

## Master of Environmental Studies Program



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"When we try to pick out anything  
 by itself, we find it hitched to  
 everything else in the universe."  
 - John Muir

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# MESSages

## Letter from the Director

**Martha Henderson**

The Graduate Program on the Environment, awarding the Master of Environmental Studies (MES) degree, is now in its 29th year. A new cohort of students began their two-year trek through curriculum, internships and thesis research. The second year cohort has nearly completed their passage through the last core program, Case Studies, sailing on to research and completion of thesis projects. From every indication, both groups of students are reaching for their own

academic excellence. Excellent student achievement is the sign of a healthy program, engaged faculty and supportive administration on campus and across numerous state and federal agencies.

We welcome new faculty members including the previous director, Ted Whitesell, ecologists Erin Ellis and Dina Roberts, and science historian Kevin Francis. Carri LeRoy completes the faculty.

Carri was featured in a *New York Times* news article on the

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## Circle Hawk Farm Work Party sponsored by MESA

**A MESA Event led by Kyli Rhoads, MES 1st year and Tim Benedict, MES 3rd year**

On November 10th, 2012 several students from MESA volunteered at a local organic farm. The farm owner, Shelly, has been providing produce for the food bank for years. The students had a great time and



Shelly appreciated their help. She offers internships for MES students, and possible projects could involve building a moveable greenhouse, working on restoration of the salmon stream that runs through her land or even building a small anaerobic digester.

For info about internships or volunteering, check out [www.oly-wa.us/circlehawkfarm](http://www.oly-wa.us/circlehawkfarm).

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## Sara Bilezikian Fellowship Winners

The Sara Bilezikian Fellowship is one of the many scholarships and fellowships that MES students can apply for while in the program. This prestigious fellowship started in Fall 2004 through a generous donation from John and Sophie Bilezikian, parents of former Evergreen student Sara Bilezikian, whose passion for social and environmental justice issues is shared by all fellows. Fellows are chosen every other year and receive a fellowship that covers two years' worth of in-state tuition. In 2012, funding was provided for two fellows! Congratulations to Carola and Charissa!

### Carola Tejeda

Much of my professional and personal goals are derived from my upbringing in Guatemala. When I was growing up in Guatemala I witnessed how the rainforest was quickly being replaced by farmland and that the indigenous villages were being displaced to make way for urban development and industrial operations. Witnessing this made me want to seek ways to promote sustainable development and environmental stewardship programs. I had the opportunity to work in a couple conservation projects that promoted environmental stewardship and I also worked as a legal researcher for an organization that sought social

justice in my native country of Guatemala.

I enrolled in the MES program because of its interdisciplinary approach. I wanted a program that was focused not only in providing the scientific knowl-

edge necessary for working in the environmental field, but also in developing the leadership and communication skills necessary to engage communities in sustainable development practices. The MES program has allowed me to look at environmental issues from multiple perspectives and disciplines thus giving me a more integral view and allowing me to think of creative collaborative approaches to these issues. I look forward to these two next years!



### Charissa Waters

The combination of my experience with environmental restoration and human services inspired me to pursue the graduate program at The Evergreen State College to unite social and natural sciences in a comprehensive approach to problem solving. My goal in the MES program is to advance my experience and knowledge of environmental restoration, management, and policy to facilitate positive interaction with the ecosystems we all share. I strive to develop a sense of place and value for the environment to encourage others to protect and enhance our local ecosystems for the benefit of all life. In times of economic instability, environmental responsibility and awareness can create a sense of hope and innovation in place of despair and increased degradation.

Through the MES program and with the generous support of the Sara Bilezikian Fellowship I plan on delving deeper into the relationship between culture and ecology in order to find effective methods of ecosystem management, conservation, and restoration. I wish to gain a wider perspective and greater understanding of underlying issues in order to find practical methods for creative solutions. The sustainability of ecosystem management and restoration depends on accompanied efforts to challenge the social and economic forces that lead to environmental degradation. Upon graduating from the MES program I hope to bring about greater environmental awareness and inspire social change.



