

Master of Environmental Studies Program



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“Man does not weave this web of life. He is merely a strand of it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.”

- Chief Seattle

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MESsages

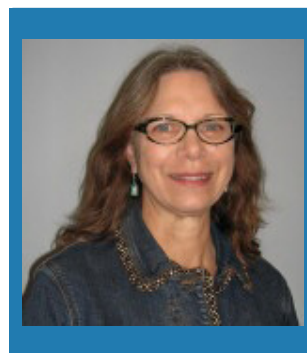
letter from the director

The new academic year for the Master of Environmental Studies program is off and running! It is a pleasure to welcome back the Second Year class and meet the new First Year students. The two classes have been getting to know each other at Orientation, a recent potluck, and through the graduate student group MESA, Master of Environmental Studies Association. Also returning are faculty members Ralph Murphy and Gerardo Chin-Leo. New faculty members to MES are Judy Cushing and Kathleen Saul, although many of us know Kathleen from her expert teaching of statistics and

teaching support for MES grad students. I am in my second year as Director, and Gail Wootan continues as the Assistant Director. Heather Kowalewski is our new student assistant. We are fortunate to have these staff and faculty members.

The MES program continues to strengthen its curriculum and overall program. Over the summer, I worked with the Assistant Director and campus administration to define our curriculum, especially electives. Students are now able to take an elective in one of three thematic areas, Energy and Climate, Ecology, and Community and Sus-

tainability, each quarter. The core curriculum remains essentially the same except the first core class is now known as (graduate) Conceptualizing Our Regional Environmental (gCORE). Electives include Sustainable Forestry with Richard Bigley and Building a Clean Energy Future with Alan Hardcastle. I



Martha Henderson
(Continued on Page 3)

a nisqually morning

By Chris Holcolmb - MES Student

Evergreen students, faculty and other members of the community pitched in to help restore the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge on October 12. Most of the group was comprised of the undergraduate art program, 'Drawing from Place'. The MES contingent included faculty member Kathleen Saul, 2009 graduate Michelle Holmes, and students

Chris Holcomb and Sarah Weber. The skies were clear and the work fulfilling, providing a welcome respite from reading, lecture planning and job searching.

A pair of bald eagles watched from a nearby snag as the group selected digging implements and hauled off flats that held dozens of slough sedge seedlings. Chorus frogs were seen hopping

around the planting area; things will only get better for them.

By noon, the large group of Greeners had planted about 2000 6-inch high slough sedge plants. Slough sedge is a common wetland plant with slender dark-green leaves and a central triangular stem that sprouts both male and female flowers on the same plant. It grows to 3 feet in height when mature. (continued on Page 4)

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The Evergreen State College · 2700 Evergreen Parkway NW · Olympia, Washington 98505

bats in the evergreen farmhouse

By Noel Ferguson - MES Student

I recently took a position as a bat-research intern at Evergreen. I've been a field biologist for about a decade and most of my work has been with raptors. While considering different possibilities for a thesis topic, I came across an announcement for a bat-research internship here at Evergreen. Though I haven't worked much with bats, I thought that it sounded pretty good for a thesis project. After a couple of emails and a meeting with the budget dean, I became the Evergreen bat-man.

Bats are pretty amazing creatures. They, in fact, play a critical role in maintaining the diversity in life on earth. Over a thousand species of bats make up around one quarter of all mammal species. The enormous presence of these winged mavens is essential to maintaining balanced ecosystems as well as providing services worth many millions of dollars annually. In tropical rainforests, bats are primary pollinators and seed dispersers for many plant species including bananas, dates, figs, and avocados. Bats also consume incredible quantities of insects. Near San Antonio, Texas, Mexican free-tailed bats (*Tadarida brasiliensis*) from just three caves consume an estimated one million pounds of insects over local agricultural and residential areas nightly. Not only are their activities necessary and of awe-inspiring proportions, many bats, including our local little brown bats (*Myotis lucifugus*) can live over 30 years!

