

# CHANGING NATURE: MIGRATIONS, ENERGIES, LIMITS

The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE)

Tenth Biennial Conference, May 28-June 1, 2013.

University of Kansas, Lawrence

asle.ku.edu

The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) invites proposals for its Tenth Biennial Conference, to be held May 28<sup>th</sup> through June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013, at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. The decennial conference theme is intended to reflect some of the most engaging current conversations within the environmental humanities and across disciplines, and to link those discussions to the transnational nexus of energy, labor, borders, and human and nonhuman environments that are so fundamentally “changing nature,” and with it the widely varied kinds of environmental critique we practice, art we make, and politics we advocate. **Migrations**—of humans, of non-human creatures, of “invasive species,” of industrial toxins across aquifers and cellular membranes, of disease across species and nations, of transgenic pollen and GM fish—have changed the meanings of place, bodies, nations, and have lent new urgency to the old adage that “everything is connected to everything.” **Energies**—fossil, renewable, human, spiritual, aesthetic, organic—radically empower our species for good and for ill, and make our individual and collective choices into the Anthropocene. And those choices are profoundly about **Limits** on resources, climate, soil, and water; about voluntary and involuntary curbs on individual and collective consumption and waste; about the often porous and often violently marked borders of empire, class, race, and gender.

We seek proposals for papers, panels, roundtables, workshops, and other public presentations that address the intersections between representation, nature, and culture, and that are connected to the conference’s deliberately broad and, we hope, provocative theme. As always, we emphatically welcome interdisciplinary approaches; readings of environmentally inflected fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and film; and proposals from outside the academic humanities, including submissions from artists, writers, practitioners, activists, and colleagues in the social and natural sciences. An incomplete list of possible topics might include, combine, and are certainly not limited to:

- Petro-culture and the Energies of Modernity: the Keystone pipeline, hydrofracking, tar sands, global capital and resource wars, the possibility of change
- Aesthetics and the Futures of Environmental Representation
- Climate Change: mitigation, adaptation, costs, and the concept of place
- Empire, Race and Environment: postcolonial ecocriticism
- The Futures of Ecofeminism
- Indigenous Environmentalisms

- "Natural" Histories of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Class, Sexualities...
- Ecocomposition, environmentalism and rhetoric, sustainable pedagogies/the pedagogies of sustainability
- Environmental Justice: toxins, food, climate, sovereignty
- Postnatural Nature, Posthuman Humanism
- Digital Representation and Natural Experience
- Biotechnology: prostheses, genetic modification, synthetic life
- Waste: from adopt-a-highway to the pacific garbage patch
- Animals, Animality: us and us
- Evolution, Epigenetic Change, Politics
- Affect and Environmentalism: love, despair, postdespair

#### PLENARY SESSIONS (more TBA):

Rob Nixon  
 Cary Wolfe  
 Stacy Alaimo  
 Juan Carlos Galeano  
 Jeffrey Thomson  
 Daniel Wildcat  
 Donald Worster  
 Wes Jackson

#### PRECONFERENCE WORKSHOPS, FIELD TRIPS & INTEREST GROUP CAUCUSES

As we have in the past, we will hold a number of pre-conference workshops on central and emerging topics that reflect the diversity of our approaches and our membership. Rather than choose conference leaders in advance, however, we are calling for proposals for workshops and will post what seem the most compelling set of panels before the conference registration opens. Preconference workshop leaders will receive free registration for the 2013 conference and a complementary year's membership in ASLE. For more information or to submit a proposal to lead a preconference workshop, please email Greta Gaard, ASLE's 2013 Preconference Workshop Coordinator ([greta.gaard@uwr.edu](mailto:greta.gaard@uwr.edu)). Proposals should include (a) a 500 word (max) proposal outlining the proposed workshop theme, structure, and your particular qualifications and (b) your vita. **Pre-conference workshop proposals must be sent by October 30, 2012.**

We will also be offering half-day field excursions one afternoon that will allow attendees to experience some of the extraordinary natural beauty and fascinating history of the area, including a visit to the Konza Prairie Biological Station; a tour of the Wakarusa Wetlands, Haskell Indian Nations University Campus and Medicine Wheel; a trip to the KU Environmental Studies Field Station and Native Medicinal Plant Research Garden; mountain biking along the Kansas River; and an organic farm tour. For more information, please contact the conference site host, Byron Caminero-Santangelo.

