Reclaiming the Commons: ASLE + AESS 2023 Conference
July 9-12, 2023 in Portland, Oregon
Call for Papers

Conference Theme: Reclaiming the Commons

In light of the increased biological and political vulnerabilities of our times, the environmental humanities seek to reassess what it means to care for the commons and how the commons are conceptualized—whether it be terrestrial, aquatic, atmospheric or sociocultural. We are faced with the challenge to renew the bonds of community and to inspire the affections of care that can move us beyond the insulation and fragmentation of the present. How might we restore attention to the commons? How can we take full advantage of a deeper self-examination and rekindling of affections for place that has been facilitated ironically by the pandemic? How might individual and planetary vulnerabilities transform into opportunities for collective strength? And in ongoing colonial settings, how can the commons be reconfigured as a decolonial project, that takes into account the widespread historical exclusion and dispossession of Indigenous groups and often unequal access to postcolonial commons?

The interpenetration of land and water in islands, their often archipelagic formation, and their situatedness in postcolonial and decolonial contexts have generated relational modes of thinking for artists, writers, activists and theorists who seek to move us beyond limiting epistemological and political boundaries. These relational modes seek to restore and renew commitments to ecological thought, action, and what Marisol de la Cadena calls "uncommonalities." A testament to the powerful work of Indigenous scientists, activists, and thinkers, these efforts are one source of inspiration in this time of increased isolation as they manifest a reclaiming of the commons—regionally, historically,

politically and economically—and a renewed connection between the human and more-than-human community.

We seek papers, creative work, and other forms of scholarly engagement that approach literature, cultural artifacts, infrastructures, geographies, watersheds, borderwaters, atmospheres, and oceans as methods for reclaiming the commons and instilling and motivating a politics of care in our time. We seek understanding about the various ways in which we as scholars, activists, and artists can rise to the challenge of building community, extend our voices into new arenas, and leverage the insights of the humanities into the practices of our various cultures. We seek discussions that highlight the ways in which, during the recent covid-imposed period of isolation and its aftermath, communities have been or may be rebuilt and strengthened, especially between the human and more-than-human, the academy and local communities, the humanities and the sciences, metropolitan centers of power and the Global South, between and among regional institutions, and across languages and epistemologies. We seek papers that will explore the role of the public humanist, the public role of scientific and climate literacy, and the social, political, and scientific obligations of the scholar and artist as part of the larger project of reclaiming commons. Finally, we seek historically situated work that considers the long global history of commons.

Other questions related to the theme of reclaiming the commons include:

- What are the community and regional obligations of the academic and the university to broader forms of commons?
- How can we translate the language of the academy into accessible language and actionable practice in local and vernacular contexts?
- How can we incorporate the contexts of the Global South in reclaiming the commons, and how can we create relational modes of imagining that stem from collaborative conversations, engagements and commitments?
- How can the language of science be brought to bear in the political and cultural work of reclaiming the commons?
- How can service and problem-solving become more central to the work of scholarship?
- How can the work of the environmental humanities become more influential politically and culturally?
- How might environmental scholarship become more multilingual and interdisciplinary, extending engagements with the commons beyond narrow and often exclusive cultural and disciplinary silos?
- What are the risks associated with such efforts?

Conference keynote speakers will explore interconnections between the sciences and the humanities and address concerns of activists and artists who bridge the gap between the academy and the public, engaging in various ways with the conference theme of reclaiming the commons.

Already confirmed keynote speakers include **Elizabeth DeLoughrey**, whose work specializes in Island Studies, focusing especially on the Caribbean and Pacific Islands; and **Cristina Rivera Garza**, Mexican fiction writer, historian, and activist. Both DeLoughrey and Rivera Garza engage with the intersections

of archipelagoes thinking, environmental and climate justice, the Global South vis-à-vis the Global North, Indigenous and border studies, and activism. Their work challenges disciplinary, language, and textual boundaries that seek to compartmentalize knowledge and cultures, as well as to dissociate humans from non-humans, the North from the South, and Western from non-Western epistemologies. In this sense, their work builds on and connects isolated cultural spheres in order to bring them together and create an archipelago of knowledge, voices and mutual understandings as part of the larger project of reclaiming the commons. Other keynote speakers will be confirmed later.

Call Details

The [Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE)](#) is excited to collaborate in 2023 in a joint conference with the [Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences (AESS)](#). Many presentation formats will include both ASLE and AESS members together. ASLE is a diverse professional community that is enriched by the multiple experiences, cultures, and backgrounds of its members, and we strive for access, equity, and inclusion in the conference.

ASLE welcomes proposals for the following presentation formats for our 2023 conference (described in more detail in the next section below):
- pre-formed panels of scholarly papers or creative readings of between 4 and 8 presenters;
- individual scholarly papers or creative readings, to be placed into panels;
- scholarly/creative posters for participation in a poster session;
- collaborative work projects, in which presenters work together on a project prior to the conference and present on that work as a panel at the conference.

