

# ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

The Newsletter of the Environmental Peak at Middlebury

Second Issue • Year 2000

Middlebury College • Middlebury, VT 05753



## *Greetings.*

As summer edges toward autumn here in central Vermont, I welcome you all to the second issue of Environmental News. Every 10 years, colleges and universities undergo a review as part of their reaccreditation process conducted by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. In 1999-2000, Middlebury College was externally reviewed by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), an arm of the Commission.

The College was evaluated in eight specific areas, or "Standards." Following the external team's review, they prepared a 50-page report. Not surprising for Middlebury, with its history of excellence in environmental education and awareness, but perhaps the first time in the history of NEASC, the "environment" appeared as a high priority and critical component of higher education.

In the final report, aspects of the environmental peak were mentioned in the "Strengths" section in six of the eleven Standards and Summary. The report stated that the environmental peak was "a hallmark for the college...the College is a model for the campus community, the local region, and other institutions of higher education." One section stated, "Middlebury College has a leadership position in higher education for its academic programs in environmental studies. It also takes the environment very seriously in siting and constructing building, recycling, and forest management. The College has adopted guiding principles for environmental quality and has an environmental coordinator to facilitate programming. What is most striking about the College's approach is how carefully both the costs and benefits of environmental proposals are considered without the rancor encountered on most campuses." This report's recognition of the environment's value in academia is a milestone in higher education.

Middlebury College's environmental peak of excellence is breaking new ground once again by influencing leaders at other institutions about the critical and expanding role the environment plays in our students' education.

**Nan Jenks-Jay**  
*Director of Environmental Affairs*

## IN THIS ISSUE

Building Responsibility  
into Building  
Construction

Testing Natural  
Alternatives

Greening the Green  
Mountain State

Demonstrating Electric  
Vehicles on Campus

Finding History in a  
Swamp

Alumni, Faculty and  
Student News

## Going Beyond Demonstration: Responsible Building Across Campus

They may not be the Knights of the Round Table but the Project Review Committee, a group charged with developing a more responsible path for new building and construction, is charting unexplored territory and making history at Middlebury College. The people sitting around the facilities planning table may look the same - administrators, engineers, faculty, architects, and other building consultants - but they are talking about something bold and different.

"Our purpose is to assist the college in thinking about planning and developing for the future in a way that is more than bricks and mortar," explains Nan Jenks-Jay, Director of Environmental Affairs and a founding member of the Project Review Committee. When the Project Review Committee considers a new building, they don't just see a box in which to put people. Instead, they strive to think "out of the box" by assisting college decision-making to enable all new buildings and renovations to be more ecologically-sound and efficient.

When asked for an example of how this kind of thinking has already affected new building at the college, Tom McGinn, Project Manager for the Facilities Planning Group, replies, "The use of sustainable wood at Bicentennial Hall is an obvious choice. It has heightened the awareness of everyone who is involved in the building process."

Dave Ginevan, Executive Vice President of Facilities Planning, has found that the committee has "helped to formalize for the college putting into practice what it teaches and believes is the right way for an institution of higher learning to conduct business."

"The college, as a client, is asking for things that many of our consultants are not prepared to deliver, so we want to



provide that information early on," explains Jenks-Jay. "For example, when we said 'use green certified wood' to consultants, they originally thought wood needed to come from outside Vermont and be clear-grained. We had different interpretations since the college was interested in local wood with character markings that come with using the whole tree."

"I think we had a great influence on some of our consultants," reflects Jenks-Jay when thinking about the past year. "We also have imparted understanding, education, and appreciation to the other people in the facilities process."

Ross Commons, a new dormitory and dining hall slated for completion in January 2002, will likely feature a variety of environmental design elements including green certified wood, locally-sourced stone, energy-efficient kitchen hoods, and outdoor lighting that does not light up the night sky. "The process enables us to do the things that we did at Bicentennial Hall a bit better," explains McGinn.

"The college is learning better about what it wants for its buildings and occupants," says Dan Arons, a consultant for the Project Review Committee who previously worked as a project manager with Payette Associates on Bicentennial

Hall and now works with Tsoi/Kobus and Associates in Cambridge, MA. "Bicentennial Hall was a testing ground for the people involved in the building process to learn what it means to build with the environment in mind."

