

MES CONNECTION

EVERGREEN

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OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

The Changing World of Water

By Bonnie Phillips

Beginning in academic year 2003-2004, the Graduate Program in Environmental Studies decided to sponsor and organize a yearly conference, centering on these goals:

- To focus on a critical environmental issue of the 21st Century
- To provide a public and educational service for the greater Puget Sound community
- To bring together a diverse group of speakers
- To provide networking opportunities for students, organizations, agencies, and the business community

On May 14, 2004, we held our first annual conference on *The Changing World of Water*, along with co-sponsors the Washington Hydrologic Society and National Association of Environmental Professionals. About 160 people attended this conference, including TESC students, faculty and staff, as well as a great diversity of representatives from local, county, state, and federal agencies.

Keynote speaker, Dr. James R. Karr, University of Washington, set the tone for the day in his presentation on *Measuring What Matters, Counting What Counts to Sustain Salmon, Rivers and People*. Alan Hamlet of the Climate Impacts Group at the University of Washington followed Dr. Karr and presented his research on *Climate Change and Water in Washington State*.

Two other plenary speakers, Patti Goldman of Earthjustice who presented on *Changes to Federal Laws and Regulations*, and Nadine Romero of the Washington Hydrologic Squaxin Tribe who discussed *New Strategies for New Times*, rounded off the morning plenary session. After lunch, participants had a choice of seven different concurrent sessions on a range of water issues.

The conference was an excellent collaborative effort between the graduate faculty and students. In Fall Quarter 2003, students from the first and second year MES program voted on potential conference topics. The three highest ranking topics were water, changes to laws and regulations, and new strategies for new times. We were able to combine all themes in our conference. Faculty for Spring Quarter Case Studies, Cheri Lucas Jennings and Carolyn Dobbs, incorporated water issues into their class reading, lecture, and seminar material, and conference attendance became part of the class requirements.

The consensus of comments we received after the conference was very positive. By early summer, we were already planning the event for 2004-2005. Mark your calendar now for Friday, February 11, 2005. We have an even more exciting conference on the most urgent environmental, economic, social, and political issue facing the world today. We will have guest speakers talking about the broad issue and panels focusing on Washington State. Our title is *Climate Change, Energy and the Future of Washington State*. We will be co-sponsoring the conference with Climate Change in Olympia and the National Association of Environmental Practitioners.

Bonnie Phillips is a MES student and Graduate Assistant.

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Located near Washington State's Capital, MES and Evergreen offer unique opportunities for students and alumni.



Director's Column

9/11 and the Mysterious Missing Oil

By John Perkins

Perhaps some will consider it unusual to have the newsletter of a graduate program speak about the horrible events of September 11 of three years ago. What does that day have to do with graduate education in environmental studies? Actually, quite a bit, which is how my attention was drawn to the recently released *9/11 Commission Report*.

The events of that fateful day opened a new era for the United States. One might think, therefore, that efforts to deal with such a threat would reflect the full complexity of the situation. The Commission itself notes that they intended to "... provide the fullest possible account of the events surrounding 9/11 and to identify the lessons learned" (p. xvi).

Despite a refreshing bipartisan consensus, however, the 9/11 Commission has missed the mark in a way directly linked to environmental studies. They failed to address oil in any significant way.

Environmental analysts know oil is a blessing and a curse. We derive great benefits from the substance. In fact managing environmental problems as we know them assumes access to oil. Yet dependence on it has potentially terrible consequences, like climate change and war.

Two concepts could have helped the Commission. First, good decision making requires an appropriate *scope* for the analysis. In brief, we have to know what's part of the problem and what's not. If the scope is too narrow, highly relevant issues are omitted from analysis and consideration.

Second, good analysis demands that *analysis of alternatives* must be thorough and imaginative. Failure of imagination plagues decision making, because good ideas for new ways of doing things are left off the table.

