



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



# ASLE News

Winter 2013

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



## Conference Dates and Links (<http://asle.ku.edu/>)

Date for notification of acceptance: January 31

Registration Opens: Mid-February

[Travel & Writing Awards Deadlines & Info](#)

[Pre-Conference Workshops](#)

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### ASLE 2013 Conference Planning Update

by Paul Outka, 2013 ASLE President

Happy New Year from Lawrence, where we are (very!) busy planning ASLE's Tenth Biennial Conference, to be held on the University of Kansas' lovely campus May 28th - June 1, 2013. Despite losing more than a year of preparation when we unexpectedly had to move the venue from Texas to KU (due to a campus remodeling that could not have been anticipated by our excellent colleagues at the University of North Texas) and thanks especially to the hard work of site host Byron Caminero-Santangelo, ASLE Managing Director Amy McIntyre, and the dedicated volunteers on ASLE's Executive Committee, the conference is shaping up beautifully. We're genuinely excited to welcome many of you to Lawrence this spring for what we hope and think will be a deeply engaging and enjoyable gathering. And there's likely to be quite a few of you to welcome: We received more than 800 paper and panel proposals! The vetting committee is making its final decisions, and notification will be sent by January 31st.

Here are five reasons you should plan on attending:

1. **Plenaries** by **Rob Nixon** (*Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*); **Antonia Juhaz** (*Black Tide, The Tyranny of Oil*); **Daniel Wildcat** (*Red Alert! Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge, Power and Place: Indian Education in America*); and **Maxine Burkett**

## Quick Links

[Conference Web Site](#)

[Calls for Papers](#)

[Calls for Manuscripts](#)

[About ASLE](#)

[ISLE Journal](#)

[Discussion Lists](#)

[Diversity Blog](#)

[Graduate Student Blog](#)

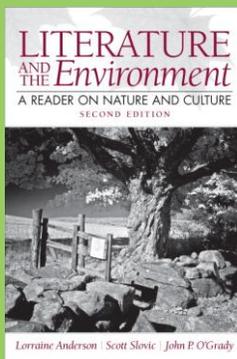
[Affiliated Organizations](#)



## ASLE Bookshelf

The following works were recently published by ASLE members. If we've missed your publication, please send bibliographic information to Catherine Meeks ([catherine-meeks@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu)).

**Anderson, Lorraine, Scott Slovic, and John P. O'Grady**, eds. *Literature and the Environment: A Reader on Nature and Culture*. Second edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2013.



**Fleming, Deborah**. *Morning, Winter Solstice* (poems).

(University of Hawai'i School of Law, inaugural Director of the Center of Island Climate Adaptation and Policy). We are also offering 3 joint plenaries: on animal studies and the posthuman with **Cary Wolf** (*Animal Rites: American Culture, The Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory, What is Posthumanism?*; *Before the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame*) and **Stacy Alaimo** (2011 ASLE award-winning *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment and the Material Self, Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space*); on the Great Plains Bioregion with **Donald Worster** (*Dust Bowl: the Southern Plains in the 1930s; Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas; Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West*) and **Wes Jackson** (President, The Land Institute; *Nature as Measure*), and a poetry reading and conversation with Professor **Jeff Thomson** (2011 ASLE award-winning *Birdwatching in Wartime; Renovation*) and Professor and filmmaker **Juan Carlos Galeano** (*Yakumama and other Mythical Beings, Amazonia*; and a film, *The Trees Have a Mother*).



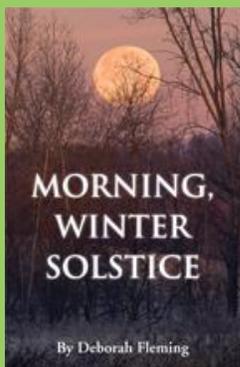
University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus

2. **Preconference Seminars and Workshops** on *Ecocriticism and Latin America* (Jorge Marcone); *Climate Change Ecocriticism* (Janet Fiskio and Michael Ziser); *Ecocriticism, Data, and Digital Media* (Heather Houser and H. Lewis Ulman); *Vegetal Ecocriticism: The Question of "The Plant"* (Joni Adamson and Cate Sandilands); *Ecocritical Art History* (Alan C. Braddock); *Material Ecocriticism and Changing Natures* (Serpil Oppermann and Serenella Iovino); *Teaching a Tree* (Susan Tomlinson and Sydney Landon Plum).

