SES 15/40
The School of Environmental Studies
15 Years 1999-2014
The Environmental Studies Program
40 Years 1974-2014

University of Victoria
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History of the School

The initial events leading to the establishment of ES were made possible by the involvement of many dedicated individuals. Marc Bell, Derrick Sewell and other faculty members brought forth proposals to address environmental issues at UVic. They recommended an approach to Environmental Studies that could be implemented with low cost in a short time. A comprehensive proposal surfaced in 1972, which was circulated through the Arts and Sciences faculty for comment. In 1974, Arts and Sciences Dean Jean-Paul Vinay established a committee to implement key elements of the proposal. This began the university wide experimental program in Environmental Studies.

The program was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences but was accompanied by the condition that it be reviewed in 4 years. In 1978 the program underwent an extensive review as planned. The steering committee submitted a report with a number of recommendations. The main proposal stipulated that ES be made a regular interdisciplinary program with its own director and steering committee. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the University Senate, and the Board of Governors approved the outlined recommendations. Thus, in 1979, ES became a regular campus program that evolved into the School of Environmental Studies by 1999. Many students and faculty were involved in the early phases of ES development and after 36 years most of the aims of the program pioneers have been realized.

Note: The caption is actually incorrect and should have said Environmental Studies Program. Paul West was the Director at the time. He is in the light coloured short-sleeved shirt standing behind the person kneeling. Duncan Taylor, the first regular faculty member in the ES Program, is to his left.
SES 15 Milestones

1. The school's three pillars

The school of Environmental Studies digs deep into environmental problems from three distinctive perspectives: **ethnoecology**, **ecological restoration** and **political ecology**. The combination makes the program unique in Canada, and is one of the main reasons why ES undergraduate and graduate programs are in demand. The perspectives are called pillars because they support and define so much of what the students and faculty of Environmental Studies do.

**Ethnoecology** is the study of interactions between people and the ecosystems they inhabit. Nancy Turner, Trevor Lantz, Natalie Ban, Wendy Wickwire, and Brenda Beckwith have done more than document traditional relationships to place: they interpret our changing relationship to nature and bring this knowledge to bear on critical issues of land rights, climate change, and the recovery of knowledge.

**Political ecology** is an interdisciplinary inquiry into the political and economic principles controlling the relations of human beings to each other and to the environment. Put more simply, it explores the politics and policy necessary in a world where ecology matters. Kara Shaw, Duncan Taylor, James Rowe, Jessica Dempsey and Michael M'Gonigle have explored how to create positive change through two key lessons. Understanding the deep blocks to change is the first lesson. The second is that real change happens when we see the subtle shades between black and white solutions.

**Ecological restoration** is repairing damage we've done to ecosystems. But, repair makes it sound too easy. Eric Higgs, John Volpe, Brian Starzomski, and Valentin Schaefer have expressed that good ecological restoration is about getting the ecology right, but that might only be 25% of the challenge. The rest involves ensuring adequate political support, creating an inspiring design, mobilizing community volunteers, providing long-term economic support, and monitoring and adapting to change complete the picture. These are big challenges requiring an integrated approach.
2. Restoration of Natural Systems Program and Native Species and Natural Processes Certificate

The University of Victoria’s Restoration of Natural Systems (RNS) program has facilitated the healing of natural ecosystems through respect, rigor and relevance. It was established in 1996 following Senate approval of a proposal largely developed by Nancy Turner and Richard Hebda. It is a unique program offered in partnership by the Division of Continuing Studies and the School of Environmental Studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences. This partnership provides unique opportunities and instructional formats that make the program unique among other environmental programs in British Columbia and the rest of Canada. There is an Advisory Committee for the RNS program chaired jointly by the Director of the School of Environmental Studies and the Director of Arts and Sciences Programs in the Division of Continuing Studies. Directors from the School of Environmental Studies have included Paul West, Eric Higgs and Peter Stephenson. Directors from Continuing Studies have include Brishkai Lund, Heather Mcrae and Maureen MacDonald.

The program has educated restoration professionals, students and community members through the undergraduate credit RNS Diploma and non-credit RNS Certificate. The program is administered by a Program Coordinator from Continuing Studies and an Academic Administrator (formerly Faculty Coordinator) from the School of Environmental Studies. The Program Coordinators have been Peggy Faulds and Janet Pivnick. Faculty Coordinators have been Richard Hebda, Patty Thomas, Don Eastman and Valentin Schaefer.

In 2006 the Division of Continuing Studies and the School of Environmental developed the Native Species and Natural Processes (NSNP) Professional Specialization Certificate to complement the existing Restoration of Natural Systems Program Certificate and Diploma. The new program targeted working professionals who wanted to upgrade their skills and/or pursue professional development. The goal was to offer a multidisciplinary program focusing on environmental stewardship that would appeal to students from a variety of regions and backgrounds.

The RNS Program fosters community outreach that has included the annual Restoration Institute, speaker series, field trips and project-based research. The RNS program has, and remains, committed to community based learning which sees students conducting community projects in almost every course they take.
3. Redfish School of Change

The Redfish School of Change is an interactive and experiential field school designed for undergraduate students interested in food security, ecological sustainability, and social equity. Over the course of five weeks, students in this interdisciplinary leadership program have lived and learned in some of the most beautiful places in British Columbia, worked alongside local food producers and ecological restorationists, and have engaged with experts in the fields of environment and social justice. By accepting only sixteen students each year the Redfish School of Change provides customized instruction and support that helps participants flourish as students and develop the capacity and confidence to lead their home communities on the environmental issues that matter most to them.

Upon successful completion of this field program, each student is awarded 4.5 units of course credit for three courses at the University of Victoria, as well as six months of post-program support. The participants learn to 'walk the talk' and obtain the life-changing skills for creating positive change.

The Redfish School of Change is a non-profit program designed for people who want to lead the way in creating ecological sustainability and social equity in their communities. Students, who are a part of this intensive six-week field school, travel and visit the mountains, lakes and valleys of the West Kootenays in British Columbia. They visit innovative sites and engage with experts in the field of environment and social justice. Participants explore the wilderness of Valhalla Provincial Park, and witness the unique nature of the Columbia Basin as they visit its various and diverse communities. Students learn critical skills for creating positive change, putting them into practice during and after this unique program.