The 9/11 Commission Report, as good and honest as it is, is deeply flawed on these two points. Take *scope* as the first example. Chapter 2 of the *Report* lays out the context of the attacks on September 11, which is the heart of setting the scope for the rest of the document. Oil is mentioned in passing but without emphasis or sense of centrality. It's as if oil were irrelevant to the attacks of 9/11 and the earlier attacks of al Qaeda on installations overseas.

American policy in the Middle East since World War II, however, has focused on ensuring oil deliveries to the US and its allies. Saudi Arabia sits on about one quarter of the global oil reserves. Its population of only about 3 million people in 1950 was not in a position to guard this wealth without help from abroad, a fact that meshed conveniently with American (and British) plans for the world after World War II.

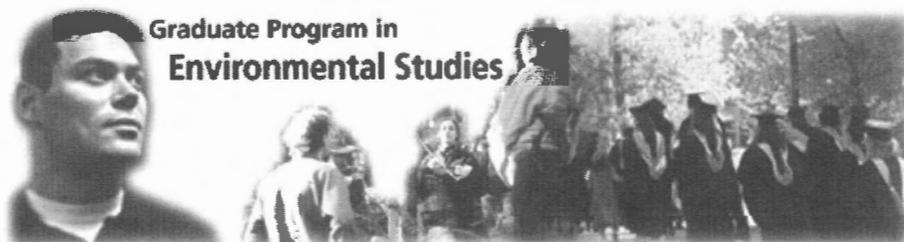
Some will be quick to say that oil had nothing to do with the hideous crimes of 9/11. They will argue that Usama bin Laden was not trying to capture any oil fields when he attacked New York and Washington, DC, nor was the US trying to seize oil wealth in Iraq. But how can one glide over a major driving issue that every American President since Franklin Roosevelt has embraced? If oil is not in the scope, an explanation is needed.

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Alternatives analysis is equally flawed, because of the failure in scope. Take just one example. One of Usama bin Laden's complaints has been that the US established military installations in the sacred lands of Saudi Arabia.

Americans have a hard time understanding why a military presence is so infuriating to bin Laden. We do not, however, find it difficult to grasp that the presence of troops has something to do with the oil. Indeed, without oil most Americans would say Saudi Arabia is not very interesting strategically.

Where does dealing with dependence upon Saudi oil figure in the Commission's *Report*? It doesn't. Instead, the mantra put forth is: *They attacked us, because we made mistakes. We must change our intelligence strategies to prevent future attacks.*

And the oil? It's assumed in the *Report*, not discussed. Do we need to think about alternatives to oil? This is not an alternative that is mentioned. Do alternatives exist to the oil? Not relevant, based on the silence of the *Report*.

It's easy to envision a report in which oil was highlighted, current policies reaffirmed, and resolutions sought elsewhere. It's hard, however, to have complete confidence in a report that remains silent on a highly pertinent and controversial issue. Useful alternatives have gone missing from the discussion.

If we cannot think openly and honestly about the oil, we cannot see the whole problem. Experience with environmental analysis demonstrates the importance of scope and alternatives analysis in decision making. The *Report* fails on both.

John H. Perkins is Director of the Graduate Program in Environmental Studies. His latest book was Geopolitics and The Green Revolution: Wheat, Genes, and the Cold War. He is Editor-in-Chief of Environmental Practice.

Alumni Spotlight—Todd Burley

By Todd Burley & Matt Proffitt

Internships offer one of the most rewarding and educational experiences for any graduate program. Situated in the State's capitol and near the urban hub of Seattle, MES students have a unique opportunity to get professional experience in the environmental field. Some even get jobs, or one step closer to their dreams.

Todd Burley expected to learn a lot about non-profit organizations and the sustainability issues in the region while interning with Northwest Environment Watch (NEW) in Winter and Spring quarters of 2004. He didn't know that being in the right place, at the right time, would launch his nature photography business into a new era as well.

In 2003, Todd contacted NEW to obtain some publications to use in an MES paper on wind energy. Noticing his website address in the email, they checked it out, and asked if he would donate images for certain uses. One of his images, *Desolation Sunrise* (see sidebar photo), would later be used on a note card, printed in Seattle by Good Nature Publishing for NEW.

