

Graduate Program
on the Environment



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“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature -- the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.” - Rachel Carson, in “Silent Spring”

Inside This Issue :

Letter from the Director	1
2013 Hooding Ceremony	1
Farming & Organic Food Alumni	2
CONFOR West Conference	3
Evergreen Sustainability Fellowship Recipients	5
Admitted Students Day	7
Are you there Rachel Carson? It's me, MESA	8

MESsages

Letter from the Director

As we near the end of academic year 2012-2013, I am able to report that the students, staff and faculty of the Graduate Program on the Environment are wrapping up a banner year of success, tempered by the daily reminders of the significant work we are doing in creating healthy and academically strong responses to environmental change. Daily we read about the impacts of global climate change, changing economic and political conditions at the national level, and local responses to create sustainable communities.



Martha Henderson

addressed in the 23rd annual Rachel Carson Forum. MES members of the Master of Environmental Studies Association organized a stimulating forum on local food systems and sustainability. It was a real pleasure to hear TJ Johnson, soon to be a

These issues were clearly

continued on page 4

The Graduate Program on the Environment Hooding Ceremony is June 14, 2013, 10:30am-12:15pm in Library 4300

We are honored to have the following speakers: core faculty Carri LeRoy, adjunct (and retiring) faculty Craig Partridge, student Andrea Martin, Lieutenant Ryan Wattam of NOAA and Evergreen alumna and Director of Washington Department of Ecology, Maia D. Bellon. Attendance is open to all. Visit www.evergreen.edu/mes/graduation for the full schedule.



Martha Henderson speaks at the 2012 hooding ceremony

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MES Alumni Update

This year's Rachel Carson Forum focused on local, sustainable food in the South Sound region (see page 8). So we decided to check in with two MES alumni who are working "in the field."

Karin Kraft, Iron Horse Farm MES 2004

The Iron Horse Farm started officially in 2010. After working for five years as a Green Purchasing Specialist and the Interagency Sustainability Coordinator for the State and as Director of Sustainable South Sound, Karin came to the conclusion that personal behaviors are the only ones that can be changed. Her reasons for starting a sustainable farm included the need to connect more intimately with the earth, to establish authenticity related to her work, to grow nutritious, organic and reliable food for her family and friends, and to acquire firsthand knowledge of the challenges and opportunities related to agriculture.

Karin decided to focus primarily on Kunekune pigs not only because raising the best pigs for small urban farms is lucrative, but composted pig manure makes outstanding fertilizer for her vegetable garden, fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, and pastures. Karin says she is fortunate to be able to get up every day, feed her animals, and hug and kiss a piglet. She is grateful for the joy they bring to neighbors and friends. Karin's goal is to develop a bio-dynamic or self-sustaining farm within five years.

Karin serves on the board of Harlequin Productions and is developing a portfolio of artwork. She plans to add an education component to the farming and artwork later this year.

www.theironhorsefarm.com



A baby pig at the Iron Horse Farm

Katherine Withey, WA State Dept. of Agriculture Organic Food Program, MES 2008

Katherine Withey completed her undergraduate degree in 1996, studying sustainable agriculture systems, policy and practice. She put her education to work after graduation at a sustainable diverse farm in Loveland, Colorado, where she shepherded a variety of plants and livestock from seed to table. During that time, she most closely worked with the livestock on the farm, including a raw milk dairy herd and a variety of animals for meat, eggs and fiber. Although this work was fulfilling, Katherine followed her heart back to Olympia to earn her Master's Degree with the MES Program in 2006.

For the past decade, she has worked with the Washington State Department of Agriculture Organic Food Program. As a part of her day-to-day duties, she coordinates the certification of organic livestock producers, works with complex regulatory issues and conducts inspections of dairy operations. She has worked to support the organic livestock industry by facilitating partnerships with industry groups and reaching out to producers to assist with locating organic feed, transitioning animals to organic production and maintaining compliance with the USDA National Organic Standards.

