



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



ASLE News

Summer 2010

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

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ASLE Bookshelf

Sneak Preview of 2011 ASLE Conference: Species, Space and the Imagination of the Global

by Ursula Heise, ASLE Vice President and Conference Program Chair

By now you should have received the Call for Papers for our next convention in your email inboxes. The 2011 ASLE Conference will take place June 21-26 at Indiana University, Bloomington under the title, "Species, Space, and the Imagination of the Global." This broad theme seeks to bring together two sets of interests that emerged forcefully at the Executive Council's meeting in North Carolina last February: on one hand, great excitement over exploring the problems and promises of globalization in its various dimensions (economic, ecological, technological, cultural, political), and a keen interest in how cultural communities around the globe are addressing these issues through their cultural practices and works; and on the other hand, enthusiasm over the ever more visible presence of animal studies across various disciplines and activities inside and outside of the university.



*Grasses and Forbs, Franklin County, OH.
Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.*

The issues surrounding our varied interfaces with the global and its cultural representations hardly need any introduction. Many of you have been working for a long time on the relation of local environmental issues to regional, national and international problems, frameworks and organizations. At the same time, recent developments in ecocriticism--the rise of postcolonial ecocriticism and the increasing interest in cross-cultural, diasporic, transnational and cosmopolitan forms of identity, to name two of the most prominent--have opened up new perspectives on the basic environmentalist question of how we might live responsibly in one place while also keeping our minds open to the many other places to which it connects around the globe. We all know what an intellectual and ethical challenge it is to map the consequences of our own actions at these various levels of scale, and how different cultural frameworks invite quite different ways of mapping places, regions, countries, hemispheres, networks and the planet as a whole.

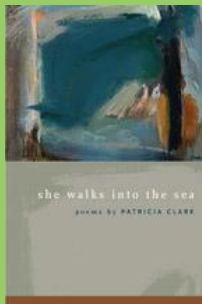
Much of this "mapping" takes place metaphorically in literary texts, films, photographs, paintings, performances, installation art, and video games. But some of it is also quite literal. Cultural geography has newly emerged as a discipline that has much to say and show about humans' interactions with their natural environments, and we look forward to discussing some of these approaches at the

The following works were recently published by ASLE members. If we've missed your publication, please send bibliographic information to Catherine Meeks (catherine-meeks@utc.edu).

Bradfield, Elizabeth. *Approaching Ice* (Poems). New York, NY: Persea Books, 2010.
www.ebradfield.com
www.broadsidedpress.org



Clark, Patricia. *She Walks into the Sea* (Poems). East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2009.



Clark, Patricia. *Given the Trees* (Poetry chapbook). Part of the "Voices from the American Land" subscription series. Placitas, NM, 2010.

conference. At the same time, new imaging techniques enabled by digital tools of various kinds are creating innovative ways of looking at the places, spaces and networks we inhabit - some of you may remember the stunning video by Aaron Koblin that Andy Revkin presented as part of his keynote in Victoria last year, graphically tracing the number of flights departing from and arriving in US airports during a 24-hour period. It was difficult to think about our own continent in quite the same terms after seeing it refracted through Koblin's dynamic graphing of its global mobility. But humans are of course not the only mobile species: different ways of tracking wildlife on the land and in the oceans is opening up new insights in how our fellow species - from viruses to arctic terns and whales - inhabit, use and migrate across places and spaces. We hope that some of the new graphs, maps and images that are now becoming available to us will prompt discussions about how they interact, conflict and converge with more established mapping genres from ancient epic to television documentary.

Animal migration links the imagination of global spaces to animal studies. As an emergent field, animal studies sits at the exciting - sometimes explosive! - intersection of the animal rights movement, recent poststructuralist work on "the question of the animal" and a steady flow of new scientific insights into animals' cognitive, communicative, emotional and social skills and capabilities. Clearly, the way in which animal studies thinks critically about the status of humans dovetails in many respects with environmentalists' long-term debates about anthropocentrism, biocentrism and the "more-than-human" world. But environmentalists and ecocritics have often been more reluctant than animal studies scholars to focus on animals alone, preferring instead to approach them as part of complex ecological networks that also include plants and inanimate forces such as soil, water and climate. Just how the status of the animal, the concept of the species and the functioning of such networks is envisioned varies, once again, widely with different cultural contexts, so that we can look forward to a truly multidimensional conversation.

