June 2015

Hello Alumni, Parents, and Friends of the College,

I am very much looking forward to our class together, “The Changing Vermont Landscape.” A new edition of *The Story of Vermont: A Natural and Cultural History* came out this January. I co-authored this book with Steve Trombulak, a fellow Middlebury faculty member (biology and environmental studies). The impetus for the first (and second) editions of the book was a first year seminar I teach on the Vermont landscape. Our goal in that class—as well as our own—will be to make sense of why Vermont looks the way it does today. This will of course entail understanding what Vermont looked like in the past. And we’ll also speculate about what Vermont will look like in the future—and what we’d like it to look like!

In the book we focus on three forces shaping the Vermont landscape: geology, ecology, and human culture. Since I’m a historically minded social scientist, we’ll focus most of our attention on how human actions have shaped the landscape. We’re fortunate to be meeting in one of the loveliest spots in Vermont, and we’ll certainly talk about the Bread Loaf landscape. We’ll also take an excursion to Mt. Philo, Vermont’s first state park. We’ll drive to the top, take in the views of the Champlain Valley and the Adirondack Mountains, and discuss the landscape we see.

*The Story of Vermont* (2d ed) will serve as our “text,” and I’d like you to read/skim the book before you arrive to campus so you have a general understanding of the themes of our course. (Don’t worry—no exam!). Some of you may have read the short piece by Bill McKibben on conserving Bread Loaf in the Spring 2015 issue of *Middlebury Magazine*. I’d like you all to read (or re-read) it before arriving ([http://sites.middlebury.edu/middmag/2015/05/15/the-liebowitz-years-a-vision-realized/](http://sites.middlebury.edu/middmag/2015/05/15/the-liebowitz-years-a-vision-realized/)).

One final “assignment”: bring a photo or other image of Vermont with you to Bread Loaf so we can discuss the landscape in the scene.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer and I look forward to seeing you in August.

Best,

Chris McGrory Klyza
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Professor of Political Science and Environmental Studies