The Organic Farm at Evergreen has a rustically beautiful cedar-sided farmhouse that many of us are familiar with and hold fond memories of pot-lucks, presentations, and seminars that

took place there. The farmhouse is in need of some repair. A few years ago a remodeling project nearly began there but was put on hold due to the disruption that such a project would have on the little brown and Yuma bats (*Myotis yumanensis*) that use the structure as a maternity roost during the warmer months. The colony is composed of several hundred female bats that birth and raise their young there in the spring and summer.

mariewin.server304.com



Brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*)

Not only would disturbing the bat roost be pushing legal boundaries without providing some sort of mitigation measures, but perhaps unethical, as many people really like the charismatic night sprites. The bats at the farmhouse indeed have a Facebook page dedicated solely to them by admiring fans! (I didn't create the page, by the way!) Fueling concerns about the Evergreen bats is the fact that bat populations are declining worldwide; as of 2002 56% of U.S. bats were listed as threatened or endangered.

Thus my job and my thesis are to figure out a way to proceed with the remodeling, provide suitable housing for the maternity colony, and coordinate between various parties with different interests- Evergreen facilities, the community of bat supporters at

Evergreen and beyond, and State and Federal regulatory agencies.

In our neck of the woods, the South Puget Sound is home to some 10 species of bats. Included are the silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*) and California myotis (*Myotis californicus*), both of whom were recently discovered by Northwest bat expert Greg Falxa to be active all winter long. Previously it was thought that these bats hibernated the cold nights away and bat researchers didn't put time into studying them that time of year. But thanks to tips from watchful backyard naturalists, it is now known that these guys come out to forage for insects on mild evenings all year long.

It is quite interesting that even in this advanced age of technology, when much of natural world has been closely scrutinized for millennia, there are still basic things we don't know about bats. I am excited about taking on this project and hopeful about my own discoveries through this work. I welcome any and all inquiries about my bat project as well as comments or tips from your own experiences with local bats. You can contact me through email at Nferguson24@gmail.com.

Letter from the Director (continued)

am pleased to welcome these new adjunct faculty members. As always, Tim Quinn will teach Biological Conservation, Kurt Unger teaches Climate Change, Greg Stewart is teaching GIS, Kathleen Saul will teach Energy in the Pacific Northwest, and I will introduce a new elective in Political Ecology and Environmental Leadership. Regular faculty are teaching electives in Environmental Economics, Environmental Policy Making, and Marine Biology in the spring quarter.

Current MES student academic work is illustrative of the transdisciplinary, over-arching questions we address in the program. These questions are backed up with excellent investigations of environmental relationships at the case study basis. Current student work is focusing on water and resource management issues, law and Indian policies, climate change, wildlife and plant ecology, environmental education and sustainability. Specific

research focuses on impacts of dam removal, South Sound algae blooms, Nisqually tribal land management, and sense of place in the Pacific Northwest. Student research continues to support Washington State environmental management and recognition of the role of the natural environment in society.

We are anticipating a high number of thesis presentations this fall and spring as many past students are completing their thesis projects. These presentations are a celebration of completing thesis research and a contribution to the intellectual work of the college. Several presentations are already scheduled for November and December.

I am very happy to announce the continuation of a number of financial aid opportunities for students. The Cargill Award, a \$4000 award, continues to be available to MES students. Past awardees were Carl Elliot, Don Loft and Travis Skinner. Carl's research was on forest sustainability education

in prisons, Don completed an inventory of 6000 culverts in the Chehalis Basin using GIS, and Travis created mechanisms for students to use TESC bicycles. These projects are all great examples of MES students working to bring a more sustainable environment to the PNW. Additional financial aid and fellowships are regularly made available through the Assistant Director's office.

As the year begins, I am very proud of our students, faculty and staff. It is heartening to walk across campus and see MES folks on their way to class, library, computer labs, and meetings. The energy exhibited by MES students for their chosen environmental work is generating positive change in every direction.