To encourage such conversations in a variety of formats, we are keeping up the innovations Dan Philippon and Richard Pickard introduced so successfully at last year's conference in Victoria. A distinguished international slate of keynote speakers will be joined by an equally diverse roster of leaders in an array of pre-conference workshops and seminars, which I hope many of you will have the occasion to take advantage of. We encourage you to propose papers and panels for traditional sessions with three or four participants (see the call for such a panel being formed below), for roundtables with four to twelve participants focusing on a single issue, or for paper jams with up to seven speakers giving very brief presentations. For the first time, in consideration of the international and global dimensions of our conference theme, our Call for Papers will go out in both English and Spanish, and we invite proposals and panels in both languages. As you get ready to think about your own participation in next year's exciting venture, please keep in mind that ASLE has received more paper proposals than will fit into our current conference format for the last few years. As with the last few conferences, we will therefore give preference to panels that you've already formed, while single-paper proposals will be given lower priority. We hope that this will encourage all of you to get the conversations started well before the beginning of our conference and to put together nodes of interest and discussion that will then constellate into an exciting program. We look forward to seeing you in Bloomington - and just in case your GPS is confused, tell it that's Bloomington, Indiana, not Illinois!

* * * * *

Call for Panelists Writing Original Eco-fiction for ASLE 2011

When we write creative nonfiction prose about the natural world, we are free to write as essayists, science popularizers, journalists, and the like, mingling natural history with factual (or quasi-factual) information about ourselves and other historically real human beings. But when we write fiction and wish to say something ecologically significant, we have additional, or perhaps altogether different, conventions to consider, conventions most readers expect from stories and novels--e.g. dramatic action, dialogue, character development, plot, and symbol. If you are struggling with these considerations as you write original eco-fiction and would like to take part in a panel discussion on the topic at next year's biennial conference in Bloomington, please e-mail Allison Wallace at allisonw@uca.edu by September 1, 2010. Briefly describe your project and include a short excerpt of your work within the text of your message.



Cusick, Christine. *Out of the Earth: Ecocritical Readings of Irish Texts.* Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 2010.
www.corkuniversitypress.com

Day, Lucille Lang. *The Curvature of Blue: Poems.* West Somerville, MA: Cervena Barva Press, 2009.



Grumbine, Ed. *Where the Dragon Meets the Angry River: Nature and Power in the People's Republic of China.* Washington, DC: Shearwater, 2010.
www.angryriver.org

Call for Submissions: ASLE Biennial Book Awards

The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment will present its third biennial book awards in ecocriticism and creative writing at its 2011 conference in Bloomington, IN, June 21-26. Both awards include a prize of \$500. Unlike in previous years, the awards will be announced in advance, providing an opportunity to promote book sales, and the awards will be presented at the authors' reception rather than at the banquet.

The Book Awards will be presented in two categories:

- 1) the best book-length monograph of scholarly ecocriticism published in 2009 or 2010.
- 2) the best book-length monograph in creative writing (any genre) on an environmental theme published in 2009 or 2010.

NOTE: Jointly authored works will be considered, but anthologies or collections by multiple authors are not eligible in either category. Works of narrative scholarship, or works that in other ways blend scholarly criticism with creative writing, can only be submitted in one category, which must be indicated in an accompanying letter.

Works may be submitted by either the author or publisher.

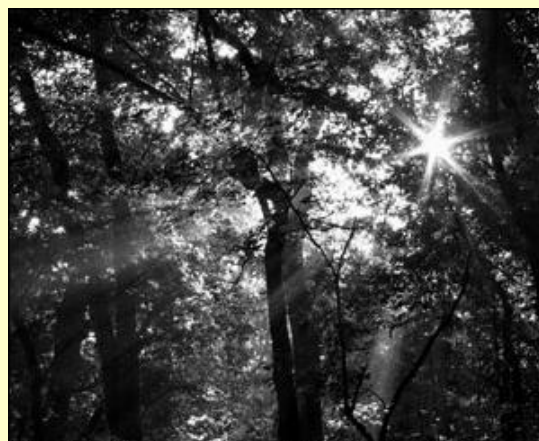
Nominees must be members of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment or an international affiliate as of January 1, 2011.