Living and learning with fifteen to seventeen other participants and three instructors, each student develops the capacity and confidence to lead their community on the issues that matter most to them. Upon the successful completion of the program, the participant receives three course credits from the University of Victoria as well as six months of post-program support on their environmental and social justice initiatives.

The Redfish School of Change grew out of a shared passion for social and environmental change and experiential education as well as a strong belief in the capacity of young people to lead. A partnership between GreenLearning Canada, the University of Victoria School of Environmental Studies, and Pearson College formed to make this unique program possible. A wonderful fusion of academic and experiential learning, the Redfish School of Change runs every spring.
Distinguished Professor and Hakai Professor in Ethnoecology, Nancy Turner is an ethnobotanist whose research integrates the fields of botany and ecology with anthropology, geography and linguistics, among others. She is interested in the traditional knowledge systems and traditional land and resource management systems of Indigenous Peoples, particularly in western Canada. Nancy has worked with First Nations elders and cultural specialists in northwestern North America for over 40 years, collaborating with Indigenous communities to help document, retain and promote their traditional knowledge of plants and habitats, including Indigenous foods, materials and medicines, as well as language and vocabulary relating to plants and environments. Her interests also include the roles of plants and animals in narratives, ceremonies, language and belief systems.

Currently, Nancy is working on several research and writing projects. In 2011, she was named to a new position as Hakai Chair in Ethnoecology and was awarded a $1.25 million grant from the Quadra Island-based Tula Foundation to support her ongoing work. This funding and new role allows her to participate more fully in community-based learning and research, especially as it pertains to critical issues facing Canadians today around the importance of sustaining biocultural diversity in an ever-changing world. She remains active in organizations such as Global Diversity Foundation, The Hakai Institute, Society of Ethnobiology, Society for Economic Botany, and Slow Food International.
5. Restoration Institute

The Restoration Institute is a joint initiative of the School of Environmental Studies and Restoration of Natural Systems Program at the University of Victoria based in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. The institute was created to foster an international dialogue on emerging issues in the field of ecological restoration. The Restoration Institute is currently developing the *New Natures Network*, a global partnership of researchers, practitioners and students to understand and explore the cultural and social dimensions of rapid ecosystem change.

Each year the institute focuses its attention on a unique advanced restoration theme. Past themes include:

6. Seafood Ecology Research Group

The Seafood Ecology Research Group (SERG) addresses research questions that reside at the interface between the marine environment’s limited capacity to produce and the seemingly insatiable human demand to consume. As a starting place for all our research initiatives, SERG takes the position that ecological issues are in fact the manifestation of underlying economic, social and cultural drivers. By limiting research scope to only the “ecological” while ignoring the economic, social and cultural is tantamount to treating the symptom while ignoring the disease. Each research initiative is positioned in such a way as to be driven by, incorporate and respond to, economic, social and cultural dynamics. The underlying motivation of all SERG research is to inform and be policy relevant for the benefit of all Canadians. The group is keenly aware of the putative role of university research in public discourse and seeks to engage and inform.
7. Mountain Legacy Project

The Mountain Legacy Project is an interdisciplinary research team based in the Visualization Lab of Eric Higgs at the School of Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria, British Columbia. The project investigates landscape ecology, ecological restoration, and social perspectives on the mountainous landscapes of western Canada through repeat photography and archival research.

The Mountain Legacy Project has many partners including:
- Library and Archives Canada
- Parks Canada Agency
- Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
- The Alberta Library
8. Master’s and Doctoral Programs

In 2009 the School of Environmental Studies began to offer its own MA/MSc program. Prior to this addition the degrees were only offered through special arrangement. The School of Environmental Studies is composed of three core interdisciplinary research areas in ecological restoration, ethnoecology and political ecology. The three areas allow for participants of ES to embrace a full range of learning opportunities spanning natural and social sciences, humanities and traditional ecological knowledge.

The School's MSc and MA programs are research based and therefore all students are supervised by a faculty member along with an advisory committee. A typical master's program takes 2 - 2.5 years to complete. All MA/MSc students are required to take three mandatory ES graduate courses and are expected to complete two additional courses that complement their research. One of these can be at the 400 undergraduate level.

In 2013 the School received approval to offer a PhD in Environmental Studies with the first students starting their program in 2014.
Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan, UVic’s Chancellor from 1979 to 1984 and one of Canada’s foremost wildlife biologists and conservationists, died April 18 in Victoria, just two months shy of his 100th birthday.

He received an honorary degree from UVic in 1985 and also served on the university’s board of governors and alumni board of directors. In 2005 the Dr. Ian McTaggart-Cowan Professorship in Biodiversity Conservation and Ecological Restoration was established at UVic with a $750,000 donation from the provincial government. Subsequent donations from the Habitat Conservation Trust, BC Hydro and many private donors increased the value of the professorship to $1 million.

In 2009, the professorship was awarded, for the first time, to Dr. Brian Starzomski who described McTaggart-Cowan as “a wonderful researcher, teacher, mentor and conservationist and it’s my hope to follow in his footsteps”.
10. Dr. Lorene Kennedy

Dr. Lorene Kennedy was fully committed to students and deeply concerned about the environment. Although she passed away in August 2002, at the age of 82, her love of the natural world lives on through a $2.5 million gift to the students of the School of Environmental Studies students in the form of bursaries.

Dr. Kennedy was a modest, quiet person who was driven to succeed despite the many barriers she faced, and who felt strongly that all interested students should have the opportunity to obtain an education. She was concerned about all of the things that biologists worry about: loss of habitat, loss of diversity. She saw the School of Environmental Studies as providing an education that combined scientific understanding of biology and ecology with an awareness of the importance of conservation. She was also deeply inspired by the work of Dr. Nancy Turner, one of the world’s leading ethnobotanists and a professor at the School.
11. Pit Cooking

Pit cooking is a tradition of BC First Nations that involves steaming vegetables in a shallow pit. A wood fire is made to heat round stones about 15 cm in diameter. After the stones are heated the food is added and then covered with branches of salal, fronds of sword fern and other native plants. A large stick is held upright in the pit as material is added and it is later removed after the pit is filled.

