ASLE's Sustainability Initiatives
by Amy Patrick Mossman, Western Illinois University, ASLE Executive Council Member

Part of ASLE’s mission is "to promote the understanding of nature and culture for a sustainable world." To fulfill its mission, ASLE is committed to "maintaining and advocating ecologically sustainable practices." ASLE seeks, as two of its strategic plan goals, to "improve the environmental sustainability of the organization" and "explore how innovative conferences and symposia can help us fulfill our mission." One way to improve our environmental sustainability is through the planning of our biennial conferences, taking into consideration the environmental as well as social and economic impact our conferences have on both the ASLE and local conference communities. Minimizing our carbon footprint through reduction in resources used and waste produced, contributing to the economic health of the local community by drawing upon and investing in their resources, and fostering the social, intellectual, and cultural growth of the ASLE community through a commitment to diversity and innovation are values connected to sustainable practice.

With the mission, goals, and values mentioned above in mind, during the Executive Council retreat in February 2010 the Council formed a subcommittee to address making ASLE, and our biennial conference in particular, more sustainable. Amy McIntyre, Richard Hunt, and I drafted a set of guidelines for the 2011 conference, working with Indiana University's sustainability director, Bill Brown; assistant director, Emilie Rex; and our site coordinator, Christoph Irmscher to identify sustainability initiatives already in place at Indiana University (these were highlighted in the Spring 2011 Issue of ASLE News). We were able to take advantage, for example, of their new sustainably-designed dormitory complex on Union Street and their recycling program. IU staff allowed us to set up extra recycling and one of our student volunteers, Carol Corkran, focused on helping the organization meet its sustainability goals. Carol made sure recycling receptacles...
were clearly labeled and accessible, and set up name badge collecting stations in Ballantine and the Union Street dorms toward the end of the conference.

Additionally, this year we set up a webpage linked to the conference site titled "Sustainable ASLE." The site highlighted IU's sustainability initiatives, ten things attendees could do to reduce their conference-related carbon footprint, links to resources on local foods, public transportation, and accessibility information, and actions ASLE had taken for a more sustainable conference, including the use of eco-friendly printed materials, sustainable badge holders (which we encouraged attendees to return at the end of the conference for future use), sustainable water bottles for attendees, and a vegetarian banquet incorporating local and organic foods— including local beer and wine— as much as possible. We also collected voluntary carbon offset donations from 94 conference participants totalling $1330, and will match that with an equal amount of ASLE funds. The money is being donated to atmosfair, a non-profit that invests in many alternative energy projects worldwide. For more information, see http://www.atmosfair.de/en/home/.

During the conference, officers and council members discussed ways in which the diversity caucus and sustainability subcommittee could collaborate to make ASLE and its future conferences more accessible. These efforts were a small but important step in our community's commitment to sustainable goals and practices.

If you have comments or suggestions for other things ASLE can do as part of its commitment to sustainability, especially for the 2013 conference, please share them with ASLE’s managing director, Amy McIntyre (info@asle.org) or myself, Amy Mossman (ap-mossman@wiu.edu).
The third biennial ASLE book and graduate student paper awards were presented at a festive session during the conference in Bloomington. Unlike the awards presentations at the previous conferences, this year the awards were announced at the Authors’ Reception rather than at the banquet. This seemed a more appropriate venue at which to honor authors, and it also provided an opportunity for the award winning books to be available for sale. Reports are that book sales were quite brisk, so that strategy appears to have succeeded.

I would like to thank all of the judges for their participation. They have a difficult task of reading a lot of material in a short span of time and judging between many varied and worthy books. They make a valuable but rarely acknowledged contribution to the development of ecocriticism.

The next round of awards will be presented at the 2013 conference. This will be for books published during the years 2011 and 2012. The deadline for book submissions will be January 15, 2013. As usual, submissions will be accepted from members of ASLE or any of the international affiliate organizations.

We have made a notable change for the 2013 awards. We have opened up the categories so that anthologies and other sorts of collections will be eligible. More details will be distributed to members and posted on the ASLE website as we get closer to the deadline. If you are a member who will be publishing a book during the next two years, please have your publisher submit three copies of your book for the award.

Finally, if you think these awards are a worthwhile endeavor, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to the ASLE book and paper awards when you register for the next conference.

For more information on the awards, contact Tom Lynch: tplynch2@gmail.com. Read on to find out more about this year’s winners!