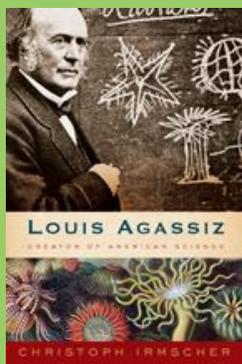
3. **Field Trips** to the Konza Prairie Biological Station, the KU Field Station and Native Medicinal Plant Research Garden, and the Wakarusa wetlands at the height of the spring flowering. Canoeing and kayaking on, as well as Mountain biking along, the Kansas River. Tour of the historic Haskell Indian Nations University campus and Medicine Wheel. And for those wanting something closer to campus, during the field trip times we will also offer film screenings with an opportunity for discussion, as well as a curated exhibit of environmentally themed art at KU's Spenser Museum of Art across from the Kansas Union

4. **A walkable, bikable conference** in a vibrant and progressive college town. All conference sessions, events, and exhibits, as well as all dormitory housing, a number of food and drink options and one of the conference hotels are within a five minute walk of each other on KU's beautiful campus. Bustling and very pedestrian/bicycle friendly downtown Lawrence is about a fifteen minute walk from campus on tree-lined streets, and offers a wide range of local restaurants, shops, music venues, coffee bars, and bookstores, as well as the other two conference

Port Jefferson, NY: Vineyard Press, 2012.



**Irmscher, Christoph.** *Louis Agassiz: Creator of American Science.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013.



**Kolodny, Annette.** *In Search of First Contact: The Vikings of Vinland, the Peoples of the Dawnland, and the Anglo-American Anxiety of Discovery.* Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2012.

hotels. Bus service will be provided from campus to downtown as well.

5. **Interest Group Caucuses.** For the first time, we are reserving a block of time and a number of rooms during the conference to facilitate the sort of networking and affiliation that happens informally at the conference. We are hoping to encourage, without directing, the formation of affinity groups within ASLE, based on identity, language, region, critical interest, or whatever organizing principle the group chooses, with the only proviso that they are open to all members and that they are willing to help the larger organization deepen its longstanding commitment to diversity in its conversations and membership.

Moreover, Lawrence is easy to get to by air, car (directly off I-70), and rail (Amtrak). Kansas City Airport (MCI) is about 40 miles from Lawrence; in addition to car rentals and private shuttles, ASLE will be offering an inexpensive and convenient bus service on the first and last days of the conference. We hope to see you soon!

## ASLE 2013 Pre-Conference Workshops and Seminars

by Greta Gaard, University of Wisconsin, River Falls

For ASLE's 10th biennial conference, rather than arrange preconference seminars and workshops ourselves as ASLE has done in the past, we asked the membership, last fall, to submit proposals. Our choices were difficult to make, but out of a wide range of exciting submissions, we are delighted to offer the following:

### Seminars

**Ecocriticism and Latin America** led by **Jorge Marcone**, Associate Professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

**Climate Change Ecocriticism** led by **Janet Fiskio**, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies, Oberlin College, and **Michael Ziser**, Associate Professor of English, University of California, Davis.

**Ecocriticism, Data, and Digital Media** led by **Heather Houser**, Assistant Professor of English, University of Texas at Austin and **H. Lewis Ullman**, associate professor of English at The Ohio State University.

**Vegetal Ecocriticism: The Question of "The Plant"** led by **Joni Adamson**, Associate Professor of English and Environmental Humanities, Senior Research Scholar at the Global Institute of Sustainability, Program Faculty in Human and Social Dimension, Arizona State University, and **Cate Sandilands**, Professor in the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, Toronto.

**Ecocritical Art History** led by **Alan C. Braddock**, Ralph H. Wark Associate Professor of Art History and American Studies at the College of William & Mary.

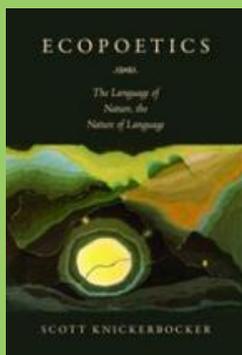
**Material Ecocriticism and Changing Natures** led by **Serpil Oppermann**, Professor, Department of English, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey and **Serenella Iovino**, Professor, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Turin, Turin, Italy.

### Workshop

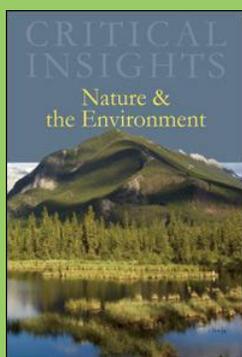
**Teaching a Tree** led by **Susan Tomlinson**, Associate Professor, Environment and Humanities degree program, Texas Tech University, and **Sydney Landon Plum**,



**Knickerbocker, Scott.**  
*Ecopoetics: The Language of Nature, the Nature of Language.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012.



**Slovic, Scott, ed.** *Nature and the Environment.* (Critical Insights series) Ipswich, MA: EBSCO/Salem Press, 2013.



**ASLE Ph.D.**

English Department, University of Connecticut.

Each workshop and seminar will last for three hours on the afternoon of May 28th and will be limited to 15 participants. Advanced registration is required and will begin January 31st and close March 31st (or when full). Some preconference preparation will be required for seminars, as noted in the descriptions (available here: <http://asle.ku.edu/Preconference/index.php>). Because titles of position papers will be listed in the conference program, we encourage (but will not require) seminar participants to consider attending the seminar in lieu of presenting at the conference itself (rather than doing both).

