



ASLE News

Spring 2014

A Quarterly Publication of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment

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A Report on the 2014 ASLE Officer's Retreat

By Mark C. Long, Keene State College

Camp Glen Brook, a 250 acre working farm above the village of Marlborough, was the site for the 2014 ASLE leadership retreat: a weekend of meetings, meals and muddy walks in the fields and forests of New Hampshire. Gathered around a woodstove on a chilly April weekend, we reviewed past and current goals, made decisions that will shape the future of our association, and set to work planning the eleventh biennial conference in Idaho.



ASLE officers and coordinators at Camp Glen Brook in April.

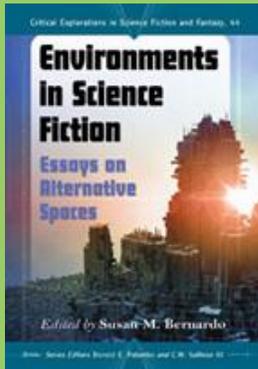
Review of the ASLE Strategic Plan

Since the ASLE Strategic Plan was approved in 2009, we have strengthened the disciplinary and demographic diversity of our membership and reaffirmed the values of equity, inclusion, and accessibility in our association. More recently, our Diversity Officer, Sarah Wald, chaired a task force that drafted ASLE Accessibility Guidelines, and our International Liaison, George Handley, created Affiliate Guidelines, and is developing a new proposal to offer meaningful assistance for conference attendance to members outside the US. In our review of the Plan, we also discussed strategies to include in the work of ASLE teachers and scholars from the humanities and sciences; to address the needs of our graduate student members, especially as we reconstruct our digital presence and strategy; to collaborate with the ASLE Creative Caucus to further environmental writing and the arts; and to promote our intellectual work, and the work of our association, in the civic sphere.

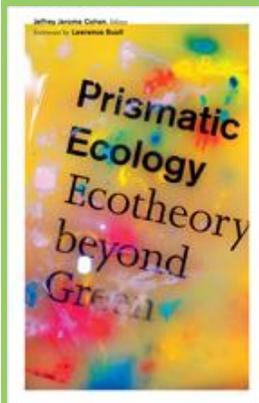
ASLE Bookshelf

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

Bernardo, Susan M, ed.
[Environments in Science Fiction: Essays on Alternative Spaces](#).
Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014.



Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome, ed.
[Prismatic Ecology: Ecotheory Beyond Green](#). University of Minnesota Press, 2014.



Cokinos, Christopher. [Held as Earth](#) (poems).
Georgetown, KY: Finishing Line Press, 2014.

A New ASLE Election Cycle

For the past couple of years the ASLE leadership has discussed the presidential structure of our association. Currently the president serves a three-year term (Vice President, President, Past President). However, the one-year presidential term leaves limited time to set the agenda for the association and complete projects and initiatives, especially for the president in a conference year.

I am pleased to report that the EC voted unanimously to approve a new election cycle. We will now elect both a president and vice president to serve two-year terms. The president will begin in a non-conference year. The vice president will begin in a conference year and will no longer automatically become president. The first election in the new cycle will be in the fall of 2014, when we will elect a vice president for 2015-16 (see related [call for nominees](#) in this issue). We will then elect a president in the fall of 2015 to serve in 2016 (a non-conference year) and 2017 (a conference year). We are confident that this new cycle will strengthen the leadership structure of ASLE and help to address the challenges of organizing the biennial conference.

Update on the New ASLE Web Site

The ASLE digital strategies committee (Allison Carruth, Anthony Lioi, Mark Long, and Amy McIntyre) has been meeting regularly over the past year. At the retreat, the committee summarized the proposed content management system (CMS) and how it will improve our process of managing and updating the web site. In reviewing the site architecture we developed in consultation with Bixler Communications Group, the EC helped the design team address the challenges of representing ecocriticism; and they underscored the importance of capturing the critical and creative scope of the environmental humanities, of communicating effectively with both internal and external audiences, and of utilizing the new web site for generating, presenting and archiving content.

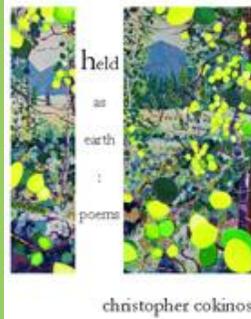
As the process of designing the new web site moves forward, we welcome your thoughts about the opportunities of a more dynamic and interactive web presence for ASLE. Please contact me, or other members of the digital strategies committee, as we work toward launching the new site later this year.



A woolly resident of Camp Glen Brook.

An Update on Interest Groups

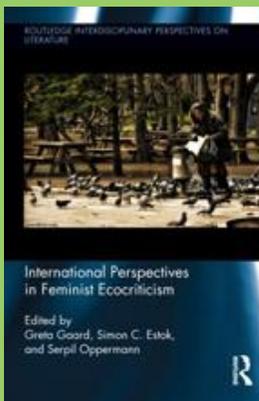
In the fall of 2013 the ASLE Interest Group Ad-Hoc Committee (Salma Monani, Sarah Jaquette Ray, Stephen Rust, and Sarah Wald) presented recommendations to the EC. The committee defined interest groups as grassroots initiatives that arise as ASLE members wish to organize. These groups can form around any topic of interest, for example, disciplinary (e.g., Ecomedia Studies), geographic (e.g., Southwest Literature), or institutional (e.g., Undergraduate or 2-year colleges). Interest groups would serve to encourage networking and fellowship, as well as to provide support for pedagogy, scholarship, and mentoring within these particular areas.