Katherine is passionate about organic and sustainable agriculture and enjoys helping organic farmers and processors obtain and maintain their organic certification.

www.agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/

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CONFOR West Conference

**Brittany Gallagher and Dennis Aubrey,
MES 2nd Year Students**

In late April four MES students attended CONFOR West, an annual conference in Western Canada highlighting environmental science, forestry, and collaborative conservation. This year the Evergreen contingent, which included Brittany Gallagher, Andrea Martin, Hannah Faulkner and Dennis Aubrey, was the only group from the United States.

This year the conference was held in Kananaskis, Alberta, in the spectacular Canadian Rockies just southeast of Banff. The four of us chose to drive together rather than fly, both to save money, and to gain a better appreciation for the landscape and culture of the region. The first night we stopped and soaked in Radium Hot Springs, near the entrance to Kootenay National Park. The next morning we drove up into the Kootenay high country, where we saw a large bull moose crossing a river, and over 50 white-tailed and mule deer browsing near the road in meadows newly emerged from the melting snowpack. After crossing a few passes and traversing northward through long valleys, we made our way up and over the continental divide, simultaneously entering Alberta and Banff National Park. It was still early in the day so before heading south to Kananaskis we turned north and drove about 75km up the famed Icefields Parkway, where we snapped pictures of hanging glaciers and frozen lakes amid towering frosted peaks.



MES students on the Continental Divide, simultaneously entering Alberta and Banff National Park

The conference itself was set at the Canadian Rockies and Foothills Biogeoscience Institute, and consisted of two mornings of presentations followed by afternoon activities and then poster sessions and keynote speakers in the evenings. Morning-session presentations were in two formats: 5-minute lightning talks and 15-minute featured presentations. Lightning talks at CONFOR are doubly challenging, as they include self-advancing PowerPoint slides, making practice and timing essential. Some general themes that emerged from the talks given by Canadian students were related to mountain pine bark beetles, tar-sands impacts and mitigation, and involving First Nations peoples in collaborative conservation.



Looking up at the Crowfoot Glacier along the Icefields Parkway

All four of us from Evergreen gave presentations on our thesis work. Both Brittany and Andrea took the challenge and gave well-received lightning talks. Brittany presented on her work with the Sustainability in Prisons Project evaluating the effectiveness of environmental, educational, and sustainability programs in Washington state prisons. Andrea talked about evaluating the effectiveness of youth conservation corps leadership programs. Hannah presented a poster on her work exploring the relationship between sea ducks and aquaculture in Puget Sound. Dennis gave a 15-minute presentation which included an overview of the Sustainability in Prisons Project, and a brief discussion of his research with

[continued on next page](#)

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Letter from the director (cont.)

continued from page 1

MES graduate, present an insightful review of political organizing around a Thurston County wide food council. Along with other local presenters, the Forum engaged community and students to consider meeting a global food industry with local sustainability [Ed note: please see story on page 8 about the Forum.]

This spring will find us with a busy thesis presentation schedule. Due to the hard work of students and faculty thesis readers, a relatively high number of thesis projects are nearing completion. Most impressive is the effort by students to complete primary research data collection and analysis. The topics represent a full range of interests in environmental studies from work on individual species of flora and fauna to understanding the role of volunteerism in maintaining urban orchards. The completed theses will be available online in the Evergreen College Library by next fall.

The Spring Quarter has also brought news of new jobs and appointments for students once they graduate. Thanks to the solid work of students and excellent coaching by Gail Wootan, Assistant Director, students are better prepared for job applications. I am very thankful for the positive collaboration the program has

developed with state and federal agencies, the Sustainability in Prisons Project, and a number of non-profits who have provided internships and further employment for our graduates.

Finally, I would like to thank the hardworking staff and faculty of the program. We are very fortunate to have the excellent faculty knowledge and skills of Dr. Erin Ellis, Dr. Carri LeRoy, Dr. Kevin Francis, Dr. Dina Roberts and Dr. Ted Whitesell. All of these faculty members have engaged with student work and continued with their own research and advocacy work over the year. Jennifer Runyan has completed her first year as our student assistant and will continue to work in the front office with us next year. Jana Fischback, our newsletter editor, has increased our social media following and will continue next year along with Jen. Katie Wolt has been a tremendous resource as the MES/MPA writing tutor, especially during thesis writing. As always, a big debt of gratitude goes to Gail Wootan for her excellent work as the Assistant Director. In addition to all of her regular work, Gail has also provided the administrative leadership for an MES sponsored trip to Cuba this summer.

