

# THE ECOTONE

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## *Shaped by Place*



<i>Dominion, Dressing, Keeping</i>	3
<i>Mangoes</i>	5
<i>A Sensible Experience</i>	6
<i>An Interview with Peter Walker</i>	8
<i>Becoming a Savvy Environmentalist</i>	11
<i>Native Grace</i>	15

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# Editor's Note

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*ECOTONE: a transition zone between two adjacent ecological communities, such as forest and grassland. It has some of the characteristics of each bordering community and often contains species not found in the overlapping communities. An ecotone may exist along a broad belt or in a small pocket, such as a forest clearing, where two local communities blend together. The influence of the two bordering communities on each other is known as the edge effect. An ecotonal area often has a higher density of organisms and a greater number of species than are found in either flanking community.*

This issue of *THE ECOTONE* is devoted to the broad theme "Shaped by Place" with several essays on the reciprocal relationships that bind humans and nature. Many in the environmental movement today are attempting to find alternatives to the modernist imperative to analyze, predict and control an "objective" nature, seen as something separate from human beings. In his essay, "Dominion, Dressing, Keeping," David Sumner looks to the Christian Bible and the Colorado River, seeking wisdom that speaks to our contemporary environmental challenges. In her essay "Mangoes," Jen Shaffer finds that a simple act of eating can be permeated with meaning. In "A Sensible Experience," Gretchen Yost unravels some of the complex interrelationships between direct experience, place and language. "An Interview with Peter Walker" introduces the Environmental Studies community to our newest faculty member, whose research explores the many linkages between society and nature. In "Becoming a Savvy Environmentalist," science librarian Diane Sotak provides a pragmatic introduction to environmental research which should assist students and faculty. Finally, Laird Christensen completes our circular theme with his poem, "Native Grace." We hope you find this issue hopeful and useful in your own efforts to establish a renewed relationship with the more-than-human world.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Dominion, Dressing, Keeping	3
Mangoes	5
Congratulations!	5
A Sensible Experience	6
An Interview with Peter Walker	8
Becoming a Savvy Environmentalist	11
Native Grace	15
Ecological Conversations	16

## THE ECOTONE

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# Dominion, Dressing, Keeping

by David Thomas Sumner

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In early June of 1989, I was on my first trip down the Colorado River's Cataract Canyon as a paid guide. On the first evening of that trip, we set up camp, fixed dinner, did dishes, and watched the sun turn the surrounding cliffs from the pale oranges of midday to the deep reds of sunset. At dusk, I found myself across a driftwood fire from a man with thick black hair and cheeks shadowed by two days growth. His beard was coarse, growing from just below his eyes all the way down his neck. He was squat and thick and a professor of something somewhere. And as the fire cast excited shadows on the cliff behind us, we talked of the beauty of Cataract Canyon and the Colorado River. We discussed the Glen Canyon Dam and the stagnant water of Lake Powell that we would encounter in a few days. He commented on how much of the beauty of Glen Canyon is now lost under the man-made lake. I told of how wildlife downstream now had difficulty accessing the river because the sand bars and beaches were eroding away and the silt that should replace them was trapped behind the dam. We complained of the loss. I told him my father had seen the canyon as a Boy Scout, but that we never would. I then qualified one of my statements by saying, "I'm not an environmentalist, but..." The vacationing professor questioned my hesitation. "What's wrong with being an environmentalist?" he asked.

That night, across that fire, there were plenty of things wrong with it. I was brought up in Utah with the sagebrush rebellion, the Central Utah Water Project and wilderness issues in the news. The conservative Mormon community I come from sees environmentalists as running counter to our pioneer roots, as radical hippies standing in the way of progress, standing in the way of "God's command" to make the desert bloom. To be put in this group, to accept this label, was, in a way, to be alienated from my community, alienated from my culture, from my history. On both sides of my family I have ancestors who trekked west by handcart and covered wagon with the Mormon pioneers. The religious ideology of

these people led them to abandon home, country, possessions, and often other family members, in the hope that they could forge a utopian community out of the howling wilderness of the American West — a place where they could practice their religion without persecution and impose Old Testament ideas upon the landscape; a place where they could create a garden from the desert. To be labeled as an environmentalist was, in some way, counter to what my ancestors had worked and sacrificed for, to go against what they dreamed of for me. But the professor's question struck a deep chord, and as the summer progressed the river worked on me, changing me not only physically, but spiritually. Its thick waters carved my body and shaped my soul.

The Colorado River melts out of the Rockies and winds its way through the rusted canyons of the Southwest. The clear, cold, liquid snow turns taupe with silt, taking on the colors of the desert as it descends out of the mountains. The river continues to excavate the sandstone canyons, just as it has for millions of years, slowly carrying red earth seaward. I am comforted by the river. I am comforted by such consistency, such deliberate sustained effort. The river is a constant—changing and causing change on that which it contacts.

