



## Cultural barriers hinder risk communication with minorities

BY STEVE POMPLUN

During breaks from laboratory work at UW–Milwaukee’s Center for Great Lakes Studies, **Maria Powell** often walked the banks of the Milwaukee River nearby, talking to people who fished there.

“I found that they ate a lot of the fish they caught but usually didn’t know anything about what was in the river or what was in the fish,” she says. “Many of them were poor and needed this fish for food.”

Powell, who was learning about contaminants in the Great Lakes — mercury, PCBs, lead and other toxic chemicals — began to question the value of her work.

“It struck me that there was a disconnect between the science that was going on in the labs and getting

published in journals and these people who were ingesting the contaminants that the scientists were studying,” she explains.

Powell decided to turn her attention to a set of questions at the heart of that disconnect: “How does science get to people, which people does it get to, which people does it *not* get to, and what are the social, political and communication factors that shape those interactions?”

She enrolled in the Nelson Institute’s Land Resources Program (now Environment and Resources) to study risk communication, earning both a master’s degree and a doctorate, which she completed in 2004. Her research focused on understanding how African

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### Greetings from the Nelson Institute

For some of you, *In Common* is an old friend reappearing, after a hiatus, with a new look. For others, this is a first acquaintance. In either case, we hope you find it informative and appealing.

These are exciting times in the Nelson Institute. Through *In Common*, we share our excitement with you. We also turn the spotlight on our alumni as they make their marks throughout the United States and around the world.

While the interests of everyone associated with the Nelson Institute are diverse, we share a sense of purpose: the pursuit of an environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable future. That’s why we call this newsletter *In Common*. We welcome your comments and suggestions as we launch version 2.0.



MICHELLE STOCKER, THE CAPITAL TIMES

Maria Powell, left, speaks with UW–Extension nutrition educator Kazoua Moua during a traditional Hmong dinner at Madison’s Brittingham Park on Lake Monona.



THE NELSON INSTITUTE  
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
*Where Environmental Leadership Begins*

## Same program, new name

Our flagship graduate degree program, Land Resources, has a new name: Environment and Resources.

Nelson Institute faculty members approved the name change last year to more accurately reflect the program's broad scope. Established in 1976, Environment and Resources is by far the largest of the institute's three active graduate degree programs. Annual enrollment averages about 90, divided almost equally between master's and doctoral students. The program now claims approximately 560 alumni.

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Americans and European Americans perceive uncertainties about risks from eating contaminated Great Lakes fish, and how individual, cultural, and social factors influence the ways they obtain and understand information about these risks.

## A Persistent Passion

Today, Powell is an assistant scientist at UW–Madison's Nanoscale Science and Engineering Center. There, she explores the environmental, health, and regulatory implications of emerging nanotechnologies and develops ways for citizens to engage with scientists and policy makers in decisions about these issues. But her passion for her dissertation topic is unabated.

While in graduate school, Powell walked and talked with shoreline anglers in Madison. She found that, as in Milwaukee, a lot of people fished for food, a lot of them were poor, and most were members of minority communities.

She also found that many of these African American anglers regularly drove from Milwaukee, some three or four times a week, to fish around Monona Bay and other Madison-area waters. Some were older and had grown up in the South. A few still fished with cane poles.

Powell says she began to realize that fishing was not only an important source of food, it was a deeply ingrained cultural experience for people who had fished all their lives and for whom sharing the catch was an important social activity.

"There's a lot of bringing fish back home, for grandparents, for elderly, for neighbors," she says. "You have to understand the social and cultural aspects of it."



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That understanding is key to informing people who fish about the risks associated with eating their catch. Government agencies typically issue advisories against the consumption of certain species and sizes of fish from waters known to be contaminated. But Powell says conventional methods of disseminating such information may not reach minority groups effectively. She also finds fault with the overall approach.

"Telling people to change their behaviors is really victimizing; it puts all the onus on them," she explains. "And when you talk with many people, they say they know the fish is contaminated, and they turn toward the Capitol and say, 'They need to clean this up, but they don't care about me anyway.'"

## New Approaches

Fishery managers at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and other agencies would certainly disagree. Their advisories are meant to protect people, not vilify them. But Powell believes new approaches are needed to address cultural differences and other factors that impede effective risk communication.

A more vigorous effort would include identifying and connecting

with minority communities. Powell concedes that's not always easy. For example, she walked the shores of lakes Mendota and Monona for months before becoming aware of a large Hmong population that regularly fished there.

