



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



# ASLE News

Winter 2015

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

NOTE: If the full text and/or photos for this newsletter do not display properly, click on the link at the top for web viewing

## Notes from Underground:

**The Depths of Environmental  
Arts, Culture and Justice**

ASLE Eleventh Biennial Conference  
June 23-27, 2015 ♦ University of Idaho

For full information visit the [Conference Website](#)

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### ASLE Welcomes Newly Elected Vice President and Executive Council Members

By Mark C. Long, ASLE Immediate Past President

We are pleased to announce the winners of our recent officer elections. **Sarah Jaquette Ray** (Humboldt State University) will serve as the 2015-16 Vice President. Sarah's many contributions to ASLE include serving as an ASLE Graduate Student Liaison from 2009-2011 and as host of the 2012 ASLE off-year symposium "Environment, Culture and Place in a Rapidly Changing North" at the University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau, Alaska. In addition, Sarah has for the past two years served on the ASLE Executive Council (EC).



Sarah Jaquette Ray

Sarah will be joined by two newly elected EC members-at-large who will serve three-year terms, **Elizabeth Dodd** (Kansas State University) and **Stephen Rust** (University of Oregon, Oregon State University). We welcome **Heather Houser** (University of Texas, Austin) to the EC as well. Heather has been appointed to a one-year term to complete the EC

## Quick Links

[ASLE Conference Website](#)  
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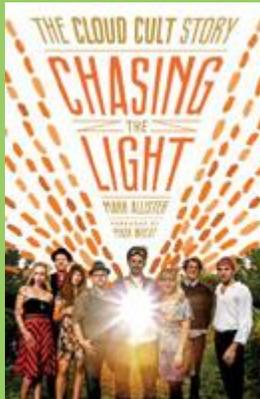
[Affiliated Organizations](#)



## 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](#).

**Allister, Mark.** [Chasing the Light: The Cloud Cult Story](#). University of Minnesota Press, 2014.



**Graham, Vicki.** [The Hummingbird's Tongue](#) (Poems). Red Wing, MN: Red Dragonfly Press, 2014.

responsibilities of our new Vice President, Sarah Jaquette Ray. We are fortunate to have the experience, intelligence, and leadership of Sarah, Elizabeth, Steven, and Heather on the ASLE governing team. We are also grateful for the talented candidates who ran for office but were not elected this time around, Heather Sullivan, Nicole Seymour, and Laura Gray-Street.



Elizabeth Dodd



Stephen Rust



Heather Houser

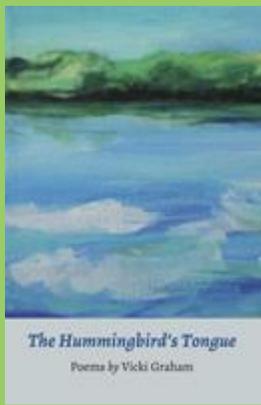
We extend special thanks to the ASLE officers whose terms officially ended in 2014. **Paul Outka** deftly and thoughtfully guided us for three years as Vice President, President, and Immediate Past President and (in collaboration with site host and current EC member Byron Caminero-Santangelo) was responsible for organizing our successful tenth biennial conference at the University of Kansas. In addition to Paul, **Christoph Irsmscher** (our 2011 ASLE Conference host) and **Stephanie LeMenager** complete their three year terms on the Executive Committee this year and ASLE owes both of them our gratitude for their service.

We are privileged to have such thoughtful and engaged people guiding our association and we look forward to the contributions of our newly elected officers.

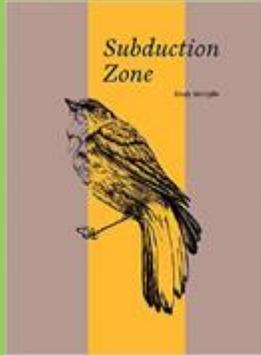
## ASLE.org and You

By Mark C. Long, ASLE Immediate Past President

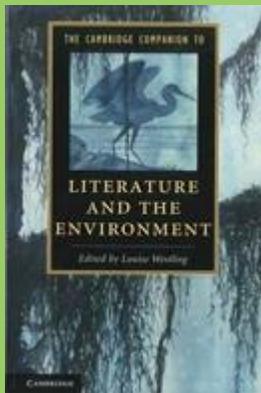
The new ASLE web site was designed to create a dynamic source for news about the intellectual work of our members as well as a robust archive of materials for students, teachers and research scholars, journalists, and members of the public. We have also envisioned a broader digital strategy to strengthen our community through conversation, sharing resources, and making visible our creative and critical work.