The cost of pre-conference workshops and seminars is \$15, payable during online registration. For further information or to register for one of the seminars or workshops, please contact Greta Gaard: [greta.gaard@uwrp.edu](mailto:greta.gaard@uwrp.edu).

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## Travel and Writing Awards at ASLE 2013

At the ASLE 2013 Biennial Conference, accepted participants may apply for two types of travel awards and/or Graduate Student Paper Awards. Deadlines are fast approaching, and specific information on applying is available at the conference website's [Awards Page](#). The deadline for submitting to the ASLE Book Awards has passed, but the recipients will be announced at the conference during the Author's Reception, see information below.

### ASLE Travel Awards

ASLE will provide a limited number of small grants to assist international attendees, graduate students, and independent scholars demonstrating financial need with expenses related to conference attendance. This year, ASLE has doubled the total funds available from \$2500 to \$5000, and there will be five grants made at the \$500 level, and ten grants of \$250. Students wishing to apply for an award should send an email application to Joni Adamson ([Joni.Adamson@asu.edu](mailto:Joni.Adamson@asu.edu)) by 5 pm EST on February 28, 2013. A special Awards Committee will review applications and make awards by March 15.

### NEW-CUE Travel Awards

NEW-CUE (Nature and Environmental Writers-College and University Educators, <http://www.new-cue.org/>) will sponsor two grants of \$250 each that are available to graduate students or independent scholars whose work reflects the influence of Rachel Carson and has been accepted for presentation at the 2013 ASLE Conference.

These grants will be awarded to graduate students or independent scholars whose papers are written in response to/in the tradition of Rachel Carson's scientific writing and/or written in response to/in the tradition of Rachel Carson's creative, nature writing. The papers do NOT have to be about Carson or her work. Students or independent scholars wishing to apply for the NEW-CUE grants should send an email application to Joni Adamson ([Joni.Adamson@asu.edu](mailto:Joni.Adamson@asu.edu)) by 5 pm EST on February 28, 2013. A special Awards Committee will review applications and make awards by March 15.

On November 28, 2012,

**Peter Chidester** completed his PhD in English at the University of Connecticut with the successful defense of his dissertation, "A Land Choice above All Others: The Importance of the American Wilderness to the Rise of the Mormon Church, 1820-1850." His committee was comprised of Dr. Jerry Phillips (Major Advisor), Dr. Robert Tilton, and Dr. Samuel Pickering. His doctorate was officially conferred on December 16, 2012, and he is currently teaching at Eastern Arizona College.

### Sustaining, Patron and Lifetime Members

The following people are currently Sustaining (\$100-149), Patron (\$150 +) or Lifetime members of ASLE. These memberships are a contribution to the ongoing work of ASLE and help us to continue our current programs and add new initiatives. We appreciate their dedication to ASLE!

#### Sustaining

Joni Adamson  
Bruce Allen  
Thomas Becknell  
Kate Chandler  
Laird Christensen  
Jeffrey Cohen  
J. Gerard Dollar  
Ann Fisher-Wirth  
Richard Hunt  
Christoph Irmscher  
Jenny Kerber



Red Eyed Tree Frogs, Costa Rica. Photo by Paul Lindholdt

### Graduate Student Awards in Ecocriticism and Environmental Creative Writing

ASLE will once again honor the best work of graduate students by presenting two awards for presentations made at its 2013 conference in Lawrence, KS:

- the best scholarly paper in ecocriticism by a graduate student presented at the conference
- the best work of environmental creative writing (any genre) by a graduate student presented at the conference

Those submitting papers must be members of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, or an international affiliate, and should have been enrolled as a graduate student at some time within the previous seven months.

Both awards include a prize of \$100 and publication in *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*. Awards will be announced at the conference's Authors' Reception scheduled for Thursday evening, May 30, 2013.

NOTE: The paper that is submitted for either of these awards must be essentially the same paper that is presented at the conference. Longer works abbreviated for "paper jam" sessions are eligible, but the complete work should be submitted for consideration. Submissions longer than 12 double-spaced pages (works cited excluded) will not be accepted.

Papers must be submitted as an email attachment in a standard format (doc, docx, or pdf) no later than April 26, 2013. Send to: Tom Lynch at [tplynch2@gmail.com](mailto:tplynch2@gmail.com).