Davis, Todd. [*In the Kingdom of the Ditch: Poems*](#). East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2013.



Gaard, Greta, Simon C. Estok, and Serpil Oppermann, eds. [*International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism*](#). Routledge, 2013.



Houser, Heather. [*Ecossickness in Contemporary U.S. Fiction: Environment and Affect*](#). New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

The EC endorsed the interest group concept. And interest groups will be a part of our ongoing efforts to make visible ASLE's commitment to disciplinary diversity as well as demographic equity and inclusion. In addition, we will integrate the committee recommendations into the web site design and our conference planning. For a listing of current interest groups in ASLE and contact information if you are interested in joining, see the website at <http://www.asle.org/site/about/affiliates/>.

A Look Ahead to Idaho

We were fortunate to have with us a member of the local site team for ASLE 2015, Erin James, who offered an overview of the University of Idaho and the town of Moscow. Our current vice president, Cate Sandilands, helped to bring the weekend retreat to a close with a brainstorming session on the theme of the conference. Members of the EC offered their insights and ideas about the program. We benefited especially from the experience and wisdom of past conference presidents and site hosts, including our immediate past president, Paul Outka, and our Kansas site host, Byron Caminero-Santangelo.

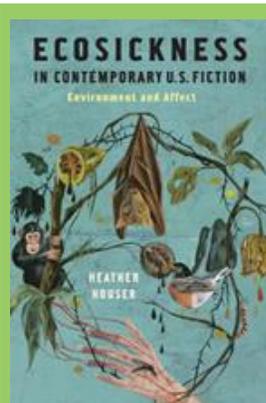
Pre-conference workshops, concurrent sessions, mid-conference seminars, field trips, town and community events, keynote speakers and plenaries, accessibility, connecting with local activist groups, conference sustainability concerns, and the many, many logistics of pulling off a conference of our scope and size--these were just some of the issues we discussed at length. Members can expect to hear more about the 2015 conference in upcoming newsletters and correspondence.

Ongoing Projects, Initiatives and Collaborations

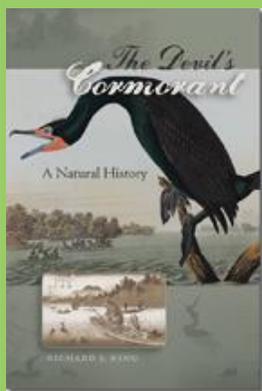
There are a few additional projects, initiatives, and collaborations underway that I would like to mention here:

- ASLE grant opportunities continue to support members of the association. The [International Membership Grants](#) are being offered on a rolling basis. And June 15 is the deadline for the [Local Environmental Humanities Grant](#), [the Book Subvention Grant](#), and [the Translation Grant](#).
- We are forming an ad-hoc committee to consider the structure and venue of the biennial conference. The study committee will review the conference and make recommendations to the EC in 2015.
- Note well our two [off-year conference opportunities](#) in 2014: **Writing in Place: A Summer Writers' Workshop: Place, Nature, Food, and Culture**, June 9-20, 2014 at Vermont's Sterling College, and **Towards Ecocultural Ethics: Recent Trends and Future Directions**, October 9-11, 2014, in Goa, India.

We are fortunate to have dedicated members of the EC and Program Officers who participated in an intensive weekend of discussion and planning. It is an honor to be a part of this energizing and talented group. As always, on behalf of the ASLE leadership team, I welcome your thoughts on the items I have summarized here, as well as your suggestions about the ongoing work of your association.



King, Richard. [The Devil's Cormorant: A Natural History](#). University of New Hampshire Press, 2013.



Long, Laura. [Out of Peel Tree](#). Morgantown, WV: WVU Press, April 2014.



Moe, Aaron M. [Zoopoetics: Animals and the Making of Poetry](#). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014.



Greenhouse at Camp Glen Brook. Photo by Mark Long.

June 15 Deadline for ASLE Grants

The June 15 deadline is rapidly approaching to submit applications for ASLE Translation Grants, Book/Article/Media Project Subvention Grants, and Community Grants. The Translation Grants were established in order to support work in ecocriticism from international scholars and to expand exchanges across cultures and continents. The Subvention Grants were created to support innovative projects in ecocriticism and the environmental humanities. The Community Grants seek to support projects that will help build connections between the environmental humanities and place-based environmental organizations working outside the academy.

To read more about the criteria and how to apply for these grants, go to <http://www.asle.org/site/opportunities/professional/grants/>

ASLE Sponsors Workshop and Symposium

ASLE is sponsoring two off-year events in 2014, one a writer's workshop at Sterling College in Vermont, the other a symposium in Goa, India. Read more about the events and how to register below.

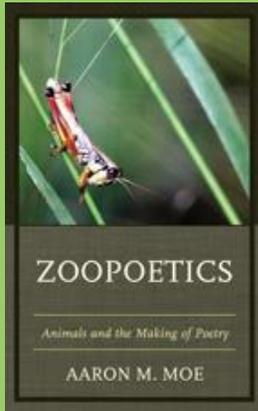
Writing in Place: A Summer Writers' Workshop

<http://www.sterlingcollege.edu/academics/continuing-education/summer-2014/environmental-humanities/>

Place, Nature, Food, and Culture is the theme of this immersive 2-week writers' workshop, held June 9-20, 2014. It will draw upon Sterling College's long history with the Wildbranch Writers' Workshop to bring together leading writers, teachers, and environmental thinkers and to explore resonances between place, nature, food, and culture in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

Thanks in part to a partnership with ASLE, Sterling is proud to be able to bring together some of the leading voices and teachers in environmental writing today. ASLE members are eligible for discounted registration. Read on for more details.

