

Center for Environmental Futures

Our Progress through 2018



UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURES



Environment.

Justice.

Culture.

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURES

—Environment, Culture, and Justice

The University of Oregon’s Center for Environmental Futures traces its beginnings to 2014, when scholars in English, history, and philosophy formed the Environmental Humanities Collective. Following two highly attended symposia that the group organized, CEF officially came into being in the fall of 2016, with support from the College of Arts and Sciences. Since then, we have received research funding and major support from the UO Vice President for Research and Innovation, the College of Arts and Sciences, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. We’d like to offer special thanks to Karen Ford, Andrew Marcus, Paul Peppis, Michael Schill, and Louise “Mollie” Westling, whose support and inspiration have made CEF possible. We also want to acknowledge the inspiration offered by our colleagues at the University of Wisconsin’s Center for Culture, History, and Environment; the Oregon Humanities Center; the Center for Land Use Interpretation; and the L.A. Urban Rangers.

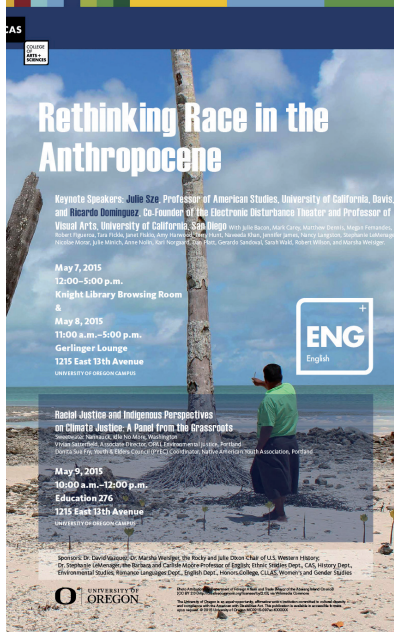
Since its founding, CEF has held regular “Interdisciplinarity 101” seminars, screened an annual Emerald Earth Film Festival, organized a “Field School” to record interviews with Oregonians regarding the state’s public lands, and presented public symposia on “Environmental Justice, Race, and Public Lands” and “Global Environmental Histories from the Pacific.” Thank you for helping to make these programs successful! We welcome your continued participation as we move forward.

While sustaining these important programs, over the next three years we will roll out a number of new initiatives, including a Writers Workshop for public engagement, a Visiting Scholar program, and significant incentives for faculty, graduate, and undergraduate research in the environmental humanities and allied fields, including undergraduate research stipends for honors theses, undergraduate research prizes, dissertation fellowships, a post-doctoral fellowship, and faculty research stipends. Additionally, we are developing a First Year Interest Group (FIG) in environmental justice, an undergraduate minor, and a graduate certificate.

Cover Photo: Willamette River, Eugene, Oregon
Photo Credit: Rick Obs

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURES

ACHIEVEMENTS 2015 - 2018



2015

Rethinking Race in the Anthropocene

This ground-breaking symposium explored the intersections of race and environmental justice in the Anthropocene, an emerging term for the modern era during which human activities are changing the environment on a planetary scale. Featured guests offered a variety of perspectives, drawing on their scholarship and activism in African American studies, anthropology, environmental history, environmental justice, geography, Latinx studies, literary studies, performance art, and philosophy. The symposium concluded with a one-day workshop on “Racial Justice and Indigenous Perspectives on Climate Justice: A Regional Panel of Community Organizers.”

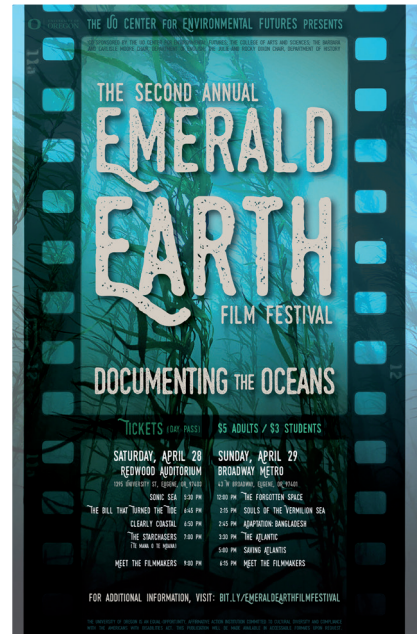
2016

Environmental Humanities Symposium

In this symposium, Gregg Mitman (founding director, Center for Culture, History, and Environment, University of Wisconsin) and Bethany Wiggins (founding director, Penn Program in Environmental Humanities, University of Pennsylvania) discussed their ground-breaking programs in the environmental humanities. The ideas and insights they shared became the springboard for the Center for Environmental Futures.