### Book Awards in Ecocriticism and Environmental Creative Writing

The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment will present its fourth biennial book awards at its 2013 conference in Lawrence, Kansas. The book awards will be presented in two categories:

John Knott  
Marcia Littenberg  
Tom Lynch  
Susan Maher  
Ashton Nichols  
Paul Outka  
Anne Raine  
John Saad  
Lisa & Elizabeth Slappey  
William Stroup  
Alison Swan  
H. Lewis Ulman  
Laura Dassow Walls &  
Robert E. Walls  
Jim & Julianne Warren  
Monica Weis, SSJ  
Priscilla Ybarra &  
J. Baird Callicott

#### Patron

Stacy Alaimo  
Annie Ingram  
Rochelle Johnson  
John Lane  
Jeri Pollock  
Catriona Sandilands

#### Lifetime

Elizabeth Ammons  
Mark Long

- the best book-length monograph of scholarly ecocriticism published in 2011 or 2012.
- the best book-length monograph in creative writing (any genre) on an environmental theme published in 2011 or 2012.

Deadline for receipt of all materials was January 7, 2013. As instituted in 2011, award winners will be announced in advance and the awards will be presented at the conference's Authors' Reception (scheduled for Thursday, May 30, 2013) rather than at the banquet, allowing for advance publicity and enhanced book sales. For further information contact Tom Lynch: [tplynch2@gmail.com](mailto:tplynch2@gmail.com).

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## Sign Up For Authors' Reception at ASLE Conference

Any ASLE member who has published a book (or books) since the last ASLE conference in June 2011 has the opportunity to meet and greet readers, as well as sell and sign copies, at the conference's Authors' Reception. If you fit this description and wish to be included in this year's reception (scheduled for 8:00-9:30pm on Thursday, May 30), please send your name and contact information, along with the title, publisher, and ISBN of the book, to Salma Monani at [smonani@gettysburg.edu](mailto:smonani@gettysburg.edu) by March 31, so we can list you in the program. Salma and Catherine Meeks will co-coordinate this year's event. There is currently space for up to 60 authors, first come first served, so please contact them soon if you plan to participate. If you wish to sign and sell your book(s), you or your publisher must arrange to have copies on hand. ASLE is providing only the space, not the books. For shipping information, see the "Pre-Conference Shipments" section of the publisher's page (<http://asle.ku.edu/logistics/publishers.php>).

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## Grad Student Professionalization Panels at ASLE 2013

by Andrew Hageman, Luther College, Senior Graduate Student Liaison, and Andrew Husband, Texas Tech University, Junior Graduate Student Liaison

As at past ASLE conferences, ASLE 2013 will feature two professionalization panels geared toward ASLE's graduate student members, though any and all are welcome to attend. Below are descriptions of the two "Topographies of Professionalization" panels, and graduate students are encouraged to contact Andrew Hageman ([hagean03@luther.edu](mailto:hagean03@luther.edu)) and Andrew Husband ([andrew.husband@ttu.edu](mailto:andrew.husband@ttu.edu)) if you have specific interests or requests for these sessions.

### Topographies of Professionalization: Early Career Planning

So you've decided to study literature and the environment--now what? This workshop will provide novitiates with advice on early career planning and professional identity formation. A panel of advanced students, junior and senior faculty, and administrators will extrapolate from personal experience and contemporary trends to explain the extracurricular activities suggested for early MA and PhD students. The topics discussed--funding, publishing, and networking--often find a venue in many graduate programs. However, this workshop affords ASLE student members the opportunity to learn about these practices in the context of their scholarly foci. What public and private funding opportunities are commonly

available to students and scholars in the field of literature and environment? What journals regularly publish ecocritical scholarship? How does one go about reviewing books for these journals? And how might one network in and outside of professional conferences? As the title suggests, new grads are most likely to benefit from the workshop, but all grads are invited to participate.



*Fungi and Lichen, Tulum, Mexico. Photo by Paul Lindholdt.*

### **Topographies of Professionalization: Nearing the Market(s)**

This workshop will help familiarize you with the procedures, components, and protocols of the job market. A group of panelists ranging from those who've read application materials for years to those who've recently obtained their first jobs will describe and discuss letters, CVs, writing samples, research plans, and the interview process. This workshop offers a rare opportunity to hear a range of diverse ASLE-focused ideas on how to find a professional niche in which your personal and professional values will align. The workshop will conclude with breakout sessions where participants can follow up on more specific questioning. Participants are strongly encouraged to bring drafts of job market documents for feedback/workshopping. As the title suggests, grads nearing completion of their degrees are most likely to benefit from the workshop, but all grads are invited to participate.

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## **ASLE Launches New International Membership Grants Program**

ASLE is pleased to announce an International Membership Grants Initiative. The Initiative provides 50 ASLE-US membership grants to literature and environment scholars outside the US and Canada. The grants are designed to help a more diverse, international community of scholars gain access to educational and scholarly opportunities in our field, as well as to advance educational and professional opportunities beyond the US and Canada.

International Membership Grants will provide assistance to scholars who, through higher education, are seeking to advance their knowledge of the field of literature and environment. Membership benefits include contact with other scholars through our membership database, access to the scholarly and creative writing in the field through a subscription to our journal ISLE, and access to the resources and information about the field and our organization in our quarterly newsletter ASLE News, among others.

