

Greetings from the Director

Being a faculty member or student in environmental studies is not for the faint of heart. As a global population, we face seemingly insurmountable environmental issues – climate change, water pollution, air pollution, loss of biodiversity, compromised agricultural productivity, and more. I'm often asked how I remain positive while absorbed in such daunting challenges on a day to day basis. It certainly helps that I have a stereotypical Midwestern disposition; I fall firmly at the friendly end of the personality spectrum, I tend to view the world through a rosy set of lenses, and yes, I am a bit obsessed with tractors. While these traits are undoubtedly advantageous on particularly rough days, I draw my real strength from the brilliant faculty, staff, students, and community members who compose our growing Environmental Studies (ES) program at Skidmore College.

The 40+ ES Affiliated Faculty members from across campus who contribute courses, research experiences, and advice to the program tirelessly challenge our students to comprehensively analyze complex environmental issues and to develop practical, yet innovative, solutions. These same faculty members help us build an environmentally-focused co-curricular program every year that infuses campus discussions with additional perspectives and engages our students more thoroughly in what it means to be an informed, responsible citizen in today's world. Our growing core of faculty and staff in the ES program has provided critical stability to the program and an improved balance of disciplinary foundation and interdisciplinary immersion, which is the hallmark of our new ES curriculum. In the last year we have hired Cathy Gibson as an Assistant Professor in ES (see page 2), Kim Marsella as our ES

Program Coordinator and Lecturer, and Carol Goody as our ES Administrative Assistant.

As was the case in 2002 when we first implemented the ES major, Skidmore students continue to be the driving force in ES. While we began the ES major with one graduate in 2002 (Jenna Ringelheim, see page 2), our declared majors and minors now number over sixty. Our ES students' accomplishments during their time at Skidmore (see page 3) and in their post-Skidmore life (page 4) are nothing short of remarkable. Most rewarding for me, however, is the willingness of our current students and alums to give back to the ES community at Skidmore. Our alums return to talk with current students, our older students mentor our younger students, and all of our students participate in events that help strengthen the ES program.

ES Students, Class of 2008



The growth of our ES program would have been impossible without strong institutional support. The College administration, faculty, and student body have helped usher in policies and initiatives that have strengthened the ES program directly and created a campus climate marked by heightened environmental awareness. Most recently, the College hired Erica Fuller as our Campus Sustainability Coordinator, and Erica has made Sustainable Skidmore a reality (see <http://cms.skidmore.edu/sustainability/>). The campus greening projects that are part of Sustainable Skidmore provide

valuable learning opportunities for our ES students and enhance the environmental understanding of all Skidmore students as they live and learn on a more environmentally-friendly campus.

In addition to our strides on campus, we have strengthened bridges with the surrounding community through the Water Resources Initiative (see insert) and our enhanced efforts on internship placements. Our community partners provide valuable learning opportunities for students and faculty alike and are just as much a part of our ES Program as our campus constituents.

So, counter to what many might think, rather than a feeling of hopelessness or negativism, most days I am awestruck by the potential of the future. I find it impossible to join a conversation among our students hanging out in our new ES Social and Cultural Research and Resource Center or to sit among our collective ES Program community at our annual Capstone Event (see insert) and feel anything other than excitement and hope. The future is indeed bright, and because of the hard work of many, our ES program is positioned to make significant contributions to that future.

-Karen Kellogg, Director of the Environmental Studies Program



Environmental Studies

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Faculty Profile: Cathy Gibson / Alumni Profile: Jenna Ringelheim

Dr. Cathy Gibson joined Skidmore as an assistant professor of Environmental Studies in the Fall of 2007. Cathy earned her Ph.D. at the University of Georgia's Institute of Ecology in 2004, and was a postdoctoral research associate at Northern Arizona University (in Flagstaff, AZ) and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Darin Freshwater Institute (on Lake George, NY) prior to joining Skidmore.

