



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



# ASLE News

Fall 2013

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

## In This Issue

ASLE Bookshelf  
ASLE Position Openings  
ASLE PhD  
Member News  
Contributing Members  
ASLE 2013 & 2015 Conferences  
2013 ASLE Elections  
VP Candidates  
EC Candidates  
Diversity Officer Candidates  
Interest Group Reports  
ISLE at Oxford Journals Day  
Notes from Managing Director  
ASLE News Notes

## Quick Links

[Calls for Papers](#)  
[Calls for Manuscripts](#)  
[About ASLE](#)  
[ISLE Journal](#)  
[Discussion Lists](#)  
[Diversity Blog](#)  
[Graduate Student Blog](#)  
[Affiliated Organizations](#)



## ASLE Bookshelf

The following works were recently published by ASLE

## Report on ASLE 2013 Conference and Announcement of 2015 Conference Location

By Paul Outka, President

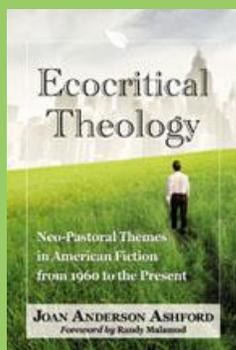
As my term as conference-year President of ASLE comes to an end, let me start this column by expressing my profound gratitude to the membership for the privilege of serving in this role, and for the invaluable support and wise advice I've received from my fellow officers and from innumerable other friends of ASLE. It's been an extraordinary experience professionally, personally, and intellectually, and as Immediate Past President in 2014, I very much look forward to supporting Mark in building the organization over the coming year, working with the two new EC members and new Diversity Officer, and with assisting Cate or Lance as they begin their work on the next conference.

Despite the fact that we had to move the conference venue to Lawrence less than a year before the conference began, I'm very happy (and relieved!) to say that, at least objectively, the 2013 conference was a success. Over the five days of the conference, we offered nearly 200 panels with presenters from all over the world, heard from 10 distinguished plenary speakers, initiated interest group caucus meetings as part of the conference schedule, unveiled a new logo and grant program, and enjoyed a range of field trips--from walking the Wakarusa Wetlands to a tour of the Konza Prairie to the perfect-day cycling I enjoyed with several of you--and did it all under budget and in the good company of a near-record number of attendees. But all the planning we did was only to provide a setting for the real conference--the countless conversations between old friends or new ones after a panel, at a meal, at the bar or over coffee, the scribbled notes in the margins of the program, the good idea, the abandoned bad one, the sense of participating in a much larger, more vibrant, and ever-more diverse community of scholars and artists working in the environmental humanities. That's the conference I saw, largely from the outside this time as I scurried around, and the one I'm really eager to attend again in 2015 (and keep reading for information on where that will be!).

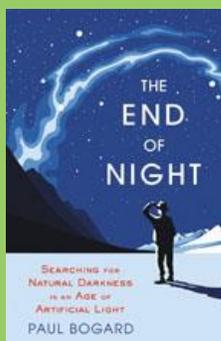
We also took several steps to reduce the sizable environmental impact of a major international conference like ASLE, including an app-based digital program, offering locally-sourced and vegetarian food, creating a bus shuttle service from the airport to Lawrence, and making sure that the conference was as pedestrian-focused as possible. And, as we have at every conference since 2007, we asked for carbon offset donations from participants during registration, and then matched their contributions with our own funds. We made a donation of those funds, which this year totaled \$2622 (the donation, according to our receipt, offset 85,100 Kg of CO<sub>2</sub>), to the organization atmosfair, a non-profit organization based in Bonn,

members. If we've missed your publication, please send bibliographic information to editor [Catherine Meeks](#).

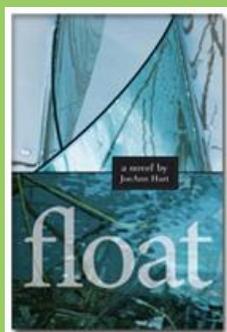
**Ashford, Joan.** *Ecocritical Theology: Neo-Pastoral Themes in American Fiction from 1960 to the Present*. Jefferson (NC): McFarland, 2012.



**Bogard, Paul.** *The End of Night: Searching for Natural Darkness in an Age of Artificial Light*. New York: Little, Brown, July 2013.



**Hart, JoeAnn.** *Float* (fiction). Ashland (OR): Ashland Creek Press, 2013



Germany. Atmosfair contributes to many projects, including ones generating electricity from Brazil nut shells in remote areas of Bolivia, making clean electricity from wind power in Nicaragua, and creating biogas for energy supplies in Kenya and India. Although ASLE recognizes the limitations and complexities of carbon offsets, we nevertheless believe they are an important way we can reduce ASLE's carbon footprint and support our mission by maintaining and advocating ecologically sustainable practices.



*Hermit Crab Feeding. Photo by Paul Lindholdt.*

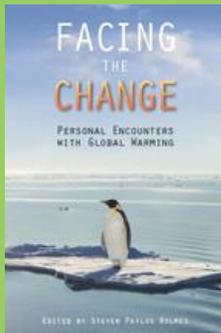
We have listened carefully to both the words of praise and the helpful suggestions we received from many of you during and after the conference. We sincerely thank you for your engagement, which is central to making ASLE the dynamic and vital community that it is. Please know how profoundly the ASLE leadership is committed to creating an organization and a conference that reflects the membership's varied commitments and desires, and the feedback that we've received has already shaped our planning for the 2015 conference. One of the abiding strengths of ASLE in particular, and work in environmental criticism in general, is the vibrant and ever expanding diversity in the sort of conversations we foster and topics we engage. Of course there are real limits on how many plenary speakers we can invite, on who is willing to come despite the very modest honorariums ASLE can offer, and how many panels we can run. But what the Executive Council and Officers can and will do is keep listening carefully to all of you, and to act in good faith. Our strength as a professional organization is in our membership, and our programming strives to represent that strength from conference to conference.