"All that time walking around Madison, talking to people who were fishing, I rarely saw Southeast Asian anglers. I really wasn't aware of the extent that Southeast Asians, and Hmong in particular, were fishing in Madison," she says.

The reason: Hmong fishermen went out in the predawn hours and were usually home by 6 a.m.

"This is an example of how people can become invisible if you don't really know what's going on in the community. You can be completely unaware that they're there if you don't know the culture, if you don't know the social context, and if you don't try to make contact," says Powell.

Other factors make connecting with the Hmong community an extraordinary challenge. It's largely an oral culture, traditionally with little written communication. Many older Hmong people do not read. But talking to them is also fraught with obstacles. Hmong society is clan-based, in some situations only males have significant authority in the community, and the endorsement of shamans can determine whether the community will be receptive to a message.

And Hmong use the fish they catch in ways not figured into consumption advisories. Many cook or eat most parts of the fish, including parts that are likely to have higher concentrations of contaminants. Yet advisories are based on the assumption that only muscle tissue is eaten.

Powell says the advisories also

fail to include catfish or carp, but these, too, are eaten in many communities.

## Building Trust

"People ask, 'Why are these advisories failing?' They're failing because we're not taking the time to understand our audiences and to build trust," she says. "We need to break down these barriers."

Two years ago, she co-founded a new group, the Madison Environmental Justice Organization (MEJO), along with several Hmong leaders and community organizers on Madison's North Side. MEJO works to build the community's capacity to collectively address water quality and other environmental problems, promote understanding between government agencies and minority communities, and help improve communication. Last year it received a \$50,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for this purpose.

MEJO does not seek to prevent people from eating fish.

"Fish is a healthy local food source," says Powell. "It would be ideal if we could just go down to Lake Monona and catch some fish for dinner tonight. We want to work toward that and away from the idea that this is toxic fish and we should forget about it. We want to work toward the point where our children and grandchildren don't have to worry about it at all."

She says that kind of message resonates in every community, taking the onus off individual anglers and creating a common goal on which everyone can agree.

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*For more information about the Madison Environmental Justice Organization, visit [www.mejo.us](http://www.mejo.us)*

## Director finalists

Two prominent environmental scientists, **Robert Costanza** and **Jonathan Taylor Overpeck**, are finalists to become the next director of the Nelson Institute.

Costanza is director of the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics at the University of Vermont in Burlington. Overpeck directs the Institute for the Study of Planet Earth at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

A search began last summer to replace **Frances Westley**, who accepted a new position at the University of Waterloo, in Ontario, Canada, in mid-2007 to be closer to relatives with health and medical problems. She had directed the institute for two-and-a-half years, coming to UW-Madison from McGill University in Montreal. **Lewis Gilbert**, the Nelson Institute's associate director since 2005, has served as interim director.

In his announcement of the finalists, UW-Madison provost Patrick Farrell promised to select "a strong leader who will continue the institute's tradition of excellence."

# Gaylord Nelson's legacy preserved for the ages

BY TOM SINCLAIR

Jennifer Graham admits accepting the job with some trepidation. “A *thousand* boxes?” she recalls thinking. “I was scared.”

Her supervisor reassured her: “You have to get past the *number*.” Before long, she did.

Graham was still a graduate student in library and information studies at UW–Madison when the Wisconsin Historical Society hired her a year and a half ago to make Gaylord Nelson’s senatorial papers more accessible to researchers and other users.

Nelson served 18 years in the U.S. Senate. By the time he left office in 1981, he and his staff had amassed 1,040 cubic feet of files — each cubic foot packed neatly into a cardboard box the size of a desk drawer.

The contents were deeded to the historical society in Madison. Although the staff made them available to anyone who requested them, for many years the society lacked time and money to catalog the papers thoroughly.

A grant from the Evjue Foundation in 2006 made it possible to begin the labor-intensive task while the historical society, the Nelson Institute, and Nelson’s family sought to raise additional funds. By early 2008, their effort had yielded about \$130,000 — enough to sift through all 1,040 boxes, eliminate unneeded items (such as government publications, which are available elsewhere), duplicates, and miscellany, consolidate the rest, and prepare a thorough index, or “finding aid.”

By summer, the Nelson Legacy Archives will be available to those who visit the top floor of the Wisconsin Historical Society’s



WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY IMAGE 48015

Gaylord Nelson speaks in Denver on the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970. The photo is one of many preserved in the Gaylord Nelson Legacy Archives.

*“You’re presented with all this material, and you have to keep asking yourself, ‘What does this collection document?’”*

headquarters on Library Mall. And the finding aid will be accessible to anyone with Internet access through ArCat, the historical society’s on-line archives catalog, at [www.wisconsinhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org).