McGiffin, Emily. [\*Subduction Zone\*](#). St. John's, Newfoundland.: Pedlar Press, 2014.



Westling, Louise, ed. [\*The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Environment\*](#). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.



Westling, Louise, ed. [\*The Logos of the Living World\*](#):

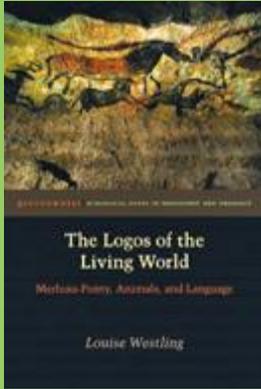
Our hope is that every member of ASLE will consider one or more of the following opportunities:

- **Make [ASLE News](#):** We invite you to contribute your news items to [info@asle.org](mailto:info@asle.org). Please put "ASLE News" in the subject line and keep the news item brief. We welcome high-resolution images in jpeg format, or professionally presented video files, to accompany the text.
- **Join the Conversation:** [Members of ASLE](#) have access to the "ASLE Member Community" page. The "Chatter" tab is designed for conversations, information exchange, and collaboration. Members can browse people, groups, or topical threads; begin a thread with a new post; or join one of the active interest groups or create a new group.
- **Engage the Community:** Share your [calls for conference panels and papers](#), or [calls for manuscript contributions](#) using the online forms at the web site.
- **Tell the Story:** Contribute video, audio or text features to 1) the "[Member Perspectives](#)" or "[Member Spotlight](#)" pages; 2) the "[Featured Research and Projects](#)" page; or 3) the "[Course Spotlight](#)" or the "[Sample Curricula](#)" pages; or 4) the "[Students](#)" page. Know an ASLE member who is making exceptional contributions to the environmental humanities community? Nominate them to appear in the Member Spotlight. Queries and contributions may be sent to [info@asle.org](mailto:info@asle.org).
- **Share the Story:** Move the [ASLE news](#) out to other digital platforms by clicking on one of the social media icons at the bottom of our news items, or share what we are doing by linking to our pages from your web site or blog.
- **Build the Research Archives:** Contribute to the ASLE "[Research Library](#)" and the "[Research Organizations](#)" pages. Forward links to digital resources and organizations to [info@asle.org](mailto:info@asle.org).
- **Build Teaching and Program Archives:** Submit a syllabus to our growing collection of "[Sample Syllabi](#)" in PDF or Word format to the Managing Director of ASLE at [info@asle.org](mailto:info@asle.org). Feature your program on the "[Sample Curricula](#)" page

We need your help building our new digital home. Help us represent the critical and creative scope of the environmental humanities. Help us promote environmental writing and the arts. Help us make visible our work with students on emerging projects. Help us reach independent scholars, writers not affiliated with colleges or universities, and other members of the public who might be interested in our work. We will all be the richer for your contributions!

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[Merleau-Ponty, \*Animals, and Language\*](#). Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2013.



## New MLA Forum

The Executive Council of the Modern Language Association (MLA) has approved the creation of a new forum for Ecocriticism and the Environmental Humanities. The first official sessions of the forum will take place at the 2016 MLA convention in Austin, Texas.

The forum proposal was drafted and submitted by Sharon O'Dair (University of Alabama) who is a member of the Founding Executive Committee that includes professor Stacy Alaimo (University of Texas at Arlington), professor Stephanie LeMenager (University of Oregon) and professor Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (George Washington University). They held a kickoff happy hour at the convention last month in Vancouver; stay tuned for future developments!

## A New Home for ASLE News

By Mark C. Long, ASLE Immediate Past President

Some of you will remember when *The American Nature Writing Newsletter* was adopted as the official newsletter of ASLE in the early 1990s and when, in the spring of 1996, you received our biannual publication *ASLE News*. For nearly two decades *ASLE News* tracked the activities of our members and the evolution of our field. During these many years a series of talented and dedicated editors shared the story of ASLE and moved the newsletter from a biannual to a quarterly publication, from black and white to color, and from a print to a digital format.

