber's seminar on "Ecocriticism, Environmental Justice, and Global Indigenous Studies" (this last seminar is now full).

Our seminar leaders are at the cutting edge in their fields: Estok's new *Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Reading Ecophobia* (2011), Ruffin's *Black on Earth: African-American Ecoliterary Traditions* (2010), Dobrin's co-edited volume *Ecosee: Image, Rhetoric, Nature* (2009) and Monani's position as Moderator for the online scholarly community, EcoMedia, all promise that participants will be introduced to the most current themes and issues in these areas.

To maximize this learning opportunity, pre-conference seminars require some advance reading from participants, along with writing a short position paper, which will be exchanged and read by all the participants prior to the seminar. Pre-conference workshops simply require that you show up, ready to learn!

"Word Play" led by creative writers Ann Fisher-Wirth and Janine DeBaise explores relationships between language, the body, and place, generating raw material that can be shaped into poetry or prose. "The Land Ethic Leaders Method" of ecopedagogy, led by Buddy Huffaker, introduces

## Conference Dates and Deadlines

Please keep in mind the following dates as you prepare for the 2011 ASLE Conference in Bloomington:

**February 28:** Conference registration will open on or before this date.

**March 15:** Preregistration for Preconference Workshops and Seminars Closes

**May 1:** Deadline to register for conference without late fees.

**May 1:** Deadline to submit for ASLE Graduate Student Paper Awards and all Travel Grants.

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## ASLE Bookshelf

The following works were recently published by ASLE members. If we've missed your publication, please send bibliographic information to Catherine Meeks,

[catherine-meeks@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu).

**Buntin, Simmons B.** *Bloom: Poems, Cliffs of Moher, County Clare, Ireland: Salmon Poetry*, 2010.



participants to a method of teaching that encourages participation and connects students with their own ecological values, motivating new behaviors and insight. Graduate students will benefit from strategies and advice offered in "The Academic Job Market" workshop led by Tom Hillard, while we old dogs (still barking vigorously) can sign up with John Tallmadge and Mark Long to gain a tool box of strategies for "Staying Alive" in academe, living a balanced life and maintaining authentic personal relationships.

To sign up for any of these seminars or workshops, send an e-mail to Greta Gaard ([greta.gaard@uwrf.edu](mailto:greta.gaard@uwrf.edu)). Pre-conference workshops and seminars cost an additional \$15, a fee you can pay along with your regular conference registration. Along with learning new ecocritical tools, you will be listed in the conference program as a presenter, thereby allowing you to apply to your institution for funding with a bit more leverage than you'd have as a regular attendee. For full descriptions of these seminars and workshops, go to the conference website, at <http://www.indiana.edu/~asle2011/preconference.shtml>.

On the longest day of the year, there's time to learn something new--but hurry! Registration closes March 15.

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## Greening Indiana University: Notes on the 2011 ASLE Conference Site

by William Marshall Brown, Indiana University's Sustainability Director

Located in the heart of Bloomington, Indiana, on partly wooded property that once belonged to Moses Dunn, the flagship campus of Indiana University has always had a unique relationship with its natural environment. Herman Wells, the revered president of Indiana University from 1938 to 1962 and its chancellor thereafter until his death in 2000, made the preservation of green space one of his priorities. Retaining the woodland character of the campus, he declared: "To cut a tree unnecessarily has long been an act of treason against our heritage and the loyalty, love, and effort of our predecessors who have preserved it for us."



When then Chancellor's Office founded the Council for Environmental

**Caplow, Florence and Susan A. Cohen,** eds. *WildBranch: An Anthology of Nature, Environmental, and Place-based Writing*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010.



**Cauthen, Sudy.** *The Salvation of Maggie Rider: Stories from Nokoffa*. North Florida Center for Documentary Studies, Inc.: 2010.



**Ingram, David.** *The Jukebox in the Garden: Ecocriticism and American Popular Music Since 1960*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010.

Stewardship (CFES) at Indiana University Bloomington (IUB) in 1998, it was continuing a tradition established by Herman Wells. This important first step led to a series of other initiatives, focused on promoting environmental literacy on the Bloomington campus. Perhaps the most far-reaching of these was the formation, in 2007, of the Indiana University Task Force on Campus Sustainability co-chaired by Michael Hamburger, Professor of Geology and Paul Sullivan, Deputy Vice President for Administration. The 16-member task force oversaw the creation of the *Campus Sustainability Report*, released in January 2008, a broad-based effort by over 100 Indiana University faculty, staff, and students which addressed issues of environmental sustainability across a broad range of academic, administrative, and operational programs on the Bloomington campus.

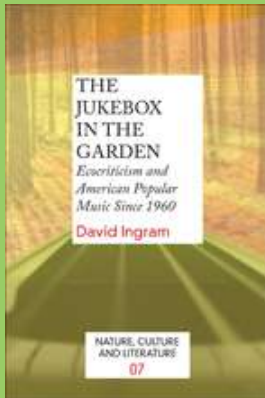
One of the core recommendations of the *Campus Sustainability Report* was the creation of an Office of Sustainability, which would provide administrative leadership and coordination for campus-wide programs on sustainability. I was selected as Indiana University Bloomington's first Director of Sustainability and began work on March 2, 2009. The director reports jointly to the Provost and the Vice President for Capital Projects and Facilities. The office has a full-time assistant director, Emilie Rex, and typically 18 paid interns and four part-time student employees at a time.