Finally, as announced on the diversity caucus blog and in the newsletter, the conference will make a block of time and a number of rooms available during the conference to facilitate the formation of interest group caucuses within ASLE, based around critical perspective, identity, language, region, nation, or whatever other organizing principle the group chooses. The only requirement for these groups is that they are open to all members; our hope is that the caucuses will encourage richer conversation within ASLE and will facilitate better communication between the membership and the leadership about how ASLE might strengthen its longstanding commitments to diversity. For more information on the caucuses and to request meeting space in advance, please contact ASLE diversity coordinator Salma Monani at [smonani@gettysburg.edu](mailto:smonani@gettysburg.edu).

### LAWRENCE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

*“Stretching out on its own unbounded scale, unconfined... Combining the real and the ideal, and beautiful as dreams.”*

—Walt Whitman on the view from the campus of The University of Kansas

Located in the forested hills surrounding the Kansas River, Lawrence offers the charms of a small city on the edge of the prairie with the resources of Kansas City (and its major airport) a short drive to the east. As home to both the University of Kansas and Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence is frequently cited as one of the United States’ best college towns, and was recently ranked by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of its “Dozen Most Distinctive Destinations.” The lovely KU campus sits atop Mount Oread and is a short walk, bike, or bus ride from Lawrence’s vibrant downtown, as well as the river and a number of area parks. At the center of downtown is very pedestrian-friendly Massachusetts Street, offering two miles of local shops, galleries, independent bookstores, coffeehouses, bars and live music venues, as well as a burgeoning foodie and locavore culture spearheaded by a range of downtown restaurants. For those seeking outdoor activities, the town offers extensive cycling and walking trails through town and along the Kansas River; hiking, camping, and boating at Clinton Lake and Perry Lake (each about a fifteen-minute drive from campus); and walking trails through the Wakarusa wetlands.

Conference housing will be provided in the university’s dormitories and in three local hotels. Dormitory housing, all conference events, and one hotel are all within a five minute walk of each other through campus. Two conference hotels are in the center of downtown, about ten blocks from campus; regular shuttle service will be provided for those who would prefer that option. Wireless service will be available for all conference registrants, and all rooms for concurrent sessions will be equipped with projectors and Internet access. In addition, to reduce our resource use, we will make all conference materials, including maps and the program, available online and through a smartphone app; paper materials will also be readily available at registration upon request.

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

***For additional information and to submit a proposal for a pre-formed panel or individual paper, please visit the conference website: [asle.ku.edu](http://asle.ku.edu)***

- One proposal submission allowed per person.
- Participants can present on only one panel/paper jam/or roundtable (though serving as a chair on a panel, in addition to presenting, is permitted.)
- Pre-formed panels are *highly* encouraged. To encourage institutional diversity and connection, all pre-formed panels must include participants from more than one institution and from more than one academic level.
- Proposals must be submitted online (though if this poses a significant difficulty for an individual member, please email Paul Outka to work out an accommodation.)

**All proposals must be submitted by November 15, 2012.** We will evaluate your proposal carefully, and notify you of its final status by **January 31, 2013.**

For questions about the program, please contact 2013 ASLE President Paul Outka, at [paul.outka@ku.edu](mailto:paul.outka@ku.edu). For questions about the conference site and field sessions, please contact the Conference Site Host, Byron Caminero-Santangelo, at [bsantang@ku.edu](mailto:bsantang@ku.edu).