In addition, we welcome participation in special pre-conference workshops, many of which will focus on specific regional topics and collaborations.

While the vast majority of sessions will only be available to people attending the conference in person, there will also be some virtual panels to allow people who cannot attend in person an opportunity to participate (at a lower registration cost). Plenary sessions will also be available to virtual participants, both as live streams and recorded, and a few pre-conference workshops may be available virtually. Other conference sessions will not be available virtually, as we will not be able to accommodate hybrid sessions at the conference. People who submit proposals to present at the conference in person will therefore *not* be able to present in those sessions virtually, if their circumstances change.

Paper, Poster, and Panel Submission Process

All presentation sessions will be 90 minutes long. We will accept proposals for the 2023 conference for both pre-formed panels and individual presentations, with no preference given to one type of proposal or the other. Both scholarly and creative submissions are welcome. ASLE encourages experimentation with alternative forms of presentation, discussion, and engagement, especially in

pre-formed panels. We expect to receive more proposals than we can accommodate; therefore, not all proposals will be accepted.

Only one individual, panel or poster submission is allowed per person. Participants can present only once during the conference as part of a panel (including collaborative work project panels) or poster session; facilitating or participating in a pre-conference workshop or chairing a panel do not count towards this limit.

All presentation proposals must be submitted via the Pheedloop submission platform. Click on your submission format type below and fill out the required information. For cases in which online submission requirement poses a significant difficulty, please contact us at ASLEconference2023@gmail.com.

Please read below to find specific submission information for the various presentation formats and links to their particular submission forms.

Pre-Formed Panels of Paper Presentations or Readings

Proposals for pre-formed panels of scholarly papers or creative readings must include a chair and at least four presentations of fifteen minutes each, plus discussion time. Proposals may also be made for roundtables (five or six presentations of no more than 10 minutes each, plus discussion) or paper jams (seven or eight short presentations of no more than 7-8 minutes each, plus discussion). Other alternative formats for pre-formed panels are also encouraged, such as symposium discussion, practical workshops, visual exhibitions, interactive artistic engagements, debates, etc. Please contact ASLE Conference Chair Scott Hess at ASLEconference2023@gmail.com before proposing such alternative formats.

Panel organizers must submit an abstract of not more than 500 words outlining the proposed panel topic, format, and participants' roles, and all participants' contact information. Individual participants in pre-formed panel proposals must also submit their specific presentation abstract (no more than 300 words) independently, and include the name of the proposed panel with their submission, both to facilitate conference organizing logistics and in order to be considered as individual presentations if their pre-formed panel cannot be accepted. Each presenter in a pre-formed panel should also use the "Pre-formed Panel Proposals" link to submit their own individual paper abstract—do NOT use the Individual Paper Presentations link.

To facilitate broad advertisement of and inclusion in pre-formed panels, we encourage people with panel ideas to submit a brief call with your proposed panel theme to invite potential presenters to join your panel. The panel call should be no more than 300 words, and submitted *no later than October 10, 2022* via the link above. We will then post these calls on the ASLE conference website and advertise them in our publicity channels. Pre-formed panels are not guaranteed acceptance in the conference, unless they are submitted by affiliate organizations or ASLE interest groups, but if we are unable to accept a panel, the individual proposals in that panel will receive full consideration as part of the regular submission process.

To encourage institutional diversity and exchange, all pre-formed panels must include participants from more than one institution and from more than one academic rank or sector. We also encourage the formation of pre-formed panels that include both ASLE and AESS members when possible.

Proposals may also be submitted for virtual panels, to be posted and accessed online. Any proposals for virtual panels must be clearly indicated as such at the time of submission. Please note we are NOT able to accept hybrid part-virtual panels.

Submit a Pre-formed Panel Proposal

Individual Paper Presentations or Readings

Proposals may be submitted for individual paper presentations or readings, for a maximum of 15 minutes each. These presentations, if accepted, will be placed into panels. Potential presenters will be asked to indicate whether they would also be willing to participate in a roundtable (5-6 presenters per panel) or paper jam (7-8 presenters per panel) format, with shorter presentation times; willingness to participate in such formats will increase chances of acceptance. Individual proposals should include abstracts of no more than 300 words describing both the content and (if necessary) format of the proposal.

Proposals may be submitted for virtual presentations, to be included in virtual online panels. Any proposals for virtual presentations must be clearly indicated as such at the time of submission. If you are submitting your presentation abstract as part of a pre-formed panel, do not use this link, use the one for pre-formed panel submissions!

Submit an Individual Presentation or Reading Proposal

Collaborative Work Project Panels

The 2023 conference will include the new format for ASLE of collaborative work project panels, in which people will engage in significant collaborative work before the conference and present the results of that collaborative work at the conference. These panels should speak to some specific aspect of ASLE's current strategic plan and mission and/ or the ASLE/ AESS collaboration, which might include:
- Multi-disciplinary environmental engagement that extends beyond the Humanities in some way;
- Promoting diversity;
- Fostering regional collaboratories;
- Modeling organizational sustainability;
- Supporting public writing and engagements.