Thank you for your support of the MES program. I wish you all a wonderful summer!

CONFOR West (cont.)

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incarcerated women investigating Taylor's checkerspot butterflies' use of golden paintbrush. At the end of the conference, Dennis' presentation was voted best 15-minute presentation and mentioned as a close second for most creative presentation overall.

Another unique aspect of CONFOR West is that it is planned and attended solely by graduate students. This tends to give



Frozen Bow Lake surrounded by the standard bill of fare in the Canadian Rockies

it a more casual and festive atmosphere than other scientific conferences. Groups went snowshoeing and hiking in the mountains, and informal discussion groups formed in the common area and dining hall. Overall, the trip was a rewarding and educational experience. Some of the relationships and perspectives we gained will undoubtedly serve us in the future, allowing us to more effectively collaborate with our colleagues across the border.

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Evergreen Sustainability Fellowship

Congratulations to Krystle Keese and Sasha Porter, MES students who were awarded the Evergreen Sustainability Fellowship.

Krystle Keese, 1st Year MES Student

This quarter I was awarded the Evergreen Sustainability Fellowship to plan and coordinate the next Vision 2 Action quarterly sustainability symposium highlighting the Architecture 2030 Challenge, a strategy aiming to dramatically reduce green house gas emissions in the built environment. The Vision2Action sustainability series is a quarterly symposium that facilitates strategic discussions around local sustainability movements or challenges within the economy and environment of Thurston County. It is a program of the Northwest EcoBuilding Guild, supported by the Thurston county public works, and is endorsed by various city and non-profit agencies.

For this symposium, we will explore the proposed Sustainable Thurston Regional Development scenarios as prepared by the Sustainable Thurston Task Force and re-imagine what these goals and targets might look like if carbon neutrality really mattered. Victor Martinez, the director of research and operations of Architecture 2030 Inc., has agreed to attend as our keynote speaker. He will be presenting the Architecture 2030 Challenge as well as the Seattle 2030 District, an adoption of the challenge working to create a groundbreaking high-performance building district in downtown Seattle. A panel of local leaders and Sustainable Thurston Task Force members will follow, presenting the Sustainable Thurston processes and progress as well as the opportunities and challenges of including carbon neutrality as a goal for Thurston County.

Many key regional leaders and visionaries have been invited to attend the symposium including: elected government officials, regional planners, Sustainable Thurston Task Force members and panelists, local developers, builders, architects and engineers, economic development professionals, property owners and managers, and environmentally concerned citizens. Following the presentations, all attendees will participate in interactive cafe-style break out sessions. These working sessions will inspire creative and collaborative problem solving as well as a more dynamic understanding of the complexities of striving for carbon neutrality in Thurston County.

At the outcome of the Vision 2 Action Symposium, we expect to connect the regional leaders and visionaries of Thurston County and encourage the formation of partnerships to continue the discussion around the importance of carbon neutrality. Additionally, we hope the symposium discussions will inspire the Sustainable Thurston Task Force to consider bolder sustainability strategies for the Sustainable Thurston

Regional Development scenarios.

The Evergreen Sustainability Fellowship has provided me the opportunity to explore the exciting sustainability topic of carbon neutrality and connect it to my local community. This Vision 2 Action Symposium is going to be an important event to expand upon the current direction of Sustainable Thurston and discuss bolder and more aggressive sustainability strategies for Thurston County. The symposium is on July 7 from 8:30am to 4:00pm. Visit ecobuilding.org for more information.

Sasha Porter, 1st Year MES Student

There are several disturbed sites on the greater Evergreen State College campus that, for a variety of reasons, are not regenerating into forest naturally. The Evergreen Sustainability Fellowship has given me the opportunity to spend spring and summer terms conducting ecological, historical, and social research on these sites with the goal of determining why expected succession is not occurring, and providing recommendations for the future of the disturbed sites.