Cathy's research focuses on how ecosystem processes are altered as a result of anthropogenic modifications to streams and their surrounding watersheds. Her dissertation focused on linking urbanization to the "metabolism" of the Chattahoochee River (draining much of Georgia, including Atlanta). Her work in Northern Arizona focused on the effects of dams (and dam removal) on the functioning of Fossil Creek, a stream draining off the Mogollon Rim of the Colorado Plateau, and her research on Lake George linked the fluctuations in water quality to the composition of the sub-watersheds that feed the lake.

Since arriving at Skidmore three semesters ago, Cathy has taught *Environmental Concerns in Perspective* (ES100), become the lead instructor for *Field Studies in Environmental Science* (ES105), twice co-directed the ES Capstone course, and developed two new 300-level ES courses: *Urban Ecology* (ES351a) and *Restoration Ecology* (ES351b). She is developing a new 200-level course called *Watershed Assessment: Dynamics and Integrity of Aquatic Systems*. She has also created a research program with study sites in the Kayaderosseras watershed, Battenkill River (in Vermont), and the Shawangunk Mountains (in southern New York).

In spite of all this work, Cathy's three-year old son still doesn't "get" the watershed concept.



Jenna Ringelheim graduated from Skidmore College in 2002 as our first Environmental Studies major. After graduating from Skidmore, Ringelheim worked for the Nature Conservancy in Idaho and then as an AmeriCorps member for the Johnson Creek Watershed Council in Portland, Oregon, working on salmon restoration projects throughout the city. She later received a Masters Degree in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning from Tufts University. In 2007, Ringelheim was recognized by the Environmental Leadership Program as a New England Regional Fellow. This prestigious award is part of a program that aims to enhance the capacity of the environmental movement by supporting outstanding emerging leaders.

Ringelheim is currently the Executive Director of Wild Gift, (<http://wildgift.org/>) a small non-profit organization that gives exceptional leaders, ages 21 to 30, a compelling experience in deep wilderness. The environmental leadership action program is based in Sun Valley, Idaho, and the group supports participants for a full year as they launch self-designed projects that promote wilderness stewardship and the development of sustainable human communities and lifestyles.

"I like to be part of solutions, not a contributor to the world's problems," Ringelheim said, concerning her work efforts. "At the end of the day, I feel like I am making a difference."

Ringelheim is also the author of "Best Hikes with Dogs: Boston and Beyond," which appeared in bookstores in August of 2008. Influenced by environmental thought leaders such as Rachel Carson, Michael Pollan, and Van Jones, Ringelheim recommends being creative, optimistic, and persistent in environmental careers. Above all, she matches her strong work ethic with a sense of humor: "I guess you could say that I got to where I am now by working hard and having a lot of fun doing it!"

Grants and Conference Publications

The Environmental Studies Program continues to benefit from a number of large institutional grants. The Educational Foundation of America granted the program \$140,000 in 2007 for "Campus Sustainability at Skidmore College," resulting in the hiring of Erica Fuller as our full time campus Sustainability Coordinator. In 2006, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation granted the program \$300,000 for "Environmental Studies and the Water Resources Initiative at Skidmore College." The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations granted the "Water Resources Initiative" \$200,300 in 2005. The Rathmann Family Foundation granted \$80,000 in 2004 and \$160,000 in 2002 for "Strengthening the Environmental Studies Program at Skidmore College." We could not have strengthened our ES Program without these generous contributions. We are extremely grateful to all of these organizations.

Cathy Gibson and Joshua Ness, Assistant Professor of Biology & ES, attended the North American Benthological Society Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City and presented research done with Skidmore students. Seven students from Gibson's Urban Ecology class presented at Skidmore's Focus the Nation Poster Session. Karen Kellogg attended the National Environmental Studies and Science Summit in Jonesboro, AR. Kellogg, along with students Ryan Bailey '09, Alicea Cock-Esteb '09, Nadine Dodge '10, and Brad Nesbitt '09, presented at the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement, Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities (SENCER), 2008 Washington Symposium in Washington, D.C. Michael Ennis-McMillan, Dean of Studies and Associate Professor of Anthropology, and Kellogg co-authored presentations at the Society for Applied Anthropology in Memphis, TN and at the American Anthropological Association Annual Conference in San Francisco, CA.