I'm delighted to say that all those invitations and conversations will be happening in 2015 in a beautiful location: the University of Idaho in Moscow, ID. Co-hosts Scott Slovic, Jennifer Ladino, Erin James, and Anna Banks have put together a detailed proposal that has the wholehearted support of all of us on the Executive Council. Tentative dates are June 23-27, 2015, so mark your calendars and I can't wait to see you there.

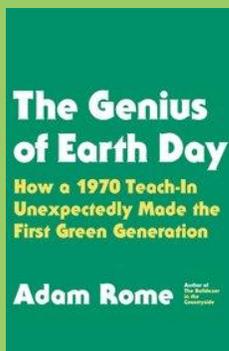
**Holleman, Marybeth** and Gordon Haber. *Among Wolves: Gordon Haber's Insights into Alaska's Most Misunderstood Animal*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2013.



**Holmes, Steven Pavlos, ed.** *Facing the Change: Personal Encounters with Global Warming* (essays, poetry, stories). Salt Lake City (UT): Torrey House Press, 2013.



**Rome, Adam.** *The Genius of Earth Day: How a 1970 Teach-In Unexpectedly Made the First Green Generation*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2013.



## 2013 ASLE Elections

Each autumn, ASLE members are invited to elect a new Vice President and two new Executive Council members; every third year, members also elect a new Diversity Officer, as the current three-year term comes to an end. The Vice President serves one year as VP, the subsequent year as President, and the year following as Immediate Past President. Executive Council members and Diversity Officer are selected for three year terms. Once again, we have a fantastic slate of candidates whose statements are printed below.

As instituted in 2008, this year the election will primarily take place online.

To cast your vote, log in at the ASLE website as a member with your email and password at <https://www.asle.org/site/members/login/>. Once you are logged in, you will see a link in the right hand column under the heading "2013 Officer Elections" that says "Cast Your Vote." Click on this link and the slate of candidates will appear and you can make your selections. There is also a link to review the same candidate statements published below. The secure system will ensure that each member can vote only once.

Online voting will begin immediately and will close at 11pm EST on December 2, 2013. If you would like a paper ballot sent to you, or have questions about online voting, please contact Amy McIntyre at [info@asle.org](mailto:info@asle.org) or 603-357-7411.



Monarch butterfly larva, Olentangy River Wetlands Research Park, Franklin County, OH. Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.

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## Candidates for Vice President

(Vote for One)

### **Lance Newman, Westminster College**

In the post-400-ppm era, environmental humanists face a historic challenge: Can we create and spread new stories, images, and ways of thinking that will help change our society's metabolic relationship to the planetary systems on which all life depends?

For the last two decades, I have dedicated my career to making space in higher education for the environmental humanities. So, I am both honored and excited to have been nominated for the position of Vice President of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment. I joined ASLE as a graduate student in the mid-90s, and it has been my professional home since. I have organized numerous conference sessions over the years, including a multi-panel mini-symposium on "Class and the Environment" at the biennial conference in Boston, a roundtable discussion of "Post-Natural Ecologies" in Victoria, a roundtable on "Cosmopolitics and the Radical Pastoral" in Bloomington, and another on "Race and Nature in Nineteenth-Century American Literature" in Lawrence. I have also organized three ASLE Grand Canyon river trips with environmental writers Ann Zwinger, Craig Child, and Rebecca Solnit.

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## ASLE Needs Coordinators

As detailed in the article in the [Summer 2013 issue of ASLE News](#), we are still looking for people to serve in the following key appointed roles in the organization. Terms are ongoing, a three-year commitment is requested but not required. Appointments to begin immediately upon review of applicants. This is a great way to get more involved in ASLE, so please consider applying.

### Graduate Mentoring Coordinator

Contact: Mark C. Long at current Mentoring Program coordinator, at [mlong@keene.edu](mailto:mlong@keene.edu)

### Book and Paper Awards Coordinator

Contact: Tom Lynch, current Awards Coordinator, at [tplynch2@gmail.com](mailto:tplynch2@gmail.com)

### Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA) Liaison

Contact: Paul Outka, ASLE President, at [paul.outka@ku.edu](mailto:paul.outka@ku.edu)

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## ASLE Ph.D.

**Megan Buckley** successfully defended her PhD dissertation, entitled "'Midwives to creativity': A Study of Salmon Publishing, 1981-2007," at the National University of Ireland, Galway, in December 2012, and was conferred with the degree in March 2013. *Viva* committee members were Prof. Sean

As Vice President, I would work collaboratively with the other officers, the Executive Council, and the Managing Director to carry forward recent momentum, especially with regard to the following goals, which are articulated in the 2009 Strategic Plan:

1. increasing the disciplinary and demographic diversity of our membership,
2. exploring innovative conference and symposium arrangements (including the use of web-based tools that can reduce emissions associated with air travel), and
3. increasing the visibility of the organization within and outside academia.

In addition, I would like to explore regular intensive field experiences and additional opportunities for ASLE scholars to interact with practicing environmental writers, artists, and activists. Finally, I would like to support the recent trend in ecocriticism toward engaging post-colonial, international, multicultural, materialist, and other contemporary theoretical frameworks. These perspectives can help us revalue and curate the long tradition of radical environmental literature that connects the exploitation of natural systems with the oppression of human beings. And that body of literature can serve as a touchstone for the twenty-first-century movement for global environmental justice.

