

ASLE Conference Proposal Guidelines

About the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE)

We are pleased to hear of your interest in hosting an Association for the Study of Literature and Environment conference. ASLE is an international scholarly organization with more than one thousand members devoted to the study of literature, language, and the environment. We are an energetic and accomplished group, and our biennial conferences are as dynamic as our membership.

Conference overview

Our conferences typically run for five days, from Tuesday to Saturday, usually in early or mid-June. In addition to the paper sessions that are typical of most scholarly conferences, our conferences have featured pre-conference seminars led by leaders in the field, roundtable discussion sessions, creative readings, workshops, field trips, sessions specifically geared toward graduate students and professionalization issues, post conference field excursions, and plenary sessions with prominent writers. Our 2003 conference, for instance, featured several field trips in the city of Boston (to such places as the Arnold Arboretum, the Olmsted National Historic Site, and a downtown neighborhood for a tour led by an environmental justice group) and several outside the city (to Walden Pond and Mount Monadnock). Our plenary speakers in 2003 included Pulitzer Prize-winning biologist Edward O. Wilson, ecologist Sandra Steingraber, Abenaki storyteller and poet Joseph Bruchac, nature writer John Hanson Mitchell, fiction writer Grace Paley, poet Cynthia Huntington, and environmental historian Sam Bass Warner. Conferences since 2003 have continued in this tradition of plentitude and excellence. In short, our conferences attract prominent scholars and writers in environmental literature and natural history.

How sites are selected

Site selection is the responsibility of our president, vice-president, and ASLE's six-member Executive Council.

Conference proposal

To aid us in our decision-making, we ask that you prepare a brief proposal (1-2 pages) and send it to ASLE's current president. The proposal may be prepared by the ASLE member who would serve as conference host, but we would also like to see administrative approval in the form of an authorizing signature from a dean, provost, college or university president, or some other administrator who can pledge the college's or university's support.

The proposal should address the following:

1. Who is the ASLE member on-site who would serve as conference host?
2. Is seed money, or other support, perhaps in the form of a donation of university services, available from your college or university? Typically, we have received seed money in the amount of \$6,000. If seed money is not available, is it possible that conference-planning services (registration, room rental fees, printing, staff support,

etc.) could be donated in an amount approximating \$7,000? If seed money is offered, that amount could be recouped by the college or university through services provided. Relatedly, is the college or university willing to help make the conference sustainable—in terms of using recycled materials whenever possible, contributing to carbon off-setting, or in some other way?

3. Is there a conference-planning office at your college or university that can handle the registration process and help with other facets of conference planning (help coordinate the book exhibit, prepare informational packets, coordinate printing, assign audio-visual equipment to session rooms, etc.)? If there is not a designated conference-planning office, is there other staff assistance that could accomplish the same tasks? The ASLE president would put together the actual program, but the on-site details will be handled by the ASLE member(s) at the host college or university.
4. Is there adequate lodging, both in dorms and nearby hotels? Typically, we attract four to seven hundred attendees. The majority would likely prefer the reduced costs of dorm housing, but some will prefer a hotel, and we want to be sensitive to the needs of families and the disabled. Some would find nearby camping opportunities appealing. If the lodging options are more than a 5-minute walk from the conference site, can transportation arrangements be made for conference attendees—perhaps a shuttle that runs routinely between the lodging sites and the conference site?
5. Is there an adequate auditorium for the plenary sessions (seating at least four hundred, and preferably more) and classrooms or other rooms to handle our regular paper sessions (about twelve concurrent sessions at a time)?
6. How good is access to the college or university by air? How far is it to the nearest airport, and does that airport serve major airlines? How would transportation from airport to campus be handled?
7. If you were to host the conference, are there any connections with the local community that would be of interest to ASLE members? Are you willing to explore the possibility of corporate sponsorships for certain events (receptions, plenaries)?
8. Are there any other attractions of the site or the surrounding area that may be of special interest to ASLE? Possible field trips?
9. If the proposal is not accepted for the next biennial conference, are you interested in being considered for future conferences?

We thank you very much for your interest in ASLE, and we look forward to working with you.