- Best Wishes
Martha Henderson

the mes student organization

By Nahal Ghoghaie - MES Student

In the 2009-2010 academic year, the social component of the MES program was made top priority with the reinstatement of the MES Graduate Student Organization, which was renamed GAEA, The Graduate Association for Environmental Action. A group of four first-year MES students took on the role of organization founders in early fall quarter of 2009. Nahal Ghoghaie, Austen Walsworth, Shannon Clay, and Cassandra Lee, who Melanie Hagen Kincaid replaced in winter quarter 2010, quickly embarked on the task of arranging the largest MES event of the year, The Rachel Carson Forum. The event takes place each spring. Beyond this event, GAEA coordinated conservation work days, social events, fundraisers to assist MES students with costs of attending conferences and the spring field trip,

and the coordinators submitted an extensive budget request to the Student Activities Budget Committee to ensure a paid stipend for organization leaders in 2010-2011. The budget proposal also included funds to purchase environmental film documentaries, compensation for the next Rachel Carson Forum keynote speaker, and van rental for future off-campus organizational events.

Involvement in student organizations at Evergreen provides students with the opportunity to learn professional skills such as website development, writing budget proposals, as well as the chance to partake in Evergreen's unique nonhierarchical, consensus-based democratic process.

The organization, renamed again this year to MESA (Master of Environ- (continued on page 4)



Dr. Estella Leopold
Rachel Carson Forum 2010
Keynote Speaker

A Nisqually Morning (continued)

Project coordinator, Jesse Barham selected slough sedge for the area because it can survive in both full sunlight and shade.



Kathleen Saul

The ongoing restoration seeks to establish different habitat types in different parts of the refuge and this area, just north of the twin barns, is slated to feature shrub or forested wetland in the future. Barham mentioned that high tides occasionally bring saltwater into the planting area but not enough

to adversely affect the freshwater plants that he hopes will survive there.

Plantings such as this one have been part of an intensive effort to restore the Nisqually delta to the vibrant estuary that it once was. One hundred years ago, a dike was built and much of the land was devoted to agriculture. After years of careful planning, a key part of restoration took place in October of 2009 when several backhoes breached the dike to allow tidal waters to enter the refuge. This instantaneously increased the southern Salish Sea's salt marsh habitat by 50%. Over the next several years, more plantings will take place, hydrology will be monitored, and wildlife will be tallied so adjustments in the restoration can be made. MES students Lisa Belleveau and Heather Allgood, spent the summer as interns at the refuge and continue to assist with all of this important monitoring.

The restoration is a cooperative effort between the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Nisqually Indian Tribe and Ducks Unlimited. It has also been



Chris Holcolmb

made possible by a \$2.7 million federal stimulus grant. Many construction workers were busy building the new boardwalk as the volunteers planted.

Jesse Barham, mentioned that volunteers may be called upon in January to plant willow stakes. The Nisqually restoration continues to be carefully monitored and planned. Witnessing the changing landscape and the way salmon and other wildlife use it will be exciting for everybody.

The MES Student Organization (continued)

mental Studies Association), is back with a team of three new coordinators. Two are returning for their second year - Melanie Hagen Kincaid and Stephanie Blumhagen, and the third is starting his first year in the program - Matt Ritter. MESA is seeking to recruit a fourth coordinator.

They are working to develop MESA's service, outreach, and professional

development opportunities. Meetings take place every other Thursday in the Graduate Student Lounge - Lab I 3023. Their first meeting of the year focused on selecting a speaker for the Rachel Carson Forum, forming committees, and brainstorming fundraising and social event ideas. Meetings also involve discussions regarding the distribution of MESA funds, currently approxi-

mately \$1,000 for student conference/educational/professional development activities to members. They will determine the procedures to apply and criteria to base awards.

We all look forward to MESA's future contributions to the culture of environmental awareness on the Evergreen campus and broader community.

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new student stories

Tim Benedict - 1st year Student

I've been looking forward to these next two years in the MES program for over a decade now. I graduated from TESC in 1999 and pursued work in indigenous advocacy, international conservation, habitat restoration, education, green-building and conflict resolution. As I began to see the connections between my varied interests, I set my sights on returning to Evergreen so I could refine my approach to addressing environmental issues.

