

Graduate Program on the Environment



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"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, the stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

— Aldo Leopold

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MESsages

Letter from the Director

Martha Henderson

The academic year passed its midway point in mid-February. Less optimistic people may think of the Wednesday of Week 5 in Winter Quarter as the glass being half empty with half of the year yet to come, but I prefer to think of it as a time to celebrate achievement and accomplishment. MES students, faculty and staff have all been working to achieve major goals of candidacy and thesis writing, completing electives and finding internship opportunities. Gail Wootan, our amazing Assistant Director, accomplished a huge goal to recruit a diverse and academically strong pool of potential students for the 2013 cohort. Many thanks to the MES Ambassadors for assisting Gail in this important task. Jen Runyan and



Jana Fischback continue to support the program with excellent office assistance and media assistance. Both faculty and students are very pleased with student achievements in good writing skills thanks to our excellent writing tutor, Katie Wolt.

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Erin Ellis Awarded Faculty Foundation Grant



Erin Ellis

Erin Ellis, first year MES faculty member, was awarded a Faculty Foundation grant to continue her ongoing research on the global carbon cycle. She will be investigating the age of carbon exported by the Queets River, which drains a pristine temperate watershed located within the Olympic Peninsula. Specifically, Erin will use radiocarbon dating to determine temporal variability in the age of carbon carried by the Queets that is ultimately derived from vascular plants. Through this work, she will provide baseline data that can be used to assess how climate change will impact carbon storage within temperate watersheds. Erin earned her Ph.D. in Oceanography from the University of Washington in 2012.

Congratulations Erin!

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Reflections from a WSDOT Intern

By Sam Wilson, MES 1st Year

It was just about this time last year when I started the application process for the Washington Department of Transportation's Stormwater Features Inventory (WSDOT SFI) Internship. Back then, I didn't know whether I would be studying here in Olympia or working either in Birmingham or San Francisco. All three of the opportunities in front of me at the time looked great, but after visiting and falling in love with Olympia, I decided to move up here to the great Pacific Northwest.

And I'm glad I did.

These past two quarters in the MES program and with WSDOT have really helped me to get my thinking cap on again after taking some time away from academia. Even though it feels like one of those 20 pound tropical cornucopia hats sometimes, which makes it hard to get up in the morning and difficult to balance while juggling my schedule, I've grown more as a student in this short time than I ever did in undergrad. Although the WSDOT Stormwater Internship focuses on GIS and map creation, I've reinforced other skills as well like having patience with Windows and managing my time outside of work and class more effectively.

To be honest, I came in to this internship with a bit of a GIS chip on my shoulder. I used the program quite a bit in undergrad and especially during my senior thesis project. That chip didn't last for very long. The capabilities of this program seem endless and are truly unique. There's always something more to learn from and to be done with the program. For those of you who haven't had much experience with GIS, believe me when I say that this program has the power to change the way we think about and act on environmental problems. It has the power to affect pragmatic environmental solutions by mapping complex problems and making them aesthetically pleasing and easy to understand in the process. I'm not saying that the first thing I think to myself when I wake up is, "I'm going to change the world today" or anything, but what we do at WSDOT SFI is vital to our state's natural quality and economy.

In case you've forgotten, it rains a lot here and in urban environments much of the ground is impervious to water, meaning that it has to be routed somewhere. This is where we come in to the picture. At WSDOT SFI, it is our job to track where the water goes and how it gets there. We interns help to accomplish this goal both in the office and in the field. Days spent in the field are fun and educational, especially when we work with Tim Hall, the SFI Inventory Lead and Data Steward. Tim's enthusiasm and dedication never fails to get the group excited about ditches, drains, and catch basins (I'm serious; he's like the Leslie Knope of WSDOT). We usually work in teams of three during field days: one person manages the portable GIS computer, one person measures and photo-documents features, and one gets it all on paper in one of our many Rite-In-The-Rain notebooks. Field days have yielded some good B-side experiences that include seeing six bald eagles, hearing doomsday messages from shaman-like travelers, and eating my first hamburger after being a vegetarian for eight years (seriously, you have to try Gourmet Burgers on SR 3 near Gig Harbor).