The 2013-14 International Membership Grants Initiative will begin January 15, 2013. Applications will be reviewed on an ongoing basis until 50 two-year memberships have been granted. The Grants Initiative for 2015-16 will begin in January 2015.

Application materials must be submitted by email as attachments to ASLE International Liaison George Handley at [George.Handley@byu.edu](mailto:George.Handley@byu.edu). Grantees names and institutions will be posted on the ASLE website's [International Grants Page](#).

To read more about eligibility requirements, the application process and further instructions, visit the ASLE website: <http://www.asle.org/site/resources/international-scholarship/memberships/>. We encourage ASLE members to help us spread the word to their colleagues and friends in other countries by passing on the information and links on the new program.



*Intrusive Roots, Tulum, Mexico. Photo by Paul Lindholdt.*

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## Welcome to Newly Elected ASLE Officers!

We are thrilled to announce the winners of our recent elections. Congratulations and welcome to our new ASLE officers! **Mark Long** will serve as 2013 Vice President, 2014 President, and 2015 Immediate Past President, and **Allison Carruth** and **Sarah Jaquette Ray** will serve on the Executive Council, with three-year terms. We are fortunate to add their talents and commitment to ASLE's leadership.

Mark is Professor and Chair of English and Professor of American Studies at the University System of New Hampshire's Keene State College. He has published widely on American literature, poetry, and environmental literature. In addition to his work as the Coordinator of the ASLE Graduate Mentoring Program, Mark is an associate editor for the English studies journal *Pedagogy*, and co-founder and co-coordinator of the Calderwood Institute on the Teaching of Writing at Keene State. His book, *Teaching North American Environmental Literature*, was published in 2009 by the Modern Language Association of America.



2013 ASLE Vice President Mark Long

Allison is Assistant Professor of English at UCLA, where she is affiliated with the Institute of the Environment & Sustainability, Center for the Study of Women, and Institute for Society & Genetics.

Her first book is entitled *Global Appetites: American Power and the Literature of Food* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). Her second book project examines how biotechnology has shaped and been shaped by contemporary environmental literature and visual culture. She is also co-authoring a book entitled "Literature and Food Studies" with Amy L. Tigner. Her articles have appeared in *Modernism/Modernity*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *parallax*, and *Environmental Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*.

Sarah is Assistant Professor of English and Coordinator of the Geography and Environmental Studies Program at the University of Alaska Southeast in Juneau, Alaska. She teaches and researches between the fields of environmental literature, environmental justice, and human geography. Her first book, *The Ecological Other: Environmental Exclusion in American Culture* (2013), theorizes the role of disgust in environmental discourse, and she continues to think about environmentalist disgust in terms of trash, bodies, femininity, race, and space/place. Sarah has been involved in ASLE since her first year as a graduate student, when a biennial conference was held at her graduate institution, University of Oregon, in 2005. She served as Graduate Student Liaison from 2009-2011, and is excited to serve on the EC again.

Special thanks should also go out to the ASLE officers whose terms officially ended in 2012. **Ursula Heise** has served us for three years as Vice President, President, and Immediate Past President. It has been such an honor to work with Ursula, who brought an inspiring amount of energy, time, dedication, and foresight to the office. With her typical grace, wisdom, and intellect, she organized a wonderfully successful 2011 conference and moved ASLE forward in ways that set excellent precedents for the coming years.

**Cate Sandilands** and **Greta Gaard** will be rotating off the Executive Council after serving three years. On every issue, we could count on Cate and Greta for their great advice and timely responses. Cate and Greta will continue to give generously of their time as volunteers for the 2013 conference--Cate as a member of the 2013 Program Committee and Greta in organizing the Pre-Conference Workshops and Seminars, respectively. We are grateful that they will still be with us in these capacities.

## ASLE Founders Exchange Ideas in Lubbock, TX

by Cheryll Glotfelty, University of Nevada, Reno

In November nineteen of ASLE's original fifty-four members enjoyed a twenty-year reunion in Lubbock, Texas at the Western Literature Association Conference, hosted by Sara Spurgeon, Associate Professor of English at Texas Tech University. ASLE was formed in 1992 at a special session of the WLA conference, held that year in Reno, Nevada. To celebrate ASLE's twentieth anniversary, Sara chose an environmental conference theme for the WLA, ordered a birthday cake and champagne, lined up a star cast of ecocritics and environmental writers, and made space on the program for two ASLE-sponsored paper sessions and a demi-plenary roundtable of ASLE's founding members.