Inspired by the innovative work of TESC faculty and fellow students, I've eagerly accepted challenging assignments. With each difficult situation I wanted to know more, investigate its origins, learn new skills and understand how it related to other issues. Becoming a truly engaged learner

is what I appreciate about Evergreen.

As we can only imagine the environmental and social challenges that await us, it's imperative that we use our creativity, compassion and strengths to create innovative collaborations and solutions. Our various approaches to these challenges are unique tools that help us build upon our previous experiences. For example, while helping Navajo elders resist relocation by a coal company, I applied green-building techniques I had learned elsewhere to create more sustainable projects.

Through the MES program I'll strive to pull from my past to create a new future. In particular, I will be pursuing my interests in community-based conservation efforts and conflict resolution in the local and interna-



tional arenas.

While thriving on the challenges of various jobs, I always looked forward to the day I could once again rest in the rain for a while and delve into the complexities I have encountered so far. I'll be studying rural conservation programs and creating one of my own for my family's land in Illinois. I see it as a great privilege to be back here on campus and I hope fellow classmates do too and challenge me along the way.

Heather Kowalewski - 1st year student

I want to leave this world knowing I fostered a greater awareness among my fellow beings.

After high school I continued onto college, and only knew little of the environmental movement. However, that all changed after an on-campus viewing of An Inconvenient Truth. The light came on: we were doing WHAT to our world!?!?! That was it. I had to do something.

The next three years I led the campus environmental coalition; became involved in a United Nations youth-based education program centered on climate change awareness; immersed myself in my environmental biology curriculum; became involved in biofuel research projects; and spent my summers pursuing marine studies, first off the New Hampshire coast, then on San Juan Island, WA. I graduated in the summer of 2009 and this past year I served an AmeriCorps

position organizing youth programs based on sustainable agriculture and the natural world.



I evolved from believing in an environmental movement, to believing in

a movement that involves justice on all levels: ecological, social, cultural, economical, health—a global human transformation. That's where Evergreen comes in: The MES program recognizes these interconnections. Like the MES program, I prefer to approach these issues from the lens of the environment, however it is all towards the goal of a sustainable human society that is harmonious with the environment.