The four areas I will be focusing on include a site just north of parking lot C that was used to dump fill from the construction of Sem II, a field behind the water towers off Overhulse Road, the staging site for the college's construction on Driftwood Rd, and a section of the median on Evergreen Parkway. My research will include ecological surveys on vegetation and soil, and a consolidation of information on the past and current use and management of these sites. The Sustainability Committee will use this information to help the college make environmentally and socially sustainable decisions about future use; options could include leaving the areas to regenerate naturally, replanting to encourage carbon sequestration, bioremediation projects, organic farm extension plots, or designation for student and faculty research.

I will be incorporating this work into an independent learning contract on ecological survey techniques and plant identification, and providing a final report with recommendations to the sustainability committee.

TEDxTheEvergreenStateCollege



TEDx

TheEvergreenStateCollege

x = independently organized TED event

TEDxTheEvergreenStateCollege videos from the February 25th event are online! Check them out at blogs.evergreen.edu/tedx.

In Memoriam

Andrew J. Bobick, MES '03, of Olympia, died October 13, 2012. Originally from Pittsburgh, he worked for the U.S. Forest Service at the Payette National Forest in McCall, Idaho, the Rocky Mountain Research Station in Boise, Idaho, and most recently for the Parks and Recreation Department of Olympia, Wash.

Duane "Ranger" Heier, MES student in the '80's, died April 16, 2013 in Seattle. He was a co-owner of Steamboat Island Nursery in Olympia.

Kudos Corner

Traci Sanderson, 1st year MES student, recently had her candidacy paper accepted to the American Fisheries Society annual conference as an oral presentation! Her paper is titled *Culmulating Effects of Shoreline Amoring on Nearshore Systems Affecting Salmon Migration*. Congratulations Traci!

Congratulations to 1st year MES students **Charissa Waters** and **Carola Tejada** and MES admitted student **Bethany Alender** for being selected as one of 20 Summer 2013 WSDOT Wetlands Monitoring interns!

Congratulations to two MES students for being awarded a Spring 2013 Evergreen Foundation Activity Grant for their thesis research!

Andrea Martin: "How Significant and for Whom? Investigating the Influence of Conservation Corps on Environmental Attitudes."

Otis Bush: "Protecting Marine Areas and Tribal Sovereignty: An Assessment of the Relationship between the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary and Washington Treaty Tribes."

Congratulations!

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Admitted Students Day

30th MES cohort invited to campus for first ever
Admitted Student Evening on April 25, 2013

On the first warm and beautiful day of the Spring quarter, 19 newly admitted MES students plus their guests spent an afternoon and evening on campus to get to know their new academic home. The students, who came from as far away as Ohio and Alabama (not to mention Tacoma), were treated to a day full of food, fun, and faculty!

After an optional tour led by MES Ambassadors Bobby Coleman and Otis Bush, the evening started with a welcome speech from director Martha Henderson, in which she went over the uniqueness of the MES curriculum. She was followed by a panel of her fellow core faculty: Erin Ellis, Carri LeRoy, Ted Whitesell, and Kevin Francis. At around 5pm, everyone took a break for dinner, current students joined, and all reconvened for an energizing panel of five different alumni, who emphasized the importance of the program's interdisciplinary lessons in their professional work, as well as the benefits of internships. The alumni who attended were David Giglio, MES 1994, Assistant Director, Technology and Financial Management at Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife; Tricia Bateman, MES 2011, Ballast Water Management Program at Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife; Krystal Kyer, MES 2002, Executive Director at Tahoma Audubon Society; Brian Missildine, MES 2005,

MES Student Assistant Jen Runyan, MES Director Martha Henderson, and MES Core Faculty Member Kevin Francis



MES Director Martha Henderson talking to the group of potential new MES students at the 2013 Admitted Students Day

Natural Resource Scientist and Hatchery Evaluation Team Supervisor at Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Ann Marie Pearce, MES 2001, Education and Outreach Specialist Resource Stewardship for Water Resources - Stormwater Utility at Thurston County.