Works must be in English.

Deadline for receipt of all submissions is January 14, 2011.

Three copies of the nominated book should be sent to:

Tom Lynch
ASLE Awards
Department of English, 202
Andrews Hall
University of Nebraska, Lincoln
P.O. Box 880333
Lincoln, NE 68588-0333
For further information contact Tom Lynch at: tplynch2@gmail.com



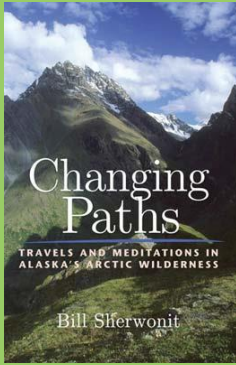
Eastern Hardwood Canopy, Franklin County, OH.
Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.

Call for Applicants: ASLE Professional Liaison Coordinator Position Open

ASLE is in need of a new Professional Liaison Coordinator (PLC). We thank outgoing coordinator Donelle Dreese for her three years of service in this position. Due to his/her pivotal role in helping ASLE to fulfill some of our strategic plan goals, the PLC has an expanded job description:

General description:

The Professional Liaison Coordinator (PLC) for ASLE is an appointed position. While there is no set term, we request that the PLC make a commitment of at least three years. The person in this position serves an important public relations role for ASLE by managing our professional affiliations with a variety of other organizations in the field. This person needs to work consistently to make sure that ASLE's obligations are being met in our formal relationships. This includes ensuring that panels at various non-ASLE conferences are properly submitted and chaired, as well as performing outreach to new groups, either directly or with the assistance of interested members who volunteer their services. ASLE's recently



Sherwonit, Bill. *Changing Paths: Travels and Meditations in Alaska's Arctic Wilderness.* Anchorage: University of Alaska Press, 2009.

ASLE Seeks Nominations

Candidates are being sought to run for ASLE Executive Council (EC) and Vice President (VP), for terms beginning January 2011. EC members serve a 3-year term, as does the VP: one year as VP, one year as President, and one as Immediate Past President. If you or another member you know would like to run for an ASLE office, please contact 2010 President Annie Ingram (aningram@davidsen.edu) by August 15, 2010.

ASLE Needs MLA Liaison

ASLE is seeking a member to serve as its liaison to the MLA convention. This entails organizing and chairing the two annual ASLE panels at

adopted Strategic Plan puts an emphasis on diversity, with a specific task being to "Expand the number of professional organizations that are ASLE affiliates to include organizations that focus on topics other than literature/creative writing and organizations that specifically support racially and culturally diverse scholarship." Given this initiative, ideally the PLC will have (or will be willing to cultivate) contacts in these areas to ensure that ASLE meets this strategic initiative.

Specific Duties:

> Coordinates ASLE's formal affiliations with other professional organizations, including but not limited to:

- Maintaining a list of current professional affiliated organizations and ASLE liaisons to each one, and updating the ASLE Managing Director and President when any changes occur to this list;
- Evaluating requests for new or continuing affiliate organizations, including notifying organizations of their affiliate status, and requesting renewals according to the established schedule;
- Assuring that there is an active liaison for each of ASLE's affiliated professional organizations;
- Arranging for a chair person for each of the sessions that ASLE hosts at the affiliate organizations' conferences;
- Working with the ASLE Executive Council and Officers, as well as the Diversity Coordinator, to identify new organizations for formal partnerships and affiliations, and pursuing these new affiliations by making appropriate contacts and completing any necessary paperwork or correspondence.

> Compiles on a timely basis any Calls for Papers, Manuscripts, or related items from the listserv and other outside sources and forwards them on to the Managing Director for posting to the web.

> Endeavors to attend the annual meetings of ASLE's Executive Council. Although he/she is not a voting member, the PLC's very active and ongoing work on behalf of the organization makes attending these annual meetings necessary for clear communication within the organization.

