

Environmental Issues

Environmental Studies Program
Denison University

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Visting Scholar Explores the Documentary Art in the Local Environment

by Sarah Baird ('00) and Sarah Beazley ('02)

The Environmental Studies Program hosted twenty-two students, faculty, staff and community members from Denison, Kenyon, Ohio Wesleyan, and Earlham for a one-week intensive workshop from May 13th through 18th. Entitled "The Documentary Art: Imaging and Imagining the Environment," the workshop was led by Dr. Gregory Spaid, a professor of art and acting Provost at Kenyon College. Participants explored their environmental imaginations as they learned about the documentary art of others and had the opportunity to produce documentary works of their own.

Much of Gregory Spaid's work over the past decade has grown out of a concentration on the lyrical documentation of place and time. Spaid has published numerous books including *Grace: Photographs of Rural America*, *The Man Who Created Paradise* (with Gene Logsdon), and *On Nantucket*. His work has been exhibited throughout the United States and is in the collections of many public and private institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Smithsonian Institution and the Chase Manhattan Bank. He has been the recipient of numerous grants for his work, including six from the Ohio Arts Council and a Fulbright Research Fellowship to Italy.

The workshop emphasized artistic documentary approaches to a particular place and time--namely, Licking County in the spring. The week was largely experiential, emphasizing the artistic responses of the participants. Mornings were spent learning about issues related to doing documentary work through group discussions and presentations

by Spaid and others. Then groups spent time "in the field" gathering information through images and interviews. A bus tour of Licking County on the first day familiarized participants with the local environment, highlighting the built environment, prehistoric features, urban sprawl, rural communities, and farms. In the evenings, groups worked "in the studio" shaping their documentary projects into books.

On the last day of the workshop, each group presented their books. The handmade books on the Licking County environment illustrated themes such as sustainable communities, small towns, rural communities, farmers, and local landmarks. The workshop was successful in helping participants create their own impressive documentary works while gaining a deeper understanding of the local environment.



Photo by Gregory Spaid

ENVS Welcomes Three New Members to the Program



Dr. Tod Frolking
Program Director

Greetings! I come to the Directorship with a long history of involvement in the Program and with environmental issues broadly defined. In fact, many of you may have heard me rant and rave about the tremendous overlap between my home discipline of Geography and Environmental Studies. Courses that I teach, including World Regional Geography, Geography of North America, Weather and

Climate, Geomorphology and Hydrogeology, all have a strong environmental “component,” presented with a geographic bent.

Upon my arrival at Denison in 1984, I took over the Environmental Issues evening class from Dr. Robert Alrutz, founder of the Environmental Studies Program. Since then I helped organize the early Licking River Roundups, have been active in recycling issues and have served as faculty advisor to the Outing Club for years. I am currently a board member of the Licking Land Trust.

I step into the Director position after many years serving as Chair of the Department of Geology and Geography, so I am very comfortable with the administrative aspects of the position. Fortunately, under Abram Kaplan’s guidance, ENVS has grown into a strong, well-structured program. I look forward to exciting years working with a strong faculty and superb students, while Abram gets a much-deserved break from administrative duties. After a year focusing on research issues, he will return as a full-time ENVS faculty, bringing his strengths in the policy domain back to the program.



Sarah Beazley (*02)
Program Manager

I graduated from Denison just last May, and now I’m returning for one more year on the hill as the Environmental Studies Program Manager. The Program Manager for the last two years, Sarah Baird, has moved on to Denver to teach primary school while pursuing her Master’s in Education, leaving some big shoes to fill in Barney. When I worked with the program last year, Sarah modeled her skills in making

the ENVS program better while contributing to the wider community, enabling me to do things like initiating a paper-recycling program in Barney. As a student, I was involved with organizations such as DURP (DU Recycling Program), and I plan to continue participating in and organizing campus environmental and outreach activities as a member of the ENVS crew. I’ll also be helping plan an up-coming conference as part of our ongoing Mellon Grant. I’m really excited to be back with ENVS to work with students and other members of the community who care about environmental issues.



Dr. Doug Spieles
Assistant Professor

Greetings from the newest member of the McPhail Center for Environmental Studies! I have come to Denison from Minnesota, where I was an Assistant Professor in the Southwest State University Environmental Science Program for the past four years. My wife Beth, daughter Jackie (2 years old) and I are all excited about exploring new surroundings, meeting new people, and becoming part of the Denison community.

While I am new to Granville, the move to Ohio has been a homecoming of sorts—I grew up in Wauseon, Ohio, majored in biology at the University of Dayton, and attended graduate school at Ohio State. My graduate work focused on entomology and wetland ecology, and I am most interested in the system-level ecology of aquatic ecosystems. So, from an ecological perspective, I have left the prairie potholes of southwest Minnesota for the swamps, bottomlands and marshes of central Ohio. Prairie country is beautiful, but it is nice to once again live amongst the trees.

This year I will be teaching Introduction to Environmental Studies and Environmental Assessment. I will also be working to develop an analytical laboratory facility in Barney-Davis Hall. Ultimately, this lab will be used for water, soil, and biotic analyses in both curricular lab exercises and scholarly research projects. I am looking forward to integrating courses and facilities to enhance the learning experience for our students.

I am delighted to be joining the Environmental Studies program, and I hope to meet many of you in the upcoming months.

Returning members of the ENVS crew are busy too.