The newly created Office of Sustainability (IUOS) used the *Campus Sustainability Report* for a roadmap; many of the former Task Force members now serve on a new Campus Sustainability Advisory Board which has seven Working Groups, each with 20 to 30 members. A new Student Sustainability Council, made up of student leaders from 22 student organizations, also provides input and assistance to the Office of Sustainability. This group recently gathered 11,000 petitions to start a Student Sustainability Fund, which will be funded through a voluntary \$5 donation at registration.



Volunteers participate in "Greening Cream & Crimson," part of a comprehensive effort to make IU Athletics a sustainability success story

A key component of Indiana University campus sustainability progress has been a unique Sustainability Internship Program that to date has enlisted over 100 students in applied sustainability research over the past five years. Each paid intern works with an academic mentor and an operations mentor to study some aspect of campus academic programs or operations over a summer or over an academic year. Some projects



## Sign Up for eTOC Alerts for ISLE

Stay up to date with the latest in [ISLE](#) by registering for email table of contents alerts (eTOCs) through Oxford University Press. Signing up is easy and free, simply follow these 4 steps:

1. Go to [My Account](#) and create a new user account.
2. Select 'Humanities' and then 'Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment' from the dropdown list. Check the Table of Contents and/or Advance Access box
3. Make sure you save your selection!
4. You'll then receive an email each time an issue is out so you'll always be up to date.

they have pioneered can be found at the website of the IU Office of Sustainability: <http://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/home.html>.

A few *ad hoc* grass roots sustainability committees had formed to promote sustainable practices in their own buildings even before the IU Office of Sustainability. In my first year as Sustainability Director, I pulled these groups together in "green bag" luncheons to stimulate a free exchange of best practices and over twenty new Green Teams have been formed in the past year.

IUOS has also formed collaborations with Indiana University Athletics and the university's Alumni Association to reach out to a broader portion of the IU family. In addition, many collaborative programs have been established between our campus and the community of Bloomington to tackle common sustainability issues like transportation, storm water, food, waste management and recycling.

Building on the *Campus Sustainability Report*, our new *Campus Master Plan* is unique in the degree to which it is infused with sustainability principles and goals. The four main sustainability principles recommended by the plan are: 1) adopt environmentally sensitive land use practices; 2) move toward a carbon-neutral campus; 3) ensure a range of transportation options; and 4) plan for innovative sustainable buildings and landscapes.

IUOS convened a *2020 Vision* retreat in February of 2010 to propose an ambitious vision and plan for the next decade - leading up to Indiana University's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2020. This group of administrators, faculty, staff and students proposed the following 2020 Vision:

*Indiana University is an international campus sustainability leader recognized for innovation and excellence in academic programs, research, campus environmental quality, campus operations and community outreach that facilitate and demonstrate the path to a more sustainable future.*

This proposed *2020 Vision* and the 20 ambitious goals that accompanied it are intended to catalyze a broader discussion about how best to propel Indiana University to a position of leadership in the great challenge and great opportunity of our time. You are welcome to be a part of that discussion of your future.



Volunteers in Sustainability table at "Green Day" in Dunn Meadow, Indiana University Bloomington

## Members Write

ASLE News wants to include your creative voices! We invite members to submit original short prose or poetry that resonates with a word, phrase or question we pose. Selected entries will be included in the following issue of the newsletter.

The word this time around is:

**"Metamorphosis"**

Please send responses either in the body of an e-mail or as an attachment to ASLE News editor Catherine Meeks, [catherine-meeks@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu).

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## ASLE PhDs

On December 10, 2010, ASLE member **Andy Meyer** defended his dissertation "Occasions of Wildness: Literature, Simultaneity, and Habitation" to earn a Ph.D. in English at the University of Washington. His committee members were Herbert Blau (chair), Gary Handwerk, and Leroy Searle.

In early January of 2011, Indiana University became the 7<sup>th</sup> institution to submit to a new campus sustainability metric developed by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. The Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) is in its initial year with over 200 institutions signed on as charter participants. Indiana University Bloomington's initial STARS rating is Silver. One of the goals expressed in the 2020 vision is to achieve the highest rating, Platinum, by 2020. Before your visit to our campus this summer, please visit the website of the IU Office of Sustainability at <http://www.indiana.edu/~sustain/home.html> to learn more about the many campus sustainability initiatives, in areas ranging from energy and built environment, transportation, environmental quality, sustainable food, resource use and recycling, sustainable computing, and academic programs.

