

Master of Environmental Studies Program



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“We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

- Aldo Leopold

Inside This Issue :

Letter from the Director	1
Welcome BBQ	1
Meet the New MES Cohort	2
Little Internship on the Prairie	3
Butterflies and Giants	4
Bilezikian Legacy	5
Kudos Corner	5
2011 MES Graduates	7
Bringing It All Together	8
Fall Thesis Presentations	8

MESsages

Letter from the Director

I always look forward to the beginning of a new academic year. It's Fall, one of the nicest seasons in the Pacific Northwest. The salmon return, summer travelers return, and students return. This year, the MES second year students returned with amazing stories from their summer internships and individual learning contracts. Some began field research for their thesis projects and others learned how to sail and teach environmental education at the same time. Returning for one last core class is a real accomplishment; the first year students became the second year students like

salmon returning for the last big push – which will end in graduation and a brighter future than the salmon.

Our new first year students gathered for their first meeting at Orientation in September. The new student body is very diverse. The class has students interested in social conditions of the environment as well as students committed to ecological understanding of the environment. There are a number of current and past AmeriCorps members, former Peace Corps volunteers, veterans, and students direct from 4-year degrees. Along with the new

students, we welcomed Dr. Carri LeRoy as an ecology faculty member in the program.

Within the first two weeks, the class was off on a field trip coordinated by Judy Cushing to the H.J. Andrews forest research facility on Oregon's Mackenzie River. We left Evergreen



Martha Henderson
continued on page 7

Welcome Back MES! Salmon BBQ and Blessing

By Heather Kowalewski, MES 2nd Year



Second year MES students welcomed the incoming class with a regionally-themed celebration that included locally-caught salmon and a blessing from Chickasaw tribal member Bill White. Bill has worked with the Washington Department of Health and shared his knowledge of the interdisciplinary nature of environmental issues. He concluded his talk playing beautiful songs on his traditional flute. The rest of the night was dedicated to bonding among the first and second year MES cohorts over delicious food and a warm fire.

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Meet the New MES Cohort!

Dianne Dochow, MES 1st Year

Where are you from?

Enumclaw, WA

What drew you to the MES program at The Evergreen State College?

After researching several environment-centered graduate programs, the Master of Environmental Studies at The Evergreen State College was by far my first choice. Along with an excellent reputation and accomplished faculty, the interdisciplinary curriculum encourages students to form connections across a variety of interests. The ability to explore and understand issues from different perspectives provides greater depth in the learning process. In addition, it is a key component in the collaborative efforts that are essential to developing functional solutions to the complex environmental challenges we face. I look forward to taking my academic journey and environmental advocacy activities to the next level in the MES program at Evergreen.



What is your previous education and work experience prior to entering the MES Program?

Working as a civil engineering designer and construction inspector, stormwater and wastewater treatment systems were the projects I enjoyed the most. In the course of my duties, I observed many opportunities to improve environmental stewardship, especially with regard to water sustainability, and had a strong desire to be engaged in developing solutions.

The Evergreen State College Tacoma is my alma mater for a BA focused on Environmental Studies. I also earned an AS degree in Design Drafting Technology and an AA in Business Management/Marketing at Green River Community College. As an undergraduate student, I served internships with the State of Washington Department of Ecology Water Resources Program and the nonprofit organization Citizens for a Healthy Bay.

What are your areas of interest in the MES program?

Water Sustainability, Environmental Policy and Environmental Education.

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Robert Coleman, MES 1st Year

Where are you from?

Eagle, MI

What do you hope to gain from the MES program?

Greater insight into policies governing our environment and the steps to enacting, reviewing, and changing those policies. Also, a methodology for community transition programs.



What drew you to the MES program at The Evergreen State College?

The school itself and an overwhelming need for change. Evergreen was one of few schools that offered the environmental program I was looking for.

What is your previous education and work experience prior to entering the MES Program?

Bachelor of Arts - English Literature (Michigan State University); 15 credits short of a Bachelor of Science - Environmental Engineering (Michigan State University); 5 years in the utility and energy management disciplines

What are your areas of interest in the MES program?

Environmental politics, energy transition strategies, as well as re-localization economics

What activities do you enjoy outside of school and work?

Avid reader, runner, and animal lover. I love to travel and enjoy nights out with friends.

What is your "dream occupation"? What do you see yourself doing after the MES program?

My dream job would involve working for a domestic or international energy transition organization.

Who has been an inspirational individual in your life?