As I spent the days at the oars of my raft and the nights on sand bars under the stars, the unrelenting desert sun lightened my hair and darkened my skin. My body took on the colors and hues of the landscape. My back, shoulders, chest and hands spent four months learning to work with the river, discovering that they could not work against it. The river hardened my body during these lessons, defined it; my back, shoulders and chest became stronger. Calluses squared off my fingers. At the end of the day my hands, arms, shoulders and back would ache the dull satisfying ache of physical labor. On the river's edge, I would sleep deeply to the sound of water running over rocks. I bathed in the cleansing water in the evening and in the daytime the river's thick coolness

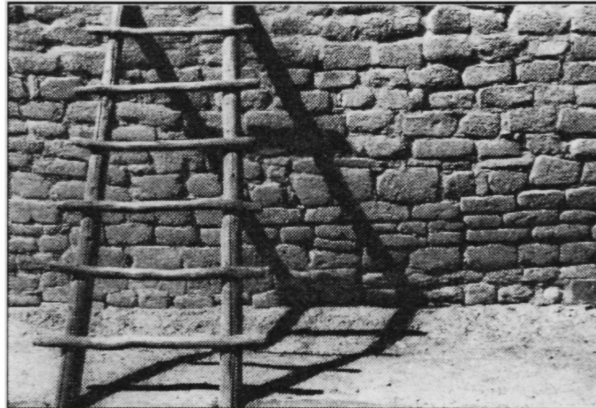
*continued on page 4*

gave me relief from the desert heat.

My eyes became sensitive to the story told by the water, watching for rocks, logs and snags hidden just underneath its opaque surface, looking for angle waves, holes, sleepers, rollers and keepers. I developed a deep reverence for the harsh beauty of the desert canyons — a respect for the deliberate nature of the plants and animals that clung to life there. A respect for the struggle of the juniper, the Mormon tea, the black brush, the salt and sage brush, the willow, the maple and the scrub-oak, against the arid climate, and against the imported tamarisk that threatens to choke all others out of their native strong-holds. I marveled at the resourcefulness of the mule deer, the acrobatics of the desert bighorn, the survival skills of the coyote against a century of poisoning and hunting by sheep and cattle men. I savored the shelter offered by the Cottonwood and the Box Elder, seeking their refuge in the worst heat of the day.

I also felt disappointment each time my raft came out of Imperial rapid into the upper reaches of Lake Powell. Here, where the power of the Colorado has been stopped by the Army Corps of Engineers, I would remember the discussion I had with the professor about the Glen Canyon Dam. I pondered what it meant to be an environmentalist.

Just as the beauty of the river upstream intoxicated me, the stagnant, man-made reservoir downstream angered me. The dam was completed in 1964, two years before I was born. The lake was already on its way to being full before I was even old enough to know there was once a river. I felt robbed then, and still do. I will never be able to experience the unique beauty drowned by the dam. I will never be able to run the 60 silenced rapids of Cataract Canyon that John Wesley Powell and his company ran. Nor will I ever float through the deep corridors of sandstone now filled with water. I am bitter.



*Leiserowitz*

I wonder about the displaced wildlife. I wonder about the countless Anasazi ruins that the water has buried—the pots, sandals, granaries, the kivas, the cooking and living quarters. I picture them in my mind, submerged, moss-grown, decaying, the walls collapsing. These lost artifacts of a mysterious culture are windows into a past that have been permanently sealed. Bricked over by a reservoir.

As the river worked on my body and mind, I began to care deeply for the desert landscape. Questions of environment became spiritual, moral questions rather than just questions about economics and lifestyle. But I found that the same religious tradition that caused my discomfort with the term environmentalist offered some hope. In Genesis, Adam is given dominion over the world, but he is also commanded to “dress and keep” it.

Although my pioneer ancestors changed the face of the West — cultivating, irrigating, and building — they did leave many places wild. I know this was not always deliberate. Often, simply, they lacked the technology to dominate their surroundings. Yet, there are also traditions in my culture of

restraint, of place, of awareness and of reverence. It is within these traditions that dressing and keeping can be seen. In early Mormon Utah there were cultural restrictions on mining and mineral extraction, and an emphasis on sustainable agriculture and communal living. These people dressed and kept their farms and homes and often left alone the canyons, the high mountains, the deserts. I like to think that they felt a part of dressing and keeping to be knowing human limits—knowing to limit human desire. Yes they made some mistakes, and theirs was not a perfect environmental ethic; but many of them reined in their desires, cultivated what they needed to live and left the rest alone.

**S**ome may find my attempt to locate value in dressing and keeping a weak one. After all it is still a human centered ethic, it is still an ethic

# Mangoes

by Jen Shaffer

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**T**hud. Thud. Smiling, brown boys lob rocks through the glossy, green leaves of a massive tree in the schoolyard. Laughing girls in bright lavalavas gather stones and wait their turn. Colorful tropical flowers and fish compete with spirals, zigzags, and abstract art on their wrap-around, cotton lavalavas. The children imitate their Samoan mothers and fathers in wearing the all-purpose garments. Lavalavas aid coconut tree climbers, carry heavy loads, keep one warm on cool nights, and wipe off runny noses. Traces of ocean and sunlight and green swirl about in the heavy, warm air.

“Tofa. Hello. What are you doing?” I ask. Small hands, sticky and dirty as only a child’s hands can be, offer up sun-warmed mangoes. “For you, take and eat it.”

I worry. My lavalava has no pockets. “E fia le tau? How much?” The fruit looks so good - the first of the season. Perhaps, I think, I can bring them something later.

“Leai, no,” the children giggle. “For you.”