## ASLE Welcomes New Officers

As in years past, the recent ASLE elections offered a slate of diverse, talented individuals running for key leadership roles. As usual, ASLE members voted for a new Vice President, who serves a three-year term as VP, then President, then Immediate Past President; two new Executive Council members, who serve three-year terms; and, for the first time, a new position was on the ballot: ASLE members voted for a Diversity Officer, a role which last year's executive council, under the leadership of then-Diversity Coordinator Priscilla Ybarra, voted to make an elected position within the ASLE leadership structure. We want to extend sincere thanks to all of those who agreed to run; ASLE members are extremely lucky to have such difficult choices to make!

And now, we are pleased to announce the winners of this year's election. ASLE is thrilled to welcome Joni Adamson, of Arizona State University, as our new Vice President; Anthony Lioi of The Juilliard School and Kimberly Ruffin of Roosevelt University as newly elected members to the Executive Council; and Salma Monani of Gettysburg College as our Diversity Officer.



Joni Adamson

Adamson, who is Senior Research Scholar at the Global Institute of Sustainability, Associate Professor of English and Environmental Humanities in the School of Letters and Sciences, and Program Faculty in Human and Social Dimensions of Science and Technology at ASU, says, "For the last 10 years, I have been the Liaison between the Environment and Culture Caucus and the American Studies Association where I have worked to bring attention to the reasons why analysis of environmental issues needs

to be part of what former ASA President Shelly Fisher Fishkin has called the 'turn to the transnational.' I am very excited to now turn my attention to ASLE and begin serving as VP." As a look at Adamson's work shows, she is clearly well-poised to do so. She is the author of *American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice, and Ecocriticism: The Middle Place* and coeditor (with Mei Mei Evans and Rachel Stein) of *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics, and Pedagogy*. Her recent essays have

## ASLE Seeks GSL

We are currently seeking a new Graduate Student Liaison (GSL) for a two-year term. GSLs serve ASLE by representing the interests and concerns of graduate students at meetings of the EC, and they work closely with ASLE's Graduate Mentoring Program Coordinator in shared pursuit of this goal. The term is two years, one as junior GSL and the second as senior GSL with voting privileges on the ASLE EC. For a full description of GSL rights and responsibilities, see the website at <http://www.asle.org/site/about/policies/liasons/>.

If you would like to be considered for a GSL position, please submit a formal letter of application to current president Ursula Heise ([uheise@stanford.edu](mailto:uheise@stanford.edu)) by March 31 for a term beginning in July 2011. Please include a statement that describes your specific interests in serving ASLE, the length and nature of your involvement in the organization, a description of your professional interests (particularly as they connect to literature and environment), and the names and contact information of three faculty references.

appeared in *The Journal of Transnational American Studies* and *ECOZON@:European Journal of Literature*, among many others.

Adamson explains, "I look forward to 'getting up to speed' as I assist Past President Annie Ingram, President Ursula Heise and our continuing and new Executive Council members and the local arrangements committee with our upcoming conference. I also look forward to supporting our new Diversity Officer, Salma Monani, as she works towards ASLE's mission and strategic goal to increase the disciplinary, demographic and international diversity of our membership." For her part, Monani says, "I am honored to have been selected as ASLE's diversity officer. I see this as an important and critical position as ASLE moves its vision for inclusiveness forward. If there ever were an organization that was ready for the next steps, it's ASLE, and I feel a sense of hope and optimism as I begin my term."



Salma Monani

As ASLE begins taking these "next steps," we'd like to thank those whose terms are coming to an end, but whose work in getting ASLE poised to take those steps cannot be overstated: Immediate Past President Dan Philippon, our two outgoing Executive Council Members, Tom Hillard and Gretchen Legler, and outgoing Diversity Coordinator Priscilla Ybarra.

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## International Affiliate ISLE Online Offer

As a membership benefit for ASLE international sister organizations, there is a special online-only subscription rate to ISLE.

### *What's the deal?*

Members of ASLE affiliate organizations can subscribe to ASLE's official journal ISLE at a special low discounted rate. A subscription includes online-only access to the journal, now published four times a year, and access to all issues dating back to 1996.

### *How much does it cost?*

A 2011 subscription costs just £27 /\$41 / €41. You will receive online access throughout the year, as well as access to previous issues.

### *Where do I subscribe?*

You can subscribe with one easy online transaction. Simply visit [http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our\\_journals/isle/access\\_purchase\\_price\\_list.html](http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/isle/access_purchase_price_list.html)

Select 'add to basket' next to the ASLE affiliate rate in the appropriate currency and follow the next steps.

### *Who's it for?*

Non-North American members of ASLE affiliate organizations can subscribe at this special rate, including ASLEC-ANZ (Australia and New

Zealand), ASLE-India, ASLE-Japan, ASLE-Korea, ASLE-Taiwan, ASLE-UKI, EASLCE (European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture and the Environment), OSLE-India

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## Affiliated Conference Reports

### **Ecocriticism in Asia: Reorienting Modernity, Reclaiming Nature**

by Greta Gaard, ASLE EC Member

From December 16-18, 2010, Tamkang University hosted its 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Ecological Discourse, bringing together ecocritics, nature writers, eco-activists and scholars to examine the influences of Asian culture on ecocriticism. Participants came from China, Korea, Japan, India, Turkey, Spain, Australia, the Philippines, and the U.S. , creating a busy, intensely dialogic community for just three days.