As we planned and developed our new web site it became increasingly clear that ASLE can more effectively and efficiently chronicle our activities at [asle.org](http://asle.org). And so this 2015 winter issue of *ASLE News* will be the last stand-alone newsletter to arrive in your e-mail inbox. *ASLE News* will now be available at [asle.org](http://asle.org). The homepage of our web site features the most current news and is designed for anyone with a desktop computer, tablet, or mobile phone. Site visitors have access to the news by navigating to the "[ASLE News](#)" page from the "Stay Informed" menu, or by clicking on "Read All News" on the homepage. Members will receive periodic e-mail announcements from ASLE that will function as a gateway to *ASLE News* on the website; links to the latest stories will be included in each mailing. In addition, visitors to the web site have access to the [ASLE News Archive](#) that contains newsletters from 1989 to the present.



Just can't wait for breaking news? The social media icons in the navigation bar at the top of the home page offers anyone the option to subscribe to the [ASLE Facebook page](#) or the [ASLE US Twitter feed](#). The new digital format of *ASLE News* makes it easier to share member projects and expertise with other academic communities, journalists, and members of the public as well. At the bottom of every News story, a reader has the option of moving the news out to other digital platforms simply by clicking on one of the social media icons.

Our new web site reflects our commitment to developing creative ways to represent the critical and creative scope of the environmental humanities, and to communicate more effectively with a wide range of audiences. We hope that you will help us disseminate our work by sharing our ideas, projects and stories with the public. And we invite you to help us envision ways to use the digital tools we now have available at [asle.org](http://asle.org).

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## 2015 ASLE Conference Seminars & Workshops

At our upcoming [2015 Biennial Conference](#) in Idaho, ASLE will hold eight workshops and seminars on important and emerging topics that reflect the diversity of our approaches and our membership. Six pre-conference seminars and workshops will be held on Tuesday, June 23 and two mid-conference workshops offered on Friday, June 26, at the same time as the field trips. The cost is \$15, payable during online registration. Each will be limited to 15 participants. ***Due to limited spaces, you must pre-register for these events!***

Advance registration is open now, and will close April 15 (or when full, whichever is earlier). To check availability and sign up or be added to the waitlist for one of the seminars or workshops, please contact our workshop and seminar coordinator Janet Fiskio, at [jfiskio@oberlin.edu](mailto:jfiskio@oberlin.edu). Leaders will NOT accept any registrations directly. For more detailed pre-registration information, visit the conference web site's [Seminars & Workshops page](#). For seminar and workshop descriptions, please click on the titles of the events below.

### **Tuesday, June 23 (preconference):**

#### **[Aligning the Personal, Political, and Planetary: A Workshop on Memoir](#)**

Leader: Jennifer Browdy, Bard College at Simon's Rock

#### **[Workshop: Teaching Climate Change](#)**

Leader: SueEllen Campbell, Colorado State University

#### **[Seminar: Ecocriticism in East Asia](#)**

Leaders: Simon Estok, Sungkyunkwan University, and Hinmin Liu, Washington State University

#### **[Seminar: Ecocriticism and Narrative Ethics](#)**

Leaders: Greg Garrard, University of British Columbia, and Eric Morel, University of Washington

#### **[Seminar: Deep Times: Imagining Geomaterial Horizons](#)**

Leaders: Lowell Duckert, West Virginia University, and Ted Toadvine, University of Oregon

#### **[Seminar: Bioregionalism: Theory, Practice, Pedagogy](#)**

Leaders: Paul Lindholdt, Eastern Washington University, and Tom Lynch, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

### **Friday, June 26 (during field trips slot)**

#### **[Staying Alive: A Workshop for Academic Citizens and Elders](#)**

Leaders: Mark Long, Keene State College, and John Tallmadge, Educational and Literary Consultant

#### **[The Depths of Latina/o Environmentalisms: A Pedagogy Workshop](#)**

Leaders: Sarah Ray, Humboldt State University, Sarah Wald, University of Oregon, and Priscilla Ybarra, University of North Texas

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## ASLE Announces 2015 Grants

By Amy McIntyre, ASLE Managing Director

ASLE is now accepting applications for four different grant programs in 2015:

### Community Grants

The Community Grants Committee is soliciting proposals from ASLE members for projects that will help build connections between the environmental humanities and place-based nonprofit environmental organizations working outside the academy. Projects will foreground the intersection between local efforts to address issues of environmental degradation and injustice and the role of representation and rhetoric. Funds may be used to cover the costs of such items as public presentations or exhibitions (permanent or temporary), informational materials, literary and artistic productions, or interactive digital projects.