Ryan Tucker Jones with Aunofu Havea of Tonga, who discussed her work on *Te Mana O Ti Moana* as part of the Emerald Earth Film Festival. Havea was captain of one of the ships of Pacific voyagers that were chronicled in the film.



Emerald Earth Film Festival

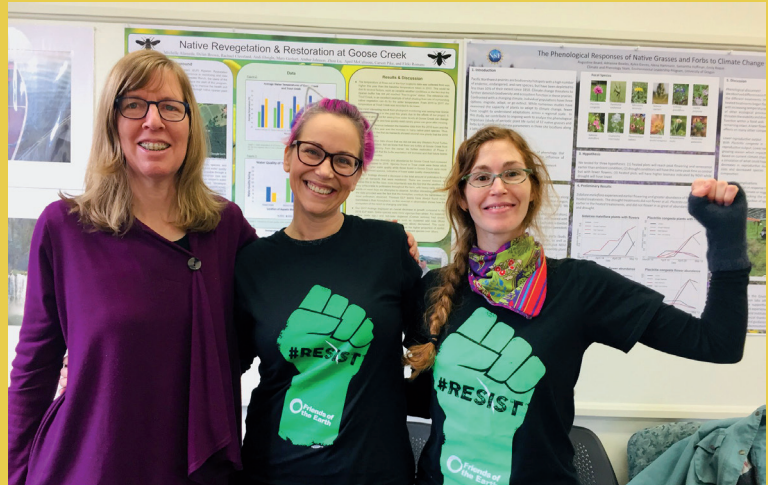
Beginning in spring 2017, we celebrate Earth Week with a thematic environmental film series. Environmental Justice was the theme for 2017 and Documenting the Oceans in 2018. Through holding Q&A's with guest directors, producers, and performers, we engage both the University and the Eugene-Springfield communities.

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURES

2017-Ongoing Interdisciplinarity 101

Beginning in 2017, we have held gatherings roughly three times per quarter to share works-in-progress by faculty and graduate students in the humanities, social sciences, arts, architecture, and education. Presenters have included:

- April Anson (English), “Survivance Ecology: Unsettling the Apocalyptic Crisis in Climate Fiction”
- Steven Beda (History), “‘Never Give A Inch:’ Popular Culture and The Northwest Woods Wars, 1960-2000”
- Carla Bengston (Art), “Falling Out, Spilling Over”
- Allison Ford (Sociology), “When the Shit Hits the Fan, We’ll Know How to Can: Self-Sufficiency Movements as Environmental Practice (an exploration)”
- Shane Hall (English), “Imagining Environmental Futures: Speculative Practice in Environmental Humanities Education”
- Kate Huber (English), “Oceans and Society: My Sea Education Association Experience”
- Cass Moseley and research team (Planning, Public Policy, and Management), “Engaging in Large-Scale Interdisciplinary Research: Experiences of Qualitative Social Scientists and Their Collaborators”



Mary Democker, author of *The Parents’ Guide to Climate Revolution*, at Interdisciplinarity 101 with UO activists with Friends of the Earth, Gabrielle Raviolo and Emily Garaventa.

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- Brook Muller (Architecture) “Al Khalifa Heritage and Environment Park in Cairo.”
 - Jennifer O’Neal (Historian and Archivist, UO Libraries), “Decolonizing Protocols for Oral History”
 - Gordon Sayre (English), “Alexandrian Library of Life: A Flawed Metaphor for Biodiversity”
 - David Vázquez (English), “Speculative Hope: Countering Dystopian Environmental Futures in Alex Rivera’s *Sleep Dealer* and Alejandro Morales’s *The Rag Doll Plagues*”
 - Mary DeMocker (Eugene activist), “The Parent’s Guide to Climate Revolution”

Global Environmental Histories from the Pacific

This one-day symposium brought together six scholars from Australia and Oregon to share their research on the environmental histories of global migrations and ocean science on the Pacific Rim. Those scholars then joined graduate students at UO and OSU for a two-day retreat at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology in Charleston, Oregon.