The vegetables cooked include traditional foods such as camas, nodding onion and wapato that are now often replaced with potatoes, carrots and yellow onions. Salmon is the usual meat. When all the food is added and covered, a final layer of burlap and leaves is placed over the pit. Water is poured into the hole left by the removed stick and the heat from the rocks and steam cooks the food.

Over the course of many years, the School of Environmental Studies has held numerous pit cooks in partnership with local First Nations bands.
12. ES200 option

The Environmental Studies Program began as a double major option with courses beginning in third year. As the program developed concerns were raised that students entering third year did not have a common knowledge of the field of Environmental Studies. The need to bring some students up to speed on the material led to difficulties in the classroom. In 2007 the program developed a second-year course to address this situation.

ES200 provides an introduction to Environmental Studies as a subject and, more specifically, to the program and curriculum of the School of Environmental Studies at UVic. The course uses a specific thematic focus to develop an understanding of the sources and character of environmental problems and some of the analytic tools and contexts necessary to respond to them. The tools and contexts introduced reflect the specializations within the School: ethnoecology, political ecology, and ecological restoration.

The thematic focus thus far has been food. Environmental Studies has chosen food as a focus both because it is an immediate part of our daily lives, and because it is inextricably linked to how we—individually and collectively—interact with our environments. By developing a richer understanding of how our relationships with food have shaped our environments, and how these in turn shape us, students deepen their understanding of the complexities of environmental problems more generally. Participants of ES200 leave with a good introduction to the curriculum they will encounter should they choose to continue on in Environmental Studies at UVic.

The course seeks to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to research, analyze and communicate about environmental issues. Specifically to help improve the capacities of students to:

- understand a broad range of environmental concerns, including the inherent uncertainties and synergies involved in environmental and social issues;
- constructively analyze environmental issues including ecological, social, historical, and economic dimensions;
- understand a variety of mechanisms for environmental and social change;
- assess the role of individuals and communities in both causing and resolving environmental problems, and
- effectively communicate about environmental issues.

Students gain further depth and understanding of environmental perspectives through exposure to a diverse array of guest speakers. In 2013, Dr. Vandana Shiva, one of the world’s most important ecofeminists and social justice activists, received an honorary doctorate from the University of Victoria. During her visit she met with undergraduates in the Environmental Studies Program in a special question and answer session.
13. ESSA and Group ENVI

The Environmental Studies Student Association (ESSA) is the Environmental Studies Undergraduate Course Union. The group focuses on linking environmental activism and social networking within the undergraduate community. ESSA organizes a wide variety of fundraisers, events and activities throughout the year, and provides key volunteer and job opportunities to the undergraduates of Environmental Studies. The Essence is ESSA’s flagship newsletter and has been an important part of the School’s identity.

Group ENVI is the Environmental Studies Graduate student organization. The group was formed in 2006 as a way to get grad students out of their offices and enjoying time together. ENVI hosts a variety of social events throughout the year. In 2006 the group's first season began with a sustainable gastronomy film series. Members of ENVI gathered to watch films on food related environmental topics and discuss them together over shared meals. This year ENVI has celebrated graduate life with a kickoff meal, a full moon potluck, pizza and movie nights, and has future plans to host a sustainable craft night in the new year.
14. Global Aquaculture Performance Index

The Global Aquaculture Performance Index (GAPI) is a tool to empower seafood industry leaders and policy makers to make informed decisions about the environmental costs and benefits of farmed marine finfish. GAPI uses a well-established statistical methodology to provide a rigorous and objective evaluation of the environmental performance of marine aquaculture globally. The methodology is based on the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) approach developed by a team of environmental experts at Yale University and Columbia University, which has been revised biennially since 2006. The species-country focus of the 2010 GAPI yields results that are most relevant for comparisons of performance across species and countries.

Future applications of the GAPI framework will include the development of a farm-level performance index and an evaluation tool to benchmark the environmental performance of current and future aquaculture standards.
15. Polis Project

The POLIS project is a Political Ecology offshoot of the School of Environmental Studies. The POLIS Project on Ecological Governance is a centre for transdisciplinary research that investigates and promotes sustainability. POLIS was established in 2000 by the Eco-Research Chair of Environmental Law and Policy at the University of Victoria and became part of the Centre for Global Studies in 2011. POLIS fills a unique niche on campus as a place where academic and policy research meets community action. As POLIS researchers, we work together with a diversity of people in different ways – urban and rural communities, First Nations, Aboriginal organizations, businesses, co-operatives, public officials and the non-profit sector – to foster healthy and sustainable communities.

The POLIS mission is to cultivate ecological governance through innovative research, policy analysis and strategic advocacy, law reform, education and community action. Ecological governance offers alternatives to linear, extractive, and unsustainable systems – alternatives that are circular, reflective and self-sustaining in ways that reduce urban demands on distant and local ecosystems. For our communities to become sustainable, we must re-imagine and re-invent our systems of governance. POLIS doesn’t see ecological governance as a choice, but as an imperative for the 21st century.

Providing a forum for cross-disciplinary dialogue, collaborative research, and socially engaged scholarship on ecological governance is the thrust and continuity in work conducted by POLIS members – whether it be investigating the shift from supply to demand management in the use of water, re-imagining new forms of urban “smart growth” such as the “planetary university,” developing research protocols and collaborative partnerships between the university and First Nation communities, or reforming environmental laws. The work at POLIS is designed to liberate the potential where people in place work together to develop sustainability in that place. This basic ethos motivates POLIS research, policy analysis and advocacy, education and community action.
1. Northern Ricercuto

Leigh Joseph is a member of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) First Nations. Her graduate research focused on the ethnoecological restoration of northern riceroot (*Fritillaria camschatcensis*) in the Squamish estuary. Ricercoot is known as lhásem in the Skwxwú7mesh language. Historically, this plant was an important traditional root vegetable that was cultivated by indigenous people in estuary gardens along the coast of British Columbia. Today, the population of this plant has been greatly reduced in the Squamish estuary and it has become a focal point for Squamish Nation members who are interested in renewing knowledge and practices connected to their traditional plant foods. Leigh's research has produced a series of experimental restoration gardens in the Squamish estuary with the hope of these gardens developing into future food harvest sites.