“Fa’afetai tele lava. Thank you very much.” They give me two mangoes, one for each hand. The soft fruit fits snugly - like it belongs, like it has always been there - between my palm and my fingers. The mangoes’ piney smell reminds me of the dark conifer forests of home, soaking up the Northwest sunshine like a sponge.

“Don’t forget to wash it first,” a little girl calls out to me in a serious manner. I smile. They laugh again. The children laugh so much. This unexpected gesture to a displaced palagi (a derogatory or affectionate term, depending on context, for a white person) gives me courage. In that moment, I can only aspire to their unconditional generosity. Someday, I hope to return the favor.

**A**fter dark, I sit in the quiet and listen to choruses of crickets and toads and the wind rushing through the coconut palms. A sliver of moon glows - reminding me of the children’s smiles this afternoon. More stars than seem possible prick holes in the night sky. If my arms were only a wee bit longer, I think I could touch them.

I pull out the mangoes and smell them again. Pine, flowers, heat. I bite out a plug of flesh. Sweet, liquid sunshine dribbles down my chin and slides down the back of my throat. Nothing has ever tasted this good. Nothing will ever taste this good again. I eat slowly, savoring the flavors of pine and sunlight, generosity and the wisdom of sharing. I wonder if my first apple or orange or ice cream tasted as wonderful as this first mango.

Finished. I bury the remains of captured sunlight beneath the stars and the moon and the nurturing earth. Maybe the seed will sprout. Maybe a tree will grow. Maybe small, laughing children will be generous to a palagi. Maybe the world will be a little bit better.

The Environmental Studies community welcomes  
our new graduate students!

Robert Chandler  
Randa Gahin  
Patrick Hurley  
David Koch  
Anthony Leiserowitz (Ph.D.)  
Lisa Messersmith  
Jonathan Plummer  
Julie Polhemus  
Stephanie Tuxill

# A Sensible Experience

by Gretchen Dawn Yost

*This was originally written for visiting professor David Abram's course on "Ecological Dimensions of Perception and Language." We were asked to slip under our thinking and pay attention to our phenomenological, direct experience of nature. It was an exercise in recognizing our primordial perceptual experience and learning to use words in a way that wouldn't conflict with, or eclipse, these experiences.*

Standing at the river's edge I think to myself: "I should not be thinking!" How do I break out of this self-imposed cocoon of conceptualization? I can see already that this will take practice...but why should it? Haven't I been directly experiencing the world with my body my entire life and simply paid little heed? Standing by the river, my first reaction is to give an explanation for why it is so full, so fast and so muddy: clearly, a storm has just passed.

But I soon forget about explaining and begin to focus my attention on how my *body* is reacting to this *place*. Watching, hearing, feeling the brown river water

swallow the trees and willows only a few feet in front of me—I too feel a sense of unbalance and unease...as though I (standing so close to the water's edge) need to plant my feet more firmly, perhaps even grow some roots, so that the lapping waves won't push me off balance. I sit down.

I watch the willows maintain their own balance in the strong river current and although I am sitting I still feel a rumbling and churning deep in my abdomen. The water is lapping, grabbing, reaching for the leaves and moss-covered stones just beneath my outstretched legs. Lounging on a couple of wet rocks I feel both the calm of the post-storm raindrops — delicately lingering on the bare winter branches —

and the tension of the strong, full river.

Looking down, I notice that my relatively dry pad of paper has become a haven and refuge for a few insects. One spider in particular, she — or he — appears to want to travel vertically. Journeying along the sheet of paper she interjects her stride with an occasional upward reach. As my notebook lies horizontal, I empathize with her grasping, stretching legs and guide her to a branch — a more fruitful place to be, I think.



Leiserowitz

The sound of the river water crashing up against one large rock in particular never seems to fade completely. Yet I notice that the sound becomes louder when I turn my head up and pay it attention. It seems as though the rock and water are responding to me and increase their activity when they have my full attention. I turn my head down to focus

on the insects crawling up and down my legs. I still hear the music of the water and rock, but now it is much quieter.

As I walked into this place at the river's edge, this canopy of moss-laden branches, I realized at the same time that this place is wandering into *my* being. I am not so sure anymore to what degree I can use the logic of spatial relations. Am I *in* this place or is it in me? Or are we "in" each other? The latter must certainly be the case, for though I am in this place, my presence is affecting the other beings here; the birds singing overhead, the branches on the ground which snap with each step of mine, and the river whose voice increases as I ap-

**Photograph:** *Needles, McKenzie River, Oregon*

proach her.

As I write, I am sitting on a tree trunk which grows parallel to the ground, slithering like a snake, before finally heading up to the sky, so it, therefore, has a nice, horizontal trunk to sit on. My behind feels the hard bark on which I rest just as I feel myself being felt by the tree, the dampness of the rain-soaked trunk seeping through my clothing and chilling my skin. I am not a compartmentalized being; a closed-off and unaffected thing, just as this place does not remain unaffected by my presence. That which seems to most hold me together and set me forth in the world as an autonomous being seems to be my skin, yet my skin is easily chilled by a creeping dampness, or easily punctured by a thorn.

More importantly, my various senses: my ears, eyes, nose, mouth and the sensitivity of my skin are in fact open to this place, and through them this place enters me. My ears are filled with sounds of river water meeting rocks, my eyes drink up all that is around me as if they couldn't get enough, my mouth takes in the damp, fresh air, my skin is awakened by *any* touch, even the touch of the air....