Carl Sagan and Lynda Boomer (my former boss)



Little Internship on the Prairie: Plants, Fire, and Fun

By Melissa Pico, MES 2nd Year

This past summer I interned with South Puget Sound Prairies Program through the Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM), formerly run through The Nature Conservancy. My internship provided me the best of both worlds: I was able to work on native plant propagation including seed collection and cleaning, stratification protocols, plant and plug production, and maintenance of native plugs for out-planting; as well as work on vegetation monitoring and fire severity monitoring after prescribed burns at Glacial Heritage and Tenalquat Prairies.

I thoroughly enjoyed my internship experience and recommend it to other MES students. It gave me the opportunity to learn micro-level and daily operational information, such as telling the difference between *Aira praecox* and *Aira caryophylla* or using old film canisters to pack the right amount of soil for plugs; while I also gained macro or systems-level knowledge on large scale and long-term restoration project organization and planning, such as which species to grow at what quantity and which groups on what prairie get the processed seed in the fall.



Castilleja levisecta at Shotwell's Landing Nursery

Additionally, I was exposed to and fascinated by the political and social issues involved in prairie restoration work through a local organization called S.T.O.P. (Stop Taking Our Property) Thurston County – whose lawn signs dot the Littlerock landscape around the Glacial and Mima Prairies. This organization, a project of the Freedom Foundation (a non-profit “think tank”), believes that Thurston

County is going to take their land (or regulate what they can do with their land) in the name of “rodents, weeds and bugs”. While the staff at CNLM believes that the science will speak for itself, the die-hard volunteers of the prairie (who have been involved with the prairie restoration for decades or more) spoke passionately about how misguided the claims of this organization are. Whether remaining neutral or taking a stance, I could see valid grievances on all sides, and could not help but think of Billy Frank Jr, the Nisqually tribal leader recognized for collaborative leadership, and his wisdom on moving from conflict to cooperation.



Fire severity monitoring at Glacial Heritage Park

Overall, my internship deeply enhanced my ecological and social knowledge of prairie restoration, providing me with a truly interdisciplinary experience. On top of all that, I got to spend my summer hanging out at the plant nursery and on prairies, and it doesn't get much better than that!



2nd Year MES Student, Melissa Pico

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Butterflies & Giants: 1st Year MESers on the Road

By: Dianne Dochow & Ashley McBee, MES 1st Years

Endangered butterflies and old growth forests greeted the 2011 first-year Master of Environmental Studies students as we hit the ground running with two field trips this quarter. An excursion to the prairies of Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) was followed by adventures at the HJ Andrews Experimental Forest (HJA) in Oregon.

With backpacks, work gloves, field notebooks, and rubber boots at the ready, our cohort boarded a big yellow school bus and headed north to JBLM on Oct 4th. Two MES graduates, now biologists at JBLM, met us on site. Standing in the midst of a vast prairie, our hosts talked about prescribed burns and other maintenance measures required for the sensitive prairie habitat.



MES Students Planting Oregon Sunshine Starts at JBLM

After a tour of JBLM prairie sites, we met up with a group working to restore Taylor's Checkerspot butterfly populations. The small colorful butterfly, once common in grasslands throughout the Pacific Northwest, is in danger of extinction due to disappearing habitat. MESers to the rescue! The peaceful prairie scene was interrupted by the roar of augers drilling shallow holes into which 3,600

Oregon Sunshine starts were inserted to promote natural habitat for the Taylor's Checkerspot.



Eating Lunch in the Old-growth Forest

After hours of kneeling and planting—now seasoned restorers of habitats—we headed back to campus, ready for the next adventure.

On October 13th, we boarded the big yellow bus once again: destination HJA. En route, we stopped at Oregon State University to attend fascinating lectures by Barbara Bond, Lead Principal Investigator (PI) at HJA, and Mark Harmon, former Lead PI.

After class discussions and reading Jon Luoma's (1999) book, *The Hidden Forest*, everyone looked forward to experiencing the forest in person. That night we settled into comfy accommodations then gathered at the conference center for dinner where Mark Schulze, HJA Forest Director and Evergreen alum, offered an intro to HJA and hyped up the fun active day ahead.

The following morning the group was off to explore the wonder-

ful world of HJA. We were immersed in the natural beauty of the forest at three different sites. Schulze talked about life cycles in the forest and explained various research projects. Donning hard hats, we hiked among the towering old growth giants and marveled at the diversity of forest life. An enormous fallen log covered in soft green moss served as a perfect perch to enjoy lunch and view the surrounding beauty. After lunch we ventured to a nearly 50 year-old Douglas fir plantation to continue the legacy of MES contributions to HJA research. We set up traverses, located vegetation plot centers, identified and measured trees, and performed understory work.