ASLE Book Award Winners 2011:

**ASLE Book Award in Environmental Creative Writing**

Judges: Kate Miles, Unity College; Nancy Holmes, University of British Columbia, Okanagan; Anthony Lioi, Juilliard School.
Conservation Conflict Resolution Course

The Smithsonian-Mason Global Conservation Program is offering a course teaching proven skills, strategies and processes for effective stakeholder engagement and successful conservation conflict transformation. The course, designed and led by the Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration (HWCC), can earn either graduation credits or CEUs. The course will be held January 16-20, 2012, with an application deadline of November 7, 2011. For more information, visit their website or email SCBltraining@si.edu.

Winner: Jeffrey Thomson, University of Maine, Farmington: *Birdwatching in Wartime*

Judges' comments: In Thomson's poetry collection, the animals are real and so is the singing. Whether mourning a wren killed by the atomic bomb or riffing on Borges, Thomson pays exquisite attention to creatures in literature and the world that might otherwise be lost, enriching our aesthetic and ethical life. *Birdwatching* gives the lie to the notion that formalism is devoid of passion by drenching its finely-wrought lines in sensual detail and biting intelligence. That it manages to be funny and experimental at the same time is a small miracle. Everyone who wonders about the fate of the green fire in American letters should read this book.

**ASLE Book Award in Ecocriticism**

Judges: Tina Gianquitto, Colorado School of Mines, Randall Roorda, University of Kentucky, Terrell Dixon, University of Houston

**Winner: Stacy Alaimo, University of Texas, Arlington: Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self**

Judges' comments: In this book Stacy Alaimo correlates and responds to numerous calls issued to ecocriticism in recent years: calls for engagement with findings of science, for involvement with environmental justice, for dissolution of nature-culture binary thinking, for rebuttal of a creeping irrealism afflicting contemporary theory, and for attention and allegiance to what we're accustomed to call nature. She does this by parlaying the notion of "trans-corporeality"--the essential material kinship, continuity, and traffic between human bodies and nonhuman nature--through a surprising range of discursive sites. Engaging in both literary-historical recovery and rhetorical intervention in contemporary affairs, *Bodily Natures* is model criticism: learned yet adventurous, comprehensive yet individual and idiosyncratic, breaking ground without burning bridges.

**Graduate Student Creative Paper**

Judges: Elizabeth Dodd, Kansas State University, Ruth Blair, University of Queensland, and Di Brandt, Brandon University, Manitoba

Honorable Mentions: David Plastrik, University of Wisconsin, Madison, for "Near Neighbors" and Crystal Gibbins, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, for "Red River of the North and Other Poems"

**Winner: Micah Sewell, University of Montana for "A Creation Story"**

Judges' comments: Micah's paper is a very ambitious and wide-ranging piece of creative nonfiction, interweaving personal narrative, reportage, and meditation in a richly developed essay. Exploring the multi-faceted role of seeds in maintaining life on earth, the story refreshes scientific knowledge with poetic immediacy. Employing a borrowed mythical frame, "A Creation Story" proposes a wide evolutionary intellectual frame, with timely cosmological implications.
Graduate Student Scholarly Paper
Judges: Greg Garrard, Bath Spa University; Carmen Flys Junquera, Universidad de Alcalá; CA. Cranston, University of Tasmania

Honorable Mention: Angela Lewandowski, University of California, Davis, for "The Ecopoetics of Emergency: Evelyn Reilly and Brenda Hillman"

Winner: Alenda Chang, University of California, Berkeley, for "Back to the Virtual Farm: Gleaning the Agriculture-Management Game"

Judges' comments: Chang’s essay begins with the author rising from bed to harvest crops--without leaving the domestic oikos. Her game of preference, FarmVille, is touted to be the most popular game in the world by the developers at Facebook. Situated in the cultural ecology branch of ecocriticism, the essay traces the multiple levels of dissonance between agricultural reality and digital representation where a revisionist 'pastoral' has evolved in games like FarmVille which 'naturalize technology.' Chang’s essay stood out thanks to its determination to engage critically with digital media, which are of inestimable significance to the students of today. The panel enjoyed her stylish writing, and admired the way in which she extended the longstanding ecocritical treatment of pastoral into new terrain.