Just as I sense this place I feel myself being sensed by it. This interaction, I suppose, is a kind of interpenetration. Yet it is not simply an interpenetration between me and this place, but between me and this snake-like tree, or this tree and the river, or the birds *and me and the river and the tree....*we all seem so interwoven in this experience it seems difficult to even delimit my "own" being, my autonomous being.

I see a small rain drop clinging to the end of a narrow and bare willow branch. I look closer and see a sphere in which the world is turned upside down. Yet I am not a detached observer looking at this drop, because I can see myself *in* it — along with the curved river, the curved bank of trees and curved horizon.

**D**usk arrives and the sky is growing darker. Standing amidst a dark forest canopy often makes me feel as though there is a spotlight on me: I cannot see the eyes surrounding me, but they can all see me. As the darkness increases the only

light left in this small canopy is the reflection of the fading horizon in the small rain drops still lingering on the branches. Soon these drops of water begin to look like little shining eyes amidst a sea of darkness. I am being watched.

Before I leave this place, I dip my hand into the river. This, it seems, is the ultimate experience

of touch. The water is feeling out and exploring every niche, pore, crease and cut in my hand. I am feeling the water — and yes, it is cold! — but mostly I feel myself being felt by the water.

As I emerge from this small canopy, I begin to feel the sprinkling rain. The drops fall on my head and run down my body like fingers caressing the trunk of a tree.



Yost

# An Interview with Peter Walker

by Jen Shaffer

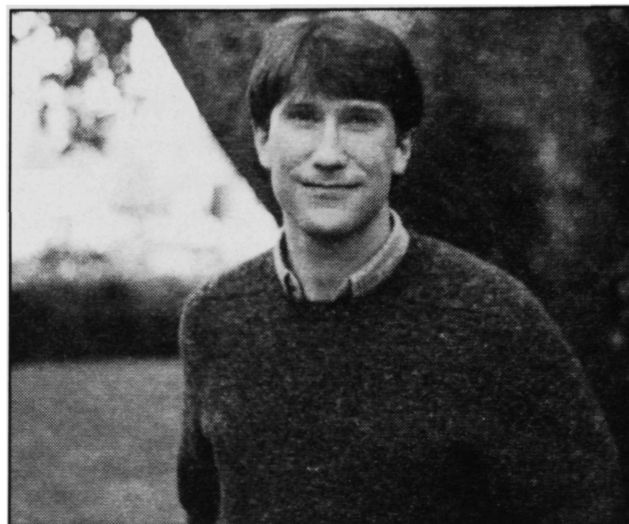
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One of the things that most impresses our newest professor in the Environmental Studies Program is the enthusiasm, energy, and engagement of both students and faculty. Peter officially joined the Environmental Studies Program last fall and began teaching two courses: "Political Ecology" and "Perspectives on Nature and Society." From 1986 to 1988 Peter served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone and from 1990 to 1997 he worked periodically as a consultant at the Harvard Institute for International Development while doing his graduate course work in Geography at UC Berkeley.

Peter started out as an economics major at UC Berkeley. He found that his training in economics provided a useful perspective, but also left many unanswered questions about the social and political dynamics that often cause the failure of development and environmental projects. He returned to academia, this time to Harvard, to earn a master's degree in public policy, hoping to learn how to solve environmental problems on the ground.

After his master's, Peter returned to Africa, this time to Malawi, to do field work in collaboration with Pauline Peters, an anthropologist from Harvard. Dr. Peters suggested that geography offered an approach that integrated economic and socio-political analysis. "I hadn't really thought of geography as an option. But geography makes it possible to bridge several of the ideas and approaches that I am interested in." Eventually he went back to UC Berkeley to earn a Ph.D. in geography.

Peter's Peace Corps experience and his consulting work in Malawi grew into his dissertation and current research. He is interested in how social changes shape environmental changes, and how both of these shift with changing economic conditions. His dissertation focused on how social history, politics and policy, and local institutions in Malawi helped to shape the conservation practices small farmers adopted in response



to extensive deforestation. Currently, Peter is studying how changing economic and social conditions are re-shaping perceptions and use of the environment in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California.

When asked about what he sees as the strengths and weaknesses of the Environmental Studies Program, Peter paused thoughtfully. "First of all, I have been really impressed with how many interested and engaged people there are in Environmental Studies. Students have a high level of enthusiasm, energy, and engagement," he said. Peter finds this encouraging -- especially since many of the students are wrestling with practical policy questions.

"The program also has lots of good faculty associated with it," he stated. "Their enthusiasm and efforts created a great program and made it work. Many times, interdisciplinary programs struggle because of boundaries between departments. However, the faculty at the University of Oregon have gotten past these boundaries to make the Environmental Studies program flourish."

Enthusiasm can be a double-edged sword though. One difficulty is that some students treat environmental issues as unambiguous moral decisions. "Too



often environmental issues get reduced to 'good vs. evil', 'us vs. them.' This isn't just a problem of environmental studies students, this is a major problem of the environmental movement."