After the alumni, MES Ambassador Ashley McBee facilitated a group of eight first and second year students who presented their thesis projects or internship experiences in five-minute presentations. The presentations truly represented the breadth of experience that students gain in the program, and impressed all who attended.

A number of new admits decided to stick around Olympia for the weekend to partake in guided tours to the beach and organic farm, as well as participate in that weekend's Arts Walk and Procession of the Species (started by Eli Sterling, MES 1991).

All in all, it was an excellent way to showcase the past, present, and future of the MES program. Welcome to the class of 2015!

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The 23rd Annual Rachel Carson Forum

Is that you Rachel Carson? It's me, MESA

Fiona Edwards, 1st Year MES Student

Sweatbands, gatorade, lunges, vocal warm-ups and protein shakes. This is how I began my Friday the 10th of May. Am I marathon runner? Part of a roller derby team? A hunger-over opera singer? No. I'm a coordinator for the Master of Environmental Studies Association (MESA) and it was my time to shine. It was the 23rd Annual Rachel Carson Forum (RCF). Along with four other dedicated MESA coordinators/team members, I had trained since September for this event. Thousands of hours and emails had been spent crafting RCF. Topics were kicked around. Chalkboards were filled in. Lunchboxes were constantly in rotation (this is an inside joke you probably won't understand unless you were present for one of our many business meetings). Relationships were made and broken. Friendships abounded.

Amidst the turmoil, we found hope in the theme of a sustainable, local food community here in the South Sound. We found four amazing local speakers, each with a mind of steel and a voice of a cherub. Local food groups were called (emailed, who am I kidding, it's 2013) and offered the chance of a Friday to table at our expo. Grants were sought after (none were offered, thanks Capitalism). Budgets were approved. We were set.

I met my team members in a dark office with a beautiful fish tank (Jen Runyan's, it's so soothing, go say hi to her and feel the healing vibes),

and we sang hymns and drank green tea, while printing programs and stretching our quads. Afterwards, we ran over to the Longhouse and began our setup. Everything was falling into place. How could anything go wrong, we all wondered? And then it happened. The mayor needed coffee. I courageously accepted this challenge, fully unaware that there were no open cafes on campus. The sweat flooded my brow in the 84 degree heat as I lost hope. Out of the blinding sunshine Katie Wolt shouted "Try the Greenery!" I did. It worked (thanks, Katie). Mister Mayor and I shared a coffee and then it began.



MESA: Jana, Fiona, Kyli, Jenny & Jen

TJ Johnson, of Sustainable South Sound, gave us hope that local food is possible and necessary to creating a more sustainable world. Sarah Rocker, of the Flaming Eggplant, broke down the economics on local food, farming, and markets in the South Sound. Blue Peetz and Menah of GRuB (Garden Raised Bounty) gave us an insight into the need for social inclusion in a local community and the importance of food banks to

make sure "people have food today." Menah explained GRuB school and their survival and revolutionary projects (Mom and Dad, why didn't I get to go to GRuB school?). Olympia Mayor Stephen Buxbaum spoke about local community development of farming organizations and community gardens from the early 1980s and beyond.

Looking back I wonder, would I do it all again? No, probably not. PSYCH. I'd do it every day for eternity (shout out to Sisyphus), and I hope next year's MESA members can channel this passion for their RCF. Humor aside, I am very grateful that I was able to participate in such a rich tradition. In the darkness that often accompanies the study of our periled ecosystems, it is important to remember how one voice can spark a huge movement, and that is exactly why we honor Rachel Carson every year.

I would like to thank my fellow MESA members: Jenny Dunn, Kyli Rhoads, Jana Fischback, and Jen Runyan for making this experience a fun way to justifiably avoid homework for a few hours each week. I'll miss our Tuesdays! I would also like to thank all of our speakers for including us in their excellent journeys towards a better, more sustainable agro-future. Huge thanks to Martha Henderson and Kevin Francis for introducing and moderating this event. And, as always, thanks to Gail Wootan for her constant support and wisdom.