If you would be interested in serving ASLE in this role, or have questions about the PLC position, please contact current ASLE President Annie Ingram (aningram@davidsen.edu). To apply, please send a letter of interest and short CV or resume with relevant experiences by August 31, 2010.



Cicada emerging, Franklin County, OH. Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.

the MLA conference. Scott Knickerbocker, the outgoing liaison, has organized the ASLE panel for the upcoming MLA (January 2011), so the new liaison would begin attending MLA in January 2012, and would need to begin organizing the panels for that in the spring of 2011. If you are interested in this position, please contact ASLE President Annie Ingram (aningram@davidson.edu) by September 30, 2010. In your correspondence, please indicate the reasons for your interest in this role, your plans for attending MLA for the next several years, and your experience in organizing conference panels, if any.

Members Write

ASLE News wants to include your voices! We invite members to write 100-200 words in response to a word, phrase, or question that we will print in this section of each issue of ASLE News. Selected responses will then be published in the next issue. (Readers of *The Sun* magazine will recognize this feature as similar to their always fascinating "Readers Write.")

For the Fall 2010 Members Write, respond to the following phrase:

"Deep Water"

Please send responses either in the body of an e-mail or as an attachment to ASLE News editor Catherine

Diversity News: Bylaws Change, Call for Nominations, and a New Blog!

by Annie Ingram, ASLE President

The Executive Council (EC) has approved changes to ASLE's bylaws that define the role and duties of the Diversity Coordinator, a newly-structured position that will now be elected by the general membership and will have voting privileges on the EC.

As the amended Article 6.6 states, "the Diversity Officer will oversee and participate in the activities of the Diversity Committee to reach across national, disciplinary, cultural, sex/gender, and other boundaries to enhance diversity and inclusiveness for ASLE. [. . .] Candidates for the position of Diversity Officer should be able to provide significant evidence of affiliations with diverse groups and/or organizations." The Diversity Committee "will agree upon specific diversity goals for each year and report on these goals and submit them for approval to the annual meeting of the EC. The Diversity Committee will also actively participate in the planning of the conference theme and the selection of plenary speakers" (see Article 7.4).

For the full text of the bylaws changes and a more detailed description of the Diversity Coordinator's responsibilities, go to the ASLE website:

<http://www.asle.org/site/about/policies/>. The changes specifically apply to Article 5: Officers, Article 6: Duties of Officers, and Article 7: Committees. Priscilla Ybarra, who has generously served as Diversity Coordinator for the past few years, will continue in the position until the new Diversity Coordinator takes office after the general elections this fall. As outlined in the new bylaws, Priscilla will serve an additional year as Immediate Past Diversity Coordinator.

We welcome nominations, including self-nominations, for Diversity Coordinator, for a three-year term beginning in January 2011. If you or another member you know would like to run, please contact 2010 President Annie Ingram (aningram@davidson.edu) by August 15, 2010.

We also invite you to peruse and participate in **ASLE Diversity**, a new blog that provides a web presence for ASLE's diversity efforts. Join the conversation or start a new one, announce conferences, find job postings, get news about ASLE members, and connect with the many interesting people that make ASLE such a vibrant and diverse community. Go to: <http://aslediversity.weebly.com/index.html>

ASLE at the American Literature Association (ALA)

by Rochelle Johnson, The College of Idaho, 2010 Chair of ASLE panel at ALA

Each year, ASLE sponsors a panel at the meeting of the American Literature Association. This year, the ALA met in San Francisco from May 27-30, and our panel was titled "**The Nature of Truth in the Age of American Transcendentalism.**" Below is a description of the excellent papers presented there. The 2011 ALA will be held in Boston, with Mark Long (Keene State College, mlong@keene.edu) chairing the panel. Mark will send out a CFP as the conference approaches.

"Transcendentalism and Green Republics," Daniel S. Malachuk, Western Illinois University-Quad Cities

The nature of truth for the three major Transcendentalists (Emerson, Fuller, and Thoreau) was more ethical than epistemological, and they shared an ethical program that could be called "green republicanism." Particularly in their writings about frontier communities past (*A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, "Historical Discourse at Concord") and present (*Summer on the Lakes*, *The Maine Woods*), the Transcendentalists together theorized a democratic republic of more loosely associated citizens obedient to "higher law" and committed to "higher uses of nature" (Thoreau's phrase). Today, better engaging the Transcendentalists' distinctive green republicanism means overcoming some critical biases so as to appreciate the Transcendentalists' ethical and political (rather than epistemological) orientation, their investment in the Lockean tradition, and their interest in nature's "higher uses."