Participants can expect to work alongside Workshop faculty—including John Elder, Clare Walker Leslie, Rowan Jacobsen, and Ginger Strand—while crafting their own creative non-fiction, narrative, memoir, journal, or other genre that draws on the expertise of the faculty, the group, and capitalizes on the place-rootedness of Sterling College's rural setting.

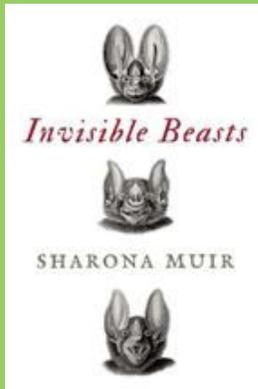


Cost is \$1,800 (\$1,500 for ASLE members) for the two weeks of the workshop. On campus housing and meals are additional.

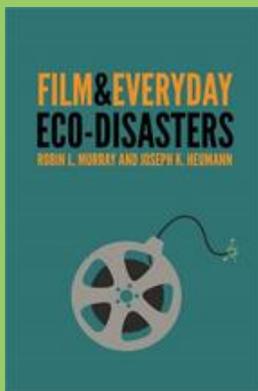
Enrollment is limited to 15 participants; there are still a few spots open. Participants can register anytime using this form: <https://sterling.wufoo.com/forms/s9y6n0c1lbiuwz/>

Sterling College has also extended that discount to ASLE members for all of Sterling's continuing education courses for this summer. ASLE members may enroll in any of Sterling's 2014 summer continuing education courses (listed here: <http://www.sterlingcollege.edu/academics/continuing-education/>) at a \$300 discount. The individual course fees vary, and the ASLE discount cannot be combined with any other Sterling-supported scholarship. Registration form: <https://sterling.wufoo.com/forms/s9y6n0c1lbiuwz/>.

Muir, Sharona. *Invisible Beasts: Tales of the Animals that Go Unseen Among Us*. Bellevue Literary Press, NYU: forthcoming July 2014.



Murray, Robin L. and Joseph K. Heumann. *Film and Everyday Eco-disasters*. University of Nebraska Press: forthcoming June 2014.



Reid, Catherine. *Falling into Place: An Intimate Geography of Home*. Beacon, 2014.



Lichen. Photo by Paul Lindholdt.

Towards Ecocultural Ethics: Recent Trends and Future Directions

The Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Birla Institute of Technology and Science Pilani, K.K. Birla Goa Campus, Goa, India is organising an International Conference on "Towards Ecocultural Ethics: Recent Trends and Future Directions" on 09, 10, 11 October 2014 at K.K. Birla Goa Campus, India. The conference is organised in collaboration with The Department of Philosophy, Goa University and is sponsored by ASLE. The same organizers in Goa were instrumental in putting on the highly successful TEFF (Tinai Eco-Film Festival) last year; for information on that event, see <http://tinaiecofilmfestival.wordpress.com/>.

Deadline for Abstract and Registration form Submission: 15 May 2014

For more details and full CFP, please see the website: <http://www.bits-go.a.in/EcocultralEthics/index.html>



ASLE Ph.D.

In December 2013, **Ilse Schweitzer VanDonkelaar** earned her PhD in English from Western Michigan University. Her dissertation is titled "Old English Ecologies: Ecocritical Readings of Anglo-Saxon Texts and Culture," and committee members included Jana Schulman (WMU), Eve Salisbury (WMU), Richard Utz (Georgia Tech LMC), and Sarah Hill (WMU).

ASLE members planning to travel from other countries to this conference should be in direct contact with the organizers regarding assistance with registration fee and accommodation. Contact email for questions and submissions is ecoethicsconference@gmail.com.

Nominees Sought to Run for ASLE Office

Candidates are being sought to run for ASLE Executive Council (EC) and Vice President (VP), for terms beginning January 2015. EC members serve a 3-year term, and beginning this year the VP term will be as follows: two years as VP, and one as Immediate Past Vice President. If you or another member you know would like to run for an ASLE office, please contact 2014 President Mark Long (mlong@keene.edu) by July 3, 2014.

ASLE Seeks Junior GSL

We are currently seeking a new junior 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, who has 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/liaisons/>. If you would like to be considered for the junior GSL position, please email a formal letter of application to current president Mark Long (mlong@keene.edu) by June 6 for a term beginning July 1, 2014. 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.

ASLE-Japan Celebrates its 20th Anniversary

By Ikue Kina, University of the Ryukyus, PR representative, ASLE-Japan

ASLE-Japan, an organization launched in 1994 and the second oldest ASLE affiliate, is observing its 20th anniversary this year. We decided to implement two special projects as a way of demonstrating development toward our goal of fulfilling our organizational responsibilities, both social and academic, not only within Japan but also as part of the network of East Asian ASLE affiliates.

