

Loyola Sustainability RESEARCH CENTRE

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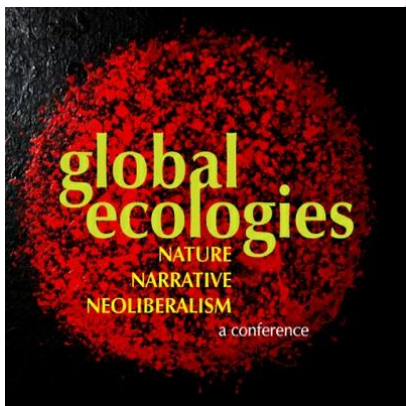
INSIDE



LSRC hosts Anna Tsing p. 2



LSRC Fellow in Germany p.2


 Global Ecologies Conference
p. 3

Science, Policy, and Values: Taking Sustainability Research to a Higher Interdisciplinary Level

Welcome to the first edition of the Loyola Sustainability Research Centre (LSRC) Newsletter, skillfully compiled, with his signature initiative, by our coordinator Adan Suazo. This is an opportunity to spread the word about LSRC, share some exciting developments, and put forth a call for further collaboration in the research community. The LSRC emerged from a lengthy process, driven primarily by professors and students, to formalize some of the networks that had been developing over several decades of research collaborations in sustainability research at Concordia University. Thankfully, former Dean of Arts and Science Brian Lewis supported the creation of a research unit that would be housed in the Loyola College for Diversity and Sustainability (formally known as Loyola International College). Several of us seized the opportunity to move forward, and graduate and undergraduate students alike have been key supporters. Though we have an office and tight connections on the Loyola campus, the Centre spans both Concordia campuses, and includes Research Fellows from thirteen different academic units as well as associate members from other faculties and elsewhere.

(cont'd p.6)

Cities and Gardens

Loyola Sustainability Research Centre Fellow Katja Neves was featured in a lengthy article in *Le Devoir* newspaper. In this article, Neves argues that cities like Montreal have the capacity to build biodiversity infrastructures within the confines of the city. In her view, urban settings and biological conservation should act in synergy. The full article can be accessed [here](#) (In French).



Neves' recent research focuses on botanical gardens' effects on social reinsertion. This project has led her to gather data in the United Kingdom, and will be part of an ongoing e-book project. In 2013-2014, she will participate in the organization of a conference that will bring scholars and practitioners involved in work on botanical gardens.

LSRC hosts world-renowned researcher



Through Fellow Kregg Hetherington, the Loyola Sustainability Research Centre co-hosted a lecture by world-renowned researcher Anna Tsing. Professor Tsing is with the Anthropology department at the University of California Santa Cruz. The event, which took place on February 1, 2013, drew an audience of over 200 students, faculty members and researchers from the Montreal area. The event was co-sponsored by the Loyola College for Diversity and Sustainability, the Sociology and Anthropology Department of Concordia University, and the Department of Anthropology at McGill University.

Sustainability and Community Building in Germany

Loyola Sustainability Research Centre Fellow Rosemarie Schade taught for the first time the courses “Local Sustainability and Community Building” and “Fieldwork in Germany “on local sustainability and community building. The courses took place during the summer of 2013 in the small town of Fulda, Germany. The course brought together undergraduate students from Concordia University and the Technical University of Fulda where they were introduced to sustainable practices and pursued related research activities. The course will be offered again in Montreal in the summer of 2014.

Recent Grants

Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, Concordia University. “Exploring the Ecological, Policy, and Cultural Implications of Climate Change for Biodiversity Conservation in Canada-United States Borderland Regions”, Pascale Biron, Jill Didur, Peter Stoett, Robert Weladji, Anya Zilberstein,

American Council of Learned Societies, American Research on the Humanities in China Fellowship, Timothy Sedo.

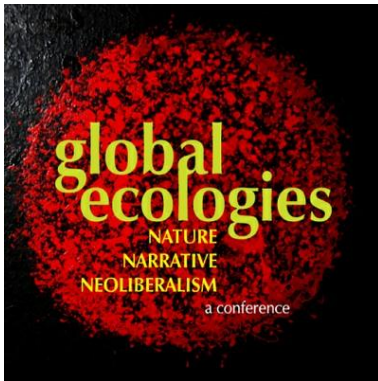
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, “Canada’s Waste Future: Uncertainty, Futurity and Democratic Engagement”, Peter van Wyck

Fonds de recherche du Québec - Société et culture, Nouveaux chercheurs, “Studying the Global Soybean Chain”, Kregg Hetherington

Fonds de recherche du Québec - Société et culture, Indigeneous Environments, Cultural Heritage, and Protected Areas of the Americas. Monica Mulrennan

Fonds de recherche Nature et Technologies, Quebec Centre for Biodiversity Science.

LSRC Presence at California Conference



Loyola Sustainability Research Centre Fellow Jill Didur participated in the Global Ecologies: Nature/Narrative/Neoliberalism, which took place on March 8th and 9th at the University of California, Los Angeles. Professor Didur presented a paper entitled "The Perverse Little People of the Hills: Global Ecologies and Species Interdependence in Reginald Farrer's Alpine Plant-Hunting". For more information on the conference, you can visit its website [here](#).