Student Awards

Our majors and minors have received several prestigious national fellowships and awards. Nadine Dodge, Class of 2010, received an EPA Greater Research Opportunities Undergraduate Student Fellowship (\$42,000). Ryan Bailey, Class of 2009, was one of 20 students selected nationwide to participate in a Lewis & Clark Mellon Foundation Interdisciplinary Environmental Research Initiative and received a fellowship (\$5,000). Nadine and Ryan are in the Social and Cultural track. Sara Lacy, ES Minor, Class of 2008, was selected as a 2008 Sustainable Energy Fellow and invited to attend the Summer Energy Fellowship to be held at Duke University.

Erin Kenison '09 and Peter Leipzig-Scott '09's collabora-

tive research poster, "Friendship Is Wasted on Invasive Japanese Knotweed," was selected from among 28 student poster presentations for a Best Student Poster Presentation Award at the Northeast Natural History Conference X, which took place on April 17-18, 2008. Their paper was based on the WRI summer collaborative research project they conducted with Assistant Professor of Biology and ES, Josh Ness. Erin was also selected to participate in a Research Experience for Undergraduates involving biology and conservation of poison dart frogs in Costa Rica for the summer of 2008, and Peter was chosen as a field assistant at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory, studying high altitude streams. These positions are very competitive and their success is a testament to the strength of our Natural Science track.

Student Trips

In the winter and spring, Kim Marsella, Program Coordinator and Lecturer of the Environmental Studies Program, and Sue Van Hook, Senior Teaching Associate of Biology, developed and offered two exciting extracurricular field trips and activities for ES majors.

On March 1-2, 2008, ten non-senior ES majors and potential majors participated in our first winter overnight weekend trip to Merck Forest. The students engaged in a fairly rigorous weekend of volunteer work helping to install new maple sugar taps in a



On Friday, May 2, 2008 ES faculty and students spent a day at Merck Forest on another new project. Ten students and three faculty members worked with the Merck Forest Educational staff on a new sustain-

ability project conceived of by Sue Van Hook. Sue acquired native oyster mushrooms from Merck Forest and grew them as birch dowel spawn in her lab under sterile conditions. The group then brought the dowel spawn to Merck and inoculated recently cut birch logs from the forest. The goal of this project is to help breakdown the logs while creating a new sustainable harvest for the non-profit farm, while introducing our students to new techniques. The project will be used for educational purposes and demonstrations, and it will feature a sign acknowledging Skidmore College.

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Events and Opportunities

Our Focus the Nation - Focus Skidmore (FTN-FS) campaign raised awareness on campus and throughout the surrounding community about climate change. FTN-FS was chaired by Sue Van Hook, Senior Teaching Associate of Biology, with Kim Marsella, Program Coordinator and Lecturer of the Environmental Studies Program, and Bob Turner, Associate Professor of Government and Interim Director of the Environmental Studies Program, serving as committee members.

The highlight of the event was a talk by Jeff Goodell, author of *Big Coal*, on the mining, politics, economics, and environmental impacts of using coal as an energy source. ES faculty and affiliated faculty also participated in two "Shades of Grey" events hosted by the Honors Forum on global warming.

Students in Cathy Gibson's Urban Ecology class conducted a greenhouse gas emissions inventory to determine a baseline of greenhouse gas emissions for the college. FTN-FS events also included a "Leave Your Car

at Home Week," a "Carpool to Skidmore" listserv, and "The 2% Solution" discussion.

In an effort to encourage local consumption of food, the FTN-FS group helped organize a local farmers' market in Case Center that is now the highlight of Fridays, and the group brought in John Turenne, the president of Sustainable Food Systems at Yale, to give a talk entitled "The Sustainable Food Movement: Implications and Opportunities for College Dining."

Patricia C. Wright, a MacArthur Award-winning behavioral anthropologist, gave a talk on the challenges of conserving the world's tropical ecosystems. ES cosponsored her talk along with the Departments of Anthropology and Biology.

Living the Liberal Arts: In October, the ES Program coordinated a "Living the Liberal Arts" Panel with five alumni, including Jonathan DeCoste '06, David Kahler '02, Jenna Ringelheim '02, Alison Roffi '04, and John Schott '04, as well as an appearance by Josh

Whitney '03 via live web cast. Approximately 50 current students attended the panel where they learned about research opportunities, graduate programs, Ph.D. programs, and various career paths.