We expect the first project, the International Symposium of Literature and Environment in East Asia (ISLE-EA), which will be held on November 22-23, 2014, at Meio University in Okinawa, Japan, to become a touchstone to measure that growth and build upon the past three East Asian conferences that took place biennially in turn in Japan, Korea, and most recently, Taiwan. For the 2014 meeting entitled "Unsettling Boundaries: Nature, Technologies, and Art," we have invited Professor Ursula K. Heise from UCLA as the keynote speaker and will pursue a continuing theme, which is to reconfirm and theorize our own particular ecocritical perspectives based on our commonly shared cultural traditions in East Asian regions.

The other 20th anniversary project is publishing a Japanese anthology of ecocritical writings. In addition to selected academic papers authored by ASLE-J members, the book includes interviews with two novelists. One is with Kyoko Hayashi, an award-winning Japanese writer who has been writing on resistance and protests against the use of nuclear power based on her own experience as a survivor of the nuclear bombing of Nagasaki during WWII, when she was a teenager. The other interview is with Karen Tei Yamashita, a Japanese American nominee for the National Book Award, who kindly contributed to our book her short story, "I, Kitty," a story about near-future technologies that enable androids and cyborgs to replace human beings. Both writers are pivotal to ASLE-Japan and/or Japan today, as their writings pertain to



Arrowleaf Balsamroot. Photo by Paul Lindholdt

our current concerns of a post-disaster ecological and social order and the question of humanity after the 3/11 earthquake and Fukushima.

The graduate students and younger members of ASLE-Japan made a great contribution to the production of this anthology. The volume includes their collaborative effort in translating the landmark article "[Literature and Environment](#)" originally published in the 2011 issue of *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*. The idea of publishing a Japanese translation of this article grew out of the reading workshop at ASLE-J's 2012 annual meeting at Kinki University in Osaka. The book also compiles the definitions of key words and issues of ecocriticism, so this publication will familiarize both academic and non-academic readers in Japan with where we feel the concept of ecocriticism needs to go through further dissemination. We especially appreciate Gakuto Hayama and Keitaro Morita for their editorship of those sections.

The two 20th anniversary-related special projects suggest only part of ASLE-Japan's organizational activities. Our 19th annual meeting, held at Shirayuri College in Tokyo on August 31 and September 1, 2013, included not only academic paper presentations but also a keynote performance by Dorian Sukegawa, an avant-garde Japanese artist who is also celebrated as a musician and a writer. The annual meeting was followed by a field trip to Minamisouma, a disaster-stricken area in Fukushima, which had a profound impact on those who participated in it.

It's been three years since 3/11, the Great East Japan Earthquake. The memory of loss is still painful, and the radioactive contamination issues in Fukushima still continue unresolved. On the occasion of its 20th anniversary, ASLE-Japan, as an environmental organization, will continue pursuing our goals with the same aspirations yet with a different historical experience, and with new questions that we might not have needed to ask without it.

ASLE-UKI Update

By Adeline Johns-Putra, Chair, ASLE-UKI, University of Surrey

The 2013 ASLE-UKI Annual General Meeting ushered in several changes in our leadership. Greg Garrard, having served many years as Chair, stepped down from the Executive after two years as Immediate Past Chair. Greg has been absolutely inspirational to British ecocriticism and has our very best wishes for his new life in Canada as Associate Professor of Sustainability at the University of British Columbia. Greg's place on the Executive has been filled by our new Deputy Chair, Brycchan Carey of Kingston University. We also welcomed Lucy Collins (University College Dublin) and Jenny Bavidge (Cambridge University) to the Executive, and Emma Curran (University of Surrey) and Michael Paye (University College Dublin) as graduate student representatives.



Ballhead Waterleaf. Photo by Paul Lindholdt.

Our eighth biennial conference took place at the University of Surrey from August 29-31, 2013. The conference attracted about 100 delegates from around the world, including the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan and China. Speaking to the conference theme of "Ecological Encounters: Agency, Identity, Interactions," delegates presented work on climate change fiction, new materialism, ecopoetics, and animal studies, among others. Catriona Sandilands (York University) treated us to a characteristically incisive, insightful, and enjoyable keynote address on the agency of plants. Later in the

conference, Sheila Jasanoff (Harvard University) and Mike Hulme (King's College London) shared the plenary stage to discuss climate change and the public imagination. The conference ended with an advance screening of *Developing the Environmental Humanities*, a film by Steven Hartman of Mid-Sweden University and Peter Norrman of the Zoopeople Media Collective, Stockholm.

ASLE-UKI also awarded a graduate bursary based on the best conference proposal from a graduate student: the bursary was won by James Finley from the University of New Hampshire, with honourable mentions going to Nicholas Beuret (University of Leicester), Hannah Boast (University of York), Louise Chamberlain (University of Nottingham), Pippa Marland (University of Worcester), and Loveday Why (University of Otago).

ASLE-UKI and Falmouth University in Cornwall co-hosted a successful one-day symposium on 'Haunted Landscapes' in March 2014. We also supported the 'Postcolonial Environments' conference at the University of Manchester in January 2014 with a special graduate travel bursary.

The second ASLE-UKI and INSPIRE lecture on literature and sustainability will go ahead at the [Hay Festival](#) in May 2014. This year's lecture will be delivered by Richard Kerridge, our founding chair, on the question of "What Can Writers Do with Climate Change?" The Hay Festival is the premier literary festival in the UK, so we're delighted to have what now appears to be an annual slot in its schedule.

Our next biennial conference will run in September 2015 at Cambridge University. The provisional dates are 2-4 September 2015 at Murray Edwards Hall, so please look out for the call for papers from organisers Jenny Bavidge, David Whitley, and Brycchan Carey.