At this early stage, one year after Bicentennial Hall was completed, the work of the committee is still being refined. "The most striking thing that I have seen is the importance of the process which has a very significant human dimension," says Arons. "The process is so heavily dependent on the common understanding of the goals. Everyone, from the Vice President of Finance to the carpenter, has a chance to impact the outcome of the process."

The Project Review Committee process rests on two documents. The Guiding Principles (see sidebar), which have been endorsed by the Trustees' Building and Grounds Committee, and the Framework charts the course for responsible building at Middlebury College.

The Framework, a work in progress, focuses on human welfare, environmental quality, energy and aesthetics. "The Framework evolved because we needed to build the guiding principles and provide educational and contractor specific information as a guide for our consultants. I predict that in five years we

## FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS

**John Elder** of English and Environmental Studies has received a Fulbright Scholar Award to support his 2000-2001 leave in Italy. The award funds his research on "The Italian Career of George Perkins Marsh." John will be researching this important conservationist's experience as the first American Minister to Italy and as the author of *Man and Nature* (1864).

**Vickie Backus** of Biology and others published "Experimental Tests of Captive Breeding Programs for Endangered Species" in Volume 16 of *Conservation Biology*.

**Mary Gaudette** of Environmental Studies has received a grant from the Vermont Department of Education to fund summer courses on the Ecology of the Vermont Landscape and the Physics of Light and Heat. This project involves an intensive two-week summer institute for teachers.

"Modern Homesteading in America: Negotiating Religion, Nature and Modernity" in the international journal *Worldviews: Environment, Culture and Religion* is **Rebecca Kneale Gould's** most recent publication. Rebecca, who is in the Religion Department, recently gave a lecture on "Spirituality and Sustainability" to Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and also gave a talk on "Spiritual Agriculture in America" at Shelburne Farms.

Director of Environmental Affairs **Nan Jenks-Jay** authored a chapter entitled "Institutional Commitment to the Environment and Sustainability: A Peak of Excellence at Middlebury College" for an internationally published book, *Sustainability and University Life*.

A program to develop new ecology curriculum, initiated by **Andi Lloyd, Sallie Sheldon,** and **Helen Young** of Biology was awarded funding from the National Science Foundation. This team is developing an integrated curriculum which will

involve a set of shared field sites used by all ecology courses. The grant also funds independent student research.

Investigations of the hydrodynamics of Shelburne Bay in Lake Champlain, by **Pat Manley** and Tom Manley of Geology, will continue with a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association.

At the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Washington, D.C., **Chris McGrory Klyza** organized the panel, "Contemporary Issues in Environmental Policy." He also presented the paper "Wilderness Policy in the Northeastern United States" at the panel. Chris and **Steve Trombulak** published their article "The New Natural History" this summer in the *Natural Areas Journal*.

For her research on the control of Eurasian watermilfoil by weevils, **Sallie Sheldon** has received funding from the U.S. Geological Service. The grant will enable Sallie and an undergraduate research assistant to examine the seed bank in Vermont lakes to predict the recovery of native plants, now that the watermilfoil is being controlled.

Another grant from the National Science Foundation will fund a project initiated by **Peter Ryan** of Geology to enhance the curriculum of geology courses. The grant will fund the purchase of equipment, including a particle size analyzer, and a short course for faculty at other colleges in Vermont and New York. **Pat Manley,** also of Geology, will participate in this project. Pete will also be delivering a short course this summer on water issues at tribal colleges in Montana with funding from the Environmental Protection Agency.

**Steve Trombulak** spent his sabbatical year as a visiting scientist in the Department of Applied and Molecular Ecology at the University of Adelaide in South Australia. While there, he com-

pleted work on his latest book, *So Great a Vision: the conservation writings of George Perkins Marsh*, to be published by the University Press of New England in 2001. He also co-authored a chapter called "Making Smart Conservation Decisions" in a new book entitled *New Priorities for Research in Conservation Biology*, to be released next year by Island Press.