Accepted proposals will be funded up to a maximum of \$5,000.00. Materials (and any questions) should be submitted electronically to Amy McIntyre by July 1, 2015 at [info@asle.org](mailto:info@asle.org). Read the criteria for submission and required information at our [Community Grants page](#).

### Translation Grants

In order to support work in ecocriticism from international scholars and to expand exchanges across cultures and continents, the ASLE Committee for Translations seeks proposals for books to be translated into English. This is the second year that such grants have been offered. Proposed books should be ecocriticism or fiction/non-fiction with a clear relationship to environmental issues, and must already have been published in a language other than English. For accepted projects, we provide funding to support the translation of these books. We also encourage authors to seek English-language publishers, particularly in the U.S., Canada, or Great Britain.

Up to three projects will be funded for up to \$1,000 each. Materials (and any questions) should be submitted electronically to Heather Sullivan, by July 1, 2015: [heather.sullivan@trinity.edu](mailto:heather.sullivan@trinity.edu). Read the criteria for submission and required information at our [Translation Grants page](#).



*Sheep in Winter. Photo by Mark Long.*

### **Media, Book, and Article Subvention Grants**

The ASLE Subvention Committee is soliciting proposals for innovative projects in ecocriticism and the environmental humanities. We are especially interested in projects of a scholarly and/or creative nature that engage with new media, aim at fostering intercultural or interdisciplinary exchange, or seek to bring insights from the environmental humanities to a non-academic public. Projects such as art installations, documentary film projects, digital humanities web projects as well as book or article publication are eligible, and funds may be used to cover costs such as publication and dissemination, color reproductions, translation, or web/internet expenses.

Accepted proposals will be funded up to a maximum of \$2,000 each. Materials (and any questions) should be submitted electronically to Chia-ju Chang at [CChang@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:CChang@brooklyn.cuny.edu) by July 1, 2015. Read the criteria for submission and required information at our [Subvention Grants page](#).

### **International Membership Grants**

The ASLE International Membership Grants Initiative provides up to fifty ASLE-US membership grants per two-year cycle to scholars outside the US and Canada. The grants are designed to help a more diverse, international community gain access to educational and scholarly opportunities in our field, as well as to advance educational and professional opportunities beyond the US and Canada.

Membership benefits include contact with other scholars through our membership database, access to the scholarly and creative writing in the field through a subscription to our journal *ISLE*, and access to the resources and information about the field and our organization at our website and in *ASLE News*, among others. Applications will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until 50 two-year memberships have been granted. The grants cycle for 2015-16 commenced in January 2015.

Materials (and any questions) should be submitted electronically to George Handley at [george\\_handley@byu.edu](mailto:george_handley@byu.edu). Read the criteria for eligibility and application information at our [International Membership Grants page](#).

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## **ASLE Announces New Honorary Members**

By Amy McIntyre, ASLE Managing Director

ASLE extended honorary memberships to three amazing women in 2014. Recipients were chosen for this honor because of their contributions to ASLE and/or literature and environmental studies. They have significantly enriched those familiar with their work, and their exemplary careers as artists, advocates, and environmental role models has inspired us all. The new inductees will be honored at the opening reception of our 2015 biennial conference at the University of Idaho in Moscow, ID.

### **Kathleen Dean Moore**

Kathleen Dean Moore, Ph.D., is a philosopher, environmental advocate, and award-winning essayist, best known for her books about our cultural and spiritual relation to the natural world--among them, *Riverwalking*, *Holdfast*, *Pine Island Paradox*, and *Wild Comfort*. She is co-editor of books about Rachel Carson, Mount St.

Helens, and the Apache philosopher Viola Cordova. Her most recent book is *Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril*, which gathers testimony from the world's moral leaders about our obligations to the future. Distinguished Professor of Philosophy Emerita at Oregon State University, she speaks across the country about the moral urgency of stopping the carbon catastrophe. Her next book is *Why It's Wrong to Wreck the World: A Book of Love and Anger*. Moore is co-founder and Senior Fellow of the Spring Creek Project, and a member of the board of *Orion* magazine. She lives in Corvallis, Oregon, and writes from a cabin on the shore of an Alaskan island, where two creeks and a bear trail meet a tidal cove.