A year later, while interning for NEW, Tim Coleman from Good Nature Publishing walked through the door and offered to do an exclusive nature photography product line with Todd's images, an offer few aspiring nature photographers get.

The world is a web of interconnections. Interning for Northwest Environment Watch not only proved a life-changing experience for Todd, but also linked him to opportunities only dreamed of. Now that Todd has completed MES, he plans to devote more of his time to photography and finalize the deal with Good Nature Publishing. Keep your eyes peeled for this recent graduate's work. You can view much his photography at www.tburleyphotography.com, as well as purchase notecards and custom prints.

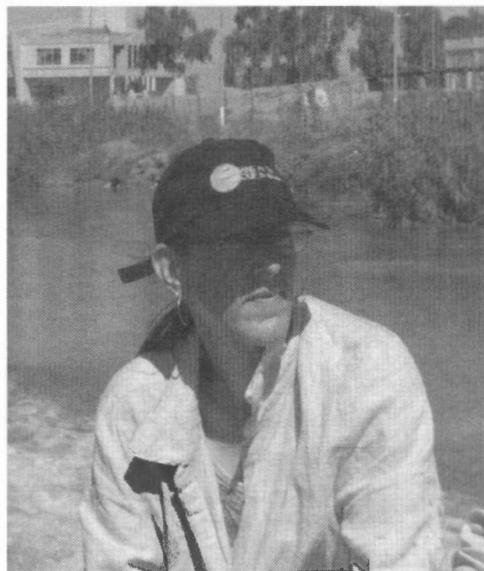


Desolation Sunrise

"My goal as a photographer is to make the viewer experience the same awe that I do when looking upon the beauty and processes of the world around us. It is a subtle form of activism, reaching the deepest levels of our humanity to challenge our assumptions and alter the way we live."—T. Burley

From Baghdad: MES Graduate Bachmann Gets Involved in Iraqi River Education

By Anna Sophia Bachmann



Anna on the Tigris

In 2003, when the second Gulf War was upon us, I decided to forego the protest rallies in the States and go to Iraq for a month to see the situation there for myself. My experience in that brief month before the war started had a profound effect upon me and I was able to return to Iraq almost exactly a year later, in February of 2004. I went, as I did on my first trip, with a peace organization called Voices in the Wilderness, but my main goal was to look at some of the environmental consequences of the War, the Sanctions and the Occupation. Of particular interest to me were the issues of Depleted Uranium and radiation contamination resulting from the looting of the Tuwaitha Nuclear Facility south of Baghdad.

I lived and worked in Baghdad for over five months—through the anniversary of the war; through the bombardment of Fallujah and the Abu Ghraib Prison scandal; and through the kidnappings and bomb attacks by the resistance. I lived in seedy hotels and private homes and took taxis all over town. Focusing in on the problems caused by the Coalition Forces use of the Depleted Uranium munitions proved to be difficult because I was working independently, with few resources and without proper equipment. The Iraqi researchers and government officials who had been quite open in discussing these issues before the war (and many in Iraq believe that the use of Depleted Uranium munitions by US and British Forces in 1991 had caused extensive contamination in southern Iraq, leading to a rise in cancers rates and birth defects), were unwilling to speak now. There is a great deal of fear and mistrust in Iraqi society, some of it dating back to Saddam and some caused by an unwillingness to upset the new power in Iraq, the Americans.

In my research on the Tuwaitha Nuclear Research Facility I faced many of the same problems. Tuwaitha was the site of the Iraqi Nuclear Research Program. Before the war, the US was warned that this facility contained Yellow Cake (low-enriched Uranium) under U.N. seals and that there were many other types of toxic chemicals stored at the facility. But as the US forces swept north, they failed to secure the Tuwaitha site, located just 30 km south of Baghdad on the Tigris River. Iraqis from the surrounding area looted the facility and dumped the Yellow Cake and other chemicals to take the barrels home to use as, in some instances, water and food storage tanks. The full scope of the contamination is still not known.