I currently serve as Associate Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences and Professor of English and Environmental Studies at Westminster College in Salt Lake City. My complete CV and copies of many of my publications are available at [Academia.edu](http://Academia.edu).

While ASLE's core impulse--to make our scholarship and teaching into forces for positive environmental change--has remained the same, the organization is now radically different than it was twenty years ago. Most importantly, we have opened ourselves up--to people that were historically excluded from academia *and* from the environmental movement, to the world beyond the U.S., to a vastly expanded canon of environmental literature, and to ways of thinking and reading from beyond our disciplinary home grounds. This evolutionary process has accelerated in the last five years, and I look forward both to consolidating our gains and to opening us up even wider to what Paul Hawken calls the "blessed unrest" that is changing the history of our world.



### Catriona Sandilands, York University

I am honoured to be nominated to run for the position of ASLE Vice President, and very excited about the potential to contribute significantly to an organization that has been so important both to me as an individual and to the field of the Environmental Humanities as a whole. Especially in the context of proliferating scholarship in, and increasing institutional recognition of, this interdisciplinary field

Ryder (NUI, Galway), Dr. Elizabeth Tilley (NUI, Galway) and Prof. Gerald Dawe (Trinity College, Dublin). The thesis included a chapter entitled "Feeling that the room had no walls": Ecopoesis and Moya Cannon's dwelling-spaces," a study of the work of Irish poet Moya Cannon from an ecocritical perspective.

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## ASLE Member News

**Amy Cummins**, Assistant Professor of English, is pleased to announce that the University of Texas Pan American, located in the Rio Grande Valley, established a new, transdisciplinary Environmental Studies Minor in 2012 and had its first graduates in Spring 2013.

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## Sustaining, Patron, Lifetime & Honorary Members

The members listed below have contributed to ASLE at the following membership levels. We thank them for their dedication and generosity. Honorary memberships are bestowed by the organization to recognize outstanding contributions in the field of literature and environment.

### Lifetime (\$1500 level):

Elizabeth Ammons  
Mark C. Long  
Ursula Heise  
Kristin Jacobson  
Paul Rich

### Patron (\$150+):

Stacy Alaimo  
Kate Chandler  
Jeffrey J Cohen  
Annie Ingram

(as evident in multiple new journals, book series, conferences, international affiliations and job postings), ASLE is uniquely positioned to tie together our longstanding scholarly, environmental and political commitments--to nature writing, to narrative and creative scholarship, to environmental justice and ecofeminism, to multispecies and ecological ethics and politics--with newer works concerned with globalization, petrocultures, digitalization, agential plurality, and resiliences/resistances in the Anthropocene.

We are entering an important period in our organization's history. Our very successful 2013 conference, "Changing Natures: Migrations, Energies, Limits," demonstrated unequivocally that ASLE is a large, thriving organization: our diverse, increasingly international membership is engaged in a huge variety of projects, which contributed to a palpable buzz of excitement on the KU campus last May/June. But the size and status of the organization also create challenges: How will ASLE address the thorny question of scale, balancing the merits of a smaller, more intimate community of scholars with those of a large, diverse, international forum? How can we simultaneously cultivate an increasing diversity of scholarship and nurture the kinds of lasting intellectual connections among our members that have been ASLE's hallmark? How can we champion and extend our past commitments - for example, to conferences that respond to and foster understandings of the places in which we are meeting--in the context of increasing pressures toward large-scale, hotel-based events? How do we increase our support for activist and creative scholarship in the midst of pressures toward academic professionalization, especially for newer scholars entering an intensely competitive job market?

There are many ways ASLE could respond to these issues and, were I elected, I would propose to shape the next conference in 2015 in ways that respond actively to members' views (as expressed, for example, in a survey to be initiated early in the organizing process). I would like to explore how we might make better use of the institution of the "off-year" symposium (such as the extremely well-received gathering in Juneau in 2012) to help establish a wider range of ASLE-sponsored conferences and workshops, including smaller as well as larger events, and in places that have not (yet) gathered our collective attention. This initiative would also necessarily touch on issues of digital culture and conversation, both in the large sense and for ASLE as an organization. I would like to develop stronger cooperative ties with our sister organizations internationally, in order not only to create more opportunities for North American scholars to attend these excellent (and very different) gatherings--and, of course, vice versa--but also to continue to extend ASLE's movement into literatures in languages other than English, including support for translation. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I would propose that, at the next conference, we hold a series of plenaries that specifically revisit some of our historic strengths in light of new theoretical, political and institutional challenges, considering such topics as nature writing, narrative scholarship, ecofeminism, and environmental justice in the Anthropocene.

I have been involved with ASLE for ten years, including participation in every biennial conference since 2003 and the honour of presenting on a keynote panel in Victoria in 2009. I served on the ASLE Executive Council from 2010-2012, including reading and vetting proposals for both the Bloomington and Kansas conferences. In addition, I have served as the Vice President and President of the Association for Literature, Environment and Culture in Canada/Association pour la littérature, l'environnement et la culture au Canada (ALECC), including organizing the program for our 2012 conference in Kelowna. As a long-term member of the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, I have developed a deep commitment to interdisciplinary scholarship in the Environmental Humanities and beyond; as a long-term participant in international conversations about queer, feminist, anti-racist and multispecies justice, I have also developed a deep commitment to the importance of combining theoretical intelligence with political/ecological attentiveness and relevance. These commitments form the bedrock of my candidacy.