## Memorable to Mundane

So what did Graham, now a staff archivist, and her student assistants find in all those boxes?

Everything from the memorable — early versions of landmark laws, copies of important congressional testimony, film and video of national TV appearances — to the mundane — office memos, meeting agendas, and mind-boggling volumes of constituent correspondence.

Nelson, who died in 2005 at age 89, is best remembered as the founder of Earth Day. Two of the

archived boxes contain most of the files pertaining to the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970. They include a prospectus with names of luminaries to be recruited for endorsements, an estimated budget for organizing the nationwide teach-in, an Earth Day news release from Nelson’s office, an excerpt from the speech he delivered that day in Denver, a collection of newspaper and magazine clippings, and much more.

Earth Day took shape in a matter of months. Other Nelson initiatives needed much longer than that. His successful drive to add Lake Superior’s Apostle Islands to the national park system, for example, required almost 10 years.

“I didn’t know it could take that long to get a bill passed,” says Graham, who found numerous drafts and redrafts of the enabling legislation in the files. “There were so many different components, and for many years there was controversy. It was remarkable.”

Some issues generated lots of material. Graham discovered 10 boxes devoted solely to ocean pollution.

## Beyond the Environment

The environment was Nelson's greatest passion but hardly his only one. He played a key role in matters of Senate ethics, government help for small businesses and dairy farms, the safety and availability of prescription drugs, the National Teacher Corps, automobile and tire safety, the Head Start program, tax and Social Security reform, and the Vietnam War, which he opposed early and vehemently.

The archives reflect all facets of his Senate career. They even hold some surprises, like files on a mysterious man in Arizona who, for a time, passed himself off as Nelson and was wanted by the FBI. Eventually, the imposter was found, dead.

Authors, historians, and students have already researched Nelson's

archives for books and papers on topics ranging from Nelson's life story to the 1980 election campaign. Now that the contents have been sorted and inventoried, the next step is properly preserving items like photographs, films, audio and videotapes, and scrapbooks.

Some of the photos have been scanned and placed on the historical society's Web site. Digitizing more of the archives for Internet access and creating museum and/or virtual exhibits are possibilities — if additional money can be raised.

"I'll be excited when the project is done," says Graham. "You're presented with all this material, and you have to keep asking yourself, 'What does this collection document?' It documents many things: how government works, what issues were important to Nelson, his ties to his constituents...."

"It's like solving a puzzle. You're trying to make sense of it, to bring order to chaos."

One box at a time.

## A peace of the prize

Nelson Institute researchers contributed significantly to reports on the implications of global warming that won the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) a share of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, along with Al Gore, last fall.

**Jonathan Patz**, a professor in the institute's Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment, was a lead author of the North American chapter of the 2007 IPCC report. He was also a lead author of IPCC reports in 2001 and 1995, as well as a past co-chair for the Health Expert Panel of the U.S. National Assessment on Climate Change.

Three scientists in the Nelson Institute's Center for Climatic Research (CCR) co-authored an article in the most recent IPCC report on anticipated changes in the global water budget over the next century. They are CCR associate director **John Kutzbach**, an emeritus professor of atmospheric and oceanic science and environmental studies; associate scientist **Steve Vavrus**; and **Jack Williams**, assistant professor of geography and environmental studies. Kutzbach, who directed CCR for many years, contributed to previous IPCC reports, as well.

**John Magnuson**, emeritus professor of zoology, director emeritus of the Center for Limnology, and a former member of the Nelson Institute faculty, was a lead author of chapters in the 1995 and 2001 IPCC reports. His contributions focused on the impacts of climate change on freshwater ecosystems.



TOM SINCLAIR

Jennifer Graham explains to Nelson Institute interim director Lewis Gilbert how Gaylord Nelson's senatorial files are organized in the archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

# Around the Nelson Institute

## Rebounding from Katrina

A New Orleans neighborhood determined to recover from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina has found an energetic group of advocates in the Nelson Institute.

Ten graduate students in one of the institute's water resources management workshops spent two months in The Big Easy last summer helping residents of the storm-ravaged Lower Ninth Ward who hope to revitalize a nearby natural treasure.

The Holy Cross Neighborhood Association invited the students to evaluate the feasibility of restoring Bayou Bienvenue, a former cypress swamp, to mitigate future storm surges and provide other environmental benefits.

The students gathered data on the history of the bayou, its current ecological conditions, and community attitudes about its proposed restoration. They eventually presented their findings to the neighborhood association and hosted three visitors from New Orleans at UW–Madison earlier this year to describe the restoration effort and help recruit additional students and faculty members to continue it.