Report from ASLEC-ANZ

By Tom Bristow, President, Association for the Study of Literature, Environment and Culture - Australia New Zealand

Hello to all our friends in ASLE-US!

At ASLEC-ANZ we are very busy organizing our 5th biennial conference, "Affective Habitus: New Environmental Histories of Botany, Zoology and Emotions," to be held at the Australian National University, Canberra, June 19-21. We're aiming to bring ecocriticism into conversation with (a) environmental humanities; (b) critical animal studies; (c) critical plant studies; and (d) a history of emotions. We have a great range of keynote speakers, including Ariel Salleh, Elspeth Probyn, Deborah Bird Rose, Linda Williams, Kate Rigby, Freya Mathews, Philip Armstrong, Iain McCalman, John Plotz, Will Steffen, and many other internationally renowned scholars.

My role as ASLEC-ANZ President over the last two years has been twofold--to develop connections with research groups in the academy, and to help establish Australian and New Zealand Connections--and I'm very pleased to be in contact with North American ASLE members. My interest in ASLE began in 2005 when I attended the ASLE conference in Eugene, Oregon, an experience that changed my PhD and triggered a fruitful and enjoyable relationship with the ASLE family in Europe and Australia. Long may that continue. In that vein, ASLEC-ANZ members are frequently exploring the ASLE-US website and discussion forum, thinking about creative ways to develop our connections (for instance, by attending the biennial ASLE-US conferences). I, for one, will be with you for the 2015 ASLE Conference in Idaho. Also, for our Annual General Meeting this year, I've ensured the participation of ASLE leaders as well as past-Presidents from Australia, Canada and the UK. This is going to be a lot of fun as we think about where we sit in an international context. Our postgrads are also discussing a potential videoconference event with the ASLE-UKI biennial conference to be held in Dublin this July. We are open to exchanges and conversations with you. Please email me if you'd like to get involved with ASLEC-ANZ: tom.bristow@une.edu.au.

We're in the process of launching a new website, with Facebook group, Twitter account and weblog. Please do take a look at these and contribute at your leisure:

<http://aslecanz.wordpress.com/>

ASLEC-ANZ postgrad facebook page:

<<https://www.facebook.com/groups/458714104202423/>>

postgrad blog Eco-Critical Connections:

<<http://ecocriticalconnections.wordpress.com/>>

Twitter feed <<https://twitter.com/EcoCritConnect>>,

<<http://ecocriticalconnections.wordpress.com/about/>>.

Our association also has a peer-reviewed journal: the *Australasian Journal of Ecocriticism and Cultural Ecology* (AJE). Our third issue has just gone live, and is freely accessible on the internet:

<http://www.nla.gov.au/openpublish/index.php/aslec-anz>. AJE is new; however, with very little marketing (i.e. none!) we have delivered 15,000 downloads of scholarly articles. I feel that we've made an initial impact on the scene, and I know that the editorial team would like to do much more.

The Academy in Australia

The University of Queensland hosted two notable events last year. The first was the high-powered conference "The Question of Nature" held by the Australian Academy of Humanities, and convened by Professors Gay Hawkins and Peter Harrison. With the ecological crisis in mind, there seemed to be two points that were stressed more than any others: first, how the humanities has really risen to the occasion and taken on some very difficult questions, and second, the importance of clarifying what is distinctive about contemporary humanities, how it is progressing and rethinking connections and overlaps with the social sciences and material cultures. Abstracts and biographical notes can be found here:

<http://www.humanities.org.au/Events/PreviousSymposia/2013.aspx>

The second conference, organized by Grace Moore, was scintillating as well: firemen and firewomen, academics, activists, environmental policy makers; people affected by Australian fires; poets--all came together to discuss 'fire' in theory and in practice, in our imaginations, and in our lives.

A great example of how far the academy has come, and how we are embracing the environmental challenges with verve, passion and integrity was the University of Sydney conference "Encountering the Anthropocene." This conference clarified the role of the environmental humanities and social sciences by drawing from a range of scholars who looked into three areas: "Perspectives of the Anthropocene," "Caring for Country," and "Animals, Plants and Food." In addition to revisiting the technological sciences and natural sciences, this conference drew much from the roles that artists and writers play in our cultural understandings of science and of the world in which we are a part. Many excellent papers were presented in an atmosphere of collegiality and warmth, largely in thanks to the conference support team: Nicole Lazaroff and Michele St Anne, from the Sydney Mellon-HfE Australian Pacific Observatory. You can see the program here:

http://sydney.edu.au/environment-institute/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/PROGRAM_03032014.pdf

One highlight was Jan Zalasiewicz's paper, "The Anthropocene as a potential new unit of the Geological Time Scale," which discussed how disciplines outside arts, humanities, and social sciences can offer vital knowledge, clear, hard facts, and a fresh outlook. Zalasiewicz is from the University of Leicester (UK) and is one of the working party who are reporting on the validity of the term "Anthropocene" for geologists. This paper spelled out the scientific methods and empirical validity required for events to register in this discipline; thus, it became much more clear what is at stake in accepting a new term, a new period. To support his point, Zalasiewicz presented hundreds of examples of the environmental changes that have occurred in our period, the late Holocene--from our use of plastic, minerals, and metals, to the shifting patterns of landscapes and continents, and climates and species movements.