Welcome to our most recent fellows



The Loyola Sustainability Research Centre wishes to welcome its two most recent research fellows Kregg Hetherington and Natasha Blanchet-Cohen. Professor Hetherington is a political anthropologist specializing in environmental conflict, economic regulation, the bureaucratic state and international development in Latin America. His research focuses on how environmental and economic knowledge become politicized during periods of rapid social change, creating divergent forms of expertise. Professor Blanchet-Cohen joins LSRC from the Department of Applied Human Sciences at Concordia University. Her research focuses on community youth development, particularly on the environmental agency of multicultural and indigenous youth, and how environmental education opens the door to enhancing young people's contributions to their own development, to the social fabric of society, and to addressing current societal challenges in unique and significant ways.

A few words from the Interim Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science



*Photo courtesy PBL
Photography*

On behalf of the Faculty of Arts and Science at Concordia University, it is a pleasure to welcome the establishment of the Loyola Sustainability Research Centre (LSRC). The LSRC continues the Concordian tradition of building our knowledge related to the most serious issues facing society today. We are particularly excited by the truly interdisciplinary scope of the research collaboration on climate change and biodiversity issues that the Centre will facilitate.

Wishing the best for this collective effort,

Joanne Locke, Interim Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science,
Concordia University

LSRC Director appointed to position in The Hague



Loyola Sustainability Research Centre Director Peter Stoett spent the summer of 2013 as Erasmus Mundus Visiting Scholar at the International Institute for Social Studies in The Hague, Netherlands. Stoett brought his experience in research, curriculum design and teaching to this highly prestigious position. During his tenure in The Hague, he had the opportunity to meet with officials from different universities and institutes for future research collaborations with LSRC.

Funding for research project in China



Timothy Sedo, Fellow at the Loyola Sustainability Research Centre, was awarded an American Research on the Humanities in China Fellowship by the American Council of Learned Societies through the National Endowment for the Humanities. This fellowship funded a four-month research leave, which started in August, where he conducted fieldwork in north China into the history of locust and agricultural deity temples from the 11- 19th century.

This work is part of his larger book project concerning the history of locust infestations, locust control techniques and environmental governance in Ming and Qing China.

Congratulations to Peter van Wyck

The Loyola Sustainability Research Centre wishes to congratulate Research Fellow Peter van Wyck for his SSHRC grant for the project “Canada’s Waste Future: Uncertainty, Futurity and Democratic Engagement”. Professor van Wyck is working with principal investigator Myra Hird and Kerry Rowe (Queen’s University).

Recent Publications

Choudhury, Baharul & Dayanandan, Selvadurai & Khan, Mohamed L. "Genetic structure and diversity of indigenous rice (*Oryza sativa*) varieties in the Eastern Himalayan region of Northeast India." *Springer Plus* (2013): 2-228.

Blanchet-Cohen, Natasha & Reilly, Rosemarie C. "Teachers perspectives on environmental education in multicultural contexts: Towards culturally-responsive environmental education." *Teaching and Teacher Education* (2013) (In press).

Dayanandan, Selvadurai et al. "The Tertiary origin and Pleistocene diversification with restricted gene flow of Dragon Blood Tree (*Dracaena cambodiana* - Asparagaceae) populations in the Asian tropical forests." *PLOS ONE* vol. 8, no. 4 (2013): 1-12.

Hetherington, Kregg. "Beans Before the Law: Knowledge Practices, Responsibility, and the Paraguayan soy boom." *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 28, no. 1 (2013): 65-85.

Hetherington, Kregg. "Tierra malhabida y el engaño de la institucionalidad." *Novapolis*, vol. 5 (2013): 31-54.

Jaeger, Jochen et al. "Monitoring the effectiveness of wildlife passages for medium-sized and small mammals along HW 175", *News Bulletin – Concordia University*, No. 2 (2013): 1-11.

Jaeger, Jochen et al. "Using Compliance Analysis for PPP to Bridge the Gap between SEA and EIA: Lessons from the Turcot Interchange Reconstruction in Montréal, Québec." *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, vol. 42 (2013): 74-86.

Jaeger, Jochen et al. "Evaluating the effectiveness of road mitigation measures." *Biodiversity and Conservation*, vol. 22 (2012): 425-448.

Matthews, Damon & Solomon, Susan. "Irreversible Does Not Mean Unavoidable." *Science*, Vol. 340 (2013): 438-439.

Müller, Frank. "The discontinuing Confusion: An Ecological Economics Perspective." *Economia*, vol.36, no.71 (2013): 53-74.

Sens, Allen and Stoett, Peter. *Global Politics: Origins, Currents, Directions, Fifth Edition*. Toronto: ITP Nelson, 2013.

Zilberstein, Anya. "The Natural History of Early Northeastern America: An Inexact Science" in *New Natures: Joining Environmental History with Science and Technology Studies*, edited by Dolly Jørgensen et al. (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2013).