Among the visitors was Nelson Institute alumnus **Rob Moreau** (Ph.D., LR '96), a biology instructor at Southeastern Louisiana University, director of its Turtle Cove Environmental Research Station, and adjunct environmental management professor at Tulane University.

## Rave reviews

What an opening act! The Nelson Institute's new Center for Culture, History, and Environment (CHE) made a dramatic public debut last November by hosting *Tales from Planet Earth*, an environmental film festival in downtown Madison.

So many people showed up at the Orpheum Theatre on the first night that the balcony had to be opened to accommodate the unexpected overflow from the main floor. "We stopped counting at 1,100," festival and CHE director **Gregg Mitman** said later. With more than 20 films from around the globe and a comparable number of guest speakers, including environmental author Bill McKibben, the free festival drew more than 3,000 over three days. A sequel is in the works for 2009.

Coinciding with *Tales from Planet Earth* were two special courses last semester in environmental film history and documentary production taught by Mitman, a science and medical historian, featuring filmmakers Judith Helfand and Sarita Siegel as guest artists.

CHE traces its origins to an informal colloquium launched half a dozen years ago for professors and students with a shared interest in environmental history. It evolved into a more structured interdisciplinary "research circle" with seed funding from the Nelson Institute before coming into its own last year as a full-fledged center thanks to a major gift from a private donor.

Devoted to the study of environmental and cultural change from many perspectives, CHE draws participants from such disparate fields as anthropology, botany, forestry, geography, history, history of science, landscape architecture,

law, literature, and rural sociology. Their purpose: to better understand human-environment interactions over the full sweep of human history and their consequences in public policy, public health, social justice, and other cultural realms. To learn more about the center, visit CHE's Web site at [che.nelson.wisc.edu](http://che.nelson.wisc.edu).

## Response to CHANGE

Interdisciplinary innovation has always been a trademark of the Nelson Institute's academic programs. Our newest, a Certificate on Humans and the Global Environment (CHANGE), is no exception.

Introduced last fall, CHANGE's three-semester curriculum educates students in professional communication and knowledge-management skills while exposing them to cutting-edge thinking about how human and non-human environmental systems operate and evolve. It is designed to supplement any environmentally related graduate degree program at UW–Madison.

"With this program, we will turn out a new generation of young scientists prepared to grapple with the complexity of today's global environmental problems," says CHANGE director **Jonathan Patz**, an associate professor of environmental studies and population health sciences.

The program interweaves natural and social sciences and the humanities to explore the vulnerabilities and resilience of human communities facing complex environmental hazards. Its curriculum draws on the university's expertise in fields such as atmospheric and oceanic sciences, conservation biology, environmental studies, geography, history, public health, sociology, and

veterinary medicine.

A \$3 million grant from the National Science Foundation's Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeships (IGERT) program, received in 2006, launched CHANGE. The grant, which supports three to four new Ph.D. students in the area of sustainability each year for five years, is supplemented by \$400,000 in student support from the Graduate School.

CHANGE welcomed its first cohort of students, including three IGERT-funded CHANGE Fellows, last fall. See [nelson.wisc.edu/grad/change](http://nelson.wisc.edu/grad/change).

## Revival of a center

The Land Tenure Center (LTC), long regarded as a world leader in issues of land policy, is undergoing a revival. Since joining the Nelson Institute in 2004, LTC has reorganized and embarked on a new journey that links its rich history of scholarship on land and resource access in developing countries to the institute's expertise in environmental sciences.

The center is a major partner in a five-year program designed to achieve conservation goals while contributing to economic development for the world's poorer populations. Together with four other organizations, LTC received a \$600,000 grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development's TransLinks initiative to develop an innovative applied research and training program.

TransLinks supports cross-cutting approaches that connect natural resource management to economic growth and good governance. Its goal is to increase social, economic, and environmental benefits through healthy ecosystems and sustainable



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## Wisconsin climate impacts

A new statewide project anchored in the Nelson Institute is assessing the potential consequences of climate change for Wisconsin's ecosystems, industries, farms, and human health and will recommend adaptation strategies.

The Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) will organize teams of experts from UW-Madison, state agencies, and other institutions to consider how local and regional shifts in temperature, precipitation, and extreme weather could affect key components of the state's quality of life.

"This initiative will combine the cutting-edge computer modeling capabilities of UW-Madison's climate research centers with the field expertise of Wisconsin's natural resource managers," says **Lewis Gilbert**, interim director of the Nelson Institute, which is coordinating the project.