Jeri Pollock  
Catriona Sandilands  
Jim & Julianne Warren

**Sustaining (\$100-149):**

Joni Adamson  
Bruce Allen  
Thomas Becknell  
Neil Browne  
Laird Christensen  
J. Gerard Dollar  
Ann Fisher-Wirth  
Susan & Larry Hanson  
Marc & Helen Hudson  
Richard Hunt  
McKay Jenkins  
Jenny Kerber  
Tom Lynch  
Ashton Nichols  
Christopher Origer  
Paul Outka  
Catherine Puckett  
Anne Raine  
Kent Ryden  
John Saad  
Lisa & Elizabeth Slappey  
William Stroup  
Alison Swan  
H. Lewis Ulman  
Rick Van Noy  
Laura Dassow Walls &  
Robert Walls  
Monica Weis SSJ  
Priscilla Ybarra &  
J. Baird Callicott

**Honorary**

Homero & Betty Aridjis  
Wendell Berry  
Lawrence Buell  
John Elder  
Cheryll Glotfelty  
Linda Hogan  
William Howarth  
Shoko Itoh  
Annette Kolodny  
Glen A. Love  
Leo Marx  
Joseph Meeker  
Mary Oliver  
Simon Ortiz  
Ruth Ozeki  
Laurie Ricou  
Scott Russell Sanders  
Scott Slovic  
Gary Snyder  
David Suzuki  
John Tallmadge  
Louise Westling  
E.O. Wilson  
Ann Zwinger

## Candidates for Executive Council

(Vote for Two)

### **Byron Caminero-Santangelo, University of Kansas**

It is an honor to be considered for a position on the Executive Council. As someone with a passion for building bridges across disciplines and between academics and community-based organizations, I have always admired ASLE's interdisciplinary focus and emphasis on the relationships among scholarship, teaching, and activism. I have long served on the Executive Committee for the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Kansas, and I have done collaborative teaching and research with geographers, environmental historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists. I cohosted an interdisciplinary colloquium on literary studies and environmental studies in Africa; I co-edited a volume on the same topic, *Environment at the Margins* (Ohio UP); and my forthcoming book, *Different Shades of Green* (Virginia UP), focuses on the intersections among African literature, postcolonial ecocriticism, global environmental justice, and political ecology. My chapters in the collections *Postcolonial Ecologies* and *Environmental Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*, my organization of two roundtables entitled "postcolonial ecocriticism and the environmental humanities" for the 2013 ASLE conference, and my inclusion in a paper jam on anthologizing ecocriticism for the 2011 conference attest to my engagement with new geographical and methodological directions in the green humanities.

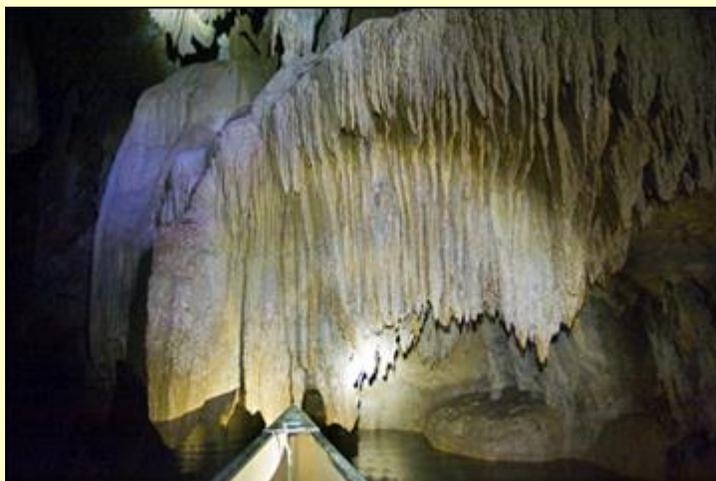
My concern with environmental justice is not just academic; I have worked for many years with community groups struggling against unjust, ecologically destructive development and sought to highlight what the humanities can bring to such struggles. I have been particularly involved with efforts to fight the building of a toll road through the middle of sacred wetlands adjacent to Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, KS; in the process, I have gained new insight into how to build coalitions among diverse communities.

This past spring, I served as the site host for the 2013 conference in Lawrence. The position afforded me a unique opportunity to contribute to the organization's bridge building projects, even as it gave me an understanding of the communal planning and toil required to develop a successful conference. As a member of the Executive Council, I would draw on my passion and experience to help expand cross-cultural dialogue, further develop connections between ASLE and community-based organizations, enhance the already exemplary interdisciplinary focus of the organization, and strengthen the visibility of new voices and perspectives. I would also bring a long-standing commitment to graduate education. As a Director of Graduate Studies, as a Job Placement Officer, and on many committees at KU, I have worked assiduously to improve placement, funding, and mentoring for graduate students.

### **Helena Feder, East Carolina University**

I was very fortunate to find my philosophical and disciplinary home in ASLE as a graduate student in the late 1990s through the mentorship of Robert Kern and David Robertson, and have been delivering papers or organizing panels at ASLE, most conference years, ever since. From 2008, when I was on the organizing committee of the annual conference of the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts, I have been proud to serve as the ASLE Liaison to SLSA, encouraging conversation between the memberships and the continuity of our interdisciplinary interests. I have also sought to foster this relationship in my scholarly work, editing a special double issue of *Configurations* (the journal of SLSA, published by Hopkins) titled *Ecocriticism and Biology*, which included work by Ursula Heise, Glen Love, Molly Westling, Greg Garrard, Michael Cohen, and other ASLE folks. My forthcoming book with Ashgate, *Ecocriticism and the Idea of Culture*, explores the

critical possibilities of work in cultural biology for the humanities, particularly cultural theory and literary analysis, through various examples of the Bildungsroman from Voltaire through Kincaid. My scholarly interests include environmental humanities, ecocriticism, animal studies, critical race and gender studies and, last but not least, transatlantic twentieth-century literature. In these areas, I have published pieces in *ISLE*, *Journal of Ecocriticism*, *Green Letters*, *Configurations*, and *Women's Studies*, and served as a reader for *ISLE*, *Journal of Ecocriticism*, *Green Letters*, and the *North Carolina Literary Review*. As a member of the Executive Committee, I would seek to strengthen the important connection between green studies and the life sciences, continue our tradition of environmental and political engagement, and help maintain our unique, enviable position outside, in several senses. ASLE means a great deal to me and has done a great deal for me, both personally and professionally; for this reason, I would like the opportunity to serve the membership as part of the Executive Committee.