Kathleen Dean Moore

### Janisse Ray

Writer, naturalist, and activist Janisse Ray is author of five books of literary nonfiction and a collection of nature poetry. Her most recent book,

*The Seed Underground: A Growing Revolution to Save Food*, looks at what's happening to seeds, which is to say the future of food. The book has won the Arlene Eisenberg Award for Writing that Makes a Difference, the American Horticultural Society Book Award, the Nautilus Gold Book Award, the Garden Writers Association Gold Award, and the Green Prize for Sustainable Literature Award.



Janisse Ray

In 2014 Ray was awarded an honorary doctorate from LaGrange College in LaGrange, Ga., following one from Unity College in Maine in 2007. She holds an MFA from the University of Montana, where she was the William Kittredge Distinguished Visiting Writer in 2014. She is a 2015 inductee into the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame.

Her first book, *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, a memoir about growing up on a junkyard in the ruined longleaf pine ecosystem of the Southeast, was published by Milkweed Editions in 1999. The book won the Southeastern Booksellers Award for Nonfiction 1999, the American Book Award 2000, the Southern Environmental Law Center 2000 Award for Outstanding Writing,

and the Southern Book Critics Circle Award 2000. It was a *New York Times* Notable Book and was chosen as the Book All Georgians Should Read. *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* is being re-issued in 2015. Besides a plea to protect and restore the glorious pine flatwoods, the book is a hard look at family, mental illness, poverty, and religion. Essayist Wendell Berry called the book "well done and deeply moving." Anne Raver of *The New York Times* said, "The forests of the South find their Rachel Carson."

Other books by Ray include *Wild Card Quilt: Taking a Chance on Home* (2003), focusing on rural community, *Pinhook: Finding Wholeness in a Fragmented Land* (2005), the story of a 750,000-acre wildland between south Georgia and north Florida, *A House of Branches* (2010), her first book of poetry which won a Southern Booksellers Award for Poetry 2011, and *Drifting Into Darien: A Personal and Natural History of the Altamaha River* (2011), a lovesong to the river of her childhood and a call to action to protect it.

The author is visiting professor and writer-in-residence at universities and colleges across the county. At home in southern Georgia, Ray attempts to live a simple, sustainable life on Red Earth Farm with her husband and daughter. Ray is an organic gardener, tender of farm animals, slow-food cook, and seed-saver. She lectures nationally on nature, community, agriculture, seeds, wildness, sustainability, and the politics of wholeness.

### **Robin Wall Kimmerer**

Robin Wall Kimmerer is a mother, scientist, writer and Distinguished Teaching Professor of Environmental Biology at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse, New York, and the founding Director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment whose mission is to create programs which draw on the wisdom of both indigenous and scientific knowledge for our shared goals of sustainability. Her research interests include the role of traditional ecological knowledge in ecological restoration and building resilience for climate change. In collaboration with tribal partners, she and her students have an active research program in the ecology and restoration of plants of cultural significance to Native people. She is active in efforts to broaden access to environmental science training for Native students, and to introduce the benefits of traditional ecological knowledge to the scientific community, in a way that respects and protects indigenous knowledge.

Kimmerer is an enrolled member of the Citizen Band Potawatomi. Her writings include *Gathering Moss*, which incorporates both traditional indigenous knowledge and scientific perspectives and was awarded the prestigious John Burroughs Medal for Nature Writing in 2005. She has served as writer in residence at Andrews Experimental Forest, Blue Mountain Center, the Sitka Center, and others. Her second book, *Braiding Sweetgrass: renewing reciprocity with the good green earth*, focuses on the subject of living in reciprocity with land. Her literary essays appear in *Whole Terrain*, *Adirondack Life*, *Orion*, and several anthologies. She is the co-founder and past president of the Traditional Ecological Knowledge section of the Ecological Society of America.



Robin Wall Kimmerer

## A New ASLE Mission and Strategic Plan

By Mark C. Long, ASLE Immediate Past President

Since the original ASLE Strategic Plan was approved in 2009, our association has strengthened its organizational structure, enhanced the disciplinary and demographic diversity of our membership, and reaffirmed the core values of equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Following a review of the 2009 Plan at the officers retreat this past spring, and discussions over the summer and fall, the Executive Council of ASLE has approved the 2014 Strategic Plan.