Along the way, we worked hard, learned a lot, had fun, and helped develop a base from which important research projects will proceed.

The next day the weary group traveled back to Olympia, recapping adventures and funny moments. Most of all, everyone couldn't wait to get home and kick back.



1st Year gCore Students and Faculty at HJ Andrews

The 1st year MES students have earned their keep for the quarter, and if rumors are correct, we look forward to returning to both venues in the spring!

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Bilezikian Legacy through MES Fellows

The Sara Bilezikian Fellowship is one of the many scholarships and fellowships that MES students can apply for while in the program. This prestigious fellowship started in Fall 2004 through a generous donation from Sophie and John Bilezikian, parents of former Evergreen student Sara Bilezikian, whose passion for social and environmental justice issues is shared by all fellows. Fellows are chosen every other year and receive a fellowship that covers two years' worth of in-state tuition. Last year, the fund also provided two students, Justin Rogers and Amanda Lucus, a smaller, \$4,000 fellowship each to support their respective research projects in sustainable food systems and student-based collective housing. MES asked the Bilezikians and the two most recent fellows about their fellowship experience thus far.

Sara's Commitment to Environmental and Social Justice

By Sophie and John Bilezikian

We were introduced to Evergreen by our daughter Sara, a 2001 graduate who died suddenly in January, 2002. Sara was not yet twenty-four years old and her path in life was still uncertain, but already she had developed a passion for issues of peace and environmental and social justice. Working with the staff in the Office of Advancement, we were able to establish an endowed fellowship in her memory. This was made possible by generous contributions from family members and friends, along with matching gifts from the Verizon Foundation and the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board. Given Sara's priorities, the obvious choice was to support a candidate for the Master's degree in Environmental Studies.

It was a wonderful moment for us when Laura Ritter, the first Sara Bilezikian Fellow, began her studies. She was followed by Laura Todis, who in turn was followed by Nahal Ghoghiaie. All three have been outstanding. Equally gratifying, all three

are gracious young women who have taken the time to understand what mattered to Sara and why the Fellowship bears her name. We are confident that Brittany Gallagher, the current Sara Bilezikian Fellow, will meet the high standards set by her predecessors.

Meet Nahal Ghoghiaie 2009 Sara Bilezikian Fellow



Nahal joined MES as a graduate of University of Texas-Austin with a background in environmental non-profit work.

continued on page 6

Kudos Corner

Allison Osterberg, second year MES student, was recently named one of four Marc Hershman Marine Policy Fellows by Washington Sea Grant. The fellowship matches outstanding students with state agencies for a one-year paid fellowship; Allison is placed with the Puget Sound Partnership in Tacoma. Allison is the only fellow who is still in graduate school—the other three are graduates of the University of Washington's School of Marine and Environmental Affairs.

Congratulations to Lindsay Raab, MES 2010, for her influence in the Audubon Society announcing the expansion of the Nisqually Important Bird Area. Through her thesis work, Lindsay identified the newly expanded area as ecologically important to the Nisqually River Delta. Her research showed that the fish attracted to local marine vegetation are an important nutrient source for area waterfowl.

A newly created "Evergreen Food Guide," was recently published by Justin Rogers, third year MES student. The food guide is the end result of the Bilezikian Sustainability Fellowship that he received during Spring 2011. The guide is a comprehensive sustainable food resource for the Evergreen community and can be found online at <http://www.evergreen.edu/rad/docs/foodguide.pdf> and around campus.

M.E.S.

Master of Environmental Studies Program

continued from page 5

In Nahal's own words:

As a Sara Bilezikian fellow, my desire to achieve and to give-back was magnified. Not only did I have the encouragement of my family in the U.S. and Iran, I now had a new family devoted to my success.

The Bilezikian Fellow provided major economic assistance, which allowed me to focus on my studies instead of worrying about finances. More importantly, the honor to carry on Sara's legacy of commitment to environmental advocacy and social justice influenced me on a deeper level and enabled me to surpass my goals. My inner desire to work towards these causes was doubled when I received the award and tripled after meeting Sara's wonderful parents, Sophie and John. Over my two years in this program, Sara's passion for the causes she devoted her life to merged with mine, and together they have driven me to devote more energy to environmental projects than I could have alone. I feel an overall enhanced sense of well-being thanks to this fellowship, which is reflected to my friends, family, and community on a daily basis.