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WSDOT SIF Interns in the Field

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Letter from the Director (continued from page 1)

The half-way point in the academic year also brings the yearly meeting of the National Council for Science and the Environment in Washington, D.C. The college generously maintains our program membership in the Council. This year, the meeting focused on environmental disasters with sessions on the sciences that help us understand why natural disasters are occurring, how to prepare and respond to disasters, and what community resilience can look like following a disaster. The sessions addressed disasters related to changing weather and climate patterns, wildland fires, social impacts, and resolving the potentials of conflict due to disasters. One of our MES graduates, Joel Clement, Director of the Office of Policy Analysis, U.S. Department of the Interior, addressed the Changing Arctic session on the role of ecosystem management for Arctic habitats and species.

I returned from the Council meeting confident that our curriculum is already addressing the issues of natural disaster and community resilience. The entire interdisciplinary perspective pulls together ways of thinking about regions of concern from a systems approach. Core classes integrate the sciences necessary to think about disasters and resilience from a systems perspective. Our electives in forestry and wildland fire events, watersheds and carbon systems, energy and climate conditions, and community choices continue to place our program at the leading edge of environmental knowledge and problem solving. An elective course on disaster events and community resilience to be offered next fall will add one more opportunity for students to investigate what is rapidly becoming the new world of environmental work. MES involvement with TEDxTheEvergreenStateCollege is another indication of our leadership in this area (see page 8).

We will continue to fill this year's academic 'glass' with the completion of thesis presentations at the end of Winter Quarter. The first year cohort will become full candidates as they complete the Winter Quarter core program. The second year cohort will be enrolling in their last quarter to complete their thesis projects. Their glasses are nearly full! Thankfully, we celebrate a great first half of the year, and continue our dedication to complete the second half of the year.

In Remembrance

Bonita Evans 1930-2012

Bonita Evans, a retired Evergreen staff member, recently passed away. She worked in Academics at Evergreen for 14 years until her retirement in 2000. For 10 of those years she supported both the Master of Public Administration and Master of Environmental Studies programs. Bonita was described by former students as a warm, encouraging supporter of graduate students. "She had a ready smile and willingness to help."

Jovana Jones Brown, 1937-2012 William H. "Bill" Brown, 1928-2012

Two long-time Evergreen faculty members, husband and wife Bill and Jovana J. Brown, died in August. Both Bill and Jovana were great contributors to environmental studies and interdisciplinary programs at Evergreen. They were significant teachers and supporters of the Graduate Program on the Environment. Jovana taught MES courses and both chaired numerous thesis projects.

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Kara and Katie go to D.C.

By Kara Karboski & Katie Wolt, MES 2nd Years

Hey Kara! How are you doing?

I'm doing great!

Let's talk about the trip we just took.

Sure! Sounds pretty good.

Can you tell me a little about the conference?

Yeah! So, we went to the National Council for Science and the Environment conference on disasters and the environment, which was sort of an inter-agency, inter-sector gathering that looked at the role of science in preparedness for disasters and climate change. It emphasized community resilience for urban areas and cities and rural areas as well. It was cool!

It was really interesting to see the current state of disaster research – I kind of feel like government agencies are a little behind in general, federal agencies as well, so it was great to see that they are coming along to the idea of interdisciplinary work. What about you?

I had a fabulous time! Although it was a little depressing from time to time, I enjoyed gaining perspectives on research areas that I'm interested in. I learned a lot about gathering statistics during disasters, especially related to secondary mortalities. I was really interested to see how these agencies work together, or don't work together, to deliver resilience and preparedness in real life.

So what was your favorite part of the conference?

Getting excited every time they emphasized interdisciplinary work and social science research! Overall I felt like the conference reaffirmed my research and participation in the MES program. It also reaffirmed the fact that working for a big agency can be difficult. I really adored Bernie Goldstein and Kathleen Tierney [Ed. note: Goldstein is chair of the coordinating committee of the Gulf Region Health Outreach Program. Tierney is the Director of the Natural Hazard Center at the University of Colorado.] There are some awesome people out there doing this work.

Yeah, Kathleen Tierney was a rock star! We were really nerding out.