Peter believes that one of the biggest reasons we end up fighting, when we should be working together to solve problems, is the narrow perspectives many people hold on diverse environmental issues, and the absence of communication and real understanding between different groups. He mentioned the spotted owl debate as good example of what can go wrong. "There is no appreciation for the other side's perspective. This absence of communication means that the debate gets reduced to sound-bite proportions, and often we end up simply blaming the other side as ignorant or selfish. When people begin to really talk, they realize that there is more commonality than we realize, and that there are real opportunities to work together. The absence of real communication between ordinary people on all sides of these debates makes it easy for the most powerful groups with economic interests at stake to define the terms of the debate. In that situation, ordinary people on all sides are likely to lose out." Therefore, Peter tries to emphasize multiple perspectives on issues in his classroom. He hopes students will understand that different views may be equally valid and valuable in a debate.

Professor Walker hopes to see more coordinated teaching between lecturers in the future. Occasionally, students say that they receive different information from different teachers on the same subject. The Environmental Studies curriculum committee is currently tackling this problem. Peter sees this, however, as a great opportunity for the program to use these contrasting perspectives positively. With coordinated teaching, lecturers might intentionally teach competing perspectives in the classroom to enhance

learning.

Peter would also like to see an increase in faculty appointments to the Environmental Studies Program. Currently, the program has about 700 undergraduate and 38 graduate students, yet employs only one part-time professor — Robert Collins — and one shared professor — Peter. (The Geography Department and Environmental Studies Program jointly hired Peter Walker as an assistant professor last September.) Many other faculty associated with the program belong to various other departments, but share a deep interest in environmental issues related to their separate fields.



Leiserowitz

Peter is concerned about the educational experience an undergraduate receives in an introductory class with 250 of their peers. A greater number of specific appointments to the Environmental Studies program would mean a better student to faculty ratio. "But, this is not just a problem for Environmental Studies."

More Environmental Studies faculty would also benefit graduate students, as there would be more professors available for advisors and research opportunities. Peter stated that he hasn't seen the problems that he experienced as a graduate student -- one 15-minute appointment every few weeks with his advisor -- yet. However, cutbacks in state educational funding could limit interaction and feedback for graduates in the future.

This year Peter will teach "Political Ecology" and "Perspectives on Nature and Society" again. He will also teach ENVS 201 — "Introduction to Environmental Studies: Social Sciences." In the Geography department, Peter will be teaching a regional course on Africa.

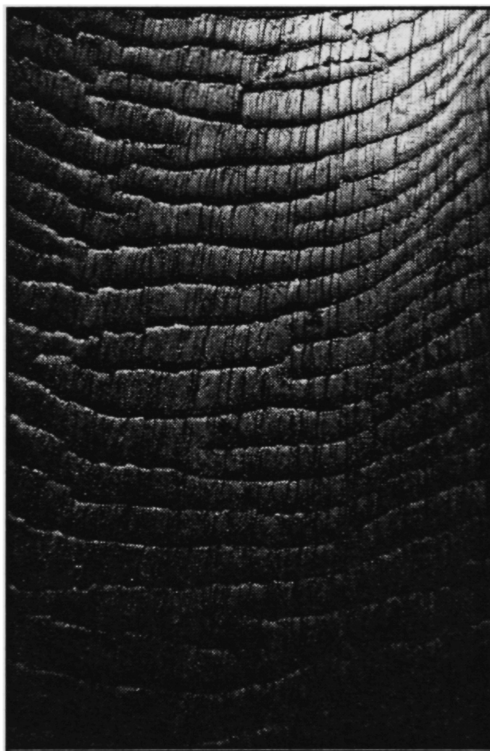
Peter has a number of future classes that he would like to teach in Environmental Studies — including courses on the role of community organizations in the environment, social institutions as mediators between the environment and property, and a graduate level course in Political Ecology.

**P**eter believes that the political economy is the most pressing environmental issue. The green movement in the United States and other countries has not paid enough attention to the role of the political economy and late 20th century capitalism in impacting the environment. “Although many well-intentioned people are working for the environment, we need to ask some serious questions. Can we sustain economic growth? Or make growth and sustainability happen together? These real questions would deal with the impact of growth on the environment. How is wealth distributed and used? We also need to look at the missing links between social justice and environmental issues.”

Especially important are the connections between poverty in the third world and environmental degradation. He thinks that in places where people are living barely at subsistence levels, justice questions become environmental questions. “Can we have cheaper goods forever without creating environmental problems?” For example, the maquiladoras produce cheap goods for US consumers, but often at the expense of Mexican laborers and the environment.

American consumerism is a real problem. “There is evidence that environmental disturbances anywhere on the planet can affect the United States - even if we

don't care about what is going on over there, we ought to be concerned about how it affects us in the long run right in our backyards. Society should be asking fundamental questions about the nature of our economy. We need to look critically at the nature of our economy and society. Is economic growth ideology sustainable, and is it even what we really want? We can see limitless growth is a problem for the environment, and we are beginning to ask whether it's even making us happy.”



Leiserowitz

When asked what books have heavily influenced his work, Peter mentioned the political ecology and ecological economics literature - particularly Herman Daly and Michael Watts - as well as the environmental historians William Cronon and Don Worster.

It was Paul Ehrlich's *Population Bomb*, however, that first piqued his interest in environmental issues. “Even if I disagree with some of Ehrlich's work now, I owe him a debt of gratitude for turning my interest in the environmental direction.”