2. Common Energy

Jamie Biggar was a Research Associate at the University of Victoria from 2007-2010 after working at POLIS while also completing his MA in Environmental Studies on network governance. He originally joined POLIS, in 2005, to research the potential for new forms of green business to gradually restructure the economy according to ecological principles. He became a Director of the University of Victoria Sustainability Project and later a student representative on the University's Board of Governors. After working to promote the book *Planet U: Sustaining the World, Reinventing the University* during the summer of 2006, he co-founded Common Energy in the fall of 2006 to spearhead a Planet U-esque campaign at UVic. The project was designed to facilitate collaboration between the network of students, staff, faculty, and regional partners interested in creating effective responses to the climate crisis in Victoria.
3. Mosqoy Foundation

Ashli Akins currently splits her time between Ollantaytambo, Peru; Oxford, England; and Victoria, Canada. She is a graduate student at the University of Oxford in International Human Rights Law, and previously graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in environmental studies, Latin American studies, and professional writing (journalism & publishing) from the University of Victoria. Ashli founded Mosqoy as well as the Q’ente Textile Revitalization Society in 2006, when she traveled to South America at 20 years of age. These organizations have since become her life’s work, as she has continued to dedicate her passion and energy towards acting as their volunteer executive director.

4. Focal Restoration and Novel Ecosystems

Eric Higgs has been a key figure in the evolution of the field of ecological restoration over the last three decades. He has been actively involved in the development of the Society for Ecological Restoration and is a past Chair of the organization. In his book Nature by Design he described the concept of focal restoration, which highlights the benefits of ecological restoration in building community. Focal restoration captures much of the essence of environmental stewardship and vital volunteer participation in restoration projects. Recently, he and two of his colleagues published Novel Ecosystems: Intervening in the New Ecological World Order. The definition and role of novel ecosystems in ecological restoration promises to be vital in the future.
5. SES Advisory Council

The Advisory Council offers wise counsel on strategic opportunities for the School of Environmental Studies. Composed of experienced professionals from private, public and non-profit sectors, the Council meets twice a year.

The current members are:

- Robert (Rob) Abbott, Founder & CEO, Abbott Strategies, Victoria
- Frank Arnold, Principal, The Pinch Group, Victoria
- Roy Brooke, Director, Sustainability Department, City of Victoria
- Arthur (Art) Hanson, O.C., Distinguished Fellow, Institute for Sustainable Development (resides in Victoria)
- Gerard (Ged) McLean, Director, Fuel Cell, BIC Inc., Vancouver
- Christine Lintott, Principal, Christine Lintott Architect, Victoria
- Dr. Sinclair Philip, Co-owner, Sooke Harbour House, Sooke
- Nancy Richards, Director of the Junior School at St. Michaels University School
- Clark Roberts, Chief Representative, Gowlings International, Beijing
- Sarah Webb, Climate Action Program Manager, Capital Regional District, Victoria
- Conrad G. Brunk, Professor Emeritus, University of Victoria
- Deborah Curran, Program Director of the Environmental Law Center and Hakai Professor in Environmental Law and Sustainability at the University of Victoria
- Gurdeep Stephens, Asset Manager at Nature’s Path Foods Inc.
6. Gorge Waterway Initiative

In 2005, The Land Conservancy (TLC) worked with the Gorge Waterway Action Society (GWAS), the University of Victoria School of Environmental Studies and Restoration of Natural Systems (RNS) Program, the Veins of Life Watershed Society (VOLWS) and interested community groups to restore a waterfront property along the Gorge Waterway. The growing and multidisciplinary interest in restoring the Gorge created an excellent educational opportunity for an on-site restoration project. Drawing upon the expertise and resources of the community, private sector, government and the university, University of Victoria students developed a restoration plan to guide the project. The development of a student composed restoration plan was made possible through offering a special edition of the course ER338 titled Restoring the Gorge. The course was funded by grants from the Capital Regional District and Coast Capital Savings. The site has since been used as a model for other properties along the Gorge Waterway to undergo similar restoration initiatives.

7. RNS Student Technical Series

The Restoration of Natural Systems Program maintains a Student Technical Series of reports written by RNS students for their major project in ER 390. The final project brings together the knowledge and skills students have acquired through the program and applies them to a real restoration situation in their area of specialization. The project is usually done in partnership with a community group, government department or industry partner and often makes a significant contribution to the community where the student lives. On occasion, the student may partner with an international organization and complete their project in another county, such as Nicaragua, Philippines and Sierra Leone. All RNS students must complete a final project to obtain their diploma or certificate. Their final reports are posted online in the Student Technical Series.
8. Restoration Conferences and Workshops

The School of Environmental Studies (ESE) and the Restoration of Natural Systems (RNS) Program have hosted a number of significant conferences in the field of ecological restoration. These were:

- 1999 Helping the Land Heal
- 2004 Society for Ecological Restoration International Conference
- 2012 Restoration Beyond Borders

Workshops held by the ESE and the RNS Program facilitate the sharing of knowledge and ideas related to environmental topics and research. Workshops have included:

- Climate Change and BC Wildlife Symposium June 1-2, 2009 (with BC Ministry of Environment).
9. Galiano Island Restorative Learning Centre

The Galiano Conservancy Association is a community-based non-profit society and registered charity founded in 1989 and dedicated to protecting the natural and human environment of Galiano Island, British Columbia. The Conservancy is one of BC’s first land trusts, and owns and protects several environmentally sensitive properties on Galiano. In 2013 the Conservancy created a Restorative Learning Centre on the west side of the island. The centre works in partnership with the School of Environmental Studies and other organizations. In 2013 the School of Environmental Studies offered a field course, ES441/ER411 Advanced Principles and Concepts in Ecological Restoration, at the Learning Centre to help with preliminary restoration designs for sites on Galiano. The course offered an in-depth look at progressive small-scale restoration efforts on Galiano Island.