She had the looks of David Bowie and the honesty of old Abe. She really emphasized the importance of social networks and the impacts of social inequalities on disaster preparedness and resilience. Also, Margaret Arnold of the World Bank had some great comments about gender-specific disaster preparedness and the

ability of disenfranchised people to manage risk.

I was just thinking how I had expectations of certain people and what they would present; they sort of blew away my expectations of the agencies on the whole.

But also, [FEMA chief] Fugate started talking about the insurance industry and disasters, but then turned it on its head to talk about how the system is not taking into account long-term incentives – too much of a focus on short term efficiency and profit.



Kara & Katie give a thumbs up to Martha Henderson, MES Director

So even though it was very agency centered, there was a lot more innovative talk from these folks than I thought there would be. They were more than “Fedlandia,” as one presenter crazily said over and over again.

Yep, we met a lot of cool people. And some crazy people too. Is there anything else we want to share? We had some delicious tacos at a food truck. Kimchee on tacos is always a good idea. What about you?

The forensic anthropology exhibit at the Natural History museum was great. Syphilitic skulls, that WSU professor's skeleton, it was creepy. Also, the Insect Zoo.

Yeah, you really loved that ant tunnel.

I sure did. Thanks for being such a great travel buddy! You were a great travel buddy, too. Thanks, DC! And thanks to MES for funding our registration!

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Northwest Impressions on Out-of-State Students

We interviewed four MES students who moved to Washington for Evergreen's Graduate Program on the Environment, to see what their impressions have been so far. Robyn Andrusyszyn is a second year student from Liverpool, NY. Rich Stein is a first year student who came here from New York City but lived in Michigan for most of his life. Jenny Dunn is a first year student from The Woodlands, Texas. Ashley McBee is a second year student from the Appalachian Mountains in East Tennessee.

Had you visited Washington before moving here for school?

Robyn: Twice, but only briefly. One of those trips was to check out Evergreen before I decided to move here.

Rich: My girlfriend and I visited last year for over a week to get to know the area. We flew into Portland to visit my aunt and uncle and their family in Vancouver (WA) for a couple of days, then drove up to Seattle where we stayed the rest of the time.

Jenny: Nope!

Ashley: Yes, to visit Evergreen.

How much did Evergreen's location play a part in your decision to chose MES?

Robyn: Entirely - I found Evergreen by looking for schools out West.

Rich: The Pacific Northwest seems to be at the forefront of the environmental and sustainable energy movement, so this seems to be a great place to study these issues. Also, the abundance of nature is extraordinary. And I also like being near oceans, so all of these things made it attractive.

Jenny: I applied to the MES program because it was an interdisciplinary program, but the location of the school was a bonus. It definitely made me more excited to move out here; with all the mountains and water around, the outdoor activities are endless.

Ashley: I visited some wonderful schools scattered throughout some great areas in the West, but was absolutely enchanted with Washington from the moment I stepped out of the airport. I knew the morning I left Evergreen (at 5am in a charter van) that I would be back here someday - if not for graduate school, for some other wonderful life experience.

What did you think of Washington when you first got here? Any stereotypes proven or disproven?

Robyn: It was beautiful and green - winter and spring look pretty drab back East in comparison. Olympians definitely fit the laid-back "hippy" stereotype that I kept hearing about. What really surprised me is the difference in how people communicate - usually when talking to someone from the East Coast they are very upfront and honest (sometimes brutally), keeping details short and to the point. However here, especially at Evergreen itself, there is a lot more discussion and support, people are too nice and non-judgmental to tell you their opinion with brutal honesty.

Rich: It's very, very green! I was impressed with all of the tall evergreen trees. The only other place I have seen these types of trees was in Maine and other parts of New England. But here in Washington they are everywhere--even around Seattle. The view of the Cascade and Olympic Mountains is breathtaking. Nowhere else have I seen mountains so close to where I live. The people here are rather polite. Although, it is difficult to meet people. Maybe it's because I'm not in my 20s anymore! But, I think that the stereotype of the "Seattle Freeze" is real. People don't like to be confronted directly as they do in New York, and since I had picked up on the NY way of approach over the years, I have to learn to back off so as not to appear "rude." But one stereotype that - so far- has been disproven for me is the rain. I was afraid I'd have to permanently say "goodbye" to the sun, terrible. In general, the weather has been pleasant. I left before Superstorm Sandy and this latest major blizzard - so I shouldn't complain!