The 2014 Plan includes a new mission statement for our association:

*The mission of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) is to inspire and promote the work of scholars, educators, students, and writers in the environmental humanities and arts.*

In addition, we defined some of the ways we seek to further our mission:

- By supporting teaching and learning in the fields of environmental literature, ecocriticism, environmental studies, literature, and science, and broadly in the humanities and the arts
- By fostering member collaboration and public dialogue through conferences, networks, publications, and other forums
- By generating collaborative research in the humanities, arts, social sciences, and sciences
- By promoting equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility on behalf of the membership
- By facilitating the public dissemination of member projects and expertise
- By maintaining and championing ecologically sustainable and socially just practices

The Strategic Plan includes updates to reflect changes in the membership and organization, including our pilot grants, projects and programs, and finances. There is also a revised list of goals and tasks that will need to be accomplished to realize the goals of our association. The Plan is available on the [Bylaws and Policies Page](#) of our newly redesigned [web site](#).

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## ASLE Joins AWP as Writers' Conferences and Centers Member

By Amy McIntyre, ASLE Managing Director

In November, ASLE became a member of the [Association of Writers and Writing Programs](#) (AWP) through its Writers' Conferences & Centers program. AWP is a larger organization that provides community, opportunities, ideas, news, and advocacy for writers and teachers of writing. We are excited about this opportunity to affiliate with them, and hope to increase awareness of our organization within AWP, but more importantly we aspire to create more ways for ASLE to connect with and support creative writers.

Our WC&C Membership includes benefits such as a [listing of our conference](#) in the online Directory of Conferences & Centers, a listing in the "Conferences, Colonies, & Centers" issue of the January *Writer's Chronicle*, and participation in the WC&C

Scholarship Program, which provides scholarships for writers to attend WC&C member programs. This program is accepting applications now and we encourage members to apply; see below for more details.



*Field edge and Snow. Photo by Ellinore Todd Long.*

### **WC&C Scholarship Competition**

AWP offers three annual scholarships of \$500 each to emerging writers who wish to attend a writers' conference, center, retreat, festival, or residency. They encourage writers of fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction to enter. The scholarships are applied to fees for winners who attend one of the member programs in AWP's Directory of Conferences & Centers. Winners and six finalists also receive a one-year individual membership in AWP. This contest aims to spread the word about the incredible work being done at local writing centers, conferences, festivals, retreats, and residencies. Deadline is March 30, 2015. Read more and submit at the [AWP website](#).

If you have any questions or other suggestions related to this new affiliation, please let us know by contacting ASLE Managing Director Amy McIntyre at [info@asle.org](mailto:info@asle.org).

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### **Be a Part of ASLE's First Progressive Evening in Idaho!**

By Catherine Meeks, ASLE News Editor

As you may have read in ASLE President Cate Sandilands's "Conference Notes" in the last issue of ASLE News, a new, exciting event is on the schedule for this summer's conference: a "Progressive Evening" in downtown Moscow, Idaho, celebrating the creative arts with a night of short films, open mic readings, art installations, music, and more. The event--a longstanding tradition in the town of Moscow--will be held Thursday, June 25, from 7:30 - 10 pm at four separate downtown venues. We will feature live music at the [One World Café](#) coffee shop, open mic readings at [BookPeople of Moscow](#), a local independent bookstore, screenings of short, environmentally-themed films at the historic [Kenworthy](#)

independent cinema, and visual art along with additional short readings at the University of Idaho's [Prichard Gallery](#). All venues are within easy walking distance of one another, and, indeed, what makes the event "progressive" by design is that attendees walk and talk, support local businesses, and get to know the thriving Moscow community by stopping in to the various venues throughout the course of the evening. All of the evening's events are free and open to the public, and there will be a variety of snacks and beverages for purchase at several event locations.

Here's where YOU come in! Participation in the Progressive Evening is open to all ASLE conference attendees and will also feature local Palouse-region artists, musicians, and writers. We are seeking members who want to share their creative talents--at the open mic readings, as part of our live music line-up, and by displaying their visual art--at this one-of-a-kind event. If you are interested in being a part of the evening, or would like to suggest one of your favorite ASLE artists for us to contact, please send an e-mail to [Catherine.meeks@gmail.com](mailto:Catherine.meeks@gmail.com) with the subject line "ASLE Progressive Evening." Participation in the Progressive Evening does NOT preclude you from participation in other events or panels on the conference program.