Opportunities for Current Students:

Please visit the ES Home Page http://cms.skidmore.edu/environmental_studies/index.cfm for links to the following opportunities or contact Kim Marsella: kmarsell@skidmore.edu
-Internships, Jobs & Fellowships
-Graduate Schools
-Events
-Sustainable Skidmore's Eco-Rep Program

Opportunities for Alumni:

In addition to the links above, you may also contact Career Services to become a job shadow sponsor for ES students: <http://www.skidmore.edu/administration/career/jobshadow.htm> and/or with Kim Marsella. Check out our ES Facebook page and LinkedIn Network, too!

**SKIDMORE COLLEGE
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM**

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Please visit
http://cms.skidmore.edu/environmental_studies/index.cfm

Graduate and Ph.D. Programs

Antioch University: M.A. Program in Environmental Education
Bard Center for Environmental Policy: Graduate Program
Boston College Law School
Colorado State University: M.S. in Watershed Science; Research Assistantship
Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs: Masters Program in Environmental Policy and Management
Cornell University: Graduate Program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Cornell University: Graduate Program in Environmental Engineering
Dartmouth College: Graduate Program
Duke University: Ph.D. Program in Hydrology and Fluid Dynamics
Florida International University: Ph.D. Program in Marine Biology; work in the Bahamas on ecological restoration of mangroves
Hertie School of Governance, Berlin, Germany: Masters in Public Policy
London School of Economics: Masters in Administration
Tufts University: Masters in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning
UC Berkeley: Graduate Program in Environmental Science, Policy and Management
UC Davis: Animal Behavior Graduate Group
University of Arizona: Graduate Program in Environmental Engineering
University of Michigan, School of Natural Resources and Environment: M.S. Program in Sustainable Systems
University of Montana: EVST Program, Environmental Writing
University of New Hampshire: M.A. Program in Environmental Education
University of Pennsylvania: Masters of Landscape Architecture Program
University of Plymouth, UK: Masters Program in Conservation Biology

Where Our Graduates Have Gone, 2002-2008

University of South Carolina: Masters in Earth and Environmental Resource Management

Research and Internship Positions

Conservation Internship with City of Boulder Parks and Recreation System
Cornell Lab of Ornithology: Field Researcher
Cranberry Lake Biological Station in the western Adirondacks: researching White-throated Sparrows
EPA in San Francisco: Summer Legal Intern
Glacier National Park: Herpetology Research with USGS
Kauaii Endangered Bird Recovery Team in Hawaii
Marine Biological Lab, Woods Hole: Geochemistry Research Assistant and TA for Environmental Science
Marine Fish Conservation Network: Office Manager/Research Assistant
Marine Resources Center of the Marine Biological Laboratory: Internship on aquaculture development in Haiti
NYC Department of Parks and Recreation: Landscape Architecture internship
NYDEC: Ongoing paid internship
ORISE Intern with the EPA
Pinnacles National Monument: Wildlife Management and Restoration
Project Bow: Chimp Internship
Sentech, Inc. Research Analyst for EPA's Energy Star program for new homes
Smithsonian Environmental Research Center
Smithsonian National Zoological Park in Washington D.C.: Animal Behavior Research Internship
Techlaw, Inc: Junior level researcher, developing pollution remediation projects
Winter field assistant, studying the Acorn Woodpecker in Carmel, California

Non-Profit Organizations

AmeriCorps: Energy and water savings community projects
AmeriCorps: Hunger relief and community garden projects
AmeriCorps: Johnson Creek Watershed Council, salmon restoration
Anacostia Watershed Society: Environmental Clean-up and Education in Washington, D.C.
Conservation Strategy Fund, Santa Cruz: Logging, watershed, aquaculture, and economic analysis
Consortium for Energy Efficiency:

Advancing energy efficient technologies
Eco-Cycle: Zero Waste and Recycling
Environmental Careers Organization: Wildlife Biologist
Lancaster Farmland Trust: Land Preservation Specialist
Moholoholo: Animal Rehabilitation Center in South Africa
San Francisco Estuary Institute: Geomorphology Field Assistant
Saratoga Local Living Guide: Project Manager
Southwest Conservation Corps: Director of Operations
The Trust for Public Land: Senior Project Associate
Union of Concerned Scientists: Climate Program Assistant
Washington Rivers Conservancy: Outreach and Policy Coordinator
Wild Gift: Executive Director

Educational Institutions

Horace Mann School, Teacher: John Dorr
Nature Lab
San Mateo Outdoor Education Program: Environmental Education

Consulting

American Hazard Control Group, Inc.
ARCADIS Environmental Consulting: Cleaning up hazardous waste sites
Brown and Caldwell: Environmental Engineering
The Cadmus Group: Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy work
Clean Harbors: Field Chemist
Clivus Multrum, Management Assistant: composting toilet company
Industrial Economics, Inc.
Ocean Conservancy: International Coastal Cleanup Project Coordinator
The Peninsula Clarion, Kenai, Alaska: Environment and Education Reporter
Prosetta Corporation: Developing Biological Pharmaceuticals
Savci Environmental Technologies LLC: Junior Hydrogeologist
TechniGraphics, Inc.: GIS Technician
Wallace Roberts and Todd, LLC: Green building and landscape architecture
WSP Environmental in San Francisco

Government

Bureau of Land Management, El Centro, CA: Sensitive Plant Survey
Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs: Environmental Policy Division, Department of State

The Water Resources Initiative (WRI) at Skidmore College brings together students, faculty and community partners to investigate our local water issues. Through courses and research, WRI helps us better understand the multiple perspectives that influence how we interact with our water resources on both a local and global scale.



Senior Capstone Projects

Classes had ended, but seventeen of Skidmore's seniors were not yet finished with their schoolwork. On Wednesday, April 30, 2008, all of the graduating Environmental Studies majors gathered at Skidmore's tenth annual Academic Festival to present their final Capstone Projects to an audience of professors, students, and Saratoga County community members. These students all began their Environmental Studies experience together in ES105: *Field Studies in Environmental Science* by focusing on the Loughberry Lake watershed. At the end of their Environmental Studies careers at Skidmore, all of the Environmental Studies majors came back together in ES375: *Case Studies in Environmental Sustainability*, which led to their Capstone Projects.

Professor Bob Turner, 2007-2008 Acting Director of the Environmental Studies program, opened the Capstone Event by explaining the goals of the Water Resource Initiative, which aims to understand our water source through a variety of perspectives. Through the WRI, Environmental Studies students focus on the Saratoga Lake watershed as a laboratory connecting the natural world with the social world. Students also have opportunities to partake in summer collaborative research with Skidmore professors, and Environmental Studies majors are required to complete a Senior Capstone Project. These WRI goals help reinforce, as Turner states, "the teacher-scholar model we epitomize at Skidmore College."

Presentations at the event included projects by those students who had completed either the Science Track or the Social/Cultural Perspectives Track of the Environmental Studies program. Projects from students who had completed the Science Track began with a discussion by Leah Wohl-Pollack, Whitney Eliot, and Noah Novotny about the addition of copper sulfate to Loughberry Lake, which was examined through a sediment core sample. This project flowed naturally into a project by Charles Gouin and Matthew Helterline discussing the bioaccumulation of copper sulfate in different fish species, followed by a project by Elizabeth Stoner and Elizabeth White exploring the impact of copper sulfate on the neurological and sensory systems of the fish. Eric Jenks examined the effects of phos-

phorous levels in the water source as a result of farm runoff and septic system influx.

Meghan Lena, Angela Polletta, and Jessica Morten explained the implications of storm water runoff, particularly as a non-point pollution source from construction sites. Andy Hart and Kate Stevens reflected

on the drought of 1964 as a model for Saratoga Springs if the city were to have another water shortage. Both groups offered solutions to these problems through environmental policy and enforcement. Sophia Wiley examined prospects for smart growth in Malta, a town included in the watershed, and offered the perspectives of local residents.