Jenny: I did not understand why everyone complained about the rain because my first two weeks here it did not rain at all. But after a few months of living in WA I'm starting to understand how the rain can get boring and why Pacific Northwest residents drink so much coffee! You do it just to stay awake on dreary days! Also it's fairly obvious to tell who isn't originally from Washington because they walk around with umbrellas (me included) while everyone else just ignores the rain and pulls their hood on.

Ashley: I was drawn to and continue to be comforted and amazed by the similarities in climate and vegetation between the Smoky Mountains and Western Washington. Simultaneously, I was drawn to Western Washington, and continue to be challenged and amazed by the cultural differences and opportunities to widen my perspective and learn new skills.

What are some of the interesting differences in this area compared to where you came from?

Robyn: People here aren't nearly as hesitant to get outside in rainy yucky weather. It seems that more often than not people in New York hide in their houses during inclement weather (and get grumpy). Also most people have veggie gardens, compost piles, and maybe even a few chickens out here. It's almost unheard of for people to own chickens or have productive gardens in NY.

Rich: One of the biggest differences is diversity. In New York there is at least one person from every country in the world. Also, the density of people is far less. I would walk out of my apartment every day and see dozens of people walking the streets, and I rarely see the same people twice. I liked that anonymity sometimes.

Another is the fact that almost everyone drives here. I never drove in New York and had never in my life owned my own car--I borrowed my parent's car in Ohio until I left, and never owned one until I got to

Washington State. Something I like here, that isn't out East, is the plentitude of microbrews! They are just starting to sprout around the NYC Metro area, but they got a long way to go to catch up with the West Coast microbrew culture. I also like the attention to local and organic foods around here.

Jenny: I'm still getting used to all the organic food options here and how everyone it seems grows some sort of produce on their own. The availability and set up of the farmers market is nice. We only have a farmers market back home during May-August and here the markets are open longer. Also, all the seafood is amazing to me. I cracked a crab after it was boiled for the first time last week and it was so much fun and delicious. Hopefully with the help of some of my grad school friends, I'll learn how to cook seafood better! Lastly, the biggest difference is the option for outdoor activities. Back home in Texas (at least where I'm from), there isn't much option for hiking, but with the mountains so close here, I can go hiking whenever I want to.

What do you miss most about back home?

Robyn: Fall in the Adirondacks.

Rich: The culture, being able to jump on the subway to get around, ethnic foods, diversity, random conversations on the streets, the convenience of getting just about anything I need at 3am, the friends I made, the quick pace. Of course, I think of it all nostalgically now--it can actually be stressful out there!

Jenny: Thunder and my family. I know missing thunder sounds silly, but having so much rain up here, you never hear thunder, which I feel like I took for granted back home. It is so much easier to fall asleep to the sound of thunder and it at least makes the rain somewhat exciting. I'm used to living elsewhere especially after going to college out of state, but I still miss my family on occasion.

Ashley: The ancient mountains that host world-renowned scores of biodiversity and are also home to my heritage and roots. I miss Southern charms and graces. I sorely miss Southern comfort foods and front porches filled with family members and yards filled with playing children. Oh, and I would give an eye tooth for an evening full of lightning bugs and the sweet serenade of katydids.

WSDOT Internship (continued from page 2)

Our more laid-back office days have been very helpful in improving my GIS skills as well as my general understanding of how roads are constructed. You'd be surprised how much attention is given to stormwater. These days consist of the interns mapping stormwater conveyance and identifying discharges on GIS with the aid of the ever-helpful Jennie Husby (MES '12). I have to say that I enjoy these days almost as much as working in the field. It's like Sim City for grownups if you take out the aliens and tornados. Lately, we've been working with roadway construction contracts from as far back as 1975. It has been really neat to see the evolution in stormwater conveyance over the years. Washington has done a good job of reducing the amount of dirty stormwater routed directly to water bodies. Most of the runoff is treated in one way or another.