**Rich Wolfson** of Physics returned to Middlebury after a year's leave at Stanford University. His activities at Stanford included beginning work on a climate modeling textbook in collaboration with Stanford climatologist Stephen Schneider. He has since contributed a chapter to a *Reader in Climate Change Policy*, edited by Schneider, A. Rosencranz, and J. Niles. Rich recently received a three-year grant from NASA to continue his solar physics research that has been funded since 1985.

A grant from the National Science Foundation funding an effort to understand why bumble bees may sometimes rob the nectar of jewelweed without pollinating the plants will enable **Helen Young** of Biology to hire at least six undergraduate research assistants.

---

**Amy Seif** brings to her second year as the College's Environmental Coordinator a deep interest in worldwide sustainability. Amy's prior experience in sustainable development comes from working with Dennis Meadows, the co-author of "Limits to Growth," on training teams for sustainable development and from coordinating an economic development program at Rocky Mountain Institute, run by Amory and Hunter Lovins in Colorado. She also served as the first Sustainability Coordinator at the University of New Hampshire. Amy's position involves guiding the college on a path towards national leadership in environmental management and education through "greening" the campus.



## ALUMNI NEWS and GATHERINGS

Middlebury College alumni embody the interdisciplinary nature of Environmental Studies at Midd in their chosen careers and paths:

**John Perkins '68** is the Chairman of the Dream Change Coalition, an author of books on shamanism and ecology, and a transformational consultant to Fortune 500 companies.

**Audrey Pritchard '90** has been at the Nature Conservancy's national headquarters in Washington, D.C. ever since graduating. She works as a Policy Associate in their Government Relations program.

**Jeffrey Collins '91**, who graduated as a physics major, received a Masters in Botany from the University of Vermont. He currently heads up the Ecological Extension Service at the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Jeff's personal projects involve invertebrate inventories and resource planning.

**Christa Hawryluk '92** began working for the Nashua River Watershed Association as their Land Protection Director after completing a Masters program in Landscape Architecture. The association is based in Groton, MA, but Christa's work covers a watershed of 31 towns in MA and NH.

**Jill Hindle '97.5** works for an independent publishing house in New York City, called Lyons Press, that specializes in books about outdoor recreation and other issues related to the celebration of the natural world.

**Melissa Barker '98** has worked as a naturalist at the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies (ACES) since graduating. Her role at the Center has evolved from being an intern to heading up the summer children's program. Last summer, she was joined by two new interns, **Phil Higuera '98** and **John Stephenson '97.5**.

**Philip Higuera '98** recently began a graduate program in forest ecology at the University of Washington in Seattle after interning at ACES. Prior to ACES, Philip conducted plant ecology research at the Archbold Biological Lab in Florida.

**Shruthi Mahalingaiah '98** recently began Harvard Medical School after studying shamanism and the relationship of body and environment in Ecuador and Bali. She has apprenticed with shamans and therefore brings unique knowledge to her medical studies.

At this past October's National Land Trust Rally in Snowmass, Colorado, Middlebury alumni gathered at a reception sponsored by Environmental Affairs.

An enthusiastic crowd of thirty-three land protection advocates assembled, including **Townsend Anderson '75**, **Andy Cole '86**, **Tom Crowell '90**, **Andrew Dana '81**, **Mary Dominick '58**, **DeWitt Dominick '91**, **Dieter Erdmann '95**, **Tom Howe '79**, **Mark McEathron '87**, **Hans Neauhauser '64**, **Eric Odell '95**, **Lyman Orton '63**, **Greg Pitts '95**, **Audrey Pritchard '90**, **Sharon Richardson '87**, **Kathy Roser '70**, **Mike Stevens '90**, **Sarah Stalus '93**, **Cynthia Szunyog '69**, **Alison Volbracht '96**,

**Alden Whittaker '91**, and **Stefan Nagel '69**, who had come up with the idea of hosting a reception at the Rally. Other alumni attended who are not in the photo below.

Showing that everyone loves Middlebury College, the reception also drew participants with no other connection to the College other than that they were from Vermont or were relatives of alumni.