"The purpose of WICCI is to anticipate and recommend adaptations to climate change regardless of its cause," explains Jack Sullivan, director of science services at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). "There is little debate that warming is under way and likely to continue and that Wisconsin will be significantly affected."

The initiative will establish working groups of scientists from the UW System, the DNR, and other state agencies and institutions. Each group will study a specific ecosystem, natural resource, or economic issue.

WICCI emerged from a meeting last summer of UW-Madison climate researchers and DNR scientists and resource managers seeking to answer questions from state legislators about how climate change would affect their districts and constituents. Initial support has been provided by the Ira and Ineva Reilly Baldwin Wisconsin Idea Endowment, the DNR and the Nelson Institute, which will seek additional federal, state and private funds to continue and expand the initiative. For further details, see [www.wicci.wisc.edu](http://www.wicci.wisc.edu).

resource management.

Partnering with LTC in the TransLinks project are the Wildlife Conservation Society, the Earth Institute at Columbia University, and two other non-governmental organizations, Enterprise Works/

VITA and Forest Trends.

As a first step, the team produced briefing documents on best practices and lessons learned in four areas important to TransLinks: participatory zoning in protected areas to balance

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## News and events

For more news from the Nelson Institute and details of upcoming events, visit our home page: [nelson.wisc.edu](http://nelson.wisc.edu)

## Did you know?

The Wisconsin Alumni Association offers a free on-line service to help locate UW–Madison graduates. Visit [uwalumni.com](http://uwalumni.com) and click on “Alumni Directory.”

## Address or job change?

If you’re a graduate of the Nelson Institute who has moved or changed jobs lately, please let us know. Visit [nelson.wisc.edu/alumni](http://nelson.wisc.edu/alumni), click on “Update Your Information,” and complete the form or send an e-mail. Updating your information assures that you keep receiving *In Common*.

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conservation and economic development goals; gender dimensions of water resource management where water governance has devolved to local authority; human-wildlife conflict; and decentralization and governance of communally owned resources from the ecological and sociological perspectives. The documents are available on the Web at [nelson.wisc.edu/ltc](http://nelson.wisc.edu/ltc).

LTC’s director, Professor **Lisa Naughton** (geography/environmental studies), expects collaborations like this to become the centerpieces of the center’s future work. She also plans to integrate the center’s activities more with the Nelson Institute’s Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development Graduate Program, which she also chairs, creating exciting new learning opportunities for students.

## New faces

The Nelson Institute has enjoyed an infusion of energetic new faculty members, including four recently hired tenure-track assistant professors with impressive credentials:



■ **Gregory Nemet**, new to the interdisciplinary faculty “cluster” in energy systems and policy, with a Ph.D. in energy

and resources from the University of California, Berkeley. His interests include energy policy, technological change, and climate change, and his appointment is split between the Nelson Institute and the La Follette School of Public Affairs.

■ **Mutlu Ozdogan**, previously a National Research Council post-doctoral fellow at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. He studies land-use/land-cover conversion and climate change impacts on the global water and energy cycles and how they interact with ecosystem goods and services important to human well being. Ozdogan has a Ph.D. in geography and environment from Boston University. He divides his time between the Nelson Institute and the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology.



■ **Annemarie Schneider**, part of the international environmental affairs and global security cluster and formerly an assistant professor

of geography at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Schneider is interested in land cover change, urban geography, the urban environment, and the human dimensions of global environmental change. She earned her B.S. in geography from UW–Madison and her M.A. and Ph.D. in geography and environmental science from Boston University.

■ **Adrian Treves**, who focuses on the human dimensions of wildlife management and conservation. He has collaborated with the Wildlife Conservation Society and co-founded a non-profit research and consulting organization, COEX: Sharing the Land with Wildlife, Inc., to promote the coexistence of people and wild animals. Treves earned a B.A. in biology and anthropology from Rice University and a Ph.D. in behavioral ecology/anthropology from Harvard University.

# Alumni Notes

What's new in your career and life? Write us at [incommon@mailplus.wisc.edu](mailto:incommon@mailplus.wisc.edu) or at *In Common*, c/o Tom Sinclair, Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, 122E Science Hall, 550 N. Park St., Madison, WI 53706-1491.

**Glen Barry** (M.S., CBSD '95; Ph.D., LR '03) is founder and president of Ecological Internet, Inc. ([www.ecologicalinternet.org](http://www.ecologicalinternet.org)), a nonprofit organization that uses the Internet to achieve ecological science-based environmental conservation outcomes. Not surprisingly, Barry has his own blog: [earthmeanders.blogspot.com](http://earthmeanders.blogspot.com).