We began with keynote presentations from Ursula Heise on "A Distant Reading of Wolves," Scott Slovic on "Authentic East and South Asian Ecocriticisms," and Patrick Murphy on hydropower dams and climate, thus

introducing a range of conference themes and foci. Keynotes throughout the conference--Simon Estok on "Ecocriticisms without Borders," Ken Noda on "Pre-landscape and Post-Romanticism" in Japan, Swarnalatha Rangarajan on "The earth-based religiosity of Bhakti Literature," Taiwanese nature writer Ka-Shiang Liu on the responsibility of the writer in an era of global climate change, Wong-Chung Kim on Korean eco-poetry, Serpil Oppermann on "The Fisherman of Halicarnassus," Deborah Bird Rose on "Philosophical Animism," Linda Hogan on children, class differences, and the urgency of environmental justice, to name just a few--provoked thoughtful responses, debate, and a general sense of urgency about the activist relevance of our ecocritical work.

Breakout sessions addressed a range of topics, from queer eco-poets to betel nut girls, animals in Australian literature and animist folklore in Cambodia, Minamata narratives on food, a comparative approach to ecofeminist toxic narratologies, wilderness, and many diverse perspectives on Buddhism.

From Shu-YuanLu, Chair of Ecocritical Studies at Soochow University in China, we learned about the contemporary shift from pastoral poetry to

work poetry in China, as young workers write about their labor and suffering in the industrial factories, and their yearning for the countryside. Due to obsolete equipment, poor work environments, lack of technical training, and fatigue caused by continual overtime work, each year among the migrant workers in the Pearl River Delta there are more than 30,000 cases of cutting or rolling off fingers. Like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory history in the U.S., some migrant workers in China are committing suicide by jumping out of buildings--and yet more workers come to the city in search of employment. Their poetry articulates environmental injustices of international proportions.

Bookending Lu's keynote, the final conference panel on environmental justice featured Joni Adamson using *Avatar* and *The Matrix* to explore the role of popular film in indigenous literary studies and climate change, Giovanna Di Chiro describing the "grassroots cosmopolitanism" of community activists who join with other grassroots groups globally to embody a local/global sense of place and demand climate justice, and Hsin-ya Huang's comparative approach examining the work of Apache, Piwan, and Atayal indigenous women writers in creating a trans-Pacific indigenous feminist response to climate change.



A concluding panel gave ecocritics a chance to sum up their reflections, with Ursula Heise providing a keen analysis of three major differences among us. There were "recuperative projects" (religious, historical, indigenous) vs. those who were broadly skeptical of whether such projects can do the work that is needed. There was the notion of harmony as a goal, vs. talks that question the notion of harmony, and whether it is derived from elitist traditions. And there were those who see the foundation of environmental ethics in the transformation of the self, and literature as offering redemption from ecological degradation, vs. those who see the foundation of environmental ethics in the transformation of collectives and systems, with literature possibly perpetuating ecological degradation. These differences were not nationally aligned, but rather scattered across the field of presenters.

After the closing banquet, I walked through the narrow night market streets of Tamsui, deeply grateful for this global ecocritical community, for the lively and gracious ecocritics at Tamkang University, and for the hope that our work may contribute to promoting climate justice and earthcare at this very critical historical moment.



## **Report on the 2010 Environment and Culture Caucus (ECC) Activities at the American Studies Association Annual Meeting**

by Joni Adamson, ASLE Vice President, Arizona State University

This year, the ECC entered its 11th year, and started off the new decade with new leadership and an increasingly transdisciplinary membership. Charlie Mitchell, an environmental historian at Elmira College in New York, who was among the Caucus's first members and who has served many years as its treasurer, took the reins from Joni Adamson, and will now serve as its Liaison with the ASA for the coming year. The Caucus is also currently transitioning into a new leadership style that will rotate from Vice-Liaison, to Liaison, to Past-Liaison. The Caucus is currently working to identify a Vice-Liaison who will follow Charlie Mitchell. Joni Adamson will continue to manage the listserv and serve as Past-Liaison.

The Caucus met this year in San Antonio, TX, on November 20<sup>th</sup> to present the 2009 Annette Kolodny Prize for Best Paper on Environment and Culture (AKP), plan for the 2011 conference, elect a new member to the AKP committee, and co-sponsor a reception with the Early American Matters Caucus and the American Antiquarian Society.

The Annette Kolodny Prize is funded by Duke University Press and *Orion* Magazine, and the winner receives a one hundred dollar prize. However, the ECC presented the Prize to two winners this year. Ivan Grabovac, Mount Royal University, Calgary, Alberta, won for his paper, "Nativism and Nationhood: Migratory Birds, Immigrants, and the Making of Ecological Citizens" and Jessica Ramsay, UC Santa Barbara, won for "Floating Communities and Contested Belonging: The Flood Narratives of Hurricane Katrina and Richard Wright."