Alumni also gathered at the Boat House on the Seattle waterfront on a crystal clear evening to hear about new initiatives of the Environmental Peak of Excellence. A room full of alumni attended the reception. The organization of this event was the result of the enthusiasm of **Gretchen Hund '79** and **Jane Harvey '85**.

Executive Vice President and Provost, Ron Liebowitz, Director of Environmental Studies, Chris McGrory Klyza, and Director of Environmental Affairs, Nan Jenks-Jay were on hand to provide an update and answer questions.

Alumni,  
Send *Environmental News*  
Your News!



## ES Sophomore Puts His Wheels to the Test

When Eric Skovsted '02.5 began his sophomore year at Middlebury College, he never thought he would become the most knowledgeable person on campus about electric vehicles. However, when Eric accepted a position with the Environmental Coordinator Amy Seif as the Electric Vehicle Outreach Intern, his year was defined for him.

By the end of the year, the ES major, who came into this position with a "general interest in environmental issues and an open mind," could answer practically any question about electric vehicles.

Eric's responsibilities included bringing the College's leased Solectria E-10, an electric pick-up truck, to large campus events and demonstrating its capabilities. "I would sit there with the hood open and the display out, and I would answer questions regarding alternative vehicles. One look under the hood usually generated a lot of questions because there's not a lot there," explains Eric.



Out of the seventeen events that Eric participated in, one of his favorites was Homecoming. "It was really fun to field questions from all the generations of people that were there. You had people coming back for their fiftieth year homecoming who were totally blown away by the vehicle," he remembers.

The intern's other responsibilities included teaching a J-term class, being interviewed on local radio stations, teaching classes in elementary schools, and bringing an electric bus to campus for a trial run as a shuttle. "It was a long process in bringing the electric bus to Middlebury," he describes, "We had to work out insurance issues, advertise it, transport the bus up to Middlebury, and establish support facilities for it on campus. We also had to design a route that was appropriate."

"I'll continue to do work in the field of alternative energy," says the precocious Feb, "I now have a pretty realistic idea of the future possibilities of alternative vehicles and the obstacles we have to tackle before they become really realistic for the general public."



## FACULTY PROFILE

# KNEE DEEP IN A SWAMP IN THE PURSUIT OF HISTORY



When Kathy Morse is interested in a subject, she is willing to dive head forward and even get a little wet. This Assistant Professor of History and Affiliate in Environmental Studies led her students into the swamp last fall to find tangible evidence of a living history that is as rich as the natural biodiversity found there. Along the way, they "all fell in and got soaking wet," soaking with knowledge as well as swamp water.

"The most important thing to teach students is how to think critically about the human place in the environment," says the professor. Kathy chose the Otter Creek Swamp, one of the largest true swamplands in New England that still exists, as a vessel through which her ES401 students could explore the environmental history of Addison County.

Their class explorations took them into the homes of elderly residents and farmers, up into a Cessna airplane with a local pilot, and wading through the swamp with hunters. Through the eyes of these residents, "folks who wandered into the swamps as kids," the class reconstructed the swamp's past. "They had conversations with Vermonters that they never would have had otherwise," explains Kathy.

When not taking accounts of personal histories, the class spent time in the Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History and Starr Library conducting archival research. Here, they learned that most of the swamp trees were used for firewood back in the 18th century, and later for logging and maple sugaring.

The class partnered with the VT Chapter of the Nature Conservancy on this project, which had suggested the swamp to Kathy because they knew very little about its history. "What

## ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

*Middlebury College's  
Environmental Newsletter*

Office:  
Farrell House  
Middlebury College  
Middlebury VT 05753

Phone: 802-443-5710  
Fax: 802-443-2458

Website:  
[www.middlebury.edu/~es](http://www.middlebury.edu/~es)  
[www.middlebury.edu/~enviroc](http://www.middlebury.edu/~enviroc)

### Mission

The Program in Environmental Studies at Middlebury College provides students with an interdisciplinary, liberal arts education. It focuses on diverse facets of the relationship between humans and the environment through study in breadth and depth.