Meeks, catherine-meeks@utc.edu.

ASLE PhDs

Dixon Bynum successfully defended his dissertation *Precarious Eden: A Return to the Mississippi Delta* last spring from the University of Mississippi. Ann Fisher-Wirth directed it; committee members were Jay Watson, Katherine McKee, and Robbie Ethridge.

Kyhl Lyndgaard completed his Ph.D. this Spring from the University of Nevada, Reno, and has accepted the position of ACM-Mellon Post-doctoral Fellow in English and Environmental Studies at Luther College (Iowa). His dissertation is titled *Landscapes of Removal and Renewal: Cross-Cultural Resistance in Nineteenth-Century American Captivity Narratives*. His committee consisted of Michael P. Branch (chair), Cheryl Glotfelty, Kathleen Boardman, William Rowley, and M. Eleanor Nevins.

Nancy Menning completed her dissertation, *Reading Nature Religiously: Lectio Divina, Environmental Ethics, and the Literary Nonfiction of Terry Tempest Williams*, to earn a Ph.D. in Religious Studies this May from the University of Iowa. Committee members included Diana Fritz Cates (chair), Ralph Keen, Christopher Merrill, Howard Rhodes, and Scott Schnell. In August 2010, Menning will begin a tenure-track position

"Nature(s) and Culture(s) of Truth in Emerson and Thoreau," Laura Dassow Walls, University of South Carolina

The era of Emerson and Thoreau was the first to articulate the sense of living in a universe without limit or plan, one that failed to touch bottom anywhere. This understanding put pressure on their longing to stabilize the search for truth. This essay explores that search by considering three facets of truth: religion, or the transcendent; science, or the planetary; and society, or the worldly. Both Emerson and Thoreau aligned the first two as a resource to correct the failures, in social justice, of the third; but Thoreau finds a deeper connection, even a constitutive one, between nature and "civil" society as its very condition of possibility. This extraordinary move grounds his social theory and, more, shows him imagining a three-way alignment of religion, science, and society into a peaceable cosmos that might miraculously bring into being the summative term we tend, too easily, to dismiss: beauty.

"Taking off the Moccasin Flower and Putting on the Lady's Slipper: Indian Removal and the Natural Environment in the Nineteenth Century," Kyhl Lyndgaard, Luther College

The distinctive orchids of the genus *Cypripedium* occur naturally throughout the Northern Hemisphere and were commonly called moccasin flowers at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Yet by 1900, the most common term used for this plant was the same one used in England: the lady's slipper. This shift in terminology mirrored changes in white American perceptions of the seeming necessity of Indian removal. Even progressive writers who argued against Indian removal accepted the culturally-produced truth that the moccasin flower was equivalent to Native Americans. The trope that Indians were vanishing, in other words, was reinforced by the description of anthropogenic changes to nature as a cultural short-hand for the future of human populations.



Sword Fern, Fall Creek, OR.
Photo by H. Lewis Ulman

Sharp Eyes IV: John Burroughs Nature Writing Conference and Seminar Summary

by Dan Payne, SUNY College at Oneonta

The 2010 "Sharp Eyes" conference, the sixth in the John Burroughs Nature Writing Conference & Seminar series, was held at the campus of the State University of New York College at Oneonta on June 7-10, 2010. This year's conference was once again directed by Daniel G. Payne (SUNY Oneonta) and focused on the work of writers, like John Burroughs and John Muir, who contributed to the success of the conservation movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the work of contemporary writers who are influencing the development of early twenty-first century environmentalism. Approximately one hundred people attended the conference, including 44 students enrolled in the associated seminar course (taught by John Tallmadge and Stephen Mercier) and scholars from as far away as Singapore, Australia, Germany, and British Columbia.