I pursued graduate study at The Evergreen State College as I felt the interdisciplinary research model matched my assorted background in the humanities, the sciences, business, spirituality, and language, which I feel are tied together with one connecting thread – the environment. I thus focused my thesis research on a topic that involves aspects from my background and wrote about climate change impacts on Native/ non-Native co-management of freshwater resources. My thesis topic involves many issues I understand to which Sara also devoted her life, and I like to imagine that if she was still with us today, we could work together towards these causes.

If there is one thing I can recommend to the next cohort, it would be to choose a thesis topic that you've cared about for as long as you can remember. You will be tempted by various intriguing projects, but trust your instincts. Go with your first choice, so you can start researching immediately. You will still have many opportunities to explore other topics and possibly to incorporate them into your thesis somehow, but do not delay. It is with sincerest regards that I wish you luck in your research and hope to work alongside you someday!

Meet Brittany Gallagher 2011 Sara Bilezikian Fellow

Much of Brittany's prior work through her Peace Corps volunteer experience and her time at University of Wisconsin-Madison, exemplifies the fellowship's commitment to



support a student "who demonstrates commitment to environmental protection, environmental advocacy, and social justice." Brittany plans to carry on with work surrounding these issues while going through the MES program and has already found an outlet to begin this work.

In Brittany's own words:

Through much of my community development work in rural

areas of West Africa and the Pacific, I have been seeking to empower people whose voices aren't traditionally heard. Often, these populations are struggling with the impacts of environmental and social problems they have done little, if anything, to exacerbate. I have worked with some unlikely community leaders who have shown real talent for developing sensitive, appropriate, local plans for regaining control of local resources, lands and livelihoods.

I have already been lucky enough to start working with the Sustainable Prisons Project here at Evergreen. I was drawn to this exemplary project because it, like the MES program, addresses environmental and social justice issues through an interdisciplinary, partnered approach. I was attracted to the Graduate Program on the Environment at Evergreen because of its holistic design. Clearly, no environmental problem exists in a vacuum, and appropriate, equitable solutions must involve a host of partners from a variety of disciplines, backgrounds, and experiences. My classmates' impressive diversity of experience shows that the MES program appreciates this, and as we move along in our studies, we will become better prepared to work creatively for a better world.

M.E.S.

Master of Environmental Studies Program

continued from page 1

in a large yellow school bus, traveled down I-5 to Eugene and then up the river to the facility. The trip not only improved students' geographical knowledge of the Pacific Northwest (PNW), it brought the class together as a learning community. Field trips are becoming more common in MES classes. Trips are planned for Winter and Spring core classes and in nearly all of the electives.

Our elective courses have expanded this year to include a class on Puget Sound marine environments and marine mammals taught by Dr. John Calambokidis, co-founder of Cascadia Research. John has previously taught in MES and we are happy to have him return. A number of students express interest in marine topics. The marine mammal class, along with Dr. Gerardo Chin-Leo's elective in marine biology, provides a strong curriculum component. Another new elective will be added in the spring when Dr. Richard Bigley, a forest ecologist with Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) who is currently teaching Sustainable Forestry, will teach a course on wildland fire. He will be joined by Sarah Hamman, a landscape ecologist with a major interest in the role of wildland fire in maintaining PNW prairies. We are happy to welcome Sarah to the MES faculty.

All of the MES elective courses are experiencing high levels of interest by students. Jean MacGregor, Senior Scholar at the Washington

Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education at Evergreen, is teaching environmental education; Greg Stewart, Geomorphologist and Hydrologist for the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, is teaching GIS; and Kurt Unger, Water Policy Analyst with the Washington Department of Ecology, is teaching a course on global climate this Fall. In Winter quarter, Dr. Alan Hardcastle, Senior Research Associate of the Washington State University Extension Energy Program, will teach an energy elective, Dr. Tim Quinn with DNR will teach biological conservation, and I will teach political ecology. Finally, the Spring quarter will include, along with the fire and marine electives, Dr. Ralph Murphy's environmental economics elective and an environmental policy elective with Dr. Craig Partridge of DNR. All of these faculty and electives add an amazing set of current and relevant topics in environmental studies and support the core curriculum as the interdisciplinary bridge in the MES program.