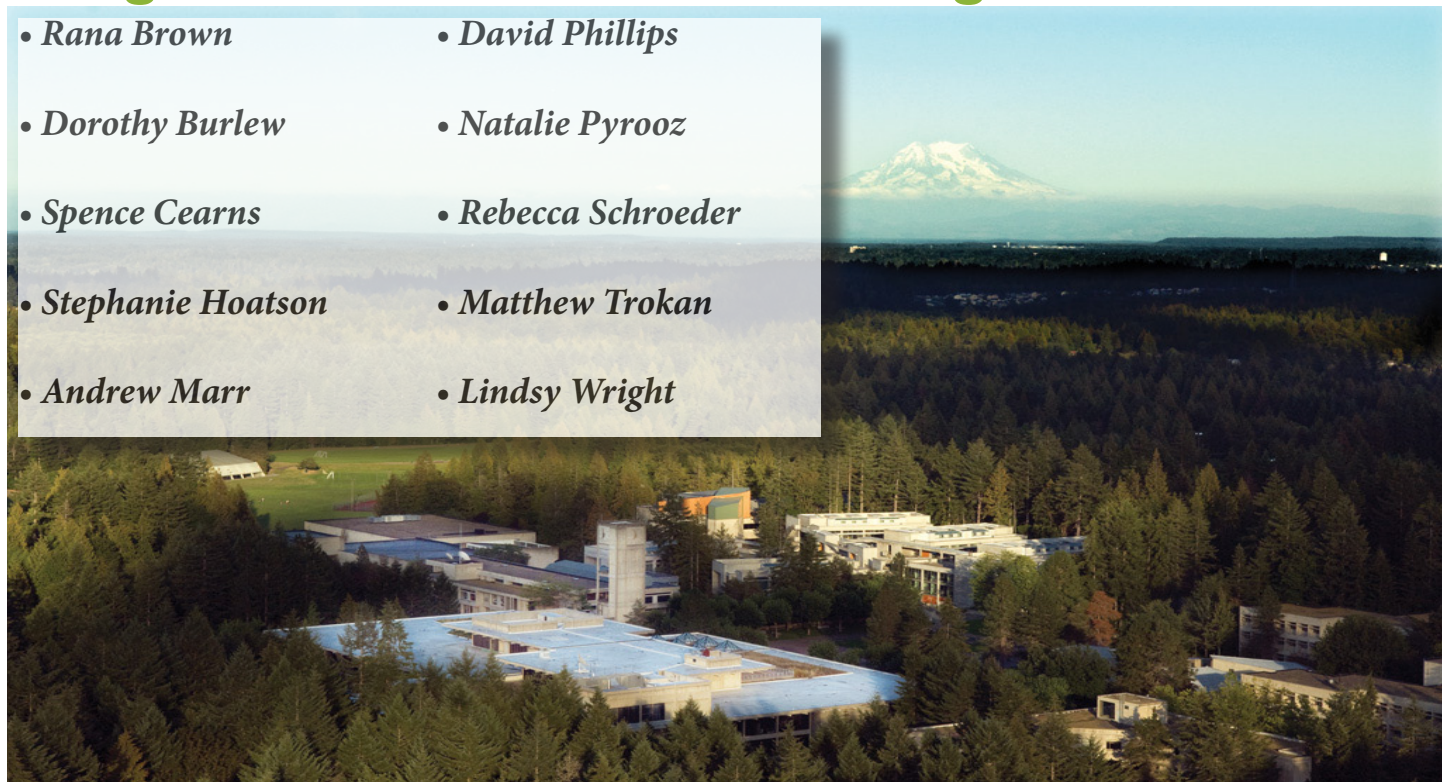
Only through the formation of sustainable community components will we ultimately evolve into a sustainable world. The possibilities on how to focus my energy are quite endless. I see the MES program allowing me to push the boundaries while simultaneously giving me the support to find practical applications for my ideas. Ultimately I seek to combine my passions and strengths in a way that will benefit my life as well as the world.

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congratulations to the '09 - '10 graduates!!!

- *Rana Brown*
- *David Phillips*
- *Dorothy Burlew*
- *Natalie Pyrooz*
- *Spence Cearns*
- *Rebecca Schroeder*
- *Stephanie Hoatson*
- *Matthew Trokan*
- *Andrew Marr*
- *Lindsay Wright*



environmental events:

November 18 6:30-9:30pm — Naturescaping for Water and Wildlife

nativeplantsalvage@gmail.com or 360-867-2166

November 19 1-5pm – Capitol Land Trust work party near TESC

Guy Maguire, guym@capitolandtrust.org

November 20 8-9:30pm — South Sound Hood Canal Pier Peer Exploration! \$10; kids are free.

RSVP at http://pugetsound.org/forms/event_rsvp.

December 8 8:30 am - 10:30 am – Titlow Park Waterbird Survey

Christina Donehower, cdonehower@pugetsound.org or 360-754-9177 ext. 183.

December 15 1-5pm – Capitol Land Trust work party near TESC

December 18 9am - 1pm - Mud Bay Restoration Work Day cdonehower@pugetsound.org

January 12 7-9pm – (video) Food, Inc. (Traditions Café, 300 5th Ave SW, Olympia)

thesis presentations:

November 30 4:30pm-5:30pm

Scoters in the Pacific Northwest

Presented by Heather Tschaekofske

Seminar II C1105

December 1 4:30pm-5:30pm

Cascade Elk Migratory Movements and Habitat Use

Presented by Barbara Moeller

Seminar II D1105

December 2 4:30pm-5:30pm

Elk Habitat Assessment

Presented by Emily Wirtz

Seminar II C1105

December 8 4:30pm-5:30pm

Sewer Overflows with Rainwater Harvesting

Presented by Lara Boyd

Seminar II A1105

December 9 4:30pm-5:30pm

Free-Roaming Cat: Trends and Knowledge

Presented by Lisa Macki

Seminar II C1105

Info. at <http://www.evergreen.edu/mes/thesispresentation.htm>

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