The Tigris River was to be my main focus while I was in Baghdad. Ever since I had seen the big, filthy brown waters of the Tigris in 2003, I had wanted to get out on the river. Under Saddam, access to large sections of the river was denied to Iraqis and little had changed under the Americans. A Ministry of Environment survey team had gone out on the river to take samples in March of 2004. While passing one of the American bases on the river, the survey team was shot at, taken into custody, the men on the boat, including the Iraqi River policeman with them, were hooded, cuffed and interrogated and three days of work from their camera was destroyed. When I heard this, I started the Tigris River Project to help the Ministry conduct its survey but I also wanted to involve Iraqi NGO's and members of the international press to spread the word about the environmental problems Iraq faces.

There is a lot of focus on the death and destruction caused by both the Coalition forces and the Iraqi insurgency. Hundreds die every month. But, as an engineer at the Rustamiyah Waste Water Treatment plant (which still isn't functioning and pumps raw sewage from half the city directly into the Tigris River) said, "Every day, thousands of people are drinking this dirty water, getting sick and many are dying." Iraq's environment is in a shocking state as a direct result of three wars and thirteen years of sanction. Far more people die in Iraq because of the pollution to land, air, and water than die from the bullets and the bombs.

The Tigris River Project trip took place on July 11th on a witheringly hot, Sunday morning. Three small boats loaded with engineers from the Ministry of Environment, representatives from Iraqi environmental NGO's, and members of Western and Arabic press left from a bridge in northern Baghdad. We made our way first past date orchards and riverside houses. We picked up an Iraqi River Police escort and quickly signs of increasing urbanization became visible. The river grew more and more pollut-



Sewage outfall on the Tigris



A riverside ceremony by the Sabea Mandeian sect along the Tigris

ed the closer we got to the heart of the city. 70% of the pollution in the Tigris River comes from this sprawling city of approximately six million people. In the very heart of the city we passed by the Green Zone, the home of US Forces and the former Coalition Provisional Authority, with its very own smoking dump located right on the river's edge. US attack helicopters kept buzzing us and I didn't feel safe until we were well beyond the US controlled 14th of July Bridge with its Abrams tank sitting mid-span.

We passed burning trash, massive sewage outfalls, and water treatment plants, collectively unable to meet the needs of the city residents. We saw derelict wrecks, fisherman, swimming children, and even a riverside ceremony by the Sabea Mandeian sect (based on John the Baptist) that involved the immersion of its followers in the oil waters of the Tigris. All along the way, the engineers took water samples and the press conducted their interviews. Our trip ended at the last bridge in Baghdad, short of its goal, the confluence of the Tigris and Diyala Rivers south of Baghdad, but the Police were spooked and felt it too dangerous to continue. We'd entered a part of the city that was known to be crawling with insurgents.

In the end, it was a simple boat trip but there had been nothing simple about it for me. I learned a tremendous amount about the River, the Iraqis, and the Americans. I'm now trying to help one of the fledgling Iraqi Environmental NGO's to create a pilot project: an environmental education project focused on the Tigris River. Nothing like it has ever been done before in Iraq and, despite the continued unrest in the country, the Iraqis involved are committed to doing something to help improve their country and its environment.

Anna Sophia Bachmann, was the Graduate Student Association Coordinator of the MES program in 1991, during the first Gulf War. She remembers vividly trying unsuccessfully to get her fellow MES students to approve a protest statement against the war. In the words of one student at the time, this was deemed, "too political." To find out more about the Tigris River Environmental Education project (yes, it needs your support) and Anna's other adventures in the Middle East (she is currently living in Hebron, Palestine), check out her weblog: peacework.blogspot.com.

Hidden Treasure: Terma Gems and Minerals Opens in Downtown Olympia

By Matt Proffitt

It is believed that the concept *terma* originates in The Kingdom of Bhutan—a small country in the eastern Himalayas—with a Buddhist monk. Terma applies to sacred objects or texts, which were hidden during the creation of all things, which convey particular meanings to particular people and that are to be found at different times and in different places; in short, the concept terma applies to hidden treasure.