Galiano Marsh
10. Lansdowne Speakers

The Lansdowne Lectures are a series of public seminars hosted by various University of Victoria departments. Notable scholars are invited to speak to enrich the learning of both students and faculty. The School of Environmental Studies has been active in bringing distinguished Lansdowne Speakers to the University of Victoria. Some of these include:

- June 19, 2009 – Dr. Jim Harris from Cranfield University, Bedfordshire, UK. *Restoring the Earth: Avoiding Peak Soil.*
- July 18, 2011 – Dr. Simon Levin, Moffat Professor of Biology, Princeton University. *The Challenge of Sustainability.*

Dr. Robert Costanza
Professor, Ecological Economics
Director, Gund Institute for Ecological Economics, University of Vermont
“The Value of a Restored Earth”
11. Farmer’s Filminac

Hannah Roesseler finds the diversity of ways that humans grow, gather or cultivate their food simply thrilling. Her research explored how organic farmers in the Pacific Northwest perceive climate change, and adapt to changing environmental conditions. She tested the effectiveness of using participatory video techniques in the learning and transfer of local farming knowledge and adaptive strategies. Hannah likes to misquote Margaret Mead by saying “dirt is just soil out of place”. She shares her research and ongoing work on the website www.farmersfilmanac.com

12. Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and photomapping the North

Trevor Bennett, a student of Trevor Lantz, used visual and participatory research methods to document and communicate local observations of environmental conditions in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, of the western Canadian Arctic. The objective of his research was to evaluate the effectiveness of these methods to monitor environmental conditions to adequately communicate, and contextualize local hunter and trapper observations.
13. Great Bear Rainforest

Maggie Low examined the processes used to negotiate novel forms of environmental governance being deployed in the North and Central Coast of British Columbia, known as the Great Bear Rainforest. She provided useful insights into the kinds of efforts that may be required to effectively address contemporary environmental problems.

Through various and complex political processes constituted by many actors, a novel set of agreements, known as the Great Bear Rainforest Agreements, arguably emerged to resolve a conflict over the management of BC’s forests, a long standing and contentious issue in the province. Maggie’s thesis first examined the wider limitations of institutions of governance to effectively address environmental problems and efforts to respond to these problems, particularly by environmentalists. Second, it told the story of the Great Bear Rainforest Agreements, and examined their wider implications for participants of the negotiations and more generally. Overall her thesis argued that the Great Bear Rainforest negotiations can provide instructive lessons to institutions of governance by demonstrating how deliberative processes can help ease some of the structural tensions that condition environmental conflicts in Canada. Second, First Nations in the region played a crucial role in the Great Bear Rainforest negotiations and the outcomes of this role are likely to have significant implications for future resource conflicts in the province. Third, the role of environmentalists in decision making in British Columbia is evolving.

14. Elwha Dams

Ryan Hilperts is the Director of the Redfish School of Change and a sessional lecturer at the School of Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria. She teaches ecology and ecological restoration, and researches the ways in which ecological restoration transforms both human and ecological communities. Her graduate work involved community engagement with the removal of two dams on the Elwha River in Washington State, focusing on the importance of fostering community conversations about ecological change. Ryan has been a workshop facilitator, sea kayak guide and marine naturalist, a long distance hiker, a mountaineering instructor, a repeat photographer, an english teacher, and a field ecology educator in Washington State, British Columbia, Alberta, Thailand, and Central America. She believes one key to transformative education is developing the ability to ask constructive critical questions not only of others, but of ourselves.
15. Eelgrass

Severn Cullis-Suzuki studied the use of Ts’ats’ayem-- eelgrass (Zostera marina L.), by Kwakwaka’wakw peoples around Vancouver Island. She worked primarily with Dr. Nancy Turner at the School of Environmental Studies and Chief Adam Dick, Kwaxsistala, of the Dzawada’enuxw of Kingcome Inlet. Among many other fascinating eelgrass aspects, Severn investigated how this marine angiosperm figured into the year's traditional round of food harvesting, how this clonally reproducing plant was affected by the harvesting techniques of the First Nations, and how the observations of the land by today's elders can inform our biological evaluation of the health of our current ecosystems.

16. Research Excellence Award

John Volpe receiving the 2013 Social Sciences Research Excellence Award.
17. Teaching Awards

James Rowe was awarded the Andy Farquharson Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching for 2010. “What I enjoy most about teaching is the creativity,” he says “the classroom is a creative space where we can collectively experiment with different ideas and spark new approaches to pressing problems. I particularly love teaching because of how much I learn from students”. “His tireless enthusiasm and relentless hopefulness create a classroom environment that is inspired and inspiring, where students can believe in the possibility of a more socially and ecologically just world,” said one of his nominators. Another said he “creates a trusting classroom environment where students from diverse backgrounds and skill levels feel invited to participate, and where tensions between perspectives are treated as possibility, not conflicts.”

Karena Shaw arrived at UVic in 2003 and quickly became a leading contributor to restructuring the school’s undergraduate program. She was also one of the designers of the new and highly successful Introduction to Environmental Studies course, which employs an overarching theme of food examined through the three pedagogic pillars of the School: political ecology, ethnoecology and restoration ecology. She has provided inspiration and advice related to the school’s new master’s programs and its partnership in the Redfish School of Change. Working with faculty in the Institute of Integrated Energy Systems, she developed a course on energy, ecology and politics that attracted students in environmental studies and mechanical engineering. Shaw has become the school’s go-to specialist in innovative teaching and has served as mentor to several sessional instructors. Colleagues are impressed by the effort she gives to teaching undergraduate students through generous conversations, exhaustive notation of their work and extensive lecture preparation.
ES 429, Urban Ethnoecology, developed and taught by Trevor Lantz, explores cultural understandings of ecosystems and knowledge of interactions between human activities and human habitats in urban settings. This summer field course investigates the ways city dwellers understand and interact with urban and peri-urban habitats. Student participants in this course study the intersections between people and place in cities from an ethnoecological perspective to inform and contribute to initiatives aimed to create sustainable cities.
19. Hakai Field Course

Brian Starzomski annually teaches a section of ES470 Field Course at the Hakai Beach Institute. The course, Biodiversity and Conservation of Coastal BC, covers aspects of coastal biodiversity such as the plants of Calvert Island – the forest bogs, wetlands and magnificent temperate rainforest. The course also covers ecological methods and theory, and conservation on BC’s Central Coast. The course is taught outdoors in the beautiful natural environment of Calvert Island, part of the Kaia Luxvbalis Conservancy. Calvert Island and Hakai Luxvbalis Conservancy are home to wolves, orcas, humpback whales, sea lions, mink, black-tailed deer, and more than 75 species of birds.