The submission deadline and acceptance date for collaborative work project proposals will be significantly earlier than for other presentation proposals, to allow accepted participants in those projects more time to engage in collaborative work prior to the conference. The earlier notification date will also leave people plenty of time to submit another proposal for conference presentation, if

their collaborative project proposal is not accepted. A couple of small grants (of up to $500 each) may be available to support the work of these collaborative projects, though most collaborative projects will not be able to be funded (see details for funding requests below).

Proposals for collaborative work project panels should describe the proposed collaboration, in an abstract of up to 1000 words, and should include between 3 and 10 collaborators (four or more collaborators is optimal). Collaborative work projects must include participants from multiple institutions, and ideally will include participants from multiple ranks, sectors, and/ or disciplines. The proposal should describe the project on which the participants will work collaboratively prior to the conference, including a rough timeline for when you will complete the proposed work, together with the format in which you will present that work at the conference. Proposals for collaborative work project panels should clearly indicate their relevance to ASLE's current mission and strategic plan and/ or the collaboration with AESS, in relation to the areas listed above. If different people will play different roles in the collaborative work project, those roles should also be clearly indicated. How groups present their collaborative work projects at the conference is up to them, but the presentations should not last more than 60 minutes total, to leave sufficient time for questions and discussion. Proposals should clearly indicate whether they are for an already existing and continuing collaborative work project or a new project—proposals of both kinds will be considered—and should include contact information for all collaborators. In cases of already existing collaborations, project members are expected to complete significant additional work together between the time of acceptance of the work project proposal and the time of the conference.

Any requests for funding for the collaborative work projects, up to a maximum of $500 per project, should be described in a separate section of the application, up to an additional 300 words. Such requests should include specific details of what that funding will be used for (receipts will be required when applicable). Funding must be used for expenses only, it cannot be used to compensate people in the collaborative work project for their time in doing the work. Since funding will be very limited, all proposals that request funding must also indicate whether the proposal is contingent on receiving that funding or not (i.e. whether you would still like to submit the proposal even if funding is not available for it).

Proposals for collaborative work projects may be submitted for virtual presentation, to be posted online prior to the conference. Any proposals for virtual presentation must be clearly indicated as such at the time of submission.

Submit a Collaborative Work Project Proposal

Poster Sessions

Proposals will be accepted for posters, for public display at the conference, with presenters standing by their posters to answer questions and discuss during the designated poster session time(s). There will not be any virtual posters. Poster proposals should include abstracts of no more than 300 words describing both the content and (if necessary) format of the proposal. Joint poster proposals (i.e. with more than one presenter working on a poster together) are also welcome.

Provide sufficient information to judge the quality of your proposal and its relevance to the conference audience. For example, public humanities projects might include development process, info on partner orgs, presentation to the public and potential impact; research results might include focal question and conclusions; pedagogical experiment might include description of experiment, outcomes and lessons learned; presentation of artistic work might include creation of the work, photos of exhibits or events; etc.

[Submit a Poster Proposal](#)

Workshops

Pre-conference workshops will also be available to conference participants, for an additional $15 registration fee, with facilitators and themes set by ASLE's invitation prior to the conference. Many but not all of the pre-conference workshops this year will focus on regional themes and collaborations. Depending on the specific workshop format, workshop participants will either do shared readings in advance of the workshop; share a short scholarly paper in advance; and/ or bring ideas and projects with them to workshop. Participants will register for workshops on a first come/ first serve basis, once registration opens, and the names of all workshop participants will be listed in the conference program—no submission form is necessary. Workshop participants may also present in another format at the conference, if they wish.

Dates and Deadlines

- All proposals for pre-formed panels, individual panel presentations or readings, or poster sessions must be submitted via Pheedloop by **11:59pm PST on January 3, 2023**. Any proposal for presentations in pre-formed panels that are not accepted for the conference will automatically be considered as individual presentations.
- All proposals for collaborative work projects must be submitted via Pheedloop by **11:59 pm PST on October 24, 2022**. All participants included in these proposals will be notified by no later than November 14, 2022 whether their proposal has been accepted or not. Those whose proposals are not accepted will then be welcome to submit a proposal for another conference presentation format, if they wish, by the **January 3, 2023** deadline.
- If you submitted a proposal but then discover you can no longer attend the conference, please inform the organizer of your panel (if relevant) _and_ ASLE of withdrawal by the end of the day on **January 30, 2023** at the latest, if possible.
- We will evaluate all proposals carefully and notify people of whether their proposal has been accepted by the end of the day on **February 27, 2023** at the latest.

For questions about submitting, please contact us at ASLEconference2023@gmail.com.