ASLE Off-Year Symposium in 2012
by Sarah Jaquette Ray and Kevin Maier, University of Alaska Southeast

We invite paper and panel proposals for the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment’s Off-Year Symposium, “Environment, Culture, and Place in a Rapidly Changing North,” to be held June 14-17, 2012, at the University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau. Proposals related to the field of literature and environment broadly, or to the symposium theme specifically, should include a 250-
Symposium Theme:
The North American "North" of Alaska and Canada is an excellent geographical imaginary through which to understand the human-nature concerns of our time. Ecosystems transgress national boundaries, for instance, and Northern communities experience the symptoms of climate change disproportionately relative to their contribution to its acceleration. A symposium focusing on "the North" suggests a transnational perspective of this paradox, as well as a range of concerns, from peak oil and climate change to traditional ecological knowledges and tourism. While the North is often seen as an isolated place with a unique character, safe from the economic and environmental woes of "down south," this imaginary belies the North's place within transnational phenomena, such as colonialism, global climate change, and globalization.

The symposium's keynote speaker will be Julie Cruikshank, Professor Emerita of Anthropology at University of British Columbia, and author of *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters and Social Imagination*. One secured plenary speaker, Ellen Frankenstein, will screen her documentary film, *Eating Alaska*.

Topics:
We welcome proposals for papers, interdisciplinary research, or creative work on issues related to literature and the environment, and also work that explores the North American North, addressing (but not limited to) the following themes: the North in the environmental imagination; global indigenous environmental movements; subsistence/food security/food justice/food cultures; traditional/local ecological knowledges; climate change; transnational North; animals/animality/wildlife; boundaries/borders in the North; migrations.

For more information, please visit the symposium website at: [http://www.uas.alaska.edu/asle/](http://www.uas.alaska.edu/asle/)

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**ASLE-SFRA Affiliation Update**
by Eric Otto, Florida Gulf Coast University

This summer's ASLE conference in Bloomington, Indiana and Science Fiction Research Association (SFRA) conference in Lublin, Poland featured the inaugural sessions of the new ASLE-SFRA affiliation. In the ASLE roundtable, titled "What's this Science Fiction Doing in/to/for My Environmentalism?" Gerry Canavan, Keira Hambrick, and Naomi Smedbol explored key points of intersection between science fiction, ecological politics, and environmental rhetoric.

Canavan, a Ph.D. candidate in the Program in Literature at Duke University, discussed ecological futurity in traditional environmentalist discourse and science fiction. What links the two genres is an "imaginary relationship to the future," with texts like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* performing the same re-imagining of the future that characterizes the politics of much science fiction. Hambrick, a recent graduate of the Literature and Environment Program at the University of Nevada, Reno, discussed ecological apocalypticism across a variety of textual genres. Entering into the longstanding debate about the value of apocalyptic rhetoric for environmentalism, Hambrick argued that while such rhetoric in nonfictional environmental writing produces "eco-anxiety," when featured in science fiction apocalypticism often allows readers to imagine new possibilities. Finally, Smedbol, a Masters student in the Faculty of
Environmental Studies at York University, referenced Robert A. Heinlein and Spider Robinson's *Variable Star* along with James Cameron's *Avatar* to contest the self/environment, or self/home, dualism. For Smedbol and her co-author, Michelle O'Brien of Simon Fraser University, science fiction "compels readers to reevaluate the actuality of the borders defining home and self."

The SFRA session, titled "Environmental Science Fiction Before 1962 (and some after)," featured Hayley Keight, Chris Pak, and Justyna Sierakowska. Keight, a graduate student at the University of Manchester, presented "'Drinking up Green Matter': Ray Bradbury the Proto-Environmentalist in *Fahrenheit 451*." Central to her argument was that Bradbury's 1953 book suggests an important difference between simply perceiving objects in nature and understanding the value of these objects for the larger ecosystem. Pak, who studies science fiction as a Ph.D. student at the University of Liverpool, presented "Nature's Other in European Science Fiction." In his paper, Pak highlighted H.G. Wells's *The Shape of Things to Come*, Olaf Stapledon's *Last and First Men* and *Star Maker*, and Stanislaw Lem's *Solaris* to demonstrate the ways in which these early works of science fiction anticipated more recent, and competing, environmentalist conceptions of nature-Gaian holism and "nature's otherness." Sierakowska read "The Generation Starship and Ecofeminist Transgression in Octavia Butler's *Dawn* and Molly Gloss' *The Dazzle of Day*." A Ph.D. student in Literature at the University of Bialystok, Poland, Sierakowska discussed the generation starships of Butler's and Gloss's works as metaphors supporting the ecofeminist critique of dualistic conceptions of humans and nature.