20. Move to David Turpin Building (formerly Social Sciences and Mathematics – SSM)

The David Turpin Building (formerly Social Sciences & Mathematics) is the new academic home for many UVic studies including Geography, Environmental Studies, Political Science and Mathematics. Built to LEED Platinum standards, this 98,000 sq ft building features many interesting environmental initiatives, including a ‘green roof’. The School of Environmental Studies moved into SSM from the Sedgewick Building in 2008.
21. David Turpin Building Gardens

The Ian Ross Memorial Garden in the courtyard of the Social Science and Mathematics building was established through a gift from Ross's daughter Robin-Lee Clarke, the current owner and operator of Butchart Gardens. Sarah Webb, UVic's sustainability co-ordinator, said the garden is part of the university's "green" building strategy and is composed of several distinct areas. "It is designed to be representative of a Garry oak meadow, a coastal bluff, a bog, a creek and has an area solely focused on native planting specific to our bioregion." The garden has many benefits, Webb said. "First and foremost is the 'learning laboratory' concept, that students will be able to utilize these landscapes as a place to study and research on an ongoing basis," she said. "There is also that ecosystem value that comes as part of the green building program -- attracting birds and bees and butterflies, and retaining storm water run-off." She said the garden brings an aesthetic appeal, and is also a place to be enjoyed by the entire community. The Ian Ross Memorial Garden and green roofs provide an integrated stormwater detention system with bioswales, ponds, open-grid paving and vegetated green roofs throughout with plantings of indigenous trees, shrubs, and groundcover. The building’s two green roofs and several patio gardens help insulate and capture rain and moisture. The design and species lists for the garden were developed by the faculty and staff in the School of Environmental Studies.

22. Development of Core Courses

Environmental Studies is a broad field that attracts students from many different academic backgrounds. This created some challenges in the classroom where some students lacked the understanding necessary to participate in class discussions and understand the course material. To address this problem the School identified core courses in each of its three areas of specialization - ES301 Political Ecology, ES321 Ethnoecology and ES341 Ecological Restoration. The School also developed a prerequisite course for all three, ES200 Introduction to Environmental Studies. ES200 can be taken by undergraduates outside of the department of Environmental Studies and has become a popular course, attracting around 400 students annually. The School of Environmental studies estimates that approximately 10% of all University of Victoria students will have taken this course when they graduate.
23. Climate, Energy and Politics course

Environmental Studies has led a number of community-based research collaboration projects. For example, in 2012 students conducted research for the City of Victoria that resulted in a public event and a published newspaper article. The research itself was used towards achieving the City's Community Energy and Emissions Plan. As part of this research a group of University of Victoria Environmental Studies students looked at transforming Government Street into a pedestrian mall, as their fourth-year project.

That proposed action, one of many considered by the city to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, was among the ideas for which UVic students designed implementation plans.

24. Root Gardens

Jen Pukonen studied Nuu-chah-nulth traditional root gardens for her MSc thesis. This research project was originally suggested by members of the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation communities of Clayoquot Sound, as a way of promoting and maintaining important traditional knowledge about nutrition and the environment. In collaboration with students and interested community members she helped to research and re-create a traditional root garden of a its"uqmapt (springbank clover), tlitsy'upmapt (pacific silverweed) and kuuxwapiihmapt (northern rice root). This community-based restoration project, involved an interdisciplinary approach to ecocultural restoration, drawing on the fields of ethnobotany, ecology and social sciences.
25. Six New Faculty Positions in Six Years

Natalie Ban joined the School of Environmental Studies as an Assistant Professor in January 2013. Trained in geography, resource management and environmental studies, Natalie Ban draws upon many disciplines from natural and social sciences in her work. Her research interests span ethnoecology, conservation biology, marine spatial planning, conservation planning and implementation, and evaluation and mapping of cumulative impacts, all mainly in marine and coastal systems. Natalie’s current research focuses on identifying options for management and conservation of biodiversity whilst respecting people’s needs and uses of resources.

Jessica Dempsey joined the School of Environmental Studies in 2012. Her central academic goal is to wrestle with the complexities of environmental politics, particularly under contemporary conditions where something like the ‘NASQUACK’ – the only half-ironic name The Economist gave to species banking in the United States – is increasingly seen as normal and even necessary. Thematically, Jessica aims to open windows on how environmental governance and ecological science are entangled with ‘the economic’, and to examine the material and discursive geographies produced in the wake of market-oriented environmentalism.

James Rowe is trained as a political scientist. His research and teaching areas are political ecology, critical theory, social movement history, and political economy. He joined the School of Environmental Studies in July 2011. James’ work is especially focused on the causes, effects, and redress of social and ecological injustice. His current research is on the emergence, effects, and rationale for profit-driven economies. This research includes an exploration of alternative drivers for economic activity like the enhancement of social value.

Val Schaefer is a biologist and ecologist by training who has developed unique expertise in the emerging field of Urban Ecology. Although he joined the School in 2005 as the Academic Administrator for the Restoration of Natural Systems Program, his position was not base funded until 2010. Val is a founder and former Executive Director of the Institute of Urban Ecology at Douglas College in New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada. Val is presently Faculty Coordinator of the Restoration of Natural Systems Program at the University of Victoria. Val is a leading proponent of urban ecology and urban biodiversity who has written extensively and presented internationally on these topics. He is also an environmental educator who has conducted numerous community projects promoting nature in the city.
Trevor Lantz joined the school as an Assistant Professor in July 2009. His work focuses on the impacts of global change on ecocultural landscapes in western North America. Trained as an ecologist and an ethnobiologist, his research employs local knowledge of ecosystems as well as observational and experimental approaches. His current research projects in Gwitchin and Inuvialuit communities in the Western Arctic examine feedbacks between climate change, warming permafrost, disturbance, vegetation change, and the abundance of country foods.

