

**Sustainability and Contemplative Practice<sup>1</sup>**  
**A Gathering at Whidbey Institute at Chinook**

In collaboration with the “Curriculum for the Bioregion” initiative  
of the Washington Center at The Evergreen State College

November 14-16, 2012

**Agenda**

**Friday**

3:00                      Registration opens at Thomas Berry Hall, check in, get settled, explore the land.

*Optional Friday afternoon activity*

4:00                      Welcome and Orientation    *Thomas Berry Hall*  
for those attending for the first time.

*Formal opening of the weekend gathering*

5:00                      In-gathering: Convene and Welcome    *Thomas Berry Hall*

Heather Johnson, Sharon Daloz Parks, and Jean MacGregor

Shared visions: The Whidbey Institute and Curriculum for the Bioregion

Introductions

Being here and nourishing ourselves at Chinook

Thomas Arthur Anderson and Christyn Johnson

6:15                      Dinner    *Dining Room*

7:15                      Moving into the work    *Thomas Berry Hall*

Small group conversations.

8:30-ish                      Closing with Marie Eaton

*Rest well*

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<sup>1</sup> Abundant thanks to Sharon Daloz Parks, Marie Eaton, Mike Gillespie, Karen Harding, David Levy, and Heather Johnson for their help in designing this gathering and in shaping this strand of the Curriculum for the Bioregion initiative.

## Saturday

7:00	Yoga with Karen Gaul	<i>Thomas Berry Hall</i>
	Silent meditation Conveners: Mike Gillespie and Kurt Hoelting	<i>The Sanctuary</i>
7:45	Breakfast	<i>Dining Room</i>
9:00	Opening	<i>Thomas Berry Hall</i>
	Reflective and contemplative practices in our courses: purposes and forms: Marie Eaton and Paul Wapner	
10:15	Pause	
10:45	Working conversations: developing or expanding reflective and contemplative practices in our courses.	
12:10	Feedback: 3-minute paper	
12:30	Lunch	<i>Dining Room</i>

*Optional Saturday afternoon activities: In your folder, see the additional yellow agenda-sheet that describes the contributed concurrent activities on Saturday afternoon.*

1:45 – 3:45	Contributed Concurrent Sessions	
4:00 – 5:00	Contributed Concurrent Sessions	
5:15	Fostering More Reflective Institutions	<i>Thomas Berry Hall</i>
6:30	Dinner	<i>Dining Room</i>
8:00	Evening gathering	<i>Thomas Berry Hall</i>
	“A Path of Hope and Sustainability: Rachel Carson as Inspiration” A presentation by Stephanie Kaza	
9:15-ish	Hot cider, wine, and informal social time	<i>Farmhouse</i>

## Sunday

7:00	Yoga with Karen Gaul	<i>Thomas Berry Hall</i>
	Silent meditation Conveners: Mike Gillespie and Kurt Hoelting	<i>The Sanctuary</i>
7:45	Breakfast	<i>Dining Room</i>
9:00	Opening	<i>Thomas Berry Hall</i>
	Contemplative Practice in Higher Education: Evolving Work Mike Gillespie, Jean MacGregor, Sharon Daloz Parks	
9:30	Workshop: developing our own inquiry and “Scholarship of Teaching and Learning” related to pedagogies of reflection and contemplation. Marie Eaton, Hope Corbin, and Jean MacGregor	
10:30	Pause	
11:00	Your feedback and our possible next steps: opportunities for continued community and collaboration.	
11:45	Closing Circle	<i>The Sanctuary</i>
1:00	Lunch	<i>Dining Room</i>

*Please check to make sure that you have any books or materials that you brought to share, and please leave us your nametag and your feedback form on the large table in the foyer. Thanks so much!*

*Safe Travels Home*

*“Another world is not only possible, she is on her way.  
On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”*

Arundhati Roy

## Sustainability and Contemplative Practice 2014 Saturday's Concurrent Sessions

*Note session descriptions here and short bios  
of all our presenters in another document in your folder*

1:45-3:45 p.m.

*This is a time for being on your own, or joining one of these planned activities.*

**1. Applied Mindfulness in the Classroom**, with Kurt Hoelting *(The Sanctuary)*

One hears a lot these days about the "Mindfulness Revolution" taking place in a variety of cultural contexts, from professional sports to business and medicine, to childrearing, to higher education. What is the essence of "mindfulness?" In this experiential workshop, Kurt Hoelting will present core concepts about mindfulness, offer some guided practices that could be employed in a classroom setting, then host a Q&A conversation about how such practices might be utilized as catalytic tools for deepening classroom inquiry into complex and emotionally challenging aspects of sustainability studies.

