



Spring 2016

Director's Note

By Kevin Francis, MES Director

Evergreen, like many creatures this time of year, is in the midst of metamorphosis. In April George Bridges, who started work in October, was inaugurated as the sixth President of Evergreen. The celebration, of course, had an Evergreen twist. Instead of a formal inaugural ball, we held a Day of Service involving projects related to Earth Day, including a successful trail construction project at Randall Preserve sponsored by MES and Capitol Land Trust and superbly organized by MES student Daron Williams. Maia Bellon, Director of the Washington State Department, was one of several distinguished alumni who shared their inspiring stories.

We also learned that faculty Ken Tabbutt will be stepping up (again) to serve as Interim Provost. The current Provost, Michael Zimmerman, has been a strong supporter of our program. An ecologist with diverse interests, he immediately understood MES and the value of a graduate environmental studies degree, both for students and for the college. We collaborated on a plan to hire three permanent faculty dedicated to MES, enabling us to build an excellent cohort of faculty dedicated to interdisciplinary research and problem solving in the environmental field. We are thrilled to have Erin Martin, whose research investigates freshwater ecology and its implications for the global carbon cycle, and John Withey, whose research addresses diverse aspects of biodiversity and landscape ecology. As a team, they provide complementary expertise for core programs, electives, and thesis work. Next year, we plan to hire a social

scientist to address student interests in environmental economics and policy.

MES is also in transition. Three faculty who have taught full-time in MES are leaving the program—Peter Dorman and Shangrila Wynn will be entering the undergraduate curriculum, and Dina Roberts will be starting her “dream job” at the University of California-Santa Cruz, where she will teach field ecology.

Three faculty will join the program this fall. Ted Whitesell, an MES veteran and former director, will bring expertise in political ecology and sustainability to our ranks. Miranda Mellis, a writer with strong interest in environmental humanities, will help us strengthen our efforts to teach environmental rhetoric and communication, important aspects of advocacy and policy making. With the widespread call for rethinking our narratives on environmental issues, especially around climate change, I think Miranda will provide students—and faculty—with new tools to imagine and persuade others about environmental progress. Finally, I look forward to welcoming John Withey to both Evergreen and MES. He grew up in Washington and has broad knowledge of Pacific Northwest ecosystems. He also has specific interests in ornithology, landscape ecology, and urban ecology that will support the interest of many thesis students.

We also finished reviewing applications for the Fall 2016 cohort. We had more than 100 applications—our largest pool in recent years—and we anticipate welcoming an impressive group of students to campus this fall. Our Assistant Director, Gail Wootan, is the



person who is most responsible for successfully reaching out to potential students around the state and beyond. One of her best ideas was to involve students in each step of the process. Since most of them are graduating and moving on to new endeavors, I want to conclude by congratulating and thanking Anna Rhoads (Recruitment Assistant), Ryan Hobbs (Communications Assistant), and Joshua Christy, Danae Presler, and Yonit Yogev (MES Ambassadors) for all of their hard work.



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Interning in Israel: Introducing Sustainability to the Masses

By Yonit Yogev, 2nd Year MES Student & MES Ambassador.

The energy, excitement and deep commitment to mission and vision of this one-of-a-kind institution are palpable throughout the hallways.

Ramat HaNadiv Memorial Gardens and Nature Park is a 1,000+ acre gem of a nature preserve in the hills just south of the Carmel Mountains, close to the coast about mid-way between Haifa and Tel Aviv, Israel. When Israel was first forming as a state, Mayer Amsel Rothschild, a modest German from a highly respected business family in Frankfurt, became enamored with the fledgling state, and so began his lifelong relationship as benefactor of towns, founder of businesses, and well-loved encourager of dreams.

The current institute, called Ramat HaNadiv, has become a center of cutting edge science as a station for Long-term Ecological Research (LTER), conservation and restoration research; a center for Environmental Education (utilizing Master's and PhD-level educators); a place of peace and shelter

for many groups who benefit from their Horticulture Therapy program and gardens; for the extensive volunteer and outreach program, and as a haven of green and beauty for its visitors in the gardens as well as on the trails of the nature park. Feeling they had accomplished much and were ready to work towards future goals, Ramat HaNadiv launched a project more ambitious and far-reaching than any they had yet attempted: The Partnership for Regional Sustainability.

The Partnership launched in 2014, and includes 6 local municipalities and townships, all of which are connected to the Nachal Taninim (Crocodile River) watershed system. An Arab village, which unfortunately is known as the poorest in the entire country, is also one of the partner towns. In mind-boggling juxtaposition, Zichron Yaakov, one of the more well-to-do towns in the area is also a partner. Ramat HaNadiv, for its part, has a goal of getting this partnership up and running so that within three short years they will be able to more or less turn over the reins to the group as a whole. So where do I fit in?

I set up an individualized internship with someone I know here, who it turned out, is the director of the Partnership. One of the things I was able to do early on was introduce them to Community-based Social Marketing (CBSM). While their philosophy clearly fits in with its foundations, CBSM is in an embryonic stage here. It's very gratifying to have



been able to connect them with the CBSM professionals in Israel. Since what the Partnership represents is a sea-change in culture and every-day actions and behaviors, CBSM will be crucial for the success of the program. Secondly, I am helping create a model for Citizen 'Science' projects, with hopes of getting one ready to launch before I leave. As is often the case with internships, one often feels like one is getting the hang of the place just in time for it to end! With a model in place, they will hopefully be able to utilize it for other similar projects, and we hope to hire someone part time to carry the project through. Citizen science or monitoring programs require that a fair bit of attention be paid to the volunteers, keeping them informed of how their data is being used, making sure they feel helpful and appreciated. In this case, in line with sustainability's underlying philosophy, we would like the volunteers from the community to have a major say in all aspects of the study, and most especially in the long-term, when the search for solutions at the root level of the problems being mapped begins in earnest.

All in all, I have learned a huge amount in my short time here, been inspired by how much a small group of dedicated people can accomplish in a short time, and feel blessed to have had this opportunity.