2009 AKP winner Ivan Grabovac was elected to the AKP Committee. He will join Erica Hannickel (also a past AKP winner), and co-chairs, Sarah Wald and John Bruni, who will choose the 2010 winner from the papers presented at the 2010 conference.

Caucus members also discussed plans for the 2011 ASA conference which is themed, "Imagination, Reparation, Transformation," and which will be held October 20-23, at the Hilton Baltimore, in Baltimore, Maryland.

Since the ASA-ECC has been very successful in placing sessions on the program over the last decade (only 60% of submitted sessions are accepted and 40% of individual papers), Caucus members discussed how they might change directions. Members decided that while the Caucus would continue to use its listserv to organize multiple sessions and to network and plan for the next year's program, the Caucus as a whole would organize only one officially-sponsored "state of the field" session that would point to some of the most important issues for environmental studies in the coming decade. Members decided to use the 2011 ASA-ECC session to imagine the "Next Environmental Studies."

Caucus members also discussed using its website, [http://www.theasa.net/caucus\\_environment](http://www.theasa.net/caucus_environment) in new ways. ASLE member Sara Wald volunteered to take charge and compile syllabi and resources. Another ASLE member, Priscilla Ybarra, volunteered to submit resources on the topic of Chicano ecocriticism.

Later that evening, for the second year in a row, the ECC co-sponsored a reception with the Early American Matters Caucus, led by Dennis Moore, and the American Antiquarian Society, headed by Paul Erickson.

Questions about the ECC or the American Studies Association may be directed to Charles Mitchell, Elmira College, [cmitchell@elmira.edu](mailto:cmitchell@elmira.edu). Also, please see his webpage at <http://faculty.elmira.edu/cmitchell/>. Questions about the listserv or membership in the ECC can be directed to [Joni.Adamson@asu.edu](mailto:Joni.Adamson@asu.edu)

### **The Virtue of Limits: ASLE-Sponsored Panel at the 2010 SAMLA Convention**

by Jim Clark, Barton College

The topic for the ASLE Affiliated Groups session at the 2010 SAMLA convention in Atlanta, Georgia, November 5-7, was "Ecocriticism and the Virtues of Limits." Timothy J. Burbery (Marshall University) was the Chair, and George Hovis (State University of New York at Oneonta) was the Secretary. Four papers were presented: "'Limitation Makes for Power': Richard Wilbur, Ecocriticism, and the Constraints of Language," Timothy Burbery (Marshall University); "'A Fearful Hope': Byron's 'Darkness' and the Apocalyptic Sublime," Sigmund Shen (LaGuardia Community College and The City University of New York); "Fantastic Ecology: The Limits of Space in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*," Sarah Cantrell (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill); and "River, Library, Airplane, Prairie: Quest for Environmental and Racial Justice," Gaynell Gavin (Claflin University).

The topic for the 2011 ASLE session at SAMLA, which will be in Atlanta, Georgia, November 4-6, is "Spiritualized Nature," about which 2011 Session Chair George Hovis writes: "This panel is open to explorations of literature that discovers or creates spiritual aspects of the natural world or that treats human interaction with nature in religious language or tropes. Papers might investigate the ways that texts revise, replace, or challenge conventional belief systems or that probe the theological implications of human impact upon Earth, or that consider how 'spiritualizing' concrete existence affects a belief in what is sacred." Abstracts of 200 words or more and a brief bio should be sent to George Hovis at [hovisgr@oneonta.edu](mailto:hovisgr@oneonta.edu) by May 15, 2011.



Southwest Coast Path, Isle of Purbeck, Dorset, UK.  
Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.

## **PAMLA 2010 Ecocriticism Panel**

by Kevin Hutchings, University of Northern British Columbia

As ASLE's newly appointed liaison to the Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association (PAMLA), I organized and chaired a special Ecocriticism session at the 2010 PAMLA conference, which was held at Chaminade University in Honolulu, Hawaii, on November 13-14. The panel was inspired by the speakers' shared concern not only to discuss representations of the more-than-human world but also to consider some key cultural implications of these representations. In the papers and the discussion period that followed, major cross-cutting themes included questions of Indigenous ecology, alternative spiritualities, colonial history, and cultural resistance to Western ideologies and practices of environmental mastery.

Teresa Shewry (University of California, Santa Barbara) got the panel underway with a deft examination of issues associated with environmental utilitarianism, deep geological time, and "geological nationalism" in New Zealand history and literature. In a paper framed by an engaging critique of the Western fear of bears, Troy Patenaude (University of Calgary) discussed some of the ways in which modern-day Canadian artists engage with and mobilize First Nations environmental knowledge in their visual works. Lacy Jo Davis (Texas Tech University) examined Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Ceremony*, focusing in particular on representations of jungle warfare and on the idea of nature's agency (which became a potent topic of group discussion afterwards). Finally, Rachel Paparone (University of Georgia) considered the relationship between Buddhism and ecology as represented in Chamoiseau's fable *Les Neuf Consciences du Malfini*, which led afterwards to some interesting questions from the audience regarding the ecological limits of Chamoiseau's idealism. Because all four papers considered connections between ecology and forms of counter-discursive resistance, the panel culminated in a lively group discussion in which each of the four speakers, and many of the audience members, participated.