**P**eter is enjoying Oregon. Originally from the San Francisco Bay area, he has found the urban crowding there to be unlivable in recent years. “I guess, like a salmon, you keep wanting to return to where you hatched. I still consider the central, northern California beaches home, but Oregon has many of the best features of home without some of the bad things. I appreciate the closeness of the urban environment to wild areas.” Let's hope that Peter continues to think of Oregon as his second home.

# Becoming a Savvy Environmentalist: Developing Your Research Skills

by Diane L. Sotak

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Being able to effectively locate and use information resources is fundamental to analyzing and developing solutions to environmental problems. The buzz phrase for this ability is “information literacy” and it is increasingly viewed as a critical and desirable component of an individual’s skills set. This literacy requires a familiarity with the structure and types of information resources, competency in using the technologies that provide access to those resources, combined with the ability to evaluate and utilize new information.

No matter what your background or area of study, everyone doing research confronts the same questions:

- How do I approach my research interest?
- What search tools are most appropriate for locating information on my topic?
- How do I use these tools? What strategies can I use to find materials efficiently?
- How can I tell if the items I find are in the library system?
- If it isn’t in the library, how do I get it?

Due to the multidisciplinary nature of environmental studies, students have unlimited information resources to tap. This can be daunting, however, because relevant information is scattered throughout the information resources of all disciplines — the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. What follows is an attempt to provide guidance and tips that will help develop your research abilities in a complicated information environment.

## How do I approach my research interest?

Before diving into an all-out search for materials consider two things: the *perspective(s)* you want to investigate and the *format* of the information needed. Keep in mind that these two aspects of your information need will change as you learn more about your topic, so be prepared to reevaluate and adjust your search strategy throughout the research process.

Let’s take the Columbia River as an example of a topic to research. Consider the perspectives from which the Columbia River can be viewed and the potential subjects for analysis within each perspective:

Biological/ecological: fish and wildlife, habitat loss and restoration, impacts of natural resource uses and associated development (hydropower, logging, wood processing)

Planning and policy: land management, scenic area development, environmental laws

Historical: natural conditions before and after human settlement

Public Health: environmental contaminants, water quality

Sociocultural: tribal subsistence rights, environmental justice

Economic: sports fisheries, recreation, power utilities

Also keep in mind the format in which the information may appear. Common format types are books, journal articles, newspaper articles, maps, data, and government reports.

**What search tools are most appropriate for locating information on my topic? How do I use these tools? What strategies can I use to find materials efficiently?**

Once you have defined what you are searching for, you can select and use appropriate search tools. Note that this article focuses on the electronic search tools available at the University of Oregon, but there are also useful print tools in the libraries that are not yet duplicated electronically. The first step towards improving your research skills is to become familiar with the variety of resources available through Janus,

the library's gateway to information, by going to URL: <http://libweb.uoregon.edu>.

The tools most useful for searching out information are accessible from the library's homepage under the sections for 'Library Catalogs,' 'Indexes & Abstracts,' and 'Beyond the Library.'

### *Library Catalogs*

The University of Oregon Library Catalog is the most accurate tool for identifying what materials (books, journals, dissertations, conference proceedings, etc.) are in the University of Oregon libraries. The next largest catalog, ORBIS, is the unified library catalog for thirteen libraries (including the University of Oregon) in the Pacific Northwest. If you find a book at an ORBIS member institution that you need, you can request it online and it will arrive at University of Oregon in three days and be held for you at the Knight Library circulation desk.

One search strategy for finding library materials on a specific topic is to search by subject headings. The subject headings are established by the Library of Congress and are assigned to library materials to alert users to the primary content of a work. It is worthwhile to experiment with various subject heading searches in order to become familiar with how they are structured. For example, a subject heading search on Columbia River results in an alphabetical list of subject headings starting with Columbia River (see below). The number of entries refers to the number of items in the library that have been assigned each subject heading. If you are not able to find subject headings for your topic, then try a keyword search.

You searched for the SUBJECT: columbia river                      UO Library Catalog  
409 SUBJECTS found, with 849 entries; SUBJECTS 1-8 are:

1	Columbia River .....	49 entries
2	Columbia River Anadromous Fishes History .....	1 entry
3	Columbia River Antiquities .....	1 entry
4	Columbia River Aquatic Biology Bibliography .....	1 entry
5	Columbia River Basin .....	2 entries
6	Columbia River Basin Anadromous Fishes .....	1 entry
7	Columbia River Basin Biological Diversity Conservation	2 entries
8	Columbia River Basin Biological Diversity Conservation	3 entries

### *Indexes & Abstracts*

These are the tools available for identifying articles in journals, conference papers, dissertations, and government reports. These electronic indexes and abstracts are produced by companies that are independent from the University of Oregon. As a result, these databases encompass materials not owned by the University of Oregon and, in general, they will have minimal location information for the University of Oregon holdings. They also have different interface designs, which means that they each look different, use varying methods for searching, and present varying amounts of information in the results (from citations only to abstracts and some full text). The best way to use these search tools effectively is to read their help screens and try a variety of searches to become familiar with how they search and the kind of results they produce. Finally, these electronic resources are not static. As pricing options and the needs of the University of Oregon community change, databases are added, replaced or discontinued.

To access brief descriptions of the subject matter, dates, and sources covered by each of the indexes and abstracts, select the 'Alphabetical List' option from this section of the library's homepage. The following table contains a sample of the electronic indexes and abstracts available for a variety of subject areas.