Working with WSDOT is a great idea for any MES student. As future and current environmental professionals, we can all make ourselves more valuable employees and Earth-savers by becoming more familiar with GIS. Whether you're interested in urban policy or restoration ecology, GIS is a skill that you will need in the future. I would recommend this internship to anyone in our program. It's a great opportunity to familiarize yourself with GIS, learn more about stormwater conveyance and related environmental policy, and work with some of the most dedicated state employees I've ever met. This has been a truly unique experience that I wish I could continue.

[Ed. note: The WSDOT SFI internship is available on a quarterly basis for 3-4 MES students. It is a paid internship. Please contact Gail Wootan at wootang@evergreen.edu if interested in applying.]

Graduation 2013

Graduation is Friday, June 14, 2013! MES will host its own Hooding Ceremony in the morning and the main ceremony on Red Square starts at 1pm. Graduates will receive more information by email about the Hooding Ceremony and applying for graduation. Friends and family are invited to both ceremonies! The ceremonies are free for all.



MES faculty Ralph Murphy hoods 2012 grad Lola Flores

History of the Hooding Ceremony:

The origins of academic dress date back to the 12th and 13th centuries when early universities were taking form. The hood, draped over the shoulders and back, indicates the subject to which the degree pertains. The assignment of color dates back to the use of white fur at Oxford University, signifying arts and sciences; colors to signify respective areas were first used in the United States in the late 19th century. For MES, The Evergreen State College awards a Golden Yellow hood, which signifies Science.

Rachel Carson Forum

Save the Date!

The 23rd annual Rachel Carson Forum, hosted by the Master in Environmental Studies Student Association (MESA), will be held on Thursday, May 9th, 2013. The theme will focus on sustainable, local food and will feature a panel from the Olympia community.

Fall 2012 Graduates

**Christopher Holcomb
Jennie Husby
Justin Rogers**

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TheEvergreenStateCollege

x = independently organized TED event

By Jenny Dunn, MES 1st Year & Coordinator
for TEDxTheEvergreenStateCollege

On February 25th, 2013, The Evergreen State College held its second annual TEDx conference, with a focus on Local Innovations for a Changing World. The event was designed to inspire Evergreen students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members through “ideas worth spreading” about local innovations for a changing world. Roughly 300 Evergreen and Olympia community members attended the event. Four full-time undergraduate programs included it as a required element of their syllabi, at least four more made it an ancillary element for students doing work in related thematic areas, and members of both the MES and MPA programs participated. In addition, it brought together Evergreen campuses at both Olympia and Tacoma, as well as Grays Harbor College via live stream along with 100 or so online audience participants.

The event featured six speakers from the Pacific Northwest, focusing on a broad range of topics. Co-Director Dan Pacholke and intern Andrea Martin of the Sustainability in Prisons Project started off the conference by speaking about sustainability in prisons. Their talk was followed by Scott Bergford, who discussed Energy Efficient Homes, and, Ron Johnston-Rodriguez from Plug-in North Central Washington highlighted Electric Vehicle Tourism. The final two speakers were Shallin Busch, a research ecologist from NOAA, who spoke about ocean acidification, and Kim Gaffi, the Executive Director of GRuB, who shared her knowledge of food justice. Following the event, there was a reception with refreshments and an opportunity for attendees to talk with the speakers.

The event was extremely successful in sparking discussions on campus about solutions for



Signature Red for the TEDx stage

climate change and ended with faculty members Anne de Marcken and Peter Impara's students from the Landscapes of Change program launching a Climate Change Portal. This portal was created to share ideas for how to personally participate in positive change related to climate change. The hope for this conference and the climate change portal are to continue to inspire discussions around innovations for a changing world. In addition, the inspiration will be able to reach a wider audience as the speakers' videos are uploaded onto the TED website and spread to the global community, much like last year's TEDx event in which David Roberts' talk was picked up by The New York Times. Finally, this event was successful thanks to the fantastic planning committee which included MES assistant director Gail Wootan, MES faculty Erin Ellis, first year students Jana Fischback and me, and second year student Bobby Coleman.



Dan Pacholke & Andrea Martin

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