The opening keynote was delivered by Julianne Warren (New York University), the author of *Aldo Leopold's Odyssey*. In her address, "Remembering Nature as Hope," Julianne touched on many of the environmental issues currently facing our civilization--most recently the enormous oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico--then gave an uplifting, inspirational talk that called for a reexamination of how we see our place in nature, reminding us that "Nature is the well-spring of enduring human hope."

as Assistant Professor of World Religions at Ithaca College (Ithaca, NY).

Kurt Moellering earned his Ph.D. from Northeastern University; his dissertation is titled *William Wordsworth, Henry David Thoreau, and the Construction of the Green Atlantic World*. His committee members were Mary Loeffelholz (chair), Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, and Stuart Peterfreund.

Over the next three days, twenty-five talks covering a range of topics from the influence of the Hudson River School of landscape painting to radical environmentalism were presented. On Monday night, conference goers were treated to a special screening of *Ora E. Anderson: The Soul of the Woods*, an inspirational film about Anderson's forty year mission to restore the forest to an exhausted farm he had bought in the Midwest. The following evening was a night dedicated to creative writers, with readings by the Slabside Poets and Patrick Lawler (SUNY-ESF); their words were beautifully accompanied for most of the reading by a nearby robin singing as the sun went down.

As tends to be the case with ASLE-affiliated events, the conference included outdoor events. The first was a field trip to John Burroughs's "Woodchuck Lodge," located on the land where he was born in Roxbury, New York and where he is now buried. Diane Galusha and Bill Birns from the nonprofit preservation group Woodchuck Lodge, Inc., were kind enough to open the house specially for the conference and to give tours, ably assisted by Jim and Julianne Warren. While conference attendees took turns viewing Woodchuck Lodge, Jan D. Wellik ran an outdoor workshop on environmental writing for children, which was an enormous hit with the seminar students. On Thursday, the fieldtrip destination was east to North/South Lake State Park and the site of the old Catskill Mountain House. When we first arrived, the fog covered the escarpment so thickly that the magnificent view from the CMH site was completely obscured; but over the next thirty minutes, the weather cleared and revealed a glorious

panorama of the Hudson River and the valley hundreds of feet below. Just before we left, a bank of enormous thunderclouds swept in from the northwest, creating a vista worthy of one of the Hudson River School's artists.

The closing keynote address was delivered by John Elder, just retired after 37 remarkable years teaching literature and environmental studies at Middlebury College. John's presentation tied together many of the ideas raised by the presenters during the week, touching on themes such as the role of the environmental movement in an era of dramatic climate change, the trend towards local and organic agriculture, and the role of the individual human spirit in modern environmentalism. His talk was by turns learned, wise, and funny and was a fitting climax to a wonderful week of learning and fellowship.

More information and photos from the conference will be posted throughout the next few months on the [conference website](#). You can also access the essay collection that came out of the 2006 conference [here](#).



Vine, Highland Nature Sanctuary, Highland County, OH. Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.

Sterling College Hosts Third Annual Rural Heritage Institute

by Laura Lea Berry, Sterling College

What do a hand drill, a canoe paddle, a wheelbarrow, beer cans, and fireworks have in common? Whether building planters by hand, contributing to a community garden, sharing an experience with peers, or facing the challenges of community living, these objects each represent a personal connection to place that can become the roots of a larger conversation about community. On the final morning of the Third Annual Rural Heritage Institute at Sterling College in Craftsbury Common, VT, Ariana McBride of the Orton Family Foundation led a session in which participants were given just one minute to describe how their object represents their community. She then explained how the Foundation uses stories and local knowledge as an essential part of the planning and zoning process. Ariana's presentation was one in a series at the institute that asked participants to look at the way we can incorporate local thinking into a larger framework so that we can better shape local and regional planning decisions and our future relationship with the world in which we live.

More than forty participants - some from just down the road in Craftsbury and some from as far away as the Netherlands - made their way to Sterling College the weekend of June 18-20 for *Is Local Enough?: The Promises and Limits of Local Action*, Sterling's second ASLE-sponsored symposium. This year's Institute followed up on past topics including *The Place of Work in Rural Communities* in 2008 and *Food, Farms and Community* in 2009. Over the three days of the Institute participants engaged in topics such as Farmers, Policy, and Identity; The Discovery of Place; New Technologies for Mapping Culture and Heritage; Philosophies and Politics of the Local and Global; Writing and Telling Stories about Place; Local Fiber, Dyeing and Clothing; Nature and Culture in the Northern Forest; and Secession as a Path to Sustainability.

