

## **ASLE 2019 | UC Davis | "Paradise on Fire" Workshop Proposal**

### Workshop topic

The public environmental humanities: An incubator

### Workshop leader

Allison Carruth | UCLA

### Description of format and structure

This workshop will explore public engagement and multimedia experimentation as growing areas of teaching, research, and publication within the environmental humanities and its allied fields. The questions that will guide the workshop include:

- (1) How and to what ends are environmental humanities educators and students pursuing research-driven collaborations with artists, scientists, journalists, community organizations, and others? And what examples from our own institutions and communities provide models for and/or highlight the challenges of such work?
- (2) What are some strategies for integrating specific academic methods (e.g., textual criticism, archival research, ethnography, data visualization) and concepts (e.g., multispecies justice, vernacular science, queer ecology, environmental equity) in partnerships and publications that reach both outside one's field and outside academia?
- (3) What are some strategies for fostering dialogue and cooperation among diverse participants when environmental values, assumptions, and histories conflict?
- (4) What are the practical challenges to public, multimedia projects in terms of funding needs; time commitments; and the established ways that universities evaluate research, teaching, and service?

The first 90 minutes of the workshop will tackle these questions with concrete case studies as fodder drawn from the workshop leader's experience: (1) the University of Oregon 2011 Food Justice conference, which drew over 1,000 attendees from the region and included a nonprofit showcase and a curated art exhibit and (2) a 2017-2018 collaboration between UCLA's Lab for Environmental Narrative Strategies (LENS), the UCLA Department of Film and Television, and the national public media company KCET. Led by Allison Carruth and KCET Chief Creative Officer Juan Devis, the LENS-KCET project involved fourteen graduate students and four faculty members working with producers and editors on a series of regional environmental stories. Each series' team researched, developed, and published on the KCET web platform short documentary films and multimedia articles involving original

reporting, ethnography, archival research, translation, photography, and data visualization; and several stories were cross-published on other media sites (Wired, City Lab, Salon, and Civil Eats among them).

At the 90 minute mark, we'll then organize into three teams to envision, plan, and anticipate the challenges and potential impacts of a *speculative public environmental humanities project*. Each team will develop their vision for such a project (or take off from a project drawn from one of the team's members experience). Participants will then flesh out a roadmap for the project's design and implementation that attends to the workshop's guiding question. We'll conclude with 10-minute informal presentations by each team and an overall workshop debrief.

#### Qualifications of workshop leader

An Associate Professor at UCLA, Allison Carruth holds the Waldo W. Neikirk Term Chair in undergraduate education innovation and is the LENS faculty director. At UCLA, she is also the faculty chair of the Food Studies minor and an ad hoc member of a new Experimental Humanities Task Force. She has served on the ASLE Executive Council and the MLA Science and Literature Forum Executive Committee.