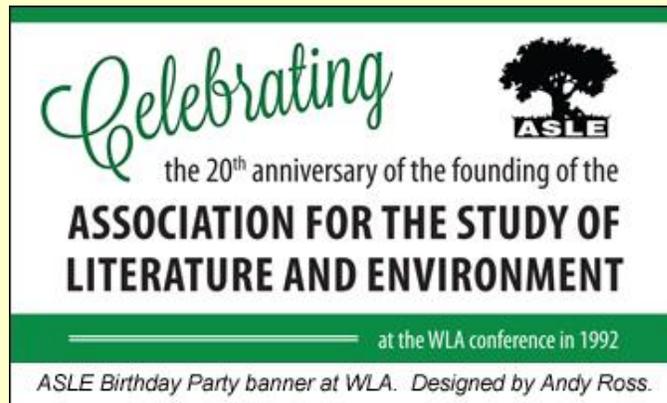
The roundtable session was entitled "Literature and Environment, the Long View--Thoughts from the Founders of ASLE." The session took place in half of a large ballroom, at the front of which three long tables were arranged in an arc, permitting panelists to face the audience and see each other. Floor-length dark table clothes, goblets of water that held clinking ice cubes, dim lighting, and a mobile microphone created an ambience of formality somewhat at odds with the jocular group of nineteen old comrades, making quips about graying hair, balding heads, and the need to wear reading glasses.



ASLE's founding officers co-chaired the roundtable--president Scott Slovic, vice president Cheryll Glotfelty, and secretary-treasurer Mike Branch. Each panelist spoke for three minutes on a topic related to the founding of ASLE, the field of literature and environment studies, or the influence of ASLE on their own careers. Ann Ronald reflected on the parallels between the birth of ASLE at WLA and the earlier birth of the WLA itself at a meeting of the Rocky Mountain MLA. Both began as advocacy organizations, WLA for a regional literature, ASLE for eco-literature. And both groups were under-theorized in their early years, eventually maturing to embrace more complex ways of thinking and analysis. Scott Slovic heralded the emergence of a new "fourth wave" of ecocriticism, with an emphasis on material and applied ecocriticism. David Copeland Morris warned that he saw "new interpretive rigidities," dropping "deconstructive bombs" on formerly valued concepts, such as wilderness, nature, and beauty. In a similar vein, Don Scheese opined that "problematic and flawed though the concept and reality of wilderness may be, . . . it remains relevant and resonant in the 21st century."

Chris Cokinos picked up on the theme of the 21st century and beyond by encouraging ecocritics to read science fiction, while John Gourlie wondered what effect electronic screens--in the form of laptops, iPads, cell phones and the like--are having on human consciousness. The roundtable was not without lyricism as David Robertson narrated a parable of "ASLE the Pill," Laurie Ricou meditated on the properties of water and ponds, and John Calderazzo's poem spoke of the

hammering that can split a rock from the inside. Only one note of regret was struck, as Mike Branch bemoaned that ASLE was not named the Association for Literature and Environment, which would have resulted in the happy acronym "ALE." Nevertheless, he hoisted a pint to ASLE and all that we have accomplished together. The Journal of Ecocriticism will publish a set of the ASLE roundtable papers in its January 2013 issue: <http://ojs.unbc.ca/index.php/joe>.



## ASLE Co-sponsored Panels at WLA

by Will Lombardi, University of Nevada, Reno

As part of our ongoing affiliate relationship with the Western Literature Association and in celebration of ASLE's 20th anniversary, ASLE sponsored two ecocriticism panels at WLA's 47th annual conference in Lubbock, Texas. Tom Lynch acted as the moderator of the first panel, "New Directions in Environmental Justice Ecocriticism," while Joni Adamson was the panel's respondent. Mascha N. Gemein, Kyle Bladow, and Priscilla Solis Ybarra presented papers dealing with indigenous literature, material ecocriticism, and chicana lit. The second panel was called "Chicana Feminist Environmental Writing and Praxis," and featured papers by Ybarra, Jennifer Garcia Peacock and Kristin Ladd. Both panels were well attended and received by appreciative audiences. ASLE made a great showing this year in Lubbock! Look for WLA panels dealing with film and creative nonfiction in Lawrence this spring.

## ASLE Co-sponsored Ecocriticism Panels at PAMLA 2012

by Kevin Hutchings, University of Northern British Columbia

The Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association (PAMLA) held its 110th annual conference at Seattle University last October. As ASLE's liaison to PAMLA, I had the pleasure of promoting our association at the conference by organizing two ASLE co-sponsored ecocriticism panels. Featuring papers focused in diverse ways on the problem of dualism, "Ecocriticism I" opened with a lively creative and critical presentation by Raymond Babbie (Washington) and Seattle poet Katelyn Kenderish highlighting "plant-centric" poems that question the conventional boundaries separating humans from the botanical world. Next, Carrie Duke (Ball State) examined texts by Marilynne Robinson and Sarah Orne Jewett, showing how they engage with and challenge Thoreauvian eco-poetics by questioning *Walden's* gendered symbolism of light and darkness. Edward Schaumburg (Washington) then examined "the ecology of existentialism" in Cormac McCarthy's *Suttree*,

showing how the novel radically questions human supremacy by depicting its protagonist as part of an urban/natural ecosystem in which humans live, die, and are recycled like all other biological organisms. In the panel's closing paper, Alexander Pichugin (Rutgers) opened a nuanced dialogue between ecocriticism and cyborg theory, investigating the deconstruction of anthropocentric binary oppositions in writings by Donna Haraway, Bruno Latour, and Dietmar Dath.