On Friday evening, Brian Donahue, Director of Environmental Studies at Brandeis University; Mateo Kehler of Jasper Hill Creamery; Amy Trubek from the University of Vermont Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences; and John Carroll, Professor of Natural Resources at the University of New Hampshire, led the keynote presentation and discussed their "Vision for Healthy Food Culture and Sustainable Farming in New England." During the question and answer section of the presentation the panel was asked outright whether local is enough; Brian and Mateo answered with a resounding 'no'. Mateo in particular pointed out that if his Jasper Hill Creamery cheese were not for sale in Los Angeles, then it would not be for sale at local stores and farmers' markets. The problem, according to Mateo, is that selling a few pounds of cheese in a morning barely covers the cost of paying someone to be at a farmer's market.



Maiden Hair Fern, Fall Creek, OR.
Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.

Saturday night included a showing of *Under the Cloak of Darkness: Vermont's Mexican Farm Workers*, a film by Bjorn Jackson, and a discussion about the film led by Chris Urban, one of the leading participants in the documentary project. The film pointed out that as much as Vermont would like to see itself as a small agricultural community, we increasingly depend upon a largely unseen labor force from beyond our borders.

The conference ended with an interactive session led by recent Sterling graduate and adjunct faculty member Jody Stoddard about "Local Fiber, Dyeing and Clothing." Jody's hands-on session allowed participants to feel freshly shorn wool full of lanolin and burrs, to see the various stages of washing, and to extract dye from lichen. After the presentation participants had the opportunity to card wool and try drop-spindle spinning. Jody's senior project, the manufacture of a traditional Highland dress, or arasaid, was on display and included wools dyed with lichens and walnut husks.

The question remains, "Is Local Enough?" The conclusion that many participants came to is no, local is not enough, but it is an essential piece of a larger solution. What we came to understand is the need for a network of locally minded communities that communicate and cooperate; we need to turn our eyes outward and look forward to a future where local ideas and thinking are part of a larger global community and economy.

The Graduate Student Page

We need YOU to help with two New Graduate Student Features in ASLE News!

We will soon begin a new feature, the Grad Student Advice Column, in future issues of *ASLE News*. The Advice Column (think of it as a sort of "Dear Abby" for Grad Students interested in all things ASLE) will become a regular semi-annual feature, and we need your questions, suggestions, thoughts, and ideas to provide fodder! Send your ideas (however seemingly small or large) - including whether YOU would like to write a future column - to *ASLE News* editor Catherine Meeks (catherine-meeks@utc.edu).

In addition, we are planning a regular Graduate Program Spotlight, and need your help! College and University programs related to literature and the environment, like the field itself, are emerging and shifting all the time. Help us keep up and share with the ASLE community what is going on where you are. Do you love your program? Do you want to showcase the great things people are doing there? Is there a particular program you would like to see profiled? If you answered "yes!" to any of those questions, please e-mail catherine-meeks@utc.edu for more information.

Grad Student Blog Launched

We are launching a new forum for graduate student exchanges with an ASLE Graduate Student Blog. This is a place for graduate students and those interested in graduate education in the field of literature and environment to engage in lively discussion and foster community. The address is <http://aslegrad.wordpress.com/>, and we encourage your participation; together we can make this a dynamic forum to discuss topics such as professional development, resume-building, syllabi, pedagogy, conferencing, and whatever is on the minds of ASLE graduate students and the faculty who teach them!



*Clearing, Glen Helen, Yellow Springs, OH.
Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.*

A Way With Words: Writing and Meditation Workshop on Cortes Island, BC

by Steven Marx, Cal Poly University, San Luis Obispo, CA

At the 2009 ASLE Conference in Victoria, B.C. the plenary speaker at the final banquet, Ruth Ozeki, suggested that members of the Association make room for the practice of contemplative meditation in their activities of meeting, writing and teaching. Ozeki is the author of two influential novels, *My Year of Meats* (1998) and *All Over Creation* (2003), which dramatize issues of industrial agriculture, animal welfare, genetically engineered crops, and malnutrition that have taken center stage in recent discussions about sustainability and the food system.