Flowstone in Barton Creek Cave, Belize.  
Photo by Paul Lindholdt.

### **Janet Fiskio, Oberlin College**

ASLE has been a professional and intellectual community for me since I first began my doctoral program in Environmental Science, Studies, and Policy at the University of Oregon. I helped to host the ASLE conference (specifically, by leading field trips!) in Eugene in 2005. Since then I've continued to be involved with ASLE through participation in conferences, the Diversity Caucus, and the EcoMedia Studies group, as the facilitator (with Michael Ziser) of a pre-conference seminar on Climate Change in 2013, and as the liaison with the Association for Environmental Philosophy. I would bring to the Executive Council experience in interdisciplinary work as an Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies (ENVS) and Comparative American Studies (CAST) at Oberlin College. I offer a commitment to innovative undergraduate pedagogy, environmental justice theory and practice, and the public humanities, particularly through a focus on collaborative, community-based research, teaching, and theory. My specific areas of interest include climate change, food studies, and environmental and public humanities. I have published essays on these topics in *American Literature*, *Environmental Philosophy*, and *Race, Gender, and Class*.

My appointment at Oberlin has allowed me to stretch toward the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the public humanities in my teaching and research, as evidenced by my collaborations with community activists in Cleveland and Milwaukee, ENVS and CAST faculty at Oberlin, and faculty from multiple disciplines outside of Oberlin. I am currently at work on a monograph entitled *Counter Friction: Poetics and Politics in Climate Justice*, which examines the contributions of literature, art, performance, and protest to constructing spaces for participatory democracy to emerge. In addition, I have several projects on food justice in the Rust Belt underway with colleagues and community organizations. Finally, together

with Kyle Powys Whyte (Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Michigan State University), I am editing a special volume of the journal *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* on the theme "Climate Justice, Indigenous Peoples, and Collective Action." I also serve as Book Review Editor for *Resilience*.

### **Christopher Schaberg, Loyola University New Orleans**

I have admired the work of ASLE since first encountering the association as a Master's student at Montana State University-Bozeman in 2001. My intellectual interests have continually tarried in an interdisciplinary environmental realm, and I have always found ASLE to be a dynamic node for inspiration and affirmation. If nominated to serve on the Executive Council, I would bring over a decade of work teaching and writing at the intersections of literature and environment. I am a member of the interdisciplinary Environment Program at Loyola University New Orleans, and I am a strong and vocal advocate for courses and research that merge intellectual inquiry in the humanities and ecology--both around the city of New Orleans, and far beyond.

I represent areas of environmental scholarship including cultural studies, mobility studies, and public intellectualism--fields that I am an active participant in with my own research and teaching. I co-edit a new series of books and essays called *Object Lessons* (published by *The Atlantic* and Bloomsbury), which is contributing in multiple ways to the changing landscape of open access and alternative academic publishing. My side of this project is to promote critical ecological topics for the series. I see ASLE as a nexus for writers and thinkers making important interventions where the lines of nature and culture blur. If elected to the Executive Council, I would promote creative ideas for expanding our reach as an association, and furthering our contributions to extant venues of publication and intellectual conversation.

My own scholarship deals with air travel in American literature and culture, a topic that I steer in a decidedly critical-environmental direction. My book *The Textual Life of Airports: Reading the Culture of Flight* (Continuum, 2011) has been reviewed positively in *ISLE* as well as in publications such as *Organization Studies*, and I'm currently working on a follow-up book on air travel. I am also working on a textbook on Literature & Environment, which stems directly from courses I have taught on this subject. I am committed to a wide-reaching, openly rigorous scholarly approach to the environmental humanities, and I would be honored to serve on the Executive Committee for ASLE.

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## **Candidates for Diversity Officer**

**(Vote for One)**

### **Jennifer Barager Sibara, Harvard Law School**

I am a queer, disabled scholar committed to anti-racist activism and environmental justice. My research focuses on the impacts of imperialism and structural racism on human health and the environment in literature and film. In 2012, while completing my doctorate in English and Gender Studies at the University of Southern California, I attended my first ASLE conference, where I found a home for my intellectual pursuits and political passions. I was heartened to find several of ASLE's members hungry to engage in dialogue at the intersections of critical race and ethnicity studies, disability studies, literature, and environmental justice. As a candidate for Diversity Officer, my goal is to keep this dialogue in the forefront while expanding our membership and our range of inquiries to further reflect the concerns and experiences of those who are most vulnerable to environmental violence. By strengthening ASLE's connections to scholars in the fields of American

studies, comparative studies of race and ethnicity, disability studies, gender and queer studies, and multi-ethnic literary studies, I will devise community-informed strategies to carry forward the tremendous work of the Diversity Caucus thus far to make ASLE a more welcoming and inclusive space. I will also prioritize the selection of plenary speakers, the representation of diversity themes across the conference program, the planning of extra-curricular events, and the reduction of financial and other barriers to participation. I would be thrilled to have the opportunity to serve ASLE as Diversity Officer. Thank you for your consideration.