Although the papers presented on "Ecocriticism II" also considered a diverse assortment of literary texts, they too shared some interesting common ground, in this case by highlighting literary depictions of a natural world seemingly hostile to humans. Gary Handwerk (Washington) opened the session with a paper examining the relationship between religion and environmental sensibility in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, highlighting the novel's depiction of Crusoe's island as a site of both paradisiacal plenty and predatory peril, and showing in the process how an ecocritical understanding of Defoe's Puritanism might help us to address neo-Puritan impulses in modern-day America. Adopting a posthumanist and postcolonial perspective, Shefali Rajamannar (Southern California) demonstrated how British representations of hunting and predatory animals in narratives of the Raj in India functioned to support the ideological construction of British imperialism as a humane enterprise. Next, Eric Robertson (Utah) examined Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* from a perspective informed by the aesthetic theories of Kant, Schopenhauer, and Bataille, demonstrating the novel's engagement with an anti-procreative queer sublime in which nature, defying Romantic conventions, "revels in its own disfigurement and demise." In the session's closing paper, Alicia Peaker (Northeastern) gave an engaging reading of Vita Sackville-West's "gumboot poetry," showing how the poet's depictions of British wartime landscapes-in which nature is at best indifferent, and at worst hostile, to humans-ultimately resisted verbal and visual forms of pastoral propaganda during World War I.

Both panels were well-attended, generating excellent dialogue and debate both in the room and in the hallways and pubs afterward. Such dynamism bodes well for the ASLE co-sponsored ecocriticism panels I plan to organize for the next PAMLA conference, which will be held in early November, 2013, at the Bahia Resort Hotel in San Diego, California. The CFP should be posted at [www.pamla.org](http://www.pamla.org) by the end of January. I hope you'll consider proposing a paper.

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## Sharp Eyes VII: John Burroughs Nature Writing Conference Summary

by Daniel G. Payne, SUNY College at Oneonta

The seventh biennial "Sharp Eyes" Nature Writing Conference was held at SUNY College at Oneonta from June 4-8, 2012, and drew nearly one hundred participants and guests including forty-five students enrolled in the associated undergraduate seminar taught by John Tallmadge and Stephen Mercier. The theme of this year's conference, which was once again designated as an ASLE-affiliated event, was "Is Nature Writing Dead?" which inspired a wide range of presentations and numerous lively discussions.

The conference opened with a welcoming luncheon and introductory presentation by Steve Mercier (Marist College) on John Burroughs's life and work. This was followed by an update by Jeff Walker and Maura Toomey (Vassar College) on the continuing work at the Vassar College Archives to digitally publish the journals of John Burroughs. The multidisciplinary aspect of environmental literature was fully evident at the conference, which featured presentations from scholars in scientific

disciplines such as biology and geology in addition to the humanities. One of the highlights of the week was a reading by Italian eco-poet Ivana Trevisani Bach, translated by her daughter Valentina and transmitted live to the conference via Skype.

The keynote address was delivered by Daniel Brayton (Middlebury College), the author of *Shakespeare's Ocean: An Ecocritical Exploration* (University of Virginia Press, 2012). Professor Brayton's talk, "Something Old, Something Blue: Recuperating the Literature of the Sea" was an engaging--dare we say, swashbuckling?--presentation that made the case that ecocriticism should include "blue" environmental awareness as well as green, and extended the notion of what nature writing comprises.

As always, the conference included outdoor events, including an outing to John Burroughs's "Woodchuck Lodge," located on the land where he was born in Roxbury, New York in 1837. Bill Birns from the nonprofit preservation group Woodchuck Lodge, Inc. gave tours of the house to groups from the conference while other groups walked to nearby "Boyhood Rock," where Burroughs is buried. On Thursday, conference attendees traveled to beautiful North/South Lake State Park and the site of the legendary Catskill Mountain House, which features a stunning vista of the Hudson River Valley which inspired many of the Hudson River School painters of the nineteenth century (including Thomas Cole, who engraved his signature in the granite ledge of the overlook). The



*Lichen and Basalt, Columbia Plateau, Washington. Photo by Paul Lindholdt.*

group then took a hike along the escarpment stopping several times along the way to enjoy the views and an accompanying narration by the Catskill Geologist Bob Titus (Hartwick College) who expertly mixed a retelling of "Rip Van Winkle" with a description of the ice age glaciers that once covered the park.