**Jill Baum** (M.S., LR '01) leads the Student Conservation Association's Mount Rainier Recovery initiative, which marshaled more than 1,700 volunteers last year to begin repairing extensive damage in Mount Rainier National Park caused by severe storm-related flooding in November 2006.

**Katie Beilfuss** (M.S., LR '01) formerly with the Wisconsin Wetlands Association, and husband **Rich Beilfuss** (M.S., WRM '90; Ph.D., LR '02), formerly with the International Crane Foundation, left Wisconsin two years ago for southern Africa. They now work for the Massachusetts-based Carr Foundation on the restoration of Gorongosa National Park, which was severely damaged by a long period of regional and civil war. The restoration combines biodiversity conservation with socioeconomic development. As director of scientific services, Rich runs the park's research center, while Katie, as communications program manager, is responsible for features including visitor exhibits and the scientific content of the park Web site.

**Sally Benjamin** (WRM '85) recently left her job in Washington, D.C., as a biologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency, which administers the federal Conservation Reserve Program, to become ecology branch chief for the Northern

Prairie Wildlife Research Center in Jamestown, North Dakota.

**Steve Brick** (M.S., LR/EAP '89), formerly associate director of the Energy Center of Wisconsin, now manages the Environmental Grant Program of the Joyce Foundation in Chicago.

**Perry Cabot** (Ph.D., LR '06) is now an assistant professor and regional extension specialist in water resources management at Colorado State University. Headquartered in Pueblo, he oversees water resources extension activities, acts as liaison to the Arkansas River and Rio Grande Basin Roundtables, and conducts applied research on water quantity and quality issues in a 14.5 million-acre region of southern Colorado with 10,000 farms and ranches and several mid-sized cities.

After 12 years with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Office, including six as FAO's representative to the U.N. General Assembly, **Florence Chenoweth** (Ph.D., LR '86) has returned to Wisconsin to launch UW-Madison's new Human Rights Initiative. The cross-campus program conducts research and education to promote fundamental rights, such as freedom of speech and religion, and draw attention to parts of the world where those rights are denied.

**Erin (Oliver) Courtenay** (CBSD '00) now writes for **TreeHugger.com**, a green lifestyle blog with "the looks of a modernist, heart of a hippy." She does this from Rome, where she moved with her new husband in the fall of 2006. He is conducting research there for his doctorate in geography.

**Jose Drummond** (Ph.D., LR '99), a professor in the Center for Sustainable Development at the University of Brasília, has

published the bulk of his dissertation as a book in Portuguese. It focuses on the developmental and environmental effects of a manganese extraction effort in the state of Amapá that was the first modern, large-scale corporate mining venture in the Brazilian Amazon.

**Vicki Elkin** (M.S., LR '98) stepped down as executive director of Madison-based Gathering Waters Conservancy in 2006 to work exclusively on the organization's campaign to reauthorize and rebuild bipartisan support for the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund. **Michael Strigel** (M.S., LR '94) became Gathering Waters' new executive director in 2007, leaving a similar position with the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, where he worked for eight years.

**Susan Drake Emmerich** (Ph.D., LR '03) appears in a documentary, "When Heaven Meets Earth: Faith and the Environment in the Chesapeake Bay," produced recently by Skunkfilms, Inc. An environmental consultant based in Palos Heights, Illinois, she also directs the Creation Care Program of the Center for Law and Culture.

**John Francis** (Ph.D., LR '91) was a featured speaker at the TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) Conference held earlier this year in Monterey, California. As part of a personal environmental odyssey that continues today, Francis did not speak for 17 years and declined to use motorized transportation for 22 years. Author of the book *Planetwalker: How to Change Your World One Step at a Time*, Francis, now 61, has logged tens of thousands of miles on foot on several continents, advocating Earth stewardship through personal interaction. Universal Pictures reportedly plans to

make a movie based on his book.

**Ariana Hauck** and **Andrew Stuhl** (both M.S., LR '07) are working as a computer lab instructor and librarian at an elementary school in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, Canada. They're documenting their year in the Arctic at [www.arcticfrontiers.blogspot.com](http://www.arcticfrontiers.blogspot.com).

**Richard Hoops** (M.S., LR '87) retired in 2007 from the UW Sea Grant Institute, where he co-produced the Earthwatch Radio program for many years. He now lives in Los Angeles and directs public communications for the Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Southern California.