A Sample of Electronic Indexes & Abstracts Available Through JANUS (<http://libweb.uoregon.edu>)

## MULTIDISCIPLINARY

ArticleFirst (1990 - present)  
Expanded Academic Index (1980 - present)  
UnCover (1988 - present)  
Dissertation Abstracts (1861 - present)  
Newspaper Abstracts (1989 - present)  
PapersFirst (1993 - present)  
Proceedings (1993 - present)  
FactSearch (1984 - present)

## SCIENCES

Aquatic Sciences — Biology — Environment  
Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (1978 - present)  
BIOSIS (1997 - present)  
Environmental Sciences and Pollution Management Abstracts (1981 - present)  
Water Resources Abstracts (1967 - present)

Geography  
Geobase (1980 - present)

Geology — Earth Sciences  
GeoRef (1785 - present)

Medicine — Health Sciences  
Health Reference Center (1994 - present)  
Medline (1965 - present)

## SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Anthropology  
Anthropological Literature (1984 - present)

Business — Economics  
Business Index ASAP (1980 - present)  
STAT-USA

Education  
ERIC (Educational Research Information Clearinghouse) (1966 - present)

Government  
Congressional Compass (1970 - present)  
Monthly Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (1976 - present)

Humanities  
Arts and Humanities Search (1980 - present)

Political Science — Public Policy — Urban Studies  
PAIS (Public Affairs Information Service) International (1972 - present)

Sociology  
SocAbstracts (1963 - present)

### *Beyond the Library*

This section of the library's homepage takes you to links, descriptions, and helpful tips for the major World Wide Web (WWW) search tools. There is also a website titled "Environmental Studies WWW Resources," which can be found at URL: <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/scilib/environ.html>.

### **How can I tell if the items I find are in the library system? If it isn't in the library, how do I get it?**

As you identify potentially relevant materials using the indexes and abstracts, or those listed in references of articles, you should search for the title or author of the item in the University of Oregon library catalog. For journal articles be sure and search for the journal (often referred to as source) title, not the article title, in the library catalog. If you, or a librarian, can determine that the item is not at University of Oregon, you can submit an Interlibrary Loan (ILL) request and the University of Oregon will borrow the item from another library. On average, these take nine days to fill so try to allow yourself enough time to take advantage of this service. ILL forms are available at all library reference desks and can also be submitted electronically using a web version of the ILL form, or directly through FirstSearch indexes (e.g., ArticleFirst, Georef, Medline).

*continued on page 14*

## Conclusion

Even though this article focuses on utilizing the University of Oregon information resources, my hope is that the underlying concepts and strategies will be transferable to wherever you may end up living and working.

- **Developing Searches** - The strategies and techniques that you learn for constructing and modifying searches are applicable no matter where you go or what search tool you use.
- **Using search tools** - Even though search interfaces vary from database to database you will begin to recognize similar search options and features that will make it easier to learn how the next database works.
- **Libraries** - Most academic, public, government, and corporate libraries offer a mixture of print and electronic resources, as well as services like reference assistance and Interlibrary loan. Gaining familiarity with these resources and services at one library will give you an idea of what to look for and ask about at another library. Most importantly, the librarians are there to help you, so don't hesitate to seek them out.

*Diane Sotak is a Reference Librarian in the UO Science Library and a subject specialist for the environmental studies area. She has a Masters of Library Science from Syracuse University and a BS in Natural Resources from the University of Michigan. She previously worked as a wildlife biologist in Oregon and Alaska.*

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### *Dominion, Dressing, Keeping continued from page 4*

that puts humans on top. It is still an ethic that grows out of dominion. And the critics may be right.

But it seems more productive to me, although perhaps more difficult, to reread and recuperate the positive aspects of our cultural traditions than to reject them outright and search for others. Other traditions, even with their wisdom and perhaps their greater ecologic sensitivity, would not have the historical and generational depth for me, nor would they have the power that depth provides. All enduring traditions have

problems, but all enduring traditions have wisdom. Dressing and keeping is far from a perfect ethic, it is an ethic that needs to be discussed and refined, but it can be used in ecocentric ways. If we interpret it with sensitivity, dressing and keeping may be used to correct the idea of dominion.

**T**he Colorado no longer makes it to the Sea of Cortez. It is sprayed onto the golf courses of Las Vegas and fills the swimming pools of Phoenix. By the time it enters Mexico it has been diverted and dammed and sucked down to a trickle. Finally, short of its oceanic goal, it evaporates under the discipline of the southwestern sun. The giant sturgeon that used to swim the river's length — fish bigger than a man — are no longer; the squaw fish, the hump-back chubb, the razorback sucker will soon follow suit. In our quest for dominion, we have wiped out countless other plants, animals — even whole ecosystems. If indeed we have been divinely granted any type of dominion, a concept I find discomfoting, we must realize that dominion does not include the right to destroy what we did not create. I hope my culture can learn how dressing and keeping may correct dominion.

It is human vanity to think that we can forever impound the river that carved the Grand Canyon, or destroy a planet that was created over eons. We can, however, dam the Colorado river for my short lifetime and greatly deface the planet's beauty; we can destroy this world for our species and for many others. We must be responsible for our dominion, whether it has been assumed or granted.