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## Letter from the Director (continued from page 1)

Sustainable Prisons Project! These faculty members complement each other well and support high academic standards for student engagement. I was re-appointed to another three-year term as Director. In October, I hosted the Association of Pacific Coast Geographer's annual meeting in Olympia with 130 geographers in attendance. After four years in MES, Ralph Murphy and Gerardo Chin-Leo left the graduate program to rotate back into the undergraduate curriculum. Judy Cushing also returned to the undergraduate curriculum after two years in the program. We were fortunate to have Ralph, Gerardo and Judy in the program.

Alumni of the program will no doubt have fond memories of reading Worster's *Nature's Economy* in their first year of the program. I know I have read the book at least ten times with a number of MES faculty including John Perkins, David Milne, Richard Cellarius, Tom Womeldorff and Ralph Murphy. Every read of the text with a different set of faculty brings out various themes from Worster's vast knowledge of environmental and ecological history. The text surfaced again in the first core program this year. Reading it with Carri and Kevin brought out a whole new range of themes and thinking about ecological history. Student seminars on the text raised interesting questions about human relationships with nature and the capacity of scientists to approach environmental issues from an interdisciplinary perspective. I anticipate a whole new range of interdisciplinary research questions and thesis projects from these new students.

MES students also filled every seat in the program electives. Doug Myers is teaching a new elective on coastal zone management. This class emphasizes the college's proximity to the Washington shoreline and student interest in marine sciences. Richard Bigley's sustainable forestry class has been critically examining forest management practices both in the classroom and on a number of field trips. Paul Pickett's class on climate conditions is engaging students in thinking about climate change

and adaptations by flora and fauna in the Pacific Northwest. Greg Stewart's GIS class continues to be a popular option for students interested in mapping data and learning a critical skill for environmental work. A number of students have internship positions with Washington Department of Transportation doing wildlife analysis and geographic information systems work.



Fall Quarter is also a busy time for Assistant Director, Martha Henderson Gail Wootan. Gail is currently recruiting for classes in the future. She has invested a great deal of time in services available for potential students including creating an Ambassador program that links current students with visitors who have expressed an interest in MES. A new position as Communications Assistant was filled by one of the first year students, Jana Fischback, and first year student Jennifer Runyan is now working in the graduate office as the Student Assistant. Gail's superior abilities to supervise these students and maintain an efficient administrative office has also added to the program's vitality. It is a pleasure to come to work everyday and I am very thankful for the hard work of faculty, staff and students to make the Graduate Program on the Environment a real success.

Please visit our updated website, follow us on Twitter and watch new developments on Facebook. We love to hear from alumni, faculty and new members of the graduate program's neighborhood. Come and visit us or contact us by phone or email.

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## Alumni Corner

By: Mark Abner, Executive Director of the Nature Conservancy in Georgia, MES 1997

Gabrielle (Gabe) Horner and I met during an MES Orientation seminar in 1988. The faculty had asked us to do some pre-reading, which included an article about a possible ecological survival strategy for planet earth by transferring life to other planets. Faculty had us discuss in small seminars whether that was an ethical strategy. Gabe and I debated each other before we even formally met, though we were both very nice about our differing opinions. Our thought bubbles read, “Who IS this person?” That night at the inaugural potluck we started talking and, well, we’ve never stopped since, marrying happily in 1996 in Gabe’s home state of Minnesota.

We were extraordinarily lucky to have had the wonderfully-engaged faculty and classmates we did. Historian Tom Rainey was director of the program with biologist John Perkins and economist Ralph Murphy co-leading our core classes. We’re still in touch with Mary Rose Livingston and Nordica Holochuck, and have occasionally seen other classmates, though not frequently enough thanks to living around the country. We have kept tabs on Evergreen happenings through our friendship with John Perkins, too. Gabe wrote her Essay of Distinction (Editor’s note: former name of 8 credit thesis) contrasting the settlement histories of Oregon and Washington and how those state environmental policies developed differently due to immigration and resulting political cultures. I wrote a thesis exploring the use of ecological terms and concepts by contemporary radical environmental activists known as Deep Ecologists, Ecofeminists, Social Ecologists and Bioregionalists. It took me a few years longer than Gabe to finally finish my paper and I really appreciate John Perkins’ patience and support. We hope our papers are safely gathering dust over in the library somewhere though there is probably a danger that they will eventually be imposed on the world through the cloud or something.