Cow Moose. Photo by Paul Lindholdt.

Last but not least...

Last year, in attempt to find out what is happening in ecocriticism and the environmental humanities, I presented at eight conferences in three countries. I hardly had time to think! Highlights included:

1. The University of Sydney launched its Environment Institute, with a new group 'Humanities for the Environment' - this collaborative network is funded by the Mellon Foundation, and is working on a number of projects - its members include the founding President of ASLEC-ANZ and first Professor of Environmental Humanities in Australia (Kate Rigby), and the current President of ASLEC-ANZ.

<http://sydney.edu.au/environment-institute/mellon/>

2. One of Australia's proto-ecocritics, Dr Ruth Blair invited me to speak to her Pastoral reading group at UQ, shortly after the AAH conference that I've spoken about above. This team is organizing the 'Afterlives of Pastoral' conference, to be held in July, only a few weeks after our biennial: <http://www.emsah.uq.edu.au/pastoralconference2014>. Our time in Queensland was fantastic; a great group of people came together to spend nearly all of Saturday to discuss critical frameworks for Pastoral, from William Empson onwards. I thought the conversation was over; far from it--it appears that Australian literature, and other post-colonial literatures are increasingly interested in what might constitute a counter-pastoral!

3. I'm fortunate to be one of the small group of scholars at UNE who have been awarded funds from The Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Partnership to investigate two issues concerning seeds (and cultural knowledge in a farming context): (1) the colonial and contemporary relations between botany, seed exploration and seed banks; with a particular focus on relations between Kew Gardens (UK) and Sydney and Melbourne herbaria; (2) the tensions between traditional knowledge and indigenous values on one hand, and the pursuit of capital, intellectual property on the other. Some of the investigators will present at our biennial conference "Affective Habitus" this June, and a small number of people will join the conference on day three as part of a "seed colloquium" to see how we can best tackle the issues as presented in the research papers.

To conclude, may I recommend some reading? ASLE members might really enjoy a quick visit to the pages of the journal PAN (Philosophy, Activism, Nature); a new issue (10) is focused on fungi: <http://www.panjournal.net/>. Finally, I've been thumbing through a new anthology from Yale UP: [*The Future of Nature: Documents of Global Change*](#) (Edited by Libby Robin, Sverker Sörlin, and Paul Warde). Coming in at 584 pages, it's quite a text, and extremely useful for teaching material as it places canonical environmental essays alongside twenty-first century commentaries: you get the history of an idea and its contemporary relevance all in one go!

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude for all the help and support provided by the ASLEC-ANZ executive over the last few months; and for all the interest from ASLE affiliations across the planet!

PS Don't forget to keep an eye on our biennial conference!
<http://www.historyofemotions.org.au/events/affective-habitus.aspx>

ASLE Honorary Members Work to Save Monarchs

ASLE Honorary Members Homero & Betty Aridjis have recently been spearheading an effort to save the endangered monarch butterflies, whose wintering territory in the mountains of central Mexico is at risk. Homero and Betty prepared a letter and secured 150 signatures of scientists and writers from around the world, and they used this letter to get the monarch issue on the agenda for the recent North American Leaders' Summit.

The letter, addressed to Presidents Obama and Peña Nieto and Prime Minister Harper, received excellent coverage in the Mexican and international media, and they were successful in getting the Monarch butterfly on the North American Leaders' Summit agenda. Here is the relevant paragraph from the joint statement released at the end of the February 19 meeting here in Mexico:

"We will continue to collaborate in the protection of our region's biodiversity and to address other environmental challenges, such as wildlife trafficking and ecosystems at risk. Our governments will establish a working group to ensure the conservation of the Monarch butterfly, a species that symbolizes our association."

Next they will be working on the creation of a milkweed corridor along the Monarch's migratory route through Canada, the US and Mexico. [Click here](#) to read the letter that convinced the summit leaders to put Monarch habitat protection on their joint agenda. To read a full transcript of the press conference where this was announced, [click here](#).



NYT Features Innovative Course Taught by ASLE EC Member

On March 31, 2014, the *New York Times* Education section highlighted Executive Council member **Stephanie LeMenager**'s course on "The Cultures of Climate Change" at the University of Oregon. LeMenager told *ASLE News*: "The *New York Times* contacted us out of the blue to find out what we in the Humanities can contribute to discussion--and action--against climate change. We were happy that the University of Oregon might be considered a place where such questions are being pursued, and happy to oblige the *NYT*. The graduate students seen presenting in the *NYT* photograph are **Taylor McHolm** and **Shane Hall**." McHolm and Hall are also members of ASLE. Read the full article at http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/01/education/using-the-arts-to-teach-how-to-prepare-for-climate-crisis.html?_r=0.

Ecocriticism Session at ALA 2013

By Mark C. Long, Keene State College

The American Literature Association, a coalition of societies devoted to the study of American authors, gathered on a rainy spring weekend in Boston, Massachusetts, for its 22nd annual conference, May 23-25. The ASLE session I organized for the 2013 conference, "Narrative Ecologies: Contemporary American Fiction and the Environment," focused on American fiction by three presenters who live and work outside the United States.