**Julietta Singh, University of Richmond**

I am an Assistant Professor of Postcolonial Literature at the University of Richmond, where my teaching and research traverse Postcolonial literatures; Ecocriticism; Food Studies; Animal Studies; and Studies in Gender and Sexuality. I am deeply committed to ASLE's mission of creating an inclusive community of not only scholars, but artists, activists, and ecologically minded individuals who together share a fundamental concern for the environment and our places within it. I have served on a range of diversity committees focused on race, gender & sexuality, and sustainable food access within my home institution and in the community at large, always working toward creating more inclusive spaces in which to think, to act, and to grow.

My particular enthusiasm about serving as the ASLE Diversity Officer resides in how "diversity" comes to take on so many valences within our own community: Because of our collective investment in the intersections between literature and environments, diversity means becoming increasingly engaged with a plurality of human voices, but also--and vitally--with perspectives well beyond those of humans. Thus, while I see our active outreach to under-represented communities within North America and abroad as essential to mobilizing our community of activists and thinkers, I also aim to foster diverse, even radical, ways of thinking and acting toward other species, pressing the limits of how we imagine community itself.

My primary aim will be to work alongside of ASLE's Executive Council to bring our attention to international initiatives that stretch our sense of place, voice, and belonging. As well, I will seek to establish and strengthen international relationships with other environmental organizations; strive to create internship opportunities for under-represented students; and foster a dynamic group of writers to keep our diversity blog energized and informative.



*Ruddy Turnstones. Photo by Paul Lindholdt*

### **Chris Tong, University of California, Davis**

When debris from the Japan earthquake and tsunami arrived on the coast of California, I could not stop thinking about how interconnected the world is. We see images and hear stories, but the Bay Area where I grew up is now physically connected to the tragic event. The environmental issues we face today are increasingly global in nature. It is therefore all the more important for us to think together and to value one another's disciplinary knowledge. As the Diversity Officer, I will build upon the excellent work that my predecessors have done. I will continue to bring scholars, writers, artists, and practitioners of various backgrounds and fields in dialogue with one another. Trained as a Comparatist, I will be an advocate of interdisciplinary and transnational approaches to ecocriticism as well as methodologies that take into account communities of color, immigrants, women, LGBT groups, and people with disabilities. For me, "diversity" is not only about heritage and identity, but also choices and experiences. As scholars concerned with the environment, we can enable an inclusive dialogue, a dialogue that keeps us attuned to the sense of coexistence that is the hallmark of ecological thinking.

I am currently finishing a PhD at the University of California, Davis. For my doctoral work, I was recognized with a fellowship from the Mellon Research Initiative on Environments and Societies and named a Finalist for the Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship. My publications have appeared in *Chinese Ecocinema* (Hong Kong UP, 2009), *Chinese Women's Cinema* (Columbia UP, 2011), and *Literary Taiwan* (Columbia UP, 2013). Two journal articles on ecocinema/ecocinema are forthcoming in *Interactions* (2013) and *Animation* (2014). More a nerd than a poet, I also studied mathematics and creative writing.

### **Sarah D. Wald, University of Louisville**

As an active member of the Diversity Caucus since my first ASLE in 2005 (when I was still a graduate student), I am honored to be considered for Diversity Officer. I bring an interdisciplinary academic background in Race and Ethnic Studies to the field of ecocriticism, with a particular interest in issues of immigration and migration. Issues of inclusion and equity have been central to my work both as an academic and as an activist.

One of the primary tasks of the Diversity Officer is to promote an inclusive and accessible ASLE in all of our programs and, especially, in our conferences -- from panel sessions and field trips to keynote addresses. I am dedicated to continuing this work.

As scholars of not only ecocriticism, but also of gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, disability, environmental justice, climate justice, and more, Diversity Caucus members are uniquely situated not only to identify barriers to equity and inclusion, but also to envision new opportunities to support justice-oriented research, pedagogy, and community engagement. Consequently, I would like to develop additional ways to engage Diversity Caucus members between biennial meetings.

I would maintain and advance the Diversity Caucus's social media strategy which has proved successful in increasing communication and collaboration among members. Moreover, every biennial meeting generates innovative ideas that we could be working on year round. Empowering working groups would allow us to follow up on these ideas more effectively. I believe that the Diversity Caucus would benefit from a clear but decentralized structure.

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## Reports from New ASLE Interest Groups

### Ecomedia Studies

By Steve Rust, University of Oregon

Ecomedia Studies encompasses a wide range of subject areas, including film, photography, new media, digital humanities, video games, data visualization, music and sound studies, graphic novels, and other forms of visual and audio art and rhetoric that intersect with environmental understandings. Given the outpouring of interest in ecomedia studies over the past few years, including book and journal article publications, course offerings and a significant number of panels and papers at recent ASLE conferences, Steve Rust and Salma Monani organized the first meeting of the ASLE ecomedia interest group at the 2013 ASLE conference this past June in Lawrence. As this field of research grows, we see the ecomedia interest group as a unique opportunity for members to collaborate as we set out to explore such questions as:

- How do we negotiate between our interest in ecocriticism and our primary disciplines?
- How do we make resources in the field available to newcomers?
- What questions at issue within the field have yet to be addressed?
- Who are our audiences and how do we find them?