ACHIEVEMENTS 2015 - 2018

2018 Environmental Justice, Race, and Public Lands Symposium

This three-day symposium opened with the Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples Lecture. It was followed by two days of lively presentations and discussion by scholars, practitioners, and activists regarding equity, diversity, environmental justice, and decolonizing public lands.

Keynote speakers included:

- Karletta Chief (Diné; University of Arizona)
- Margaret Hiza-Redsteer (Crow; U.S. Geological Survey)
- Carolyn Finney (University of Kentucky)
- Kyle Powys Whyte (Potawatomi; Michigan State University)



SAIL (Summer Academy to Inspire Learning)

In collaboration with the Environmental Studies Program, CEF co-directors LeMenager and Weisiger engaged with more than a dozen high school students to encourage them to prepare for college and inspire them to study the environmental humanities. This was part of the university-wide SAIL program, aimed at recruiting underrepresented populations and first-generation college students to UO.

Public Lands Field School: The Past and Futures of Oregon's Public Lands

Through the Public Lands Field School, CEF is exploring how attachment to specific places—through recreational use, hunting/fishing, logging, and ranching/agricultural work—shape political and cultural affiliations, what the future of America's public lands might be, how the history of public lands intersects with environmental justice issues regarding indigenous land sovereignty and socioeconomic class, what kinds of cross-partisan venues devoted to land management decisions have been models of democratic processes, and how best to find political and cultural middle ground. This Field School brings faculty and graduate students on extended field trips to conduct oral history interviews.



Indigenous scholars and students with Mark Carey (far left) and Kathy Lynn (far right), organizers of the Indigenous Peoples and Climate Lecture, April 2018. Karletta Chief and Margaret Hiza-Redsteer are on the front row (left), and Kyle Powys Whyte stands at the rear (right).

CEFF

Thanks to Our Funders

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation--The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation generously awarded a \$600,000 Higher Education Grant to support the operation of CEF for three years, through AY 2020-21. The Mellon Foundation's mission is to strengthen and promote the important role of the humanities and the arts in deepening our understanding of the human condition and experience. This significant award effectively launched the Center for Environmental Futures and makes it possible for us to begin offering a wide array of programming. We are extremely honored and grateful for this support!

American Council of Learned Societies--The American Council of Learned Societies awarded a \$141,000 Collaborative Research Award to Stephanie LeMenager and Marsha Weisiger for CEF's Field School project, *To Speak of Common Places: A People's History of Oregon's Public Lands*. The ACLS is a private, nonprofit federation of scholarly organizations and one of the leading supporters of scholarship in the humanities and related social sciences.

UO Vice Provost for Research and Innovation--The UO Vice Provost for Research and Innovation awarded \$25,000 as seed money for our Field School project. The OVPRI's mission is, in part, to support research excellence and launch new initiatives that have high potential to attract external funding and benefit the wider community beyond the university.

The College of Arts and Sciences has provided us with generous support, including basic operational funds and clerical support.

“Climate change is really important, and pairing TEK [Traditional Ecological Knowledge] with climate change for Native people is vital because we're disproportionately affected by climate change. We live *with* the land; we don't just live *on* the land. We're aware of all of these things back and forth. It's a reciprocal relationship we have with our land.”

-Samantha Chisholm Hatfield, PhD (Confederated Tribes of Siletz), in *Wisdom of the Elders, People of the Oregon Coast*



Center for Environmental Futures Co-Directors: Stephanie LeMenager & Marsha Weisiger.