Brian Starzomski joined the School of Environmental Studies as an Assistant Professor in July 2009 and is the Ian MacTaggart Cowan Chair in Conservation Biology. Broadly trained as a community ecologist and conservation biologist, his research examines biodiversity structure and dynamics, and seeks to link theory and empirical approaches. Recently, much of his work has taken place at treeline and in the alpine zone beyond it, in Labrador, British Columbia, and the southwest Yukon. Other recent projects involve examining facilitation among species in bromeliad food webs in Costa Rica. Brian doesn't have an organismal bias to his research, and is comfortable working across the taxonomic spectrum, from insects to plants to birds.


The following narrative is the personal reflections of Alan Drengson, the first administrator of the Environmental Studies Program, on the origins of the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Victoria from his book “Environmental Studies from the Early Years: Impressionistic Reflections”.

To explain why we started this program, and how it developed, I recount the personal and cultural background of the grass roots environmental movement in the early 70s. In the 60s we hardly used the words “environmental movement.” This came to refer to efforts in our society to curb widespread damages to farm land, urban environments and the natural world. As environmental concern grew, we distinguished between the environmental movement, environmental studies, environmental education and applying ecological principles to different disciplines (such as ecopsychology). The science of ecology was identified mainly with biology. An early application of ecological analysis outside biology was in Sociology in the 1950s to “urban ecology.” We distinguished between educational programs and original research aiming to further knowledge.
27. Sustainable Forest Practices in Clayoquot Sound

Clayoquot Sound has been a focal area of study for many courses over the years and the Environmental Studies faculty has made significant contributions to the debate surrounding forestry practices in Clayoquot Sound and identifying solutions for the future. Nancy Turner was a member of the Scientific Panel that explored sustainable forest practices for Clayoquot Sound in 1995. Duncan Taylor published *Ecoforestry: The Art and Science of Sustainable Forest Use* (with Alan Drengson, New Society Publishers, 1997), and most recently the edited anthology *Wild Foresting: Place Based Practices for Diversity and Health* (New Society Publishers, 2008). Kara Shaw was the Co-Director of the Clayoquot Sound Project, an effort to encourage the study of global politics through local sites that involved an International Workshop on the Politics of Clayoquot Sound, held in May 1997, and resulted in the Clayoquot Archive, *The Clayoquot Documents* and the book *A Political Space*.

28. BC Round Table on the Environment and the Economy

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 in Stockholm, Sweden, marked the beginning of political and public awareness of global environmental problems. It led to the formation of the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development, which sponsored a number of events, notably a Commission chaired by Gro Brundtland that led to the publication of *Our Common Future* in 1987 that marked the beginning of the concept of sustainable development. Canada’s response to the Brundtland Commission was the formation of its own commission that published the report *Sustaining the Living Land* with a recommendation to form round tables of concerned citizens to develop sustainability strategies to address the sustainability challenge. The BC Round Table was an advisory body of 31 representatives of society including industry, environmental and native groups, academia and public servants. Paul West was one of these representatives. From 1987 until 2002 Paul was the Director of the Environmental Studies Program and later the School of Environmental Studies. He served on the British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and the Economy from 1990-94 and as a Research Associate of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy from 1993-95. He was also a member of the Work Force Committee of the Forest Renewal BC from 1994-99.
29. Honorary Doctoral Degrees

The School of Environmental Studies has nominated several key figures for honorary Doctoral degrees. These have included:
- Dr. Mary Thomas (Secwepemc)
- Dr. Daisy Sewid-Smith (Kwakwaka’wakw)
- Dr. Earl Claxton Sr. (Saanich)
- Dr. Bill Turner, Executive Director, The Land Conservancy of British Columbia
- Dr. Vicky Husband, Past Conservation Chair, Sierra Club of British Columbia
- Dr. Wade Davis, Explorer in Residence, National Geographic Society
- Dr. Vandana Shiva, Environmental Activist and Anti-globalization Author
- Dr. Merve Wilkinson, Founder, Wildwood Forest, Ladysmith

30. Garry Oak Meadow Ecosystem Restoration (GOMER)

In 2004, after years of comprehensive design and research that culminated in a design charrette of experts and community stakeholders, a plan was completed to restore a degraded old-field that was once part of the now endangered Garry oak ecosystems on the University of Victoria campus. Championed by the Restoration of Natural Systems Program Faculty Coordinator, Don Eastman, and his student Magnus Bein, this project was intended to provide knowledge and a model for ecosystem conservation and restoration on the UVic campus and in the region—a living laboratory for examining the process and techniques for restoration of the endangered Garry oak ecosystems. The goal was to restore Garry Oak ecosystems appropriate to the site, following a process that acknowledged both the ecological and social aspects of ecological restoration, and that was based on partnerships and participation of the university, public and restoration communities.
31. Wildwood Forest

Wildwood is a forest where Merve Wilkinson has worked hard to tell people that there is an alternative to industrial forestry. Located outside Ladysmith on southeastern Vancouver Island, Wildwood Forest is now owned by The Land Conservancy and is stewarded in partnership with the Ecoforestry Institute. This property was first stewarded by Merve Wilkinson in 1938 and has become widely recognized as a valuable example of the pursuit for sustainable forestry. Under the guidance of Dr. Paul Boving, Merv was introduced to Scandinavian forest management philosophies and practices of the time. Key among what Merv integrated were the ideas of harvesting less than the annual growth rate, so that the stand volume is not diminished over time; and Dr. Boving’s preferred tree selection method, single tree selection, or what Merv has sometimes called “sustainable selective forestry”. Due to the practices conducted here, Wildwood forest has been a popular field trip site for courses in Environmental Studies.

32. Alumni Who Make A Difference Awards

Brenda Beckwith PhD ’05, (Biology)

A senior lab instructor with the UVic School of Environmental Studies, Brenda's contributions to the university extend to her role as a volunteer lecturer with University 102 and co-founder of The Red Fish School of Change, a six-week field school held in the interior of BC. In both roles she shares her teaching – encouraging students to pursue their dreams.