**2. Labyrinth Walk**, with Sharon Daloz Parks *(The Labyrinth, near the Sanctuary)*

A labyrinth is an ancient form, found across variegated cultures. Its gift is a contemplative form that invites many interpretations, thus serving varying hungers and purposes of the soul, mind, heart, and body. It can be used by individuals and/or groups. Gathering at the labyrinth on the Chinook land (weather permitting), we will reflect on the spectrum of meanings it offers, reference other forms also, and walk this labyrinth or observe it according to personal preference.

**3. "Tree Bathing" -- a Deep Ecology: A Forest Walk to Reflect, Write, and Observe Nature and Mycology** with Olivia Archibald and Irina Gendelman

*(Meet on the front steps of Thomas Berry Hall)*

Grounded in the concept of deep ecology, this session is a contemplative practice (forest walking and reflective writing) based on an article about "tree bathing" -- field experiments in 24 forests across Japan (Park, et. al, 2010 ). The session will begin with a reflective writing exercise that focuses on observation. While everyone writes, there will be an option of getting our blood pressure vitals with a blood-pressure cuff. Then, we will spend approximately 30 minutes (rain or shine) "tree bathing" and taking note of what we see around us as we walk. Guiding the forest walk will be mycology, the wisdom of mushrooms -- examining their types, culinary and medicinal possibilities, and myths about them. After the walk and a second option for a blood pressure check, we will write a reflection based on experiences of the walk and our bodies' reactions to the ecology of the forest.

*One more offering in this time slot on the next page....*

**4. Embodying Sustainability: Contemplative Movement Exploration** with Jessica Ludescher  
(*Thomas Berry Hall*)

We will practice embodying sustainability contemplatively through sitting meditation, authentic movement, and improvisational play. The primary environment of our bodies will find voice through rest, silence, individual movement expression, compassionate witnessing, joyful exploration, and reflective dialogue. Please wear comfortable clothing.

4:00- 5:00 p.m.

**1. Practice, Process, and the Student Response: a Collection of Strategies** with David Shapiro, Ellen Moore and Jane Compson  
(*Thomas Berry Hall*)

In this session, we'll share reflective/contemplative strategies with a focus on students' responses to them, and invite conversation about design, process, and student feedback.

- **First Person Narrative Journal Writing:** David Shapiro will discuss a guided meditation practice combined with journal writing that he has used to help students go deeper into developing what the late eco-feminist Karen Warren calls the "first-person narrative" approach to environmental philosophy. His hope is that this leads into a discussion of how students respond in general to the use of meditative and contemplative practices in the classroom and what sorts of prompts and settings can help foster the use of such practices more widely.
- **From Abstraction to Everyday Practice: Student Reflection on Sustainable Changes in "UW Tacoma's Biggest Loser":** In this presentation Ellen Moore will describe some difficulties and successes in the first iteration of a 30-day challenge in her environmental communication class, where individual students tried to lose 5000 pounds (of carbon) during the quarter. The challenge is based on the competitive spirit to see who the biggest carbon "loser" is, but also requires consistent reflection on how those changes can be made and what barriers to those changes exist in students' everyday lives.
- **Contemplative Pedagogy in Cyberspace: Tips for Planting and Nurturing Seeds:** In this presentation, Jane Compson will describe some of the practices and processes she uses for integrating contemplative practices into a fully online class, "Philosophy, Religion and the Environment." She will share example-practices and offer some guidelines for general principles in terms of process which have proved effective. She will also describe how students have responded to these experiments with knowing, and what she has learned from teaching them.

**2. Contemplating Enormity: Climate Change,** with Karen Litfin and Abigail Lynam  
(*Farmhouse Living Room*)

The converging challenges of global climate change call for integrated, adaptive, and transformative approaches to teaching, learning, and leadership. Engaging students in ongoing reflection and contemplative practices can strengthen individual and collective capacities for creative problem solving. This practice session explores the contributions of contemplative practices to climate change studies. We will engage in two contemplative practices used in our courses on global environmental politics and sustainability leadership development. We will explore the value of teaching contemplative practice in teaching the overwhelming social and environmental issues, ways of integrating these practices into the curriculum, and strategies for addressing potential challenges when doing so.