- ◆ **Dr. Carol Goland** will be teaching Honors Intro to Environmental Studies and continuing her work with sustainable agriculture and local food systems;
- ◆ **Dr. Abram Kaplan**, who just stepped down after nine years as director, is taking a leave this year with the help of an R.C. Good Fellowship, to focus on his research with the USGS Leadership Development and Supervisory Management programs;
- ◆ **Sean Browning** will continue teaching GIS courses at Denison in the evenings, while serving as a GIS Specialist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Newark during the day; and
- ◆ **Brenda Ash** returns for her third year as our academic secretary.

2002 Capstone Classes Connect Farmers and Restaurants, Elementary Students and Solar Power

by Sarah Beazley ('02), Carol Goland, and Abram Kaplan

The culminating course of the ENVS major aims to turn the knowledge and skills learned at Denison into practical, hands-on skills in working toward the solution of a real world problem. There were two Senior Capstone Seminars last spring.

The nine students in Dr. Goland's class worked to strengthen the local food system by improving the connection between Granville area restaurants and farmers in the region. The group worked closely with farmers in the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) and surveyed local restaurant owners and chefs to understand the needs of each group. Throughout the semester, students explored the ways that sustainable food systems can improve the natural environment, foster healthy people, and promote a thriving local economy and community.

The work of the students came together in the publication of a resource packet called "**A Fresh Look at Local Foods**," which was designed to help area restaurants establish direct relationships with local farmers. The resource packet was distributed at the culmination of the Capstoners' work: the "**Granville Food Summit**," held fittingly on Earth Day.

The summit brought together local food producers and restauranteurs to learn about ways they can work together. The event included a full-course meal prepared by the students highlighting over 20 local foods, and a speech by renowned chef/owner Parker Bosley, about his success in using local foods in his restaurant, *Parker's Bistro*, in Cleveland. Restauranteurs could "put a face to their food" as they talked with local farmers in discussion groups over dessert, and began to make connections that are now aiding them in taking steps toward a sustainable food system.

The event allowed restauranteurs, farmers, and students to work together towards the goal of creating the kind of food system that will benefit farmers, restauranteurs, consumers, and the community as a whole. The success of this work allowed the students to see for themselves how they can make a difference in their communities, now and in the future.

Dr. Kaplan's Capstone group collaborated with the intermediate class at The Welsh Hills School to design and build a **solar greenhouse** and separate photovoltaic power system. The dozen Capstone seniors worked directly with the students at Welsh Hills to learn about solar power, greenhouse designs, and other environmental issues during the four-month project.

The seniors helped to raise more than \$20,000 for the project, selected a site for the greenhouse, spearheaded the design process, and undertook most of the greenhouse construction with minimal outside help. A local solar contractor, Geoff Greenfield, of Third-Sun Renewable Energy Services, installed the photovoltaic system, which made WHS the 45th official Solar School in Ohio. The greenhouse construction, which required many full days of work by the Capstoners, involved many joint work sessions with the WHS students. It was capped off by a **grand opening celebration** that included a dancing, talking robot, speeches, refreshments, a multimedia slide show, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The project gave Denison students a unique opportunity to work closely with the community, to teach younger students, and to engage in truly hands-on (even dirty) work to demonstrate very practically that a solar future is quite possible.



Cynda Westby, Brad Halm, and 2 WHS students cut the ribbon at the greenhouse's grand opening in May

Students' Summer Experiences Funded by Mellon Internship Grants

In May, six students received funding from the ENVS Program to undertake summer internships. This is the third year that ENVS has used part of our Mellon Foundation Grant to give students the opportunity to pursue environmental positions that would otherwise be unpaid or underpaid.

We look forward to the students sharing their experiences with the rest of us **Tuesday, September 24, 2002 at 4:30 in Barney-Davis Hall, Room 110**. All are welcome and encouraged to attend!

- Chris Dickey ('03): Assistant Environmental Ed. Coordinator, Virgin Island Environmental Resource Station (VIERS);
- Adam Klein ('04): Intern, Delta Institute, Columbus, OH;
- Melanie Houston ('04): Project Leader, Helping Hands: Garden of Hope, Newark, OH;
- Dave Hughes ('04): Wilderness Education Intern, Olympic National Park, Port Angeles, WA;
- Lindsay Michael ('05): Environmental Coordinator Co-counselor, Ligonier Camp and Conference Center, PA;
- Diane Skinner ('03): Intern, Maputaland Conservation-Based Community Development Program, South Africa.

Alumni Spotlight: Brandt Coultas ('99)

by Sarah Beazley ('02)

Brandt Coultas ('99) is one alum using his ENVS education to make a real difference.

Soon after graduating from Denison, Coultas spent two years as Development Director of the Chicagoland Bike Federation, a nonprofit organization devoted to "improving the bicycling environment and thereby the quality of life in the region" (www.biketraffic.org). Coultas raised funds and worked closely with government officials to improve or create miles of bike lanes and other services that make bicycling a viable and safe—not to mention energy-efficient, economical, clean, and healthful—transportation option.

After two years with the CBF, Coultas took his expertise in the transportation and nonprofit fields to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he linked up with the getDowntown program, an organization that promotes commuting options besides the single-occupancy vehicle. Now serving as Program Coordinator, Coultas works to find the best ways for downtown businesses to get their employees to work—such as riding the bus, carpooling, biking, or walking. One program resulted in the purchase of thousands of bus passes by downtown businesses for their employees.

In his work Coultas especially enjoys bringing together the business and environmental spheres to reach win-win solutions. His senior research project at Denison on the environmental management system of the Owens Corning corporation gave him insights he applies when coordinating business with environmental interests.

*ENVS alum are doing great things
all around the world. E-mail beazleys@denison.edu
and let us know what you're up to.*

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