Alexa Weik von Mossner, from the University of Klagenfurt, Austria, presented "Speculative American Fiction and the Future of Ecological Citizenship," which discussed Norman Spinrad's *Greenhouse Summer* (1999) and Kim Stanley Robinson's *Pacific Edge* (1988) in the context of ecotopian theory by the German sociologist Ulrich Beck and the British political theorist Andrew Dobson. In the second talk, "Autonomy and Ecology: Louise Erdrich's *The Plague of Doves*," Geoff Hamilton, from York University in Toronto, Canada, discussed Erdrich's philosophy of the self as an alternative to the mythology of personal autonomy and enduring attachment to self-law in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. And the third presentation, by Julia Fendt, from the University of Augsburg, Germany, "Where the hell is the Two Cultures split when you need it? A Cultural-Ecological Approach to Richard Powers' *Galatea 2.2*," examined the deployment of the "two cultures" debate in the novel using a model of cultural ecology developed by Hubert Zapf.

The ALA is a rewarding event for anyone interested in ecocriticism and the environmental humanities. At the 2013 conference, sessions offered included zoopoetics in Whitman and Cummings, food writing and hybrid narrative forms, the African American West, and Thoreau and American philosophy. If you are traveling to Washington DC for the 2014 conference (May 22-25), join us for two Friday morning ASLE sessions: Ian Marshall's "The New Nature Writing I: New Explorers, Young Writers, New Ecocriticism" and Megan Simpson's "The New Nature Writing II: Going West." The ASLE session at ALA in 2015 will be organized by Nicole Merola. A call for papers will circulate later this year.

ASLE Session at MMLA 2013

By Breyan N. Neyland, Loras College

The 2013 ASLE panel at Midwest MLA, held November 7-10, 2013, in Milwaukee, WI, explored the idea of the postmodern farmer-citizen. The well-attended discussion began with Sarah Dimick's (PhD Candidate, University of Wisconsin-Madison) paper entitled "Immigration and Transplantation in Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*," which addressed how plants are anthropomorphized and humans are botanized in national debates over nativeness and invasiveness. It considers why colonial settlements in America were referred to as "plantations" and colonists known as "planters" as well as why the trade names of contemporary pesticides--from Roundup to Raid to Alamo--invoke an anti-immigration rhetoric. Erin McQuiston's (PhD candidate at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) paper, "New Eves and New Edens: GM Crops in Recent Science Fiction," imagines near-future landscapes through the lens of Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* (2009) and Rob Ziegler's *Seed* (2012) in which cultural landscapes are defined by genetically engineered crops and the sinister corporations that control them. Vivian Nun Halloran's (Director, Asian American Studies Program, Associate Professor of American Studies and English, Indiana University) paper, "Reclaiming Sharecropping: Will Allen's *Good Food Revolution* and the Politics of Shame," argued that Milwaukee urban farmer and food philosopher Will Allen's public advocacy campaign for a radical reconsideration of African American gastronomic citizenship within local communities as well as in the context of the United States as a whole makes him the ultimate postmodern farmer-citizen. Maxwell Philbrook's (PhD candidate at the University of Missouri - Columbia) paper, "The Neoliberal Farmer: Transnational Food Production in a Global Age," examined the mega rhetoric that contributes to the definition of farmers in the U.S. policy documents like the Farm Bill which, he suggests, help generate the mega rhetoric of food production by creating a narrative in which farmers are valued mostly as consumers.

Member News

Associate Professor of Spanish at Wofford College **Laura Barbas-Rhoden's** chapter "Espacio, violencia y heteronormatividad en una Nicaragua transnacional: Lectura ecofeminista de La Yuma y Meet Me Under the Ceiba" is included in the new book *Cartografías culturales del género en Centroamérica: saberes, imágenes e itineraries*, edited by Alexandra Ortiz Wallner and Mónica Albizúrez.

Public Culture journal announces the publication of a special issue titled "Visualizing the Environment" with contributions by ASLE Members **Allison Carruth, Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Ursula K. Heise, Heather Houser, and Rob Nixon**. Read it here: <http://www.publicculture.org/issues/view/26/2>

Christopher Cokinos is co-editing an anthology of contemporary nature writing with **Eric Magrane** called *A Literary Field Guide to the Sonoran Desert* for University of Arizona Press. Cokinos was recently named a 2014-2015 Udall Fellow in Public Policy at the University of Arizona, and he has work forthcoming or recent in *Orion, Extrapolation, New Delta Review, Western Humanities Review, Saltfront* and elsewhere. This coming year he will begin directing the creative writing program at Arizona.

Greg Garrard has recently moved from Bath Spa University in the UK, where he was Reader in Literature and the Environment, to UBC Okanagan, where he has been appointed to one of five Sustainability Professor positions on the campus. Garrard reports that the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies at UBC Okanagan is already strong in eco-poetry and art, so he is looking forward to building ecocriticism and environmental humanities research to complement it. He also joined the university's research institute for Biodiversity, Resilience and Ecosystems Services, through which he hopes to build interdisciplinary collaborations. Garrard says, "And of course, having chaired ASLE-UKI 2004-2010, I'm delighted to be in a position to engage with colleagues in ALECC and ASLE more immediately than before. I am missing the rain and bluebells of an English spring though!"



Jill McCabe Johnson's poetry book, *Diary of the One Swelling Sea* (MoonPath Press, 2013), a collection of poems in the voice of the sea addressing rising sea levels, was awarded a 2014 Nautilus Book Award in Poetry.