**Dan Jaffee** (M.S., LR '96; Ph.D. LR '06) joined the faculty of Washington State University-Vancouver in January as an assistant professor of sociology after spending a year and a half at Michigan State University. He lives in Portland, Oregon. "I've been hoping to move back to the Northwest for a while, and I'm very happy to be living just a few hours from family in Seattle," he writes.

**Jaime Jelenchick** (ESC '04), an M.F.A. candidate in science and natural history film making at Montana State University, produced a documentary recently for Engineers Without Borders called "The Water Carriers." The film follows an engineering student's effort to provide clean drinking water to more than 1,000 students at two schools in Kenya and the friendship she develops with a woman in the village. It is viewable as a video podcast in the archives of "Terra: The Nature of Our World" ([www.lifeonterra.com](http://www.lifeonterra.com)).

**Mark Keating** (CBSD '95) is now a lecturer in horticulture at the University of Kentucky

## Alumni Notes, continued

with a part-time appointment in cooperative extension.

**Jill Leary** (WRM '05) entered Lewis & Clark Law School in Portland, Oregon, last fall. She and husband Brian bought a home last year in Portland.

**Jane Licht** (M.S., LR '89) retired in December 2006 after serving 18 years as Dane County Register of Deeds. Licht was instrumental in establishing the Wisconsin Land Information Program. She continues to chair the Governor's Electronic Recording Council.

**Michelle Miller** (M.S., LR '93), is an outreach specialist at UW–Madison's Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, where she manages a project that has helped Wisconsin apple growers reduce pesticide use without sacrificing fruit quality. Launched in 2003, the project is expanding into more apple-growing regions and creating a similar program for Wisconsin berry growers. Originally called the Eco-Apple Project, it is now called the Eco-Fruit project.

During the past four years, **Bruce Nilles** (ESC '92) has prevented construction of dozens of coal-fired power plants from being built across the United States, according to *The Capital Times*. And he is challenging plans for dozens more. Based in Madison, Nilles directs the Sierra Club's National Coal Campaign. He also had a hand in a recent court settlement in which the state of Wisconsin agreed to reduce emissions from UW–Madison's Charter Street power plant and examine operations at 13 other coal-burning plants it manages.

The Madison-based Urban Open Space Foundation, established and directed by **Heather Mann** (M.S., LR '95), has changed its name to the Center for Resilient Cities. The center, which has worked in Milwaukee and New Orleans as well as in Madison, has broadened its mission to help cities across the na-

tion revitalize their urban cores by creating environmental, economic, and social benefits in depressed areas.

**Jeff Mayers** (M.S., WRM '89) co-authored a recent book, *Golf Wisconsin: The Official Guide to the State's Top 25 Public Courses ... and 50 More Fun Places to Play* (Jones Books). Mayers, who lives in Middleton, operates several on-line news services as president and editor of WisPolitics Publishing.

**Paul Meier** (Ph.D., LR/EAP '02) is an associate scientist at UW–Madison, where he directs the university's Energy Institute. Established in 2006, the institute pools the expertise of dozens of UW–Madison faculty and staff members in disciplines that range from chemistry, physics and engineering to geology, life sciences, environmental studies, public policy, business and law. Says Meier, "Our mission is to integrate all energy activities at UW–Madison and to focus them as a resource to serve Wisconsin and beyond."

**Erin O'Brien** (M.S., LR '03) is the Wisconsin Wetlands Association's policy and conservation specialist and, in her free time, a singer-songwriter who has appeared across the upper Midwest. She often combines her passions by performing original songs inspired by water conservation efforts and advocates around the state.

**Betsy Otto** (WRM '99), senior director of the Healthy Waters Campaign at American Rivers, in Washington, D.C., spent the 2006–07 academic year studying innovative approaches to water management as well as urban and regional planning principles as a Loeb Fellow at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. The Loeb Fellowship provides a year of independent study for outstanding mid-career professionals in fields related to the built and natural environments.

**Navin Ramankutty** (Ph.D., LR '00) is an assistant professor of geography and earth system science at McGill University in Montreal, where he holds a research chair in land-use and land-cover change.

**Jeff Ripp** (ESC '94; WRM '98) last year became the Wisconsin Public Service Commission's first water conservation coordinator. He is responsible for evaluating industry practices, new technologies and their impact on water regulation, water utilities, and consumer education, all with an eye toward efficient use of the state's resources.

Earth Information Technologies Corp. (Earth IT), a Madison-based company founded by **Dan Rooney** (Ph.D., EM '06) and **Marek Dudka** (M.S., EM '06) is in its ninth year. Riding on the success of its patented Soil Information System (SIS), a device that produces digital, three-dimensional soil and water maps, Earth IT develops interactive web products, database-driven applications, statistical tools, and information systems for health care, asset tracking, food supply, transportation, and environmental industries.