In addition to featuring the Ecocriticism panel, the 2010 PAMLA conference hosted a plenary forum entitled "The Environmental Humanities: Challenges and Trajectories," on which I had the pleasure of speaking alongside Sean Ireton (University of Missouri) and Richard Watts (University of Washington). In the wake of the forum, which was attended by about 60 people, PAMLA President Sabine Wilke will be editing a special Environmental Humanities issue of PAMLA's journal, *Pacific Coast Philology*. With all of this ecocritical activity underway, PAMLA is showing a strong commitment to the "greening" of the Humanities.

Although ASLE's formal affiliated relationship with PAMLA had elapsed in recent years, it has now been renewed until 2015. I look forward to presiding over an ASLE-affiliated Ecocriticism panel at next year's PAMLA conference, which will be held on November 5-6, 2011, at Scripps College in Claremont California. Please be on the lookout for the panel's Call for Papers, which will be posted on PAMLA's website at [www.pamla.org](http://www.pamla.org) early in the new year. The submission deadline for paper proposals is March 20, 2011.

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## Interview With an Independent Writer

Author **Susan J. Tweit** is a field ecologist by training. "Over the years," Tweit says, "while I mapped grizzly bear habitat, wildfire patterns and sagebrush communities, I came to realize I loved telling the stories behind the data more than collecting those data." She has now told those stories in twelve books, numerous articles, and as a regular contributor to several blogs. Her most recent book, *Walking Nature Home: A Life's Journey*, was published in 2009 by the University of Texas Press. Barry Lopez called the book "a lovely, brave, inspiring book," saying, "Sometimes I think the highest praise you can give a book is to say that it helped. This book does that."

Tweit responded to the following questions for *ASLE News*.

*What do you consider to be the most important "interrelationships that form what Aldo Leopold called 'the community of land'," as you have described what your work is about, and how did these become important to your writing?*

I'm hooked on a daily practice of observing and writing about the whole shimmering pattern woven by those lives that make up the community of the land not by any particular interrelationships. There's always something new to observe, puzzle out, to spark an "aha!" moment. Whether I'm wandering my organic kitchen garden watching hovering clouds of native bees pollinate the tomatoes, or watching tiny trout in the urban creek that borders our property chase aquatic insects, or hiking the hills, what engages me is not any particular bee (or tomato plant) or any particular trout, shrub or tree. It's the whole community: the creek, the garden, the patchwork of forest clothing the mountainsides...

I was "born to" awareness of our kinship with nature: I come from a family culture of scientists and artists drawn to the wider, wilder world. My education reflects that head-heart mix: I started college in fine arts photography and finished in plant ecology. After studying sagebrush, wildfires, and grizzly bear habitat, I turned to writing about the land when I realized I loved the stories in the data more than collecting the data itself.

*What landscapes -- whether literal, figurative, of place, of the mind -- do you consider most important to your work?*

I was born in the prairies of the Midwest, but I'm most at home in western North America's expanses of sagebrush, the high desert ocean of gray-green and fragrant shrubs that defines a whole region. If the air smells like the curious perfume of sagebrush--a mix of turpentine and sweet orange blossoms, the light is clear and bright, and the landscape expansive, defined by mountains on one horizon, I'm home.

*What books and/or authors have most influenced your work?*

I'm drawn to those who write about community in the wider, wilder sense, exploring place through the relationships among species (humans included) that bring landscapes alive. I've a lot of favorites, mostly western because I'm hopelessly rooted: Kathleen Dean Moore, Barry

Lopez, Sharman Russell, Barbara Kingsolver, David Lee, Primus St. John, Denise Chávez, Robert Michael Pyle, Steven Trimble, Terry Tempest Williams, John Calderazzo, SueEllen Campbell, Theresa Jordan, Barbara Kingsolver, Lyanda Haupt, Ann Zwinger, Sally Carrighar, Aldo Leopold, Aldous and Mardy Murie...

*What is the best thing anyone ever taught you?*

My credo is summed up by this paraphrase of a line from a Mary Chapin Carpenter song: Live with your heart outstretched as if it were your hand. I believe in mindful living, and in doing my best to embody my beliefs in each moment, which is not to say I'm perfect, not by any means! But I do try to walk my talk.

*What are you working on now?*

My husband is recovering from brain cancer--two brain surgeries within a year; my mother's in hospice care. So mostly I'm working on walking this journey with grace and wisdom (and chronicling what I learn, memoir in real time as it were, on my blog, <http://susanjtweit.typepad.com>). In terms of writing, I just finished narrating the audiobook version of my memoir, *Walking Nature Home*--it'll be released by Redwood Audiobooks later this year. I also just released another audio project, *WildLives: Celebrating the World Around Us*, a CD collecting some favorites from 20 years of weekly radio commentaries on nature near and far. And I'm working on a mystery and a garden/cooking memoir.