The call for papers for the ASLE-sponsored panel at SFRA's 2012 conference in Detroit, Michigan is below, and the call for papers for ASLE's 2013 conference at the University of North Texas will be circulated in 2012.

**CFP: Environmental Science Fiction and the Non-Urban Scape**

ASLE-sponsored panel at the 2012 Science Fiction Research Association Conference: Urban Apocalypse, Urban Renaissance: Landscapes in Science Fiction and Fantasy

Detroit, MI, June 28 - July 1, 2012

Ecocritic Patrick D. Murphy notes, "The idea of the land as scape establishes place, whether woods or lake or mountain range, as something separate from human culture" (Farther Afield 13). Proposals are invited that explore how science fiction has addressed this land-as-scape problematic. Has science fiction largely supported a conception of the non-urban ("land," "place," "nature," etc.) as escape from culture? If so, what texts maintain the land/culture divide? Or, has science fiction done much to challenge this divide with an understanding of nature as something we are always in-as something we cannot escape? What science fiction works maintain this more complex view of land and culture, and what do these works
contribute to recent efforts to upset conventional notions about "nature" (e.g., Timothy Morton, Slavoj Zizek)?

Please submit a 200-word proposal in the body of an email to Eric Otto at eotto@fgcu.edu by Friday, April 6th, 2012. See http://sfradetroit2012.com/call-for-papers/ for more information about the conference.

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New ASLE Coordinators Appointed

There have been several people appointed to positions in ASLE leadership over the past few months; we welcome them and look forward to the new energy they can bring to ASLE! Below is a quick summary:

**ISLE Book Editor**

Mike Branch, of the University of Nevada-Reno, writes: "After sixteen years as Book Review Editor of *ISLE*, I am pleased to announce that I have recently handed the tiller over to ASLE stalwart Tom Hillard of Boise State University. From now on, all queries regarding reviews should be sent directly to Tom at ThomasHillard@boisestate.edu. I've written an essay reflecting on my long tenure in this interesting job, which I hope you'll enjoy when you receive your copy of *ISLE* 18.3. Thanks to the many hundreds of you with whom I've collaborated over the years, and very special thanks to the energetic and able Tom Hillard for his willingness to serve our community in this way."

**Graduate Student Liaison**

The ASLE EC has chosen Andrew Hageman to serve as the next ASLE Graduate Student Liaison. Andrew is just finishing his PhD in English with an emphasis on Critical Theory at the University of California, Davis. He has served as departmental representative at the UC Davis Graduate Student Association, and co-chaired the English department GSA. A member of ASLE for a several years, Andrew co-facilitated the pre-conference workshop on Ecological Media with Michael Ziser at the 2009 Biennial Conference in Victoria, BC, Canada. He will serve one year as Junior Liaison and then one year as the Senior Liaison, who has voting rights on the ASLE executive board. If you have questions or suggestions for Andrew (achageman@ucdavis.edu), or for our current Senior Graduate Liaison Jill Anderson (djilllelizabeth@gmail.com), please feel free to contact them with your thoughts and ideas!

**Professional Liaison Coordinator**

Tonia Payne has been appointed as the new Professional Liaison Coordinator (PLC) for ASLE. Tonia teaches composition at Nassau Community College - SUNY, and has been an ASLE member since the early years of its existence. She has attended many of the conferences, as well as run for EC in the past. The role of PLC has a number of new duties which Tonia is ready and eager to take on, including a proactive approach to affiliation and collaboration with other related academic organizations. If you would like to contact her with questions or ideas, or to volunteer to serve as liaison with a particular group or organization, email her at tlpayne@verizon.net.
In Memoriam: Melissa Walker
by Annie Ingram and Jerome Walker

Melissa Graves Walker, a longtime member of ASLE, passed away on May 4, 2011 at Hospice Atlanta of breast cancer. A committed activist for civil rights, peace, and environmental issues, she led a distinguished career as a writer and professor.