Terma, a gems and minerals store opened the weekend of March 19th, 2004 by MES student Jeanine Toth, exists exactly as its appropriate name implies, as hidden treasure to be found by those of us who happen to visit Jeanine and her new business.

Jeanine is in the process of completing her thesis. She discusses her research with confidence and interest as she handles a large piece of aquamarine, which I cannot help staring at, virtually entranced by the simple and perfect elegance of the crystal. She explains that her thesis deals with the status of environmental education in Washington State. Specifically, Jeanine is addressing the North

American Association of Environmental Education's (NAAEE) model as it has been applied to Washington, looking at how effectively the model has been put into place and developed in the State.

Through MES, Jeanine was able to craft a learning contract where she could combine elements of Environmental Studies with her interest in gems and minerals. She attended the most-recent, annual Tucson Gem Show, in Tucson, AZ and completed a project detailing what she learned and experienced, presenting her new knowledge and ideas within the context of the natural and human environment.

She also compiled an extensive book—a sort of photo-encyclopedia—of gem and mineral characteristics; she keeps the completed project at Terma, where it serves an invaluable reference. With excitement, Jeanine tells me that she will attend every future Tucson Gem Show, the world's largest gem show. Jeanine also volunteers at Nisqually Reach Nature Center.

I look at a piece of black tourmaline set on my work desk; I got the piece at Terma several months ago. I have great and fond associations with the stone, as it has traveled with me on many of my travels and provided a great sense of good fortune. I picked it up at Terma one afternoon as I often have other pieces on similar afternoons, just stopping in to see what is new and being drawn to a particular piece. It is difficult to leave Terma without a new piece, each so wonderfully individual.

Visit Terma at 116 State St. NE in downtown Olympia, not far from the bus station. And soon, you can visit Terma online at www.termagems.com. Jeanine promises to have the site up and running “by Christmas.”

Alumni Spotlight—Christine Johnson

By Matt Proffitt

I sat down with Christine Johnson today, on a day immediately following her completion of the MES program, and the conversation we exchanged was altogether different from ones we had some two years ago, when Christine left her job of eight years as an engineer for General Instrument in Pennsylvania and moved to the Olympia area to begin her graduate studies. Christine told me that she has been reflecting on her MES experience, looking back at her studies and accomplishments without losing sight of the future and the possible avenues that wait to be pursued in Christine's career.

Christine operates a website, www.transadvocate.org. The website's aim is to stimulate discussion and to raise awareness about the range of issues surrounding gender identification. Through her website, Christine received an email in 2002 from Dr. Scott Kerlin, a scientist and transgender individual (an umbrella term applying to inter-sexed, transsexuals, and those expressing gender issues of various degrees) of DES Sons International Network. Kerlin's primary focus of study is on DES (diethylstilbestrol), a synthetic estrogen developed to supplement a woman's natural estrogen production. The drug was prescribed to women who routinely suffered from miscarriages and premature deliveries.

Out of a group of 600 individuals—both male and female—it was found that 13% demonstrated signs of transexualism; some with an anatomy not male or female, and some that identified as the opposite sex of their genotype. This raises several issues; for example, the range of changes in these DES individuals varies greatly—from behavioral patterns, which go against the socially expected norm, to morphological changes in physical development.

DES was given to nearly four million mothers between the 1940s and 1970s. The DES campaign was even discouraged by several educated scientists, yet propaganda advertisements were widely spread—promising “bigger” and “stronger” babies—and directed at pregnant women and those who wished to become pregnant.

DES serves as an exemplar, and one which Christine hopes, with the help of DES Sons, to expose and research further. There are, however, complications in determining exposure characteristics and amounts consumed by the pregnant women, as well as complications concerning potential combinations with other drugs.

Christine is more focused, however, on the range of characteristics that define male and female. Genes are the blueprint; hormones are the vehicle, the mechanism instructions unfolded. There are a range of issues that determine male from female. Timing of exposure to particular chemicals or hormones can play a significant role in a child's development. Christine believes that we are destroying our

own species by ignoring the complexity of this reality.