Recent Presentations

Fritsch, M., Lynes, P., Peterson, M. (Oct. 2013). Derrida and Environmental Ethics. Annual Meeting of the *International Association for Environmental Philosophy* in Eugene, Oregon.

Senthilkumar, U., N. Shivaprakash, R. Srirama, G. Ravikanth, D. Narasimhan, K. Ullasa, M. Sanjappa, K. Ganeshiah, R. Uma Shaanker and S. Dayanandan (2013). Proceedings of the 49th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Botanical Association, June 1-5, 2013, Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, British Columbia.

Stoett, Peter, "The Global Governance of Biodiversity: Tensions and Pathways to Resolution." To be presented to the Club of Rome Global General Meeting, Ottawa, September 20, 2013.

Zilberstein, A. (2013). Intended Consequences: Making Climate Change Before the Anthropocene, The History and Politics of the Anthropocene Workshop, May 17, History Department, University of Chicago.

Zilberstein, A. (2013). Temperate Empire: Climate Change and Settler Colonialism, Colonialism and Climate History Workshop, June 6, Mortara Center for International Studies, Georgetown University, Washington, DC.

Other Research Activities

During the summer of 2013, Selvadurai Dayanandan's LSRC member laboratory hosted:

Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship program sponsored doctoral students, R. C. Sumangala, N. Chaitanya, and H.K. Suma from the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, India to carry out research related to Biodiversity conservation in the Western Ghats Global Biodiversity Hotspot.

Professor Zhuhua Wu from Nanjing Forestry University, Nanjing, China for research on genetic diversity in wild populations of narrowly distributed endemic lily species in the Minjiang river valley in China

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Our initial thematic concerns are climate change mitigation/adaptation and biodiversity conservation. These reflect some of the strengths of our Fellows and associate members, and they are also two of the most pressing questions anyone concerned with ecological sustainability must confront today. They need interdisciplinary treatment, and at multiple levels (rural, urban, regional, global). They feed into many other issues, such as marine conservation, invasive alien species, perceptions of environmental stewardship, botanical gardens, international law, and other subjects in which members are engaged. And, of course, climate change and biodiversity loss themselves are, demonstrably, tightly linked; this applies to both the consequences of climate change and adaptation policy efforts.

What makes LSRC unique – beyond its fortuitous placement at a rapidly progressing university and the beautiful though challenged city of Montreal -- is its explicitly interdisciplinary character. We have members from all three of the sectors in Arts and Science (science, social sciences, and humanities), and our operative shorthand has evolved to be “science, policy, and values.” This reflects our collective desire to contribute to the development of sound science, policy prescriptions, and both historical and contemporary understandings of how all this relates to human culture. It is a tall order, and we have just begun this intellectual journey; yet, sustainability studies has forced this interdisciplinary outlook on us throughout our careers, so we are on familiar, if challenging, ground.

We are moving ahead with a demanding agenda. We continue to expand our membership, with Concordians as well as regional and international associate members with a rich variety of backgrounds and professional positions. Beyond the continuous search for external funding, through grants and prospective donors, we are also involved in the process of designing a new Master's degree in Environmental Studies. We have high hopes that this might also pave the way for an interdisciplinary PhD.

The College is developing new courses that can further supplant the undergraduate Minor in Sustainability Studies, and the Centre can help co-ordinate student's involvement in faculty research and related internships. We are also actively pursuing postdoctoral placements, aiming to build further on a research culture emphasizing high-level peer reviewed work. Plans are in the works for a speakers' series, and several Centre-related conferences are also on the drawing board. Our Fellows maintain a high level of community engagement and media presence, but we would like to increase these vital aspects of research contributions as well. We also aim to deepen our links to external colleagues; for example, several Fellows are also members of the Quebec Centre for Biodiversity Science run out of McGill University.

Climate change and biodiversity loss remain two of the greatest challenges society faces today; if the LSRC can help enable researchers to make even a tiny contribution toward workable solutions and deeper understanding, then we will have succeeded. We seek further collaboration across the spectrum of disciplines, inside and outside of academia, and I hope readers will make an effort to contact me to learn more about the Centre and our emerging agenda. Our website features much more information than we can convey in this short newsletter, of course, but it is always nice to speak in person with people engaged in similar pursuits.

I look forward to working with the sustainability research community in my capacity as the first Director of LSRC, trusting that we will challenge, energize, and inspire each other in this interdisciplinary context.



Peter Stoett

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Pascale Biron - Department of Geography, Planning and Environment

Natasha Blanchet-Cohen – Department of Applied Human Sciences

Grant Brown – Department of Biology, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies

Selvadurai Dayanandan – Department of Biology

Jill Didur – Department of English

Dylan Fraser – Department of Biology

Matthias Fritsch – Department of Philosophy

Yves Gelinas – Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

James Grant – Department of Biology

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Damon Matthews – Department of Geography, Planning and Environment

Frank Muller – Department of Economics

Monica Mulrennan – Department of Geography, Planning and Environment

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Timothy Sedo – Department of History

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