*Foggy sunrise, Taloden Pond, Highlands Nature Sanctuary, Highlands County, OH. Photo by H. Lewis Ullman.*

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## Graduate Student Page

If you want to suggest a topic of interest to our graduate student members, please contact Graduate Student Liaisons Sarah Jaquette Ray ([sirav@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:sirav@uas.alaska.edu)) or Jill Anderson ([jeander1@olemiss.edu](mailto:jeander1@olemiss.edu)).

### Graduate Program Spotlight: Ecocriticism and Beyond at the University of Oregon

by Rachel Hanan

From Glen Love's Past President's Address at the Western Literature Association meeting in 1989 calling for an "ecological criticism" to this month's Food Justice Conference, the University of Oregon has been at the forefront of ecocritical studies. Oregon's investment in ecocriticism is truly interdisciplinary. The English Department has offered a PhD Structured Emphasis in Literature and Environment since 1999, Environmental Studies has over 100 participating faculty and publishes the journal *The Ecotone* (<http://envs.uoregon.edu/reference/publications/ecotone/>), the Theater Arts Department offers courses in ecodrama, the Philosophy Department boasts the preeminent scholar of phenomenology Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Ted Toadvine) as well as cognitive semanticist Mark Johnson, and the University of Oregon's Environmental and Natural Resources Law program is one of the nation's oldest and most respected. Recent international conferences at the University of Oregon include the upcoming Food Justice Conference (English and Environmental Studies, February 19-21, 2011; visit <http://waynemorsecenter.uoregon.edu/foodjustice/>), Earth Matters on Stage (Theater Arts, May 2009), Thinking Through Nature Conference (Philosophy, June 2008), ASLE (English, June 2005), and the Law School's annual Public Interest Environmental Law Conference.

In the English Department, more than ten full-time faculty offer ecocritical courses from the medieval through contemporary periods (information about the English Department's Literature and the Environment field of focus can be found here: <http://pages.uoregon.edu/enql/people/faculty/litenviron/>). Recent graduate courses range from medieval concepts of wilderness, Early Modern robots, and Native American literature and ethnohistory, to science and nineteenth century literature, ecocritical theory, travel writing, and global food culture. Recent and current graduate dissertations address *Beowulf* and cognitive psychology, ecoformalism, embodiment in modernist poetry, disability studies, Gary Nabhan, Early Modern natural philosophy, climate change and film, built environments, apocalypse narratives, and American hunting and fishing narratives.

Recent faculty publications and current works-in-progress include Lara Bovilsky's book manuscript "Almost Human: The Limits of Personhood in Early Modern England"; Allison Carruth's book project on bioart, "an avant-garde movement that bridges divisions between art and science, between environmentalism and high technology and between bioethics and biopower"; Suzanne Clarke's book manuscript "The Natural History of Modernism"; Glen Love's *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment* (2003); William Rossi's Norton Critical Edition of Thoreau's *Walden, Civil Disobedience, and Other Writings* (2008); Gordon Sayre's book *The Indian Chief as Tragic Hero: Native Resistance and the Literatures of America, from Moctezuma to Tecumseh* (2005); and Louise

Westling's essays "Literature, the Environment, and the Question of the Posthuman" (*Nature in Literature and Culture Studies*, 2006) and "Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty: The Problem of Humanism" (*Culture, Creativity, and Environment*, 2007).



Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) hunting at sunset, Olentangy River Wetlands Research Park, OH. Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.

The diversity of ecocritical interest at the University of Oregon facilitates a graduate culture that is expansive, inclusive, and student-driven.

MesaVerde, an interdisciplinary graduate student working group, hosts speakers, organizes local outings, and coordinates reading groups. Literature and Environment students regularly convene symposia and works-in-progress to showcase graduate research. Graduate students help define the newest directions in ecocriticism, and, through widely available teaching

opportunities, graduate students establish themselves as cutting edge scholars and teachers even before reaching the job market. Recent graduates teach at Oberlin, the College of Idaho, the University of Alaska Southeast, the University of Colorado at Boulder, Northwestern State University in Louisiana, Green Mountain College (VT), and the University of Wisconsin La Crosse.

For more information, please contact Allison Carruth ([acarruth@uoregon.edu](mailto:acarruth@uoregon.edu)) or Molly Westling ([lhwest@uoregon.edu](mailto:lhwest@uoregon.edu)).

### ***Is there a Grad Program you want to see spotlighted?***

College and University programs related to literature and the environment, like the field itself, are emerging and shifting all the time. Help us keep up and share with the ASLE community what is going on where you are, or find out more about what is happening in other places. Is there a program you know and love and want to share with ASLE members? Is there a particular program you want more information about? Please e-mail *ASLE News* editor Catherine Meeks at [catherine-meeks@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu).

### **Graduate Student Grants and Awards at 2011 Conference**

**Graduate Student Paper Awards:** If you are attending the Bloomington, IN, conference, please consider submitting your conference paper (in either category: ecocriticism or environmental creative writing) for consideration in the 2011 Graduate Student Paper Awards. Winning papers will receive a prize of \$100, publication in *ISLE*, and inclusion in

the conference banquet program.