### 3. **Contemplating the Scale of Time**, with Christina Serkowski and Maureen Ryan

*(The Sanctuary)*

This session will present two strategies for enabling students to better understand, internalize, and reflect upon scales of time and cycles of time, which we hope will lead to a conversation about other ways to help students grasp the scope of these scales.

- Christina Serkowski: When teaching about environmental concepts, it has been helpful to have students represent the full scope of time as we currently understand it, from the Big Bang to the current day, *to scale*, in some format bigger than the classroom. When creating a physical representation of this timeline, students are able to get a better sense – a more visceral sense – for the context that frames both our existence as human beings and the meaning of the current impact we are having on our planet.
- Maureen (Mo) Ryan: To complement Christina's discussion of time scales, I will lead a short experiential exercise to reflect upon and feel time in our own lives, in the context of cycles of nature and longer time scales.

*Let's gather back at Thomas Berry Hall by 5:15 p.m.*

## Sustainability and Contemplative Practice 2014

### Presenters and Facilitators

**OLIVIA ARCHIBALD** teaches composition, creative writing, literature, and literary criticism courses at Saint Martin's University. Her research interests focus on the personal essay and reflective writing's roles to deepen student learning and the Baconian essay's form and history to reproduce power relations.

**JANE COMPSON** is assistant professor in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington at Tacoma. She teaches classes in applied ethics and comparative religion, including Environmental Ethics and Philosophy, Religion and the Environment. Her research interests include the contemporary application of Buddhist philosophies and contemplative practices in areas such as education and healthcare.

**HOPE CORBIN** is an Assistant Professor at Western Washington University's Human Services Program, at the Woodring College of Education. She is the originator of the Bergen Model of Collaborative Functioning and uses qualitative methods to understand processes of partnership between individuals, organizations and communities.

**MARIE EATON** is Professor of Humanities and Education, Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies at Western Washington University, where she teaches courses related to food pathways and ethical food production. For the past two decades, she has been exploring reflective and contemplative practice as a pedagogical tool, first exploring the impact of student self-evaluation on the learning of the students at Fairhaven College, and then gathering stories of how other practitioners use these strategies in their teaching and to enhance their own teaching lives. For the past six years, she has been working closely with this Curriculum for the Bioregion faculty learning community on reflective and contemplative pedagogies and is co-editing a book on how these practices can support the sustainability teaching and learning.

**KAREN GAUL** teaches sustainability studies and anthropology at The Evergreen State College. She is also a registered yoga instructor and integrates yogic theory and practice into her academic programs. At Evergreen, Karen helped to form a new academic planning unit around themes of sustainability and justice and has served as its coordinator. She is completing a book, *Practice! Yoga for a Just and Sustainable World*.

**IRINA GENDELMAN** teaches cultural analysis of media, communication and digital technologies in the department of Society and Social Justice at Saint Martin's University. Her research interests focus on communication in public spaces and visual communication.

**MICHAEL GILLESPIE**, teacher of philosophy and the humanities, retired from the University of Nebraska Omaha in 2002 and subsequently taught in the Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences Program in the University of Washington Bothell, from which he retired in 2010. He is convinced that shared inquiry into how to live well (philosophy) most comes to life and into relevance when it responds to issues that test our conceptions of well being, he has focused, among other things, on challenges to views of reality and value brought to the fore by human-earth systems interactions.

**KURT HOELTING** is a mindfulness teacher, writer and wilderness guide. He has led mindfulness-based kayaking retreats in Alaska for the past two decades, and teaches Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) at the VA Hospital in Seattle, and other venues around the Puget Sound area. Kurt is the author of *The Circumference of Home: One Man's Yearlong Quest for a Radically Local Life*, a finalist title for the 2011 Washington State Book Award.

**HOLLY HUGHES** co-founded the Sustainability Initiative at Edmonds Community College in 2006 and continues to serve as co-chair of the Sustainability Council. For the past 25 years, she's incorporated sustainability into her English classes by teaching learning communities with an environmental focus. She is the co-author (with Brenda Miller) of *The Pen and the Bell: Mindful Writing in a Busy World*.

**STEPHANIE KAZA** is Professor of Environmental Studies at the University of Vermont and Director of the Environmental Program. Her courses include *Unlearning Consumerism; Religion and Ecology; Women, Health, and Environment*; and other values-based courses. She co-founded the Environmental Council at University of Vermont, a campus-wide consortium on sustainability, and is the faculty director for the UVM Sustainability Faculty Fellows program.