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## **ASLE at PAMLA 2014**

By Kevin Hutchings, University of Northern British Columbia

In 2014 ASLE enjoyed a strong presence at the annual meeting of the [Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association](#) (PAMLA). Held from October 31st to November 2nd at the Riverside Convention Centre in the heart of California's "Inland Empire," PAMLA's 112th conference brought together over 700 participants, and panels on ecocriticism and related environmental topics were more prevalent than ever. In my role as ASLE's liaison to PAMLA, I was the "presiding officer" for four ASLE co-sponsored ecocriticism panels featuring a total of fifteen speakers--"a conference within a conference," as PAMLA's director Craig Svonkin described our sessions.

Our speakers were a wonderfully diverse group ranging from MA and PhD candidates to postdocs, newly minted professors, senior academics, and an independent scholar; and the papers were highly engaging, generating lively discussion and debate during the Q&A periods. Focusing on critical theory, speakers on our first panel investigated questions of posthuman agency, anthropogenic toxicity, queer ecology, and Romantic vitalism. The second panel had a distinctively international flavor, featuring papers on Parisian urban ecology, Chinese eco-poetry, and economic problems associated with global capitalism; while the third and fourth panels explored a rich cornucopia of topics including medieval Greek romance, "blue" or oceanic studies, the social construction of pollution, the racialization of space, and the modern-day advent of the "green" festival.

In addition to our ASLE co-sponsored ecocriticism panels, the conference featured a number of non-ASLE sessions dealing with topics of interest to ecocritics, including sessions on "Geocritical Approaches to 20th and 21st Century Literatures," "Landscape, Environment, and the Commons in Italian Culture and Literature," "Oceanic Literatures and Cultures," "Food Studies," and "Travel and Literature." Without a doubt, the study of literature and the environment is alive and thriving on the west coast.



*Rime Ice Near Summit of Mt Moosilauke, NH. Photo by Mark Long.*

As usual, PAMLA delegates enjoyed a lively after-hours social scene, including a "Halloween Reception, Cash Bar, and Candy Feast" on Friday evening and a celebration of Dia de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead) on Saturday evening. This year also marked the first time that ASLE co-sponsored ecocriticism panelists held a social event of our own: panelist Géraldine Fiss and incoming ASLE liaison Ted Geier (UC Davis) organized an ecocritics' supper at a local Thai restaurant, where a dozen of us met to wine, dine, and enjoy each other's company, chatting about our research projects and various other interests. Thanks to Géraldine and Ted, this event may well herald the beginning of a new annual tradition for PAMLA ecocritics.

In the five years I've organized PAMLA Ecocriticism panels, I've been delighted to witness the steady growth of interest in ecocriticism among PAMLA conference delegates. In 2010, I was able to organize just one ecocriticism panel; in 2014, for the first time, I received enough excellent paper proposals to organize four such panels, and I hope the momentum will continue. I'm proud to be passing the ASLE torch to Ted Geier, who was instrumental in making our 2014 meeting such a success. In his role as ASLE's new liaison to PAMLA, Ted will ensure that ASLE's productive relationship with PAMLA continues in 2015. I'm deeply grateful to Ted for taking on this important work.

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## **Report from MMLA 2014**

By Lisa Ottum, Xavier University

The 56th [Midwest Modern Language Association](#) Annual Conference was held on November 13th-16th in Detroit, Michigan. Following the conference theme--"The Lives of Cities"--the ASLE-sponsored panel featured three papers on the topic "Ecocritical Perspectives on Cities."

Christina Triezenberg of Grand Valley State University delivered an inspiring multimedia presentation on ecocritical pedagogy. In "Environmental Ed in the City: Harnessing the Humanities and Urban Resources to Create Environmentally Engaged Citizens in a Rapidly Changing World," Triezenberg described how she

leveraged the city of Detroit itself to teach honors environmental writing at Western Michigan University. Referring to her experience as a case study, she argued that environmental humanists can, and should, harness "the resources of the urban centers around them"--such as museums and public parks--to engage students in conversations about sustainability, resilience, and "our place in nature."

Robin Murray of Eastern Illinois University spoke on filmic depictions of war and its devastating effects on cities. Murray's talk, "Through an Eco-Lens of Childhood: Roberto Rossellini's *Germany Year Zero*," explored issues of human ecology in the third installment of Rossellini's War Trilogy. As Murray explained, *Germany Year Zero* (1948) illustrates the reciprocal relationship of humans and their environment, depicting the "smashed environment" of post-World War II Berlin. Murray argued that the film is especially concerned with how war damages children by not only shattering their physical surroundings, but also "fracturing childhood landscapes."