**Siggi Sigmarsson** (WRM '06) works for Montgomery Associates: Resource Solutions, LLC, a Madison engineering consulting firm that specializes in water resources investigation and design. Among his co-workers is **Nancy Zolidas** (M.S., WRM '82; Ph.D., Land Resources '88), a consulting hydrogeologist with the firm.

**Brian Solomon** (EAP, '92), elected last year to the Madison Common Council, has won praise for helping lead the city's effort to redevelop the troubled Allied Drive neighborhood within his district. By day, he directs the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Job Service Bureau.

**Jayne Somers** (Ph.D., LR '05) moved to Washington, D.C., in 2006 to work for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Change Division Non-CO2 Programs Branch.

**Matt Thomas** (Ph.D., LR '04) and wife Jennifer now live in Washington, D.C., where he works for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as its liaison with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Specifically, he addresses historic preservation policy issues and helps the USDA improve its compliance with federal historic preservation laws and the National Environmental Policy Act.

**Tim Tynan** (M.S., LR '01) is pursuing a Ph.D. in life sciences communication at UW–Madison. He participated on a team last summer that conducted a Tribal Youth Media Camp at the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Community College in Hayward, Wisconsin, to inspire young members of the Native community to consider media and science professions.

**Chris Vaughan** (Ph.D., LR '02) received an honorary doctorate from Grinnell College, in Iowa, in 2006. The college cited Vaughan, a 1971 Grinnell graduate, for "his passion, his activism, and his unwavering dedication to the health of our planet." An adjunct professor of wildlife ecology at UW–Madison, Vaughan spent many years in Costa Rica, first with the Peace Corps, then as a teacher and scholar at the University of Costa Rica, before pursuing his doctorate in Madison.

### In Memoriam

**Cynthia Coffin** (M.S., LR '94) died of cancer in February. After earning her master's degree, she had worked in Madison for organizations including the Sierra Club, Biodiversity Project, and Wisconsin Wetlands Association.

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Gifts are a crucial source of financial support for the Nelson Institute. They enable us to offer more scholarships, fellowships, internships and travel opportunities to our students; conduct cutting-edge research with practical, real-world benefits; establish special awards for deserving faculty members; and reach out to new constituencies in the best tradition of The Wisconsin Idea. We sincerely thank all of the following individuals and organizations that contributed to the Nelson Institute in 2007.

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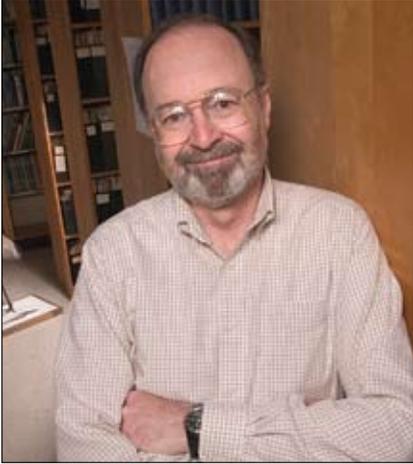
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## Transitions



**Stanley Temple** (wildlife ecology/environmental studies) retired from the faculty last year. He continues to work with conservation organizations including the Aldo Leopold Foundation and The Nature Conservancy and remains active in conservation efforts in the Caribbean region. An avian ecologist and wildlife biologist, Temple helped establish the Nelson Institute's Conservation Biology and Sustainable

Development Program in 1990 and chaired it from 1998 to 2006. **Lisa Naughton**, a professor of geography and environmental studies, now leads this popular graduate program.



**Eileen Hanneman**, a member of the Nelson Institute staff for more than three decades and assistant director for administration since 1993, retired in 2007. One year earlier, she received a Martha Casey Award for Dedication to Excellence, given to outstanding members of the academic staff. Her successor, **Hope Simon**, brings to the job 14 years of professional experience at UW-Madison, including more than 10 years as a student services coordinator and manager of international exchange programs for the Nelson Institute.

**Steve Pomplun**, the Nelson Institute's long-time Earthwatch Radio writer/producer and editor of ***In Common***, has become the institute's first assistant director for external relations. He serves as its primary liaison with government, business, nonprofit organizations, and community groups. He also manages an array of outreach activities.

**Pat Behling**, who joined the staff of the Nelson Institute's Center for Climatic Research in 1977, retired in January. A senior information processing consultant for the past 15 years, she guided CCR through a major period of growth in the use of computer technology and contributed significantly to the center's research, educational, and outreach activities.



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