Lately, in essays and poems and in her role as editor of Everydayzen.org, the website of her

mentor Norman Fischer, Ozeki has been promoting the practice of Zen meditation. From June 5-9, 2010, Ozeki and her colleague Kate McCandless, a poet and ordained Zen priest, conducted a workshop on writing and meditation at the Hollyhock Learning Center that provided compelling support for the value of adding contemplative practice to the mix of analytic, creative, scientific, political and recreational activities associated with Literature and the Environment.

The setting was appropriate. Hollyhock is located in a spectacular wilderness on the coast of remote Cortes Island in the Strait of Georgia, within view of peaks and glaciers on Vancouver Island and the mainland Coast Range. The island's sparse population includes indigenous peoples, loggers and fishermen, hippies, artists, and environmental activists, including Ozeki and her husband. The site was originally developed during the 1970's as Cold Mountain Institute by Richard Weaver and served as a gathering place for Gary Snyder, Robert Bly, Allen Ginsberg, and r.d. laing, among others. The facility was sold to a consortium of artists and activists in the 1980's and since then has developed as a model of local organic food production and home-built sustainable architecture offering hundreds of educational and outdoor recreational programs to the public.

The five-day workshop featured guided meditations directing attention to posture and breathing, to the impressions on the five senses, to memories of childhood, to the four elements shared by the body and the natural world, to the consciousness of emotions and to empathy with others. Emphasizing the complementary aspects of sitting and writing, each of the meditation exercises was coupled with prompts and time for composing, as well as for presenting and listening to others' work. The many opportunities for exploration--kayaking, a boat trip to a world heritage bird sanctuary, hiking the inland trails--were forsaken in favor of the contemplative practices, which were, however, heightened by the surrounding presence of forest, sea and sky and to which connection was intensified by silence and concentration.

The workshop reinforced the importance of frequently ignored components of the ecoliterary tradition: the pastoral of solitude and the pastoral of contemplation celebrated in Chinese and Japanese nature writing as well as by European and American authors like Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Emerson, and Thoreau. It led participants to the place in Andrew Marvell's *Garden* where

the mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness:
...
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.



Marmot, Mt. Rainier, WA.
Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.

Member News

Dr. Stacy Alaimo, Co-Chair of the University of Texas at Arlington's Sustainability Committee, was promoted to Full Professor this year and was inducted into the Academy of Distinguished Teachers.

The Merle Curti Award from the Organization of American Historians for the best book in American intellectual history was awarded to **Laura Dassow Walls** in April 2010 for *Passage to Cosmos: Alexander von Humboldt and the Shaping of America*. The book, published in 2009 by the University of Chicago Press, has much to say about environmental ideas; as Walls explains, "Humboldt's *Cosmos* was very much about the earth, not just the heavens!" Walls, who holds the John H. Bennett, Jr., Chair of Southern Letters in the English Department at the University of South Carolina, was also awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for 2010-2011 for her current project, *Writing the Cosmos: The Life of Henry D. Thoreau*.



*Sea Anemone, Pacific Coast Trail, Vancouver Island, BC.
Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.*

ASLE-Japan is pleased to announce that a list of publications by many of its members on environmental literature has been made and uploaded on the ASLE-J site at <http://www.asle-japan.org/pdf/aslej-bibliography.pdf>. (Note: The font size may appear very small but can be enlarged by pressing the "plus" key on the bar above the document.) Publications are listed in both Japanese and English; the English publications appear in the latter half of the list. As this is the first attempt to make such a list, it is far from being a complete representation of the publications of ASLE-J members. The organization will try to update it about twice a year, and hopes it will be of interest and help to environmental literature scholars worldwide.

ASLE News Notes

Member News

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

Contact Information

ASLE
Amy McIntyre, Managing Director
E-mail: info@asle.org
Website: <http://www.asle.org>
Phone & Fax: 603-357-7411