Dr. Kaza is the 2011 winner of the UVM George V. Kidder Outstanding Faculty Award for excellence in teaching. Her books include *Mindfully Green* (2008); *Hooked! Buddhist Writings on Greed, Desire, and the Urge to Consume* (2005); *Dharma Rain: Sources for Buddhist Environmentalism* (2000, co-edited with Kenneth Kraft); and *The Attentive Heart: Conversations with Trees* (1993).

**KAREN LITFIN** is Associate Professor of Political Science at the U. Washington. She is the author of *Ozone Discourses: Science and Politics in Global Environmental Cooperation* (1994); *The Greening of Sovereignty* (1998); and *Ecovillages: Lessons for Sustainable Community* (2014). (See <http://www.ecovillagebook.com>) In both her research and teaching, she endeavors to integrate the cognitive, emotive, and practical dimensions of sustainability.

**JESSICA LUDESCHER** teaches business ethics at Seattle University. She says, “Regular prayer, meditation, and reflection nourish my teaching, research, and personal life. Last year, I made the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius, which draws upon contemplative imagination. At this retreat, I will facilitate a movement arts practice, which I call Contemplative Movement Exploration (CME). This practice emerged out of myriad studies in authentic movement, improvisation, dance, meditation, and improvisation. The CME cultivates the sustainability of the environment of the human body.”

**ABIGAIL LYNAM** has 18 years of experience in sustainability education and leadership development. Her doctoral research examined how adult developmental psychology can inform the practice of teaching and mentorship, and the development of transformative climate change and sustainability leaders. She is faculty for Pacific Integral’s Generating Transformative Change leadership development program in Seattle and Ethiopia, and teaches at Antioch Seattle and Prescott College in Arizona.

**JEAN MacGREGOR** directs the Curriculum for the Bioregion initiative in the Washington Center and is an adjunct faculty member in environmental education in the Graduate Program on the Environment at The Evergreen State College. She has longstanding interests in teaching approaches that lead to civic engagement, environmental care, and social justice.

**ELLEN MOORE** teaches and does research in environmental communication, including environmental justice, at the University of Washington Tacoma. The classroom-challenge she will describe stems from the "Tacoma's Biggest Loser" competition, where she lost the most carbon-weight in a competition with other city officials.

**SHARON DALOZ PARKS** is a senior fellow at the Whidbey Institute. She teaches executive/ business and pastoral leadership at Seattle University, and she is an author and consultant.

**MAUREEN (MO) RYAN** is an evolutionary ecologist who studies the effects of climate change on amphibians in the Pacific Northwest and options to support their resilience through climate adaptation efforts. She also works on energy-environment issues, the other side of climate impacts. In addition to research positions at the University of Washington and Simon Fraser University, Mo has taught classes at the interface of ecology, evolution, climate science, and environmental history as adjunct faculty at Fairhaven College. With her students, she seeks to integrate intellectual and personal growth through a range of experiential teaching techniques that draw upon reflective and contemplative practices alongside ecological learning, with the goal of supporting individual connection with the world, resilience, and healing.

**CHRISTINA SERKOWSKI** introduces herself this way, “I am committed to teaching at the point of relevance in contemporary issues, and that in order to absorb the scale, ambiguity, and difficulty of these issues, contemplative practices are practically necessary. I have found that students respond readily to contemplative practices – as if they are intuitively in *need* of these practices – and I have found this need only continues to grow as students are more and more connected to electronic forms of information and communication, and are asked and required to engage in multi-tasking lifestyles. I do feel that hope for our future resides, in part, in the evolution of human consciousness. This, essentially, is what I’m always hoping to explore with students, with an eye toward a better future.”

**DAVID SHAPIRO** is a Faculty Member in Philosophy at Cascadia College in Bothell; he regularly teaches courses in Environmental Ethics and Sustainability in which he explores the use of contemplative and reflective practices as a means to developing greater environmental sensitivity. David is also Education Director of the University of Washington Center for Philosophy for Children, an organization that brings philosophy and philosophers (including him) into pre-college classrooms throughout the Puget Sound area.

**PAUL WAPNER** is Professor of Global Environmental Politics in the School of International Service at American University. He is the author of *Living through the End of Nature: The Future of American Environmentalism* (2013) and *Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics* (1996). His latest co-edited book (with Simon Nicholson) is, *Global Environmental Politics: From Person to Planet* (2014). He serves on the working group of Still Water Mindfulness Practice *sangha* and as a trustee of the Lama Foundation. His current research focuses on climate suffering.