At our first meeting, more than thirty scholars gathered to introduce ourselves and share our interest in ecomedia. Steve circulated a sign-up sheet and has since built a listserv that includes more than eighty members. Alexa Weik von Mossner has organized additional members from the European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture and Environment (EASLCE). If you are interested in joining the list, please contact Steve at [srust@uoregon.edu](mailto:srust@uoregon.edu). Rather than use our brief meeting time to deal with the broad set of questions listed above (questions which will continue to guide our conversations over the next several years), Don Fredrickson usefully suggested that the best use of our time would be to identify and discuss a series of **actionable items**. To that end we discussed the following four action items:

**1.** *The group expressed interest in developing a more visible online presence and venues to share ideas and resources.*

Many people expressed interest in creating a space either linked to or directly embedded within the ASLE website for folks to share syllabi, bibliographic references, information on films, film festivals and other visual texts. Stephen Rust and Salma Monani pointed folks to [EcomediaStudies.org](http://EcomediaStudies.org) - a blog already designed to address these very issues. Anyone wishing to submit syllabi, bibliographic references, or wishing to post should contact Steve or Salma. Robin Murray and Joe Heumann also invited textual analysis submissions to their blog [Eco-Cinema and Film Genre](http://Eco-Cinema and Film Genre). Immediately after the meeting, Nicole Seymour set up an [Ecomedia group Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ecomediagroup/). Those interested in joining the group, which currently has ninety-three members, should go to: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ecomediagroup/>.

**2.** *The group expressed interest in organizing an off-year ASLE symposium focused on ecomedia studies.*

While a few symposia focused on ecomedia have been held in Europe, such as the Moving Environments symposium organized by the [Rachel Carson Center](http://Rachel Carson Center) in Munich in 2011, no such meeting suited to the interests of ASLE-based media scholars has been held in the US. To this end there is considerable interest in holding an off-year ASLE symposium focused on ecomedia. Literary scholars would be encouraged to attend but the primary focus of the conference would be media. As of yet, nothing concrete has been planned for 2014 or 2016 but folks at a couple institutions have made initial inquiries as to the feasibility of hosting such a symposium.

**3. *We must continue to build bridges between ASLE and other organizations.***

This year, ASLE sponsored a panel at the International Environmental Communications Association conference held in Uppsala, Sweden, from June 6-10. Also, thanks to the efforts of Hunter Vaughan, Janet Walker, Steve Rust, Nicole Seymour, and Nicole Starosielski, there is an initiative underway to start an environmental media interest group within the [Society for Cinema and Media Studies](#). If you are a member or SCMS or interested in joining please contact Hunter at [vaughan@oakland.edu](mailto:vaughan@oakland.edu) to add your name to the required petition and find out more about the first meet-up of that group planned for the 2014 SCMS conference in Seattle. Mario Torino, who is organizing the Under Western Skies Conference in Alberta next September, has also made a special effort to reach out to those of us with interests in ecomedia studies. As a special draw, Adrian Ivakhiv, author of *Ecologies of the Moving Image*, and Bron Taylor, editor of *Avatar and Nature Spirituality*, will be among the keynote speakers. Nicole Seymour and Alexa Weik von Mossner also organized panels on ecomedia for the 2014 EASLCE conference to be held in Estonia. Proposal deadline is Sept. 15. Those with interest in building bridges between ASLE and other organizations are encouraged to reach out and let the group know how we can be of service.

**4. *The group would like to see an ASLE plenary speaker whose work speaks directly to our interests.***

While the group recognizes that the ASLE Executive Council cannot possibly please all of the interest groups that want to see their interests represented by plenary speakers, many people in attendance at the first ecomedia studies meeting noted that while several of this year's plenary speakers--including Rob Nixon and Stacy Alaimo--made significant use of visual imagery in their presentations, none of the speakers focused their talks on the role of visual and/or audio texts as such. There was unanimous consent that ASLE should make an extra effort for a plenary speaker whose work intersects more directly with ecomedia studies for the next ASLE conference in 2015.

This item is perhaps the most complex of those on our list. While the ASLE Executive Council, Diversity Caucus, and Conference planning committee may not identify a plenary speaker whose work in ecomedia studies has achieved distinguished status and whom they feel could speak to the interests of the entire organization, the idea that an interest group like ours might forward names and propose that a speaker be chosen to fit our interests presents challenges for ASLE. In particular, the fact that there are now several interest groups and a proposed Feminist Task Force all clamoring for speakers, panels, and other activities related to their interests puts the EC, DC, and conference planning committee(s) in the potentially awkward position of having to pick and choose between groups and/or place groups in the position of competing with one another for importance, although, of course, we are all generally united by common purpose. Thus we want to underscore our commitment to ASLE and dedication to partnership with literary scholars.



Cormorants at Adams Lake State Park, Adams County, OH.  
Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.

## Ecocriticism and Narrative Theory

By Erin James and Eric Morel

At the Lawrence, Kansas, ASLE Conference this past spring, a new interest group convened to grow the discussion started in a panel during the first session on points of intersection between ecocriticism and narrative theory, two approaches to the study of literature and culture that, though well established, appear to have said little to one another. *Narrative*, the flagship journal of narrative theory, has never featured a special issue focusing on the environment in narratives, and *ISLE*, the flagship journal of ecocriticism, has never featured a special issue exploring the role that narrative structures play in representations of the environment.

The spirit of the group was one of intellectual curiosity. Acknowledging that the two approaches had overlapping interests and possibilities for cross-pollination, the group wondered aloud at what forms the questions might take and what a merged bibliography might include. What might an "eco-narratology" mean, and do we need one? What studies already work to bridge these interests and which ones don't but could? These were the topics of conversation.