Since Evergreen, our personal, social and professional lives have been completely woven together. Immediately after graduation, we competed for the same internship with the Washington State Senate and, well, let’s just say that she got the job. However, I rallied and found an internship one floor above her working for the Washington Commissioner of Public Lands. It’s been much like that for us since. Though a biology undergraduate from Macalester College, Gabe was surprised to find her career interest in an environmental policy class taught by Jovana Brown (we were saddened to learn recently of Jovana’s passing). Gabe took the class originally, she says, because

I was in it, and she wanted to get to know me better, but she mostly got hooked on policy advocacy in that class. In fact, she made a significant part of her career as an environmental lobbyist and for 15 years was the government relations director for the Minnesota Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and rose later to be TNC’s liaison to the U.S. Department of the Interior. Alas, I dropped Dr. Brown’s class and, therefore, lacking any marketable skill and not wishing to attempt further competition with Gabe’s career, “tried a few things.” One thing led to another and, surprisingly to me, I became a decent fundraiser for conservation and did development work happily for about 17 years, mostly with the University of Minnesota’s College of Natural Resources and its Bell Museum of Natural History. I also spent a couple of years with the Trust for Public Land and, eventually, made my way to The Nature Conservancy, too. Its emphasis on practical, science-based, collaborative solutions and its place-based focus is a good fit for me.

We recently moved to Atlanta where I have the good fortune to lead the conservation of my beautiful home state of Georgia as state director for The Nature Conservancy. Gabe is no longer a lobbyist but

certainly uses her persuasive interpersonal and writing skills as a regional biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southeast Region. We’ll never forget the many good friends we met at Evergreen (you know who you are!) during our special years there and we would love to hear from you or help MES folks in any way that we can. As one can imagine, we can’t begin to know how to repay the special people of Evergreen for the valuable platform our graduate experience gave our adult lives but we can say with certainty that we are glad we found our way into those MES seminars.

Omnia Extares!



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## A summer in Haiti: Views from a sustainable agriculture intern

By Katie Wolt, 2nd year MES student

On the morning on Samuel Darguin's birthday, I rolled out from under my ratty mosquito net and wandered down the concrete stairs into the backyard of our compound. Over the wall, I could see fields of sugarcane and mango stretching back to the mountains bordering the Dominican Republic. Most mornings, I woke up early to water the small community garden before the Equatorial sun baked the tiny leeks and eggplants into the sandy soil. The garden was covered in hundreds of Styrofoam plates and plastic water bags that had been used at summer camp the day before. And yet, a few of the same small campers were gamely picking plates, bags, and laundry off the garden, getting ready to tend the plants. It was a reminder of the daily challenges faced in Haiti and the continued determination of its people.

As a sustainable agriculture intern with the Haitian American Caucus this past summer, I worked to evaluate and monitor agricultural practices in the La Plaine region of Haiti. I planted and tended a community garden, laid the groundwork for animal husbandry programs, surveyed farmers in the area, and taught environmental education programming to primary school children. I was also lucky enough to teach phonetics classes, wrangle hundreds of excited children at summer camp, and write agricultural manuals.

Development work is made up of profound joys and challenges. Some days were marked by successful lessons in soil health and yoga with campers or kompas music under a USAID tarp at

Jude's Love Boutique, our local bar. Other days in tent camps or rural towns full of hungry children and desperate parents are burned into my mind. Working and living in Haiti is difficult; resources are scarce, infrastructure is nonexistent, and communication can be poor. Damage from the earthquake is still widespread and creates additional hazards as hurricanes sweep through the region. The lack of clean water and waste removal programs exacerbates health issues. Improving the lives of those in Haiti, especially in regards to food access and sustainable agriculture practices, will require systemic changes that go beyond grassroots organization or education.



Thankfully, there are amazing people working to build coalitions for change all over the country. Kristopher Young, a recent MES grad from Prescott College,

has started PROVIDE, a permaculture relief program that is working to create composting toilets in La Ferme Blanchard ([provide4life.org](http://provide4life.org)). His knowledge and contacts were immensely helpful as I surveyed the community. Additionally, I was extremely honored to visit Jane Wynne, Haiti's most innovative environmental activist, at Farm Wynne in Kenscoff ([wynnefarm.org](http://wynnefarm.org)). Jane is developing innovative reforestation, composting, and terracing techniques to help farmers in the mountains. I would have been completely lost without the friendship and humor of my fellow interns and the love, support, and translation help from the HAC-Haiti staff, in particular, Smoy Damas, Lorinord Dufrense, Solomon Darguin, and Jeanide Joseph. Little by little, Haiti is working to restore environmental equilibrium and social justice; it will take many people adding their piece to create cohesive, meaningful, and resilient change.