Coming Up in 2019

In 2019, with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, we are launching ambitious new initiatives, while continuing to host symposia, speakers, interdisciplinary conversations, and the Emerald Earth Film Festival. For additional information, visit our website at:

<https://blogs.uoregon.edu/uocef/>

- Writers' Workshop for Public Engagement
- Mellon Visiting Scholar (fall term)
- Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellowship
- Mellon Dissertation Fellowships
- Mellon Faculty Research Stipends
- Mellon Undergraduate Honors Thesis Research Stipends
- Mellon Undergraduate Research Prizes
- Relaunch *Ecotone* as an on-line publication

A misty forest scene with tall, thin trees and a large tree trunk in the foreground. The background is filled with a dense forest of tall, slender trees, their trunks reaching towards a hazy, overcast sky. In the foreground, a large, textured tree trunk is prominent on the right side, with some bare branches extending from it. The overall atmosphere is serene and somewhat somber due to the mist and muted colors.

WHAT ARE THE ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES?

The Environmental Humanities take an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the environment and the human condition through storytelling, interpretation, argumentation, and the visual arts. Drawing on the scholarship of the Humanities and allied disciplines—history, literature, philosophy, art and architecture and their histories, anthropology, sociology, historical and cultural geography—in conversation with the natural sciences, the Environmental Humanities reflect on the interactions between humans and their environments through time and among different cultures, encourage us to grapple with complex moral and ethical issues, cultivate empathy, prompt us to think critically about the world around us in an era of profound environmental change, and help us to transform our environmental futures through imaginative and creative projects that remind us that no future is inevitable, that the future is ours to make. Importantly, the Environmental Humanities help us to understand the interrelationships between the effects of climate change, environmental injustice, and a long history of colonialism and racism. Finally, the Environmental Humanities promote problem-solving and activism in hopes of building a more environmentally sustainable and just world.

“Science explicates, poetry implicates. Both celebrate what they describe. We need the languages of both science and poetry to save us from ignorant irresponsibility.”

Ursula Le Guin

STEERING COMMITTEE

Stephanie LeMenager, Co-Director
(English and Environmental Studies)

Marsha Weisiger, Co-Director (History and Environmental Studies)

Lisa Arkin, Executive Director, Beyond Toxics

Mark Carey, Director, Environmental Studies Program
(History and Environmental Studies; Honors College)

Nicolae Morar (Environmental Studies and Philosophy)

Brook Muller, Director, Portland Architecture Program

Jennifer O’Neal, University Historian and Archivist (UO Library)

Scott Pratt, Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (Philosophy)

Laura Pulido, Head, Ethnic Studies Department
(Ethnic Studies and Geography)

Gordon Sayre, English and Folklore

Emily Scott, Art History and Environmental Studies

David Vazquez, Head, English Department (English and Ethnic Studies)

Sarah Wald, English and Environmental Studies

MISSION

Our mission is to encourage and support humanities and social sciences faculty and students in interdisciplinary environmental studies research and teaching, to encourage and support members of the community to participate in the University's environmental studies programming and problem-solving, and to cultivate relationships and build projects across disciplines and schools to address our most pressing environmental and social problems. We recognize, too, that problems of environment, justice, and culture call for a broad interdisciplinarity that includes the natural and physical sciences, communication and journalism, the arts and architecture, education, and law. The Center invites all disciplinary emphases and fields while foregrounding the importance of the humanities and social sciences to addressing environmental problems in ways that keep justice in its sights.

PLEASE CONSIDER SUPPORTING CEF WITH A GENEROUS DONATION



**STAND WITH FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES IN OUR
FIGHT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, AGAINST
THE RAVAGES OF TOXIC CHEMICALS AND CLIMATE CHANGE.**

Used with permission from Ricardo Levins Morales



Graduate students and faculty with environmental historians from Australia at the Oregon Institute for Marine Biology, as part of the Global Environmental Histories from the Pacific symposium, March 2018. Photo by Ryan Jones.

We seek funding for:

- A named Environment and Society Building, now in the planning stages, which will house the Center for Environmental Futures, the Environmental Studies Program, the Geography Department, and the School of Planning, Public Policy, and Management
- A named endowment to sustain the Center for Environmental Futures
- Program funding for CEF symposia and an arts initiative
- Dissertation fellowships for graduate students in the environmental humanities
- Scholarships for underrepresented undergraduates in the environmental humanities



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OREGON

Center for Environmental Futures
5223 University of Oregon
Eugene, 97403-5223

<<FIRST NAME>> <<LAST NAME>>
<<ADDRESS LINE 1>>
<<ADDRESS LINE 2>>
<<CITY>> <<STATE>> <<ZIP>>

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