Since meeting in Kansas, the group has established an email listserv and a Facebook page through which to discuss possible intersections between ecocriticism and narrative theory, share scholarship, and distribute relevant announcements and calls for papers. Our ongoing conversation has thus far raised the following points of contact:

- Access to nature alongside/versus access to narrative
- Animals as characters
- Chronotopes
- Gendered/ecofeminist approaches to narrating natural experiences
- Mimesis and diegesis
- Narration, expectation, and natural experience
- Narrative and/as environmental rhetoric
- Narrative and ecocriticism
- Narrative and/of space or place
- Narrative as mediator of natural events (journalism, nature, and narrative)
- "Natural" and "Unnatural" narrative
- Natural disaster as plot device, *dues ex machina*
- Person and narration (first, third; omniscient, restricted)
- Non-human narrators
- Role of nature in indigenous forms of narrative
- Narrative storyworlds as virtual environments
- Pathetic fallacy as narratorial strategy
- Evolutionary approaches to narrative/"ecocriticism"/"biocultural" literary criticism
- Heteroglossia and the natural sciences
- Lyric narrative and forms of nature writing
- Referentiality and political context
- Narrative agency of non-human matter

To join in the conversation, subscribe to the [Ecocriticism and Narrative Theory](#) Facebook page. You can also send an email to Erin James at [ejames@uidaho.edu](mailto:ejames@uidaho.edu) and she will add you to the email listserv.

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## ISLE Featured at Oxford Journals Day

By Scott Slovic, *ISLE* Editor

*The Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, *Social Forces*, and ... *ISLE*. At the October 2013 gathering of Oxford University Press's North American journal editors in Cary, North Carolina, I was pleased to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of *ISLE* and ASLE as a panelist in a plenary session called "Developing an Effective Editorial Board." *JNCI* and *Social Forces* are prominent journals in medical research and the social sciences, and *ISLE* was selected for this session as an example of a humanities journal with a distinguished and engaged editorial board.



Coopers Hawk in suburban garden, Franklin County, OH. Photo by H. Lewis Ulman

In my presentation, I highlighted the diversity of *ISLE* board members (who represent twenty-six states and eleven countries), their prominence in various branches of ecocriticism and environmental literature, and their contributions to the journal by way of reading submissions, contributing their own work, and referring other scholars and writers to the journal. One of the issues that arose during the panel was the question of term limits for board members. Our current board at *ISLE* has been in place since OUP adopted the journal in 2008. In the near future, I am likely to be thanking many members of the present board for their service and working to establish a reconstituted board that will represent the latest trends in the field and enable a new crew to become involved in the work of the journal.

I would like to take this opportunity, too, to thank Trish Thomas (executive editor of humanities journals) and

Oxford University Press for being such terrific partners for ASLE and *ISLE*. Our field is gaining impressive visibility thanks, in part, to the support of OUP.

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## Notes from the Managing Director

By Amy McIntyre, ASLE Managing Director

Members are the backbone of our organization, and that's why I so look forward to being able to see so many of you every two years at our biennial conference. This year was no exception; I had the opportunity to meet new members and reconnected with familiar faces, who came from near and far: among the 700-odd attendees were nearly 100 international scholars from 21 countries. ASLE is now approximately 1460 members strong, including more than 280 scholars and writers from countries other than the US. This geographic diversity adds richness to the many other types of diversity in our organization, and benefits us all.

Members are very generous to ASLE as well, with a number of you contributing above and beyond your basic dues, either by purchasing a sustaining or patron membership, becoming a lifetime member, or donating to our Book and Paper Awards. A [listing of current sustaining, patron, lifetime, and honorary members](#) is included in this newsletter. Another innovative way to give to ASLE was pioneered

in 2012 by the editors of the book *The Bioregional Imagination*: Karla Armbruster, Cheryll Glotfelty and Tom Lynch arranged with their publisher to donate all royalties from the book to ASLE. If you have a book out and are interested in this type of donation, please contact me at [info@asle.org](mailto:info@asle.org). ASLE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, so all donations are tax deductible for US citizens.

Because of your generosity, loyalty and participation, ASLE's financial footing is more stable than ever. At the end of 2012 we had assets totaling nearly \$209,000 (for full information, see: <http://www.asle.org/site/about/finances/2012/>). After a successful conference in 2013, we can anticipate those assets will continue to grow, allowing us to invest further in our long term future and to expand our programs and grants in the short term.

As a reminder of some of these program expansions, ASLE launched an international membership grants program this year, and we still have memberships to give. If you know anyone who is eligible for the program and interested in ASLE, please have them submit an application to our International Liaison George Handley, at [george\\_handley@byu.edu](mailto:george_handley@byu.edu). Instructions and criteria are found on our website's [International Membership Grants page](#). Committees have been formed and are hard at work on many other initiatives, so expect to hear more about the grant criteria and application process for our new translation grants and book subvention grants, as well as future community grants, in the Winter 2014 issue of *ASLE News*.



*Billabong at the Olentangy River Wetlands Research Park, Franklin County, OH. Photo by H. Lewis Ulman.*

While the conference is the highlight of our ASLE social calendar every two years, we do have various ways to keep in touch with the ASLE community the rest of the time: you can join the discussion list (aka the listserv), and/or follow us on Twitter or Facebook. Links to join those conversations are in the "[Quick Links](#)" section of this newsletter and also on our website ([www.asle.org](http://www.asle.org)).

Speaking of our website, the Executive Council has founded a new committee to study our digital media presence and strategize about the changes we would like to implement. Part of this is a plan for updating and upgrading the website over the next year, which will hopefully include an increase in substantive content and a hub to better tie all of our online communities and outlets together. If you as a member have suggestions for what the new website should include or for integrating our digital presence, we would love to hear from you! Just email me at [info@asle.org](mailto:info@asle.org) to share your thoughts.

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## **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.