Finally, Carrie Duke, a graduate student at Ball State University, spoke on what Rob Nixon terms "slow violence" in the American Southwest. Reading Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes*, Duke argued that while both novels depict the process of "slow violence," they also celebrate urban gardens as sites that resist socio-environmental degradation. Her talk was titled, "Re-imagining the Unimagined through the Space of the Garden: A Study of Slow Violence in *Tropic of Orange* and *Gardens in the Dunes*." Together, these papers engendered a vibrant post-session discussion of urban ecology and of cities as potential sites of environmental renewal.

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## ASLE at SAMLA 2014

By Rebecca Godwin, Barton College

ASLE sponsored three sessions at the 86th Annual Conference of the [South Atlantic Modern Language Association](#) (SAMLA) in Atlanta, November 7-9, 2014, where the theme this year was Sustainability and the Humanities. Chaired by ASLE-SAMLA liaison Rebecca Godwin of Barton College, all sessions focused on Wendell Berry, a plenary speaker at the meeting.

The first panel included three papers highlighting humans' relationship with the natural world. Younghyun Lee traveled from South Korea to present a paper titled "Ecological Agriculture and Agribusiness in *Jayber Crow*." Richard McCann, a biochemist from Mercer University School of Medicine, explained Berry's clarity about the role of food in chronic disease in an intriguing discussion of "Agent versus Cause: The Humanities, Health, and Medicine in the Vision of Wendell Berry." Ethan Mannon from Pennsylvania State University instructed listeners in "Revolution in *The Mad Farmer Poems*," arguing that Berry engages the Georgic tradition as his farmer espouses engagement with environmental problems rather than a bucolic retreat from them.



*New Hampshire Pond Ice. Photo by Ellinore Todd Long*

A second panel of papers delighted listeners with a look at what Berry says about family, education, and social justice. Gregg Heitschmidt, professor at North Carolina's Surry Community College, discussed adults' teaching children how to be human, how to achieve "A Harmony of Living," in Berry's short fiction. Also from Surry Community College, Darin Cozzens presented a cogent explanation of "What We Learn from Wendell Berry about Sustainable Education": we learn that current educational trends and constant assessment suppress achievement and seem out of sync with moral law. Darcy Mullen, from the University at Albany, related Berry's work to the locavore movement and compared Berry's and Betty Friedan's arguments in "*What are People For?*" and "*The Problem That Has No Name: Wendell Berry, Feminism, and Spatial Justice.*" Keely Byars-Nichols, from the University of Mount Olive, inspired the audience with stories of successfully teaching Berry to her mostly conservative students.

The highlight of the ASLE sessions was Chad Wriglesworth's especially well-attended "Conversation with Wendell Berry." Chad traveled from St. Jerome's University in Canada to interview Berry, leading him to talk about memory, language, religion, the failures of industrialization, and the work the humanities must do to help people understand the importance of a sustainable life.

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## Member News

**Ufuk Özdağ** has recently established the Land Ethic Research and Application Center at her home institution, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey, and was appointed the Director of the Center on November 5, 2014. Ufuk had attended the Aldo Leopold Foundation's LEL program back in 2010, and had become a land ethic leader. Under her direction the Center will work internationally to enhance a culture

that puts Leopold's vision of a land ethic at the core of decision making. Ufuk is the author of *Literature and the Land Ethic: Leopoldian Thought in American Nature Writing* (2005) and *Introduction to Environmental Criticism: Nature, Culture, Literature* (2014)-both in Turkish; co-editor of *The Future of Ecocriticism: New Horizons* (2011), and the translator of *A Sand County Almanac* into Turkish (*Bir Kum Yöresi Almanacı*, 2013).



Ufuk Özdağ

## ASLE Emeritus

ASLE member **H. Lewis Ulman** retired from The Ohio State University on June 1, 2014 and immediately set off with his wife, Pat, on a 5,800-mile, 14-week hiking and camping tour of 38 state, provincial, and national parks in 9 states and 5 Canadian provinces in the northeast, New England, and the Canadian Maritimes.

Ulman worked as a full-time instructor at Pennsylvania State University from 1985-1986, then as a faculty member at The Ohio State University from 1986-2014, focusing variously on rhetorical history and theory, digital humanities, and the environmental humanities. He served ASLE for many years as the Online Bibliography Editor.



*Mt. Washington from the Twinway Trail, White Mountain National Forest.  
Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.*

## 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@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:catherine.meeks@gmail.com)) with the dissertation title, degree-granting institution, and committee members.

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