Born and raised in Dublin, Georgia, Walker completed both her undergraduate and doctoral degrees in English literature at Emory University. She taught first at the University of New Orleans and then at Mercer University in Atlanta, where she served as chair of the English department. In 1990 she became a Fellow in the Institute of Women's Studies at Emory. She was an outspoken advocate for wilderness and served for ten years on the national board of Wilderness Watch as well as president of the Georgia chapter. She served on the Executive Council of ASLE from 1996-1998.

Walker edited one of the first anthologies of nature writing for classroom use, Reading the Environment, published by Norton in 1994. Her book Living on Wilderness Time: 200 Days Alone in America's Wild Places, was published by the University of Virginia Press and won the Georgia Writers’ Association award for Best Memoir of the Year in 2002. Her love of the Arctic wild in particular inspired A Place for Delta, which won the International Book Award for Best Children's Fiction of 2010.

Melissa Walker is survived by her husband Dr. Jerome Walker, her son Richard Walker, her daughter Laura Walker, and grandsons Joseph and Max Walker and Alan Sanchez. Her family has requested that memorial contributions be made in Dr. Melissa Walker’s name to Wilderness Watch, PO Box 9175, Missoula, Montana, 59807.
**Member News**

**Jim Clark**, Elizabeth H. Jordan Professor of Southern Literature and Chair of the Department of English and Modern Languages at Barton College in Wilson, NC, recently released his second solo CD, *The Service of Song*, which features his musical settings of twelve poems by the North Georgia "farmer-poet" Byron Herbert Reece (1917-1958). Information about the CD and mp3s of all the songs can be found at: [www.jimclarkpoet.com](http://www.jimclarkpoet.com). Author Robert Morgan writes of the album: "In *The Service of Song* Jim Clark gives new life and new voice to the poetry of Byron Herbert Reece. Clark's music and performance are a wonderful exploration and expression of Reece's art, inspired and inspiring, for a new generation of readers and listeners."

**Richmond Eustis**'s dissertation, which he defended in May 2010, was awarded Louisiana State University's Josephine A. Roberts Distinguished Dissertation Award in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences in a ceremony April 28. The dissertation, titled "Reading Out of Doors: How Nature Becomes Text and Vice-Versa," considers the entanglement of the artificial and the natural in key texts from an array of languages and times -- among them works by the Pure Brethren of Basra, Petrarch, Garcilaso de la Vega, John Wesley Powell, Thoreau, and Krakauer. His committee, drawn from LSU's Program in Comparative Literature, was directed by Gregory B. Stone. It also included Joseph V. Ricapito, John Protevi, Kevin Bongiorni, and Dean's Representative J.Gerald Kennedy. After a summer guiding sea kayaks in the San Juan Islands, Eustis will begin an appointment as Assistant Professor of English, Spanish, and Comparative Literature at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, LA.

Author/advocate/artist **Osprey Orielle Lake**'s impassioned call for a new kind of relationship with the natural world has won a 2011 Nautilus Book Award Silver Medal for *Uprisings for the Earth: Reconnecting Culture with Nature*. Nautilus Award judges "look for distinguished literary and heartfelt contributions to conscious living, high-level wellness, green values, and responsible leadership." In her award-winning work, Lake shows that we must infuse our cultural discourse with the language, importance, and wisdom of ecological systems - that lasting changes in our way of life will arise from and find broad support only when nature in all its transformative beauty and power is once again front and center in our everyday vocabulary and life. Lake is a lifelong advocate of social and environmental justice issues. She is the Director of the Women's Earth and Climate Caucus and on the governing Board of Praxis Peace Institute. A keynote speaker at international conferences and universities, Lake is also the Founder/Artist of the International Cheemah Monument Project, creating 18 foot bronze sculpture monuments for locations around the world, where people can ponder a better future for the earth and humanity. Visit [www.ospreyorielrelake.com](http://www.ospreyorielrelake.com) for more information.

This Spring, **Karen Schramm**, who recently achieved the rank of Full Professor of English at Delaware Valley College, taught a 300-level course in Environmental Literature. The course was designed to be equal parts theory and literature, environmental issues, and writings about such concerns. Schramm reports that the course was well-attended and appreciated, drawing 24 students, which is quite large for her small college. She also notes that the course brought in students from a variety of majors: Media and Communication, Environmental Science, and Wildlife Conservation and Biotechnology, among others.
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) 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). 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) with the dissertation title, degree-granting institution, and committee members.