**C**ontact with the Colorado River changed and shaped me. It sculpted and molded me as if I were a sandstone canyon. It forced me to ponder what it means to dress and keep, and taught me that part of dressing and keeping is to know that often we must leave things be. Modern life is the paradox in which I am caught. I am an environmentalist who is very much struggling with what it means to live ethically — with what it means to dress and to keep.

# Native Grace

by Laird Christensen

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i.

Here, in this river-  
scriven motherland  
of Douglas Fir and coho,  
our shortest days are wet  
and gentle, dripping

with Pacific sobs  
through grays from deep  
to feeble. So when  
the pewter shell  
of sky cracks wide  
one afternoon  
not halfway through  
our ponderous swerve  
toward Spring, I crawl  
from my green cave

of parka hood to air  
this clammy hunker out  
on the south slopes  
of Mt. Pisgah.

ii.

Burrowing through  
the steam and shade  
of cedar groves, moving  
with a seedling's ache  
for light, I lean  
into the scrawly jags  
of switchbacks

and scabble up  
the sunflushed shoulder  
past a final scatter  
of white oaks, who warm  
and stretch the tight grains  
of their muscles

through tatters of moss  
and mistletoe. By the  
breathing quilt of meadow  
draped on summit, I'm  
chasing day's last shadow  
where it ruffles  
through the fescue.

iii.

The east slides  
gently into sight  
beneath my rising,  
revealing five volcanoes,  
radiant in their snowy robes  
against the low maroon  
where time is bruising  
blue to dusk.

Hush now:

like prayer bells  
in the temple groves,  
here tolls a holiness  
that I'd have thought  
was more at home  
much further to the west—  
across the shrugs  
of trough and swell—  
than on this  
late-invaded shore.  
I dream

of the numinous calm  
of Fuji, and recollect  
the gentle rock of Li Po's  
windwrapped ribs  
beneath the gray ribbons  
of mane that splash and swirl  
on frantic thermals  
flailing up the face  
of T'ung-kuan cliffs.

iv.

But now I see  
this is a native disposition,  
domestic as the furls of oak  
that wrap these buttes  
in frazzled skirts, as  
bristled pelts of Douglas Fir  
that blacken ridgelines  
east and west—

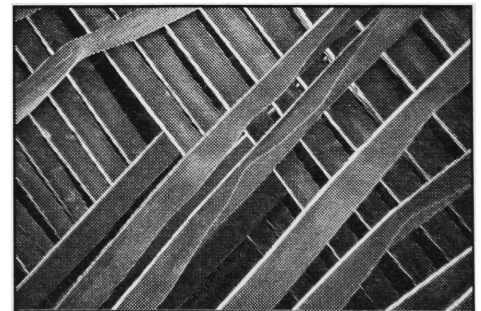
not merely resident,  
but each *in all*  
expressive of its living  
mesh of home,  
manifesting confluence  
of local rock  
and bone and leaf  
that steps to deeper soil  
in our fragrant pulse  
of rain.

v.

Diamond Peak dulls,  
and south to north  
each Cascade takes  
its turn to bloom,  
flaring lucent rose.  
In this unexpected grace,  
I come to wonder

if ever we, who bring  
no long belonging  
to this place,  
will someday learn  
to understand just how  
the land flows through us,  
to make its voice  
our custom. And when

at last the snowcaps gutter,  
paling to a bluer glow,  
I turn to see behind me,  
beneath a two-day growth  
of ghostly moon, the spill  
of Winter embers fade  
to stain above the Coast  
Range, flickering reflection  
of the shine that  
whitens Asian peaks.



Leiserowitz

*Photograph: Interlace, Belize*

# Ecological Conversations: Gender, Science and the Sacred

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Center for the Study of Women in Society  
University of Oregon

This program is designed to engage the creativity generated by the convergence of women's and ecological movements around the globe. More than three decades after Rachel Carson first raised a passionate voice of protest against the pollution and degradation of nature; postcolonial, feminist, antiracist and indigenous peoples' struggles have challenged key elements of Western science and environmental management. These movements have generated theoretical, linguistic, literary and historical investigations of the religious and cultural-symbolic meaning systems and socioeconomic underpinnings of Western colonization and desecralization of the natural world. Women's environmental theorizing and activism have produced a rich vocabulary and valuable categories for investigating the meaning of place.

This project will create a forum for critical reflection and scholarly interchange where the assumptions about knowledge and the world that shape these movements can be complicated and contested. Our goal is a series of dynamic conversations where humanists, scientists, theologians and grassroots activists from different cultural and national contexts can move beyond environmental crisis rhetoric and explore the conceptual and ethical vocabularies that meet the geopolitical, cultural, biological and technological challenges of a new millenium.

Each year's themes will balance questions of theory and practice, encompassing epistemology and concrete investigations. During the first year of our conversation we are especially interested in proposals from scholars who are already working on issues of gender and ecology or ecofeminism. We welcome proposals that deal with basic epistemological, theological, philosophy of science and interpretive questions as well as ones that explore particular problems such as environmental illness, male sexuality, fertility, geographical displacement or the interrelationships between human histories and nonhuman history.

Application deadline: February 1, 1999.

Contact: Sandra Morgen and Irene Diamond, Center for the Study of Women in Society, 1201 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1201. 541/346-5015; fax 541/346-5096

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(see also the Environmental Event Calendar at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~opwww/envcal/calendar.cgi>)