At the WLA conference in California in October, **Mark Liebenow** presented the paper "Hiking with Kierkegaard" as a member of the panel on "Internalizing Landscape" with Gaynell Gavin, Lisa Knopp, and Liz Stephens. Liebenow's paper will be published by the *Chautauqua Journal* in 2014 in Issue 11, "Wonders of the World," available soon at <http://www.chautauquabookstore.ciweb.org/>. Liebenow is the author of four books, most recently *Mountains of Light: Seasons of Reflection in Yosemite*, published by the University of Nebraska Press and winner of the River Teeth Nonfiction Book Prize. His poems, essays, and critical reviews have appeared in the *Chautauqua Journal*, *Colorado Review*, *Fifth Wednesday*

Journal, and other publications. His work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and named a notable essay in Best American Essays 2012. He is currently working on a grief memoir.

Laura Long (Lynchburg College) published the novel *Out of Peel Tree* (April 2014, WVU Press). The novel is rooted in the natural and cultural world of Appalachia, and subtly traces an Appalachia diaspora. The novel was just listed as an "editor's pick" on Oprah.com. Excerpts appeared in *Shenandoah* and many other literary magazines. Laura Long also published a chapbook of poems, *The Eye of Caroline Herschel: A Life in Poems* (Dec 2013, Finishing Line P). Poems from this collection about astronomer Caroline Herschel (1750-1848) are currently nominated for a Pushcart Prize by the Pushcart Prize Editorial Board, and were linked in the blog *Cocktail Physics* sponsored by *Scientific American*.

Catherine Meeks co-founded Fall Line South Field Institute (www.falllinesouth.org), an interdisciplinary, environmental education field school for young adults based throughout the Southeastern United States. The school's inaugural course, "Altamaha Odyssey," will take place this summer, June 6-15, and author Janisse Ray will be a guest speaker during the class's canoe trip on the Altamaha River in South Georgia.

Aaron M. Moe's "Toward a Zoopolis: Animal Poiesis and the Poetry of Emily Dickinson and Brenda Hillman" is now published in the section on Animality and Ecocriticism, guest edited by Scott Slovic, in the online journal *Forum for World Literature Studies* (Volume 6, Issue 1, 2014). In the introduction to the section, Slovic sees "animality" to be one of the "two major paradigms within the field of ecocriticism." (The other is "place.") Aaron joins Karla Armbruster, Michael Lundblad, Diana Villanueva Romero, Wendy Woodward, and Deborah Bird Rose in an exploration of the many facets of animality.

Anna Lena Philips, editor of *Ecotone Magazine*, reports that *Astoria to Zion: Twenty-Six Stories of Risk and Abandon from Ecotone's First Decade* has won a gold IPPY (Independent Publisher Book Award) in the anthology category.

Catherine Reid's essay collection, *Falling into Place: An Intimate Geography of Home* (Beacon 2014) was included as one of "ten titles to pick up now" in the March issue of *Oprah Magazine* (one of 14 in the online version). Reid says, "We've come of age: place-based essays written from a queer p.o.v. named as notable in a mainstream magazine." Reid also received creative writing fellowships this past year from the NEA and the North Carolina Arts Council.

Fred Waage presented his paper "Big Dam Foolishness: Rivers & Dams in U.S. Popular Lit. from TVA to Echo Park & Glen Canyon" at NEMLA in April 2014, and his article "The Non-Human in New World Encounter Narratives of the English Renaissance" appears in *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 38.4.

ASLE News Notes

Common Knowledges Symposium

The [Second Annual Symposium of the Common Knowledges Study Group](#), UC San Diego, will be held on Wednesday, May 14, 2014 from 4:30 - 7:30 pm in the Dept. of Literature, Room 155. The Symposium, "Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Culture, the Environment, and Labor," will be moderated by Prof. Pasquale Verdicchio, and will include presentations by Prof. Lesley Stern (UCSD), Prof. Massimo Lollini (U of Oregon, Eugene), and **Leslie Ryan** (Oregon State University). Prof. **Serenella Iovino** (Univ. of Turin, Italy) will act as respondent.

The next day, Thursday, May 15, 2014 at 6:00 pm in The Atkinson Pavilion at the UCSD Faculty Club, Iovino will give the 2014 Binder Lecturer at UC San Diego, titled "Death(s) in Venice: Bodies and the Discourse of Pollution from Thomas

Mann to Porto Marghera." Her abstract states: "There are many ways to imagine the death of a city. Death is the end of a cycle, both an episode and a rule in the ecology of matter's transformations. Death in Venice can have many faces, and many names. It has the face and the name of Gustav von Aschenbach, the German nobleman who acts as the protagonist of Thomas Mann's novel-or the face and name of Tatzio, his beloved 14-years old boy. It can have the face and the name of hepatic Angiosarcoma, a cancer form spread among industrial workers by the Montedison, a petrochemical factory located in Porto Marghera, just one mile from the city. It can have the face of the waters, and tides and fluxes of energy generated by global warming. These latter elements are coupled with the engineering systems implemented to control the ever-increasing high tides affecting Venice (the so-called MOSE barrage), with the unsustainable tourism of humongous cruise ships, and with the polluting activities normally caused by human everyday life in a delicate ecosystem such as the Venetian lagoon. In this lecture I will concentrate on Venice as a text made out of embodied stories-a material text, in which natural dynamics, cultural practices, political visions, and industrial choices are interlaced with human bodies in issues of justice, health, and ecology."

The event is free and open to the public. A reception will follow the lecture.

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@gmail.com) 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@gmail.com). 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@gmail.com) with the dissertation title, degree-granting institution, and committee members.