The mood was lightened as Dante Petri kept the audience laughing with his comical and witty explanation of septic system failure as a source of nutrient water pollution. He offered a solution for homeowners to prevent leach field failure by cleaning out their septic systems once every two years. Lauren Fletcher and Sieglinde Mueller kept the mood upbeat as they displayed their Watershed Education Guide for Saratoga Lake, designed for 3rd through 5th graders, and involved the audience as they held their arms up in the air to model a watershed.

The event was concluded with a community discussion of ideas for future Senior Capstone Projects. Sophomores and juniors in the audience listened eagerly to the concluding remarks and began thinking about their upcoming capstone experiences.

Please visit <http://hudson2.skidmore.edu/academics/wri/projects.htm> to learn more about student projects. The ES Program would like to thank Jenna Gersie '10 for her help compiling the information presented here and on the web pages.



Lauren Fletcher and Sieglinde Mueller teach students at a local elementary school about a watershed.

Skidmore College

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2007 Summer Collaborative Research Projects



During the summer of 2007, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations provided funding for six student-faculty collaborative research projects. Students participating in research projects spent ten weeks at Skidmore, working with professors, conducting research, and giving presentations to students, faculty, and community members. All projects focused on the water resources of Saratoga Springs; topics ranged from water quality to invasive species.

Ryan Bailey '09 worked with Bob Turner, Associate Professor of Government. The pair analyzed "Politics and Planning in Saratoga County" to assess how Malta and Stillwater may successfully balance growth with preserving open spaces.

Erin Kenison '09 and Peter Liepzig-Scott '09 worked with Josh Ness, Assistant Professor of Biology, on a project entitled "Distribution and Ecology of Riparian Invaders in Kayaderosseras Creek and the Battenkill." The group studied patterns of invasion of Japanese knotweed within the watershed.

Nadine Dodge '10 and Brad Nesbitt '09 worked with Karen Kellogg, Director of the Environmental Studies Program, and Michael Ennis-McMillan, Associate Professor of Anthropology. The group's project, "Crooked Waters: A History of Riparian Conflict in the Kayaderosseras Watershed," examined water conflicts, pollution control, and resource management of the watershed throughout the 19th century to demonstrate the prominent role of water in community development and debate.

Lukiana Anka-Lufford '10 worked with Judy Halstead, Professor of Chemistry, studying "The Role of Optical Brighteners in the Detection of Local Anthropogenic Pollution." The research team used the presence of optical brighteners in water samples to detect leaking septic tanks and sewage systems.

Alicea Cock-Esteb '09, Alexandra Furman '09, Judy Halstead, Professor of Chemistry, and Kim Marsella, Environmental Studies Program Coordinator and Lecturer, did a research project entitled "Water Quality Monitoring in the Kayaderosseras Creek and Saratoga Lake." The group measured dissolved oxygen, temperature, conductivity, pH, total phosphorous, phosphate, total nitrogen, nitrate, dissolved organic compounds, and total suspended solids for one lake and various tributaries throughout the Kayaderosseras Creek watershed.

Hannah Phillips '09 and Bob Jones, Associate Professor and Chair of Economics, researched "The Upper Hudson River as a Supplemental Drinking Water Source: Mapping Factors Affecting Water Quality Using Geographic Information Systems." They analyzed regional geology, hydrology, zoning, patterns of development, and town comprehensive plans within the watershed to determine areas that are prone to development. Their data contributes to an analysis of the viability of the Upper Hudson River as a supplemental drinking water source for Saratoga Springs.



WRI is supported by several foundations and organizations, including the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, the Rathmann Family Foundation, the W. M. Keck Foundation, the Saratoga County Soil and Water Conservation Committee, the Lake Lonely Improvement District, and Lance Vetter. The contributions received from these supporters continues to provide valuable support for WRI research and teaching and have led to rich collaborations among students and faculty.



The faculty coordinators for WRI are:

Karen Kellogg, Director of WRI
Judy Halstead, Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator
Bob Turner, WRI Social and Cultural Research Coordinator
Kyle Nichols, WRI Environmental Science Research Coordinator
Cathy Gibson and Bob Turner served as advisors for the 2008 Senior Capstone Projects.