Papers must be submitted as an email attachment by May 1, 2011 to Tom Lynch at [tlynch2@unl.edu](mailto:tlynch2@unl.edu). For further guidelines, please see the information regarding the Graduate Student Paper Awards on the ASLE website: <http://www.asle.org/site/publications/awards/papers11/>.

**ASLE Graduate Student Travel Awards:** ASLE will provide a limited number of small grants to assist financially needy graduate students with expenses related to conference attendance. This year, there will be three grants made at the \$500 level, and ten grants of \$100.

**NEW-CUE Travel Grants:** NEW-CUE (Nature and Environmental Writers-College and University Educators, <http://www.new-cue.org/>) will sponsor two grants of \$250 each that are available to graduate students or independent scholars whose work reflects the influence of Rachel Carson and has been accepted for presentation at the 2011 ASLE Conference. These grants will be awarded to graduate students or independent scholars whose papers are written in response to/in the tradition of Rachel Carson's scientific writing and/or written in response to/in the tradition of Rachel Carson's creative, nature writing. The papers do NOT have to be about Carson or her work.

Deadline to apply for all grants is **May 1, 2011**. For further information on how to apply see <http://www.indiana.edu/~asle2011/awards.shtml>.

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## Member News

**Marybeth Holleman's** book *The Heart of the Sound: An Alaskan Paradise Found and Nearly Lost*, first published by the University of Utah Press in 2004, is now available in paperback, just this month released by the University of Nebraska Press. More information about Holleman and her work can be found at [www.marybethholleman.com](http://www.marybethholleman.com).

**Deanne Stillman's** book *Mustang: The Saga of the Wild Horse in the American West* (Houghton Mifflin 08 and 09) is now under option for a film and documentary. The book was an LA Times "best book 08," a Southwest Book of the Year (Pima County Library), won the California Book Award silver medal for nonfiction, and got great reviews in the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Orion*, *The Economist*, *Albuquerque Journal*, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, *Missoulian*, *Texas Observer*, NPR's *On Point*, and many other places. In addition, the alt-country duo Granville Automatic has written and recorded "Blood and Gold (the Mustang Song)," inspired by Deanne's book. The book is a major driver in the campaign for wild horse and burro preservation. Deanne's previous book, the cult classic *Twentynine Palms: A True Story of Murder, Marines, and the Mojave*, was recently published in a new, updated edition by Angel City Press, with a foreword by Charles Bowden. It's been added to many college literary nonfiction classes, and Hunter Thompson called it "A strange and brilliant story by an important American writer." Deanne is currently writing *Mojave Manhunt* for Nation Books. It's based on her Rolling Stone article of the same name, a finalist for a PEN 06 journalism award. Deanne is currently assistant adjunct professor at UC Riverside-Palm Desert, and she was recently hired by [www.truthdig.com](http://www.truthdig.com) to write a new column called "Letter from the West."



**Laura Dassow Walls** received the Modern Language Association's 41<sup>st</sup> annual James Russell Lowell prize for *The Passage to Cosmos: Alexander von Humboldt and the Shaping of America*. As the official press release from the MLA states, "the prize is awarded annually for an outstanding book--a literary or linguistic study, a critical edition of an important work, or a critical biography--written by a member of the association." According to the MLA, the selection committee's citation for the winning book reads:

In North America, the legacy of the man Simón Bolívar once called the true discoverer of America has been obscured. *The Passage to Cosmos: Alexander von Humboldt and the Shaping of America* restores that legacy. Humboldt's fascination with the interconnections of ecology, geography, political science, history, and above all literature and science finds a corollary in Laura Dassow Walls's generous, lyrical, and thoroughly researched book, which shows how the making of a book and the making of a world are not merely homologous but equal acts. Walls's book is thus a genealogy, informed by a keen literary awareness, deepened by a sense of the inescapable mediations of knowledges, and mediated especially by the form of the book as cosmos. Walls illuminates the literary history of nineteenth-century America and makes us feel and see the losses we have sustained by separating literature from science.

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## ASLE News Notes

### Member News

Whether you got a new job, won an award, or did something interesting, enlightening, or exciting, we want to know what you're up to! If you have some news to share with other ASLE members, and it doesn't "fit" into the Bookshelf, PhD, or Emeritus categories, please contact Catherine Meeks ([catherine-meeks@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu)) with the Subject heading "Member News."

### ASLE Emeritus

ASLE News honors those ASLE members retired or retiring from teaching. If you would like to acknowledge someone in this new feature--or if you yourself will be retiring during the coming academic year--please contact Catherine Meeks ([catherine-meeks@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu)). We will include a brief account of scholarly interests, the institutions of employment and years taught in the next newsletter.

### ASLE PhDs

Have you or one of your students recently defended a dissertation? If so, ASLE News wants to know. Each issue, we include announcements commemorating those members who have recently completed their doctoral work. If you would like to be included in this feature, please contact Catherine Meeks ([catherine-meeks@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu)) with the dissertation title, degree-granting institution, and committee members.