Gay and lesbian individuals are often disregarded socially as people who chose alternative lifestyles when in fact there are perhaps a number of factors that play into the development of one's sexual identity. This is what Christine Johnson is trying to research.

It is clear that hormones in the environment have been proven to reverse the sex of animals—fish and frogs in particular; Christine believes that this should be seen as having relevance to humans: we are animals.

Christine is also interested in promoting understanding for those who are different. Social influence in our culture has proven good reason to not transition (assume the opposite gender) based on society's norms. Many place social relationships or identity over sexual re-identification.

Christine's thesis, *Transsexualism: An Unacknowledged Endpoint of Endocrine Disruption?*, which is available to read on her website, addresses the linkages between hormonally active agents likely to cause changes in sexual development. When it comes to experimental drugs, Christine believes that the precautionary principle is the only solution.

The Rachel Carson Forum: An Organizers Perspective

By Mary Middleton

The Rachel Carson Forum is an annual event hosted by the MES program and the Graduate Student Association. This event honors Rachel Carson (1907-1964) who in many ways helped shape modern environmental studies. Rachel Carson received her undergraduate education at the Pennsylvania College for Women and her master's degree from the Johns Hopkins University. She taught at Johns Hopkins and at the University of Maryland before accepting a career position with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Later she became a best-selling author with her books about marine life. She is probably best known for her book *Silent Spring* (1962), which established the impacts of pesticides on ecosystems. *Silent Spring* is a powerful blend of scientific knowledge and an eloquent writing style that made the information accessible to the general public. Over 40 years after its publication *Silent Spring*, is still used in many environmental studies programs.

MES student Eli Sterling started the Rachel Carson Forum in 1990. Eli proposed that the students of the Graduate Program should annually bring a prominent environmental thinker to campus. Professor Gordon Orians of the University of Washington was the first speaker and talked about tropical forests and human welfare. Since 1990, the Rachel Carson Forum has hosted a variety of speakers on many different environmental topics. This event is entirely student organized. Students select the speaker, make all arrangements, and have maintained the Forum since 1990. It is one of the largest public events held annually by The Evergreen State College.

The goal of the Rachel Carson Forum is to combine science and art to demonstrate how these two subjects, often regarded as vastly different, can complement each other. The Rachel Carson Forum speakers have come from many different backgrounds: authors, such as Terry Tempest Williams, David James Duncan, and Rick Bass; scientists have included Dr. Eugene Kozloff from the University of Washington; and Dr. David Ehrenfeld from Rutgers University. The forum has also hosted activists such as David Foreman. The Rachel Carson Forum has also invited musical guests, such as Bellingham environmental folk singer Dana Lyons.

The Rachel Carson Forum not only provides a great educational event for Evergreen and the surrounding communities, but also provides student organizers with event planning and leadership skills. The students organizing the forum quickly learn what it takes to host a successful event. The students work with budgets and have to make presentations to the Student Activities board to request funding. Organizers must have posters made, write press releases, and explore many different advertising techniques. The student's must also recruit volunteers and assign tasks. Organizing this event takes a great deal of work, but is also extremely rewarding. The organizers of the Rachel Carson Forum also get to meet and often spend the day with the speakers. This event gives students a unique opportunity to not only build valuable skills, but also to meet some amazing people.



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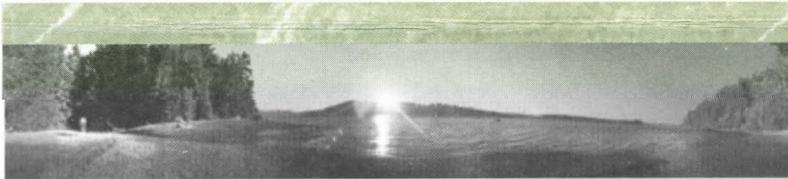
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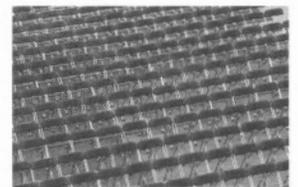
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