Back to those thesis students who are beginning their thesis work this Fall quarter. This year we begin a new thesis requirement: all students will earn 16 credits for thesis work. With continuing strong enrollment and need for faculty support, students are expected to complete their thesis projects by the end of the two year program. Not only are students working harder to complete their work within a two year framework, they are working on more and more

complex thesis topics. Several thesis presentations are occurring this Fall including presentations on bat conservation efforts, farmer participation in farmland conservation, climate change responses, and bioremediation on contaminated soils.

The faculty, staff, alum and students will be working together over Winter Quarter on a self-study. Our goal is to critically evaluate the program's objectives, curriculum, and deployment of staff to reach the highest academic standards possible. Evergreen's new Provost, Dr. Michael Zimmerman, is supporting our work to evaluate the program. Students, including a student representative on the self study team, will be asked to participate and help form the program for the future. I know that I speak for all of the MES faculty, staff and students in saying that we are committed to constantly seeking ways to support program growth and academic excellence. Our goal is to serve students and continue to seek innovative and scientifically sound responses to the environmental needs of South Puget Sound, Washington State, and the Pacific Northwest. Our excellence as an academic program extends well beyond our region as we hear from more and more alumni. The year is off to a great start. I look forward to the completion of the academic year with a strong slate of thesis presentations, high rate of graduation, and a high rate of employment for our graduates.

MES Spring 2011 Graduates

Loren Baker

Justin Bombara

Patricia Garcia

Terry Grytness

Jothan McGaughey

Jessica Moore

Laysa Rodrigues

Travis Skinner



M.E.S.

Master of Environmental Studies Program

Bringing it All Together: An Interdisciplinary Internship

By: Melanie Kincaid, MES 2010

Among the many opportunities the MES program afforded me is my current internship with the Regional Education and Training Center (RETC). Although I am sad to say this experience will complete my studies in the MES



Looking up the cooling tower

program, I realize this internship embodies everything I had hoped for when selecting the right program for my graduate studies. RETC is based in the Satsop Business Park in Elma, Washington. This sounded innocuous at first, but as I learned that Satsop is an enormous facility, a completed but never commissioned nuclear power plant, the idea became more intriguing. With cooling towers standing sentinel over the small town of Elma, the image is ominous to all who see them when passing on Highway 12. This facility, originally intended for nuclear power production, has been re-purposed as a mixed-use business and technology park where RETC now finds its home.

The education the MES program offers certainly prepared me for this multi-faceted undertaking. The program itself transcends the realm of the environment, taking an interdisciplinary approach that encompasses topics of workforce and labor, education, clean energy, conservationism, and training opportunities. The contributing factor

that ultimately lead to my decision to apply for the MES program was the fact that the program reflects my personal belief that environmental problems the world faces can only be solved with a holistic approach and requires change in how we produce, consume, employ, and live our daily lives.

The experience gained through this internship was not limited to the work place setting. It provided me (and two other MES students) the opportunity to climb one of the cooling towers. After helping with an event that gave 90 students a hands-on opportunity to explore careers in energy, we set our sights on climbing up the rickety staircase that zigzagged up the outer wall of the concrete structure. Once we reached the top, I reflected upon my time spent in the MES pro-

gram. I realized the experience of climbing a nuclear cooling tower might be considered unique for the ordinary person. However, I also realized the MES



MES 2010 Graduate, Melanie Kincaid with 2nd Year MES Students, Tim Benedict and Garrett

program has surrounded me with people in the faculty and in my student cohort to whom the word "ordinary" cannot be applied. It was no surprise to me that experiences that will follow my education at TESC will continue to redefine the word "extraordinary." for me.

Environmental Events & MES Thesis Presentations

December 7 7pm-9pm; LOTT's WET Science Center
Discovery Lecture Series: "The Road to Recovery for Endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales"

November 28 4:30pm-5:30pm
Climate Change Response in Kenya
Presented by Mercy Kariuki-McGee; Seminar II A1105

November 30 4:30pm-5:30pm
Presentation by Don Loft; Seminar II A1105

December 1 4:30pm-5:30pm
Presentation by Kiri Kreamer; Seminar II A1105

December 1 5:30pm-5:50pm
Benthic Macroinvertebrates
Presented by Autumn Pickett; Seminar II A1105

December 6 5pm-6pm; Seminar II A1105
5pm-5:20pm, Presentation by Nathan Krebs
5:20pm-6pm, Presentation by Jennifer Snyder

December 7 4:30pm-5:30pm
Presentation by Chris Holcomb; Seminar II A1105

December 8 4:30pm-5:30pm
Farmer Participation in Farmland Conservation
Presented by Jodie Dubois; Seminar II A1105

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Master of Environmental Studies Program