Nancy Turner BSc ’69 (Biology)

Nancy is a pioneer of ethnobotany, documenting First Nations knowledge and cultural heritage. Her work has attracted countless students to study at UVic and she has shared her insights as guest speaker at alumni events. She has also donated her book, periodical and research archives to Environmental Studies.

Ashli Aikins BA ’09(Environmental Studies/Writing)

At UVic, Ashli founded Mosqoy, a group dedicated to development work in Peru. The organization works with traditional weaving communities and offers scholarships to disadvantaged students pursuing higher education. Many students who participate in Mosqoy continue their volunteer efforts in their communities and at UVic.
33. Environmental Studies Steering Committee

At UVic, Marc Bell, Derrick Sewell and other faculty members brought forth proposals to address environmental issues on campus. They recommended an approach to Environmental Studies (ES) that could be implemented with low cost in a short time. A comprehensive proposal surfaced in 1972, which was circulated to the Arts and Sciences faculty for comment. In 1974 Arts and Sciences Dean Jean-Paul Vinay established a committee to implement key elements of the proposal. This was the beginning of the University wide experimental program in Environmental Studies. This program was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences with the condition that it be reviewed in 4 years. In 1978 the program had an extensive review. The steering committee submitted their report with a number of recommendations. The main proposal was that ES be made a regular interdisciplinary program with its own director and steering committee. These recommendations were approved by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the University Senate, and the Board of Governors. Thus, in 1979, ES became a regular campus program that evolved into the School of Environmental Studies by 1999.

34. ES300

The first Environmental Studies course, ES 300, was added in 1975. This interdisciplinary course was designed to bring ES students and faculty together for discussions and shared projects. Marc Bell led this course in its early years. It was problem oriented, emphasized group process, and provided off campus and interdisciplinary experience. ES 300 had many memorable events, such as design-ins with Stan King and weekends at Yellow Point Lodge near Ladysmith. This was the first of many ES courses. There were also double listed ES courses such as ES 314 also listed as Philosophy 333. Students in the course would examine environmental issues from multiple perspectives. The class in 1991 looked at the City of Victoria in terms of housing, transportation, waste management, energy and pollution. They compiled their papers in a report and presented their findings to a Council meeting.
35. First Regular Faculty Member

By 1989 the Environmental Studies (ES) Program had become a Department with Full Time Equivalents (FTEs), tenured professors and a regular budget within the Faculty of Social Sciences. Duncan Taylor was the first FTE and was appointed in 1986 as a Sessional and then in 1989 as an Assistant Professor. He introduced a number of ES courses, such as ES300A/B Environmental Perspectives and Environmental Issues, which was completely redesigned from the 300 version Marc Bell had taught. Over the years, Taylor also introduced ES 414 Introduction to Natural and Social Systems, ES 400A/B Advanced Systems Theory, ES 404 Discourses of Environmentalism, ES 412 Canada in Transition, and ES 380 Introduction to Integral Systems Theory and Practice.

36. Formation of the School of Environmental Studies

After the formation of the Environmental Studies Program, the next phase of development saw the creation of the first joint Chair of Environmental Studies with the Faculty of Law, held by Michael M’Gonigle, who came to Uvic in 1995. There was a full term Director, Paul West, secretarial and marking assistants, and students on every level – including grad studies. Students could choose to double major in ES and another discipline or they could do a minor in ES. Another option available was Special Arrangement Graduate Degrees chaired by interdisciplinary committees. In 2000 the program had 15 graduate students. Paul West served one of the longest terms as Director from 1987 to 2001, while also having received an environmental research grant in Chemistry. Under Paul’s direction the program developed in several dimensions and eventually became a School. He also introduced the ES course in Environmental Protection (originally ES 432).
37. First Tenured Full Professor

Faculty members like Nancy Turner, who came to Uvic in 1990, have won many national and international honours. Turner was Environmental Studies first tenured Full Professor. She introduced many new courses such as ES 321 Ethnoecology, ES 421 Ethnobotany: Plants and Human Cultures, and ES 423 Traditional Systems of Land and Resource Management. She has also done extensive research with first nations’ cultures in BC. In 2010 she was awarded the Order of Canada for her work. She earlier received the Order of British Columbia in 1999 for her distinguished scholarship and work with BC’s aboriginal people.

38. Cross Appointment with Department of History

Wendy Wickwire holds a cross appointment between the Department of History and the School of Environmental Studies. Among the courses she has taught for ES are: ES 428 Ethnographic Methods in Environmental Research and ES 481 Aboriginal Peoples and the Environmental History of British Columbia. Her main research interests are focused around oral history, Aboriginal history, environmental history, BC ethnohistory, and early history of anthropology in Northwestern North America. She also received a three-year SSHRC grant to study the challenge of ethnography in the Boasian Era.
39. Integral Systems Theory: Philosophy and Practice

ES 415 teaches the history and philosophy of integral systems theory and its application at the individual and community level. It incorporates recent trends in light of panarchy theory and integral ecology. The course offers guidance through exercises, readings and discussion to experience the fundamental meaning of sustainability. Out of the entire curriculum in Environmental Studies this course is unique. It deals with how the environment, economy and society are connected in their most basic principles at an advanced level. Many students have found the course to be a revelation and have been very moved by the material and method of learning.

40. Pizza Cutter Award

The faculty in Environmental Studies fosters a culture of camaraderie amongst graduate students in the School to provide professional and personal support while they are completing their Master’s and Doctoral research. A key element in building this culture is the social events hosted by faculty at their homes. John Volpe, an experienced chef, regularly holds pizza “slap down” competitions when he is the host. Under his tutelage, faculty and students collaborate in teams to create unique pizza toppings and taste experiences. Winners of the competition are selected by consensus and are honoured with the “Pizza Cutter Award”, a bronze-painted pizza cutter mounted on wooden stand, that they can temporarily possess and display with pride. In the event of a tie the contestants assume the plank and whoever can stay in the yoga pose the longest wins.