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## Master of Environmental Studies Association (MESA)

**By Jana Fischback, 1st year student**

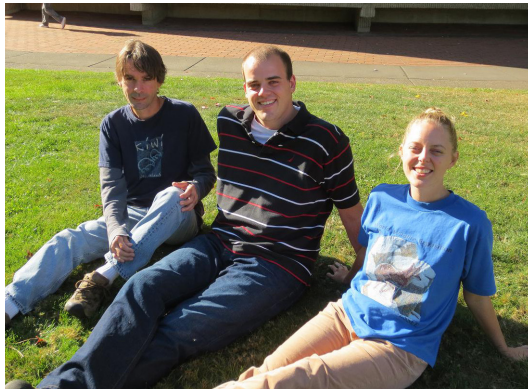
MESA has gotten off to a great start

this year! We have planned fun & educational events such as a Nature Walk through the Evergreen forest to the beach, and a work party at Circle Hawk Farm. We're well on our way to planning the 23rd annual Rachel Carson Forum. Our coordinators for '12/'13 are Jenny Dunn, Fiona Edwards and Alex Thornton. Student reps are Bobby Coleman, Jana Fischback and Jen Runyan. Please feel free to join us at our weekly meetings, Tuesdays at 4:30pm in the Graduate Lounge in Lab I, Room 3023. If you have any questions please contact us at [evergreen.mesa@gmail.com](mailto:evergreen.mesa@gmail.com).



### Meet the 2012 / 2013 MES Student Ambassadors!

The MES Ambassadors are current students who have been chosen to meet with prospective students interested in learning more about the MES degree.



#### Otis Bush

Otis is a second year MES student with varied interests including: land and natural resource management, restoration projects, ethno botany, conservation of the environment and environmental policy and law. He studied for two years at the University of Hawai'i and then two years at The Evergreen State College where he earned his undergraduate degree.

#### Bobby Coleman

Bobby is in his second year of the Master of Environmental Studies program at Evergreen, specializing in Environmental Economics and Policy, Sustainable Enterprise, and Energy. His thesis will address the benefits of community-scale greenhouse

gas emissions inventories to local and regional planners and policymakers in Thurston County. Bobby has a BA in English Literature from Michigan State University, and is 15 credits shy of a BSE in Environmental Engineering (to be completed in the near future). When he isn't working, reading for class, or tending to internship duties, Bobby enjoys spending his free-time hiking and traveling with his girlfriend Mycah and watching MSU Athletics.

#### Ashley McBee

Ashley is in her second year of the Master of Environmental Studies program. She is fascinated by the intersect between humans and the environment, and is currently developing a thesis project that will focus on possible relationships between the utilization of traditional ecological knowledge and community empowerment. Ashley hails from the beautiful Appalachian mountains of East Tennessee, where she attended Maryville College, and received her B.A. in Psychology and a minor in Sociology. Between undergraduate and graduate school Ashley worked several years in the nonprofit sector and volunteered/taught on a beautiful, sustainably minded farm in the Tennessee Valley. Ashley views the Ambassador program as an opportunity to share the student perspective on life in graduate school and life in this graduate program, and share personal experiences and knowledge with new people.

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## Spring and Summer 2012 Graduates

**Lisa Belleveau**  
**Erin Curtiss**  
**Jason Lim**  
**Zachary Maskin**  
**Lori Peterson**  
**Autumn Pickett**  
**Tim Rogers**  
**Frank Sommers**  
**Jennifer Vandever**  
**Sarah Weber**  
**Anna Wederspahn**



### **MES Writing Assistant: Katie Wolt**

Katie Wolt is the new graduate writing tutor for the MPA and MES programs; she is available for general editing of assignments, brainstorming sessions, and specific work on citations, research, and writing stylistics. Come by room 3016 in Lab I on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12-5 and Wednesdays 9-2 to say hi!

## South Sound Science Symposium

*October 30th at the Squaxin Island Tribes  
Events Center in Shelton, WA*

Nearly twenty MES students attended the South Sound Science Symposium on October 30th in Shelton, WA.