More information on the 2012 conference is available on the conference website, <http://www.oneonta.edu/academics/english/conferences/johnburroughs.asp>. Information on plans for the 2014 conference will also be posted as it becomes available.

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## In Memoriam: Dimitri Breschinsky (1938-2012)

by Tom Lynch, University of Nebraska, Lincoln and Scott Slovic, University of Idaho

The community of ecocriticism and nature writing lost a good friend and advocate recently. On October 4, 2012, Professor Dimitri N. Breschinsky, 73, died suddenly in Lafayette, Indiana. For many years, he worked as a professor of Russian language and literature at Purdue University. His obituary notes that "his primary areas of research were Old Russian literature, as well as nineteenth century Russian authors."

Professor Breschinsky was also a great nature lover, and when he discovered Loren Eiseley's book *The Immense Journey* in the 1980s, he was inspired to translate Eiseley's work into Russian. Between 1988 and 1993, he published nine translated versions of Eiseley's essays in Russian periodicals. This translation effort culminated in the 1994 publication by Moscow University Press of *Vzmakh kryla (Wingbeat)*, a collection of twelve of Eiseley's essays. A second volume of Eiseley's work, collected as *Tayna zhizni (The Secret of Life)*, was published by St. Petersburg University Press in 1999.

Finding himself caught up in the vicissitudes of international copyright law, the changing nature of the Russian state, and the difficulty of enforcing intellectual property rights in the age of the internet, Professor Breschinsky maintained an air of bemused resignation to the pirating of his translations by a Russian author whose enthusiasm for Loren Eiseley caused him to exceed ethical bounds, freely distributing Professor Breschinsky's translations of Eiseley on the internet while removing all references to the translator. This widely distributed piracy made Professor Breschinsky's translations of Eiseley freely available throughout the Russian-speaking world. Revealing his unflappable personality, however, Professor Breschinsky noted dryly that this piracy was "the single most productive 'critical response' that [his] efforts have thus far elicited." His chapter "From the American Great Plains to the Steppes of Russia: Loren Eiseley Transplanted" in *Artifacts and Illuminations: Critical Essays on Loren Eiseley* (2012) documents the successes and travails of his translation efforts.

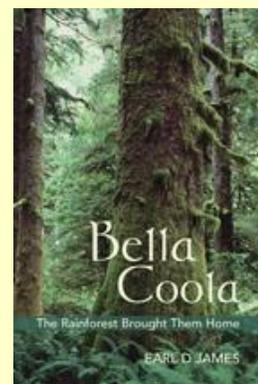
Professor Breschinsky lamented the lack of interest in nature writing in Russia, even noting that the Russian language lacked a term for "nature writer," so he had to coin one, *naturografiya*. Through his work on Eiseley, Professor Breschinsky introduced into Russian, one of the world's great literary languages, the concept of environmental literature and the field of ecocriticism.

Professor Breschinsky's translations of Eiseley's work into Russian were part of a larger effort to draw scholarly attention to Eiseley's visionary writing. He twice reported to American ecocritics about the status of Eiseley's reception in Russia, once in a "preliminary report" published in the fall 1992 issue of *The American Nature Writing Newsletter* (the predecessor to *ASLE News*), followed by an "update" that appeared in the winter 1997 issue of ISLE. More recently, he contributed two articles about Eiseley to ISLE, including a discussion of Eiseley's use of the "time's arrow" trope (published in summer 2002) and a piece on the role of birds in Eiseley's work (winter 2008). Professor Breschinsky had an encyclopedic knowledge of the works of this major American nature writer and a passion to share this knowledge with as many readers as possible.

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## ASLE Member News

**Earl James's** recent novel, *Bella Coola: The Rainforest Brought Them Home* (Black Moon Press, 2011) was a Finalist in the 2012 New Mexico-Arizona 2012 Book Awards, and won a Southwest Books 2012 Design and Production Award. Earl writes for the *Green Fire Times* out of Santa Fe, NM.



At the November 2012 meeting of the Western Literature Association, **Annette Kolodny** was given the "Susan J. Rosowski Award for Outstanding Teaching and Creative Mentoring in Western American Literary Studies." This award was instituted by the WLA Executive Council in 2005 and was given for the first time at the 2006 WLA Conference in Boise. It is awarded every other year (in even years). Kolodny also gave a keynote address at the 2012 WLA conference.

At the 2012 Southern Women Writers Conference, held in September at Berry College in Rome, GA, ASLE Member **Anna Lena Phillips** won the Emerging Writers Contest in the Poetry category (judged by award-winning poet Sandra Meek), and ASLE Member (and *ASLE News* editor) **Catherine Meeks** won the Emerging Writers Contest in the Fiction category (judged by Mindy Wilson, former managing editor of *The Georgia Review*).

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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@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu)) 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@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu)). 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@utc.edu](mailto:catherine-meeks@utc.edu)) with the dissertation title, degree-granting institution, and committee members.