MES second year student Teal Waterstrat presented a paper titled “They Live Nowhere Else in the World: Washington’s Own Olympic Mudminnow.”

MES adjunct faculty Paul Pickett presented a paper called, “An Environmental Indicator for Summer Low Flow Trends.” Speakers informed the audience about different topics within the categories of

physical science, water quality, biotic communities, and ended the symposium with the question of, “Why is science needed, and where to next in the South Puget Sound?”



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## New additions to MES Faculty and Staff

### New Core Faculty

**Erin Ellis, Ph.D.** is an aquatic biogeochemist whose research focuses on examining the role of rivers in the global carbon cycle. Her current research in the Mekong Basin (i.e. Cambodia) focuses on characterizing the type of organic carbon that is exported by large rivers to the ocean. Through her training (Erin received her masters and doctoral degree from the School of Oceanography at the University of Washington), Erin has research experience working in streams, rivers, lakes, and the ocean. Her past and present research has been conducted through collaborations with colleagues in Brazil, Cambodia, and the Pacific Northwest.

**Dina Roberts, Ph.D.** is a conservation biologist with broad field experience as an ornithologist and wildlife biologist, as well as experience in species management and forest policy development. Her background in field research spans more than two decades and includes studies in temperate and tropical forests to understand the impacts of forest fragmentation and land use change on biodiversity. Dina completed her Master's research from University of Georgia in collaboration with Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center in Panama looking at the importance of shade coffee plantations for tropical ants and birds. Dina received an IGERT Fellowship from the NSF to complete interdisciplinary doctoral research in a team of researchers looking at the importance of sustainable development and biodiversity protection in Costa Rica.

**Ted Whitesell, Ph.D.** is a broadly trained cultural geographer with special interests in political ecology and conservation. After graduation from the University of Colorado, Ted ran the Colorado Wilderness Workshop, the only statewide preservation organization at the time. From 1975 to 1985, he was a leader of the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, campaigning to secure designation of the first wilderness areas in the Tongass National Forest. He was recognized as the most accomplished environmental leader in the country of 25 years of age or less by the Tyler Foundation. Later, he earned a Ph.D. in geography from the University of California, Berkeley, investigating grassroots proposals for conservation and development in the Amazon rainforest of Brazil. Ted came to The Evergreen State College in 1998. His students published a major book in April 2004, called *Defending Wild Washington* (The Mountaineers Books). His most recent research was a

collaborative investigation of tribal perspectives on marine protected areas in western Washington. He was also the MES director from 2005-2009.

**Kevin Francis, Ph.D.** studied biology and philosophy at Reed College. After graduating, he spent several years working as a wildlife biologist for Mt. Hood National Forest. His graduate studies at the University of Minnesota focused on history of science and medicine. His historical research concerns scientific efforts to understand the mass extinction of North American megafauna (e.g. mammoth, mastodon, giant ground sloth) around 12,000 years ago, especially the way that various disciplines approach this problem.

### New Adjunct Faculty for Fall Quarter

**Doug Myers** is an experienced coastal ecologist, manager and educator with geographically diverse background, grasp of multidisciplinary approaches and ability to communicate complex scientific subjects to lay audiences. He has professional backgrounds in government, non-governmental and entrepreneurial sectors. Doug's academic interests include animal behavior, landscape ecology, climate change, public policy and sustainability education. Doug is teaching "Coastline Management."

**Paul Pickett's** career in water resources engineering spans over three decades. His career focus has been on water quality, hydrology, water supply, watershed functions, and climate change. He received a Bachelor of Science in Renewable Natural Resources from the University of California at Davis in 1984, and a Masters of Engineering in Environmental Civil Engineering from U.C. Davis in 1989. Since 1988 he's worked for the Washington Department of Ecology as an environmental engineer. From 2001 through 2012 he served as an elected Commissioner for the Thurston Public Utility District, a water utility with about 3,000 customers in 5 counties. He has taught at Evergreen since 2009, and also occasionally writes feature articles for local publications. Paul is teaching "Climate Change, Greenhouse Gasses, and our Environment."

### New MES Student Staff

**Jen Ruynan** - Student Assistant

**Katie Wolt** - Writing Assistant

**Jana Fischback** - Communications Assistant