### Administration

Chris McGrory Klyza  
Director of Environmental Studies  
Nan Jenks-Jay  
Director of Environmental Affairs

### ES Steering Committee

Chris McGrory Klyza, Poli Sci/ES  
Nan Jenks-Jay, ES  
Kathryn Morse, History  
David Stoll, Sociology/Anthro  
Steve Trombulak, Biology/ES  
Rebecca Gould, Religion  
Peter Ryan, Geology  
Jonathan Isham, Economics

### Newsletter

Amy Seif, Editor  
email: [aseif@middlebury.edu](mailto:aseif@middlebury.edu)

Janet Wiseman, Assistant  
email: [jwiseman@middlebury.edu](mailto:jwiseman@middlebury.edu)

The Second Year of the **Howard E. Woodin Environmental Colloquium Series** proved to be just as successful—if not more so—than the first (see related article on pg.6). This weekly event gathers Middlebury students, faculty and staff and, increasingly, local community residents to share lunch and a lecture and discussion on an environmental topic. Speakers range from environmental professionals to Middlebury faculty, alumni and staff to ES students giving presentations on their thesis work. Approximately seventy-five people gather each Thursday for the colloquium, with occasionally more than 100 squeezing into Gifford Annex Lounge. Even President John McCardell and Provost Ron Liebowitz have been in attendance over the course of the year.

Among the numerous highlights of last year's colloquium were presentations by former Vermont Governor Madeliene Kunin on environmental decision-making, Professor Emeritus Steven Rockefeller on his work with the Earth Charter initiative, an update on global warming by Physics Professor Rich Wolfson, and a brief on water pollution issues from Kari Dolan of the National Wildlife Federation.

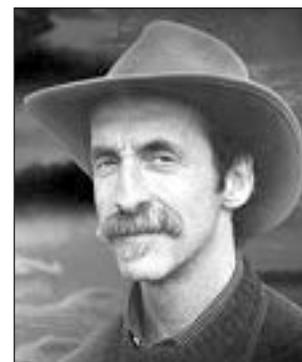
Janet Wiseman, ES Program Coordinator, and Chris McGrory Klyza, Associate Professor of Political Science and Environmental Studies, planned and administered last year's colloquium. This spring's colloquium is already underway, under the direction of Jon Isham of Economics. The complete schedule, updated for each semester, can be viewed at <http://www.middlebury.edu/~es/colloquium.html>.

■ By Christopher McGrory Klyza



### Reed Noss: The 2000 Scott Margolin Annual Environmental Affairs Lecturer

Dr. Reed Noss, the President of the Society for Conservation Biology, was the Scott Margolin Annual Environmental Affairs Lecturer. He spoke on "Reconciling Conservation of Species and Ecosystems."



Noss is also the President and Chief Scientist for Conservation Science, Inc. and is the distinguished author of over 150 scientific papers and four books. From 1993 to 1997, he was the editor of *Conservation Biology*, the premier journal in the field. During his thirty years in the environmental field, Noss has distinguished himself as a leader.

NEWS OF THE HOMEFRONT

THE YEAR IN RETROSPEC  
FROM THE ES PROGRAM DIRECTOR,  
CHRIS MCGRORY KLYZA

The past academic year was—as usual—a busy and fulfilling one for the Environmental Studies Program. We graduated 52 ES majors in May, the second largest class ever. Among those graduates were three seniors who won special awards. Meghan McGuinness, a joint ES-Economics major, received the Margolin prize as the outstanding ES graduate. Two ES majors won T.J. Watson fellowships for a year. Other good news on the student award front: for the fourth year in a row an ES major has received a Udall Scholarship in Environmental Policy.

The last year also saw the re-establishment of the Environmental Peak Task Force, designed to deliver a set of recommendations to President McCardell regarding the ES Program and environmental awareness across campus. The Peak Task Force, chaired by Director of Environmental Affairs Nan Jenks-Jay, is the focal point of two years of strategic thinking and planning about the environment at Middlebury. We have already held an extremely useful retreat of ES faculty and staff, and this fall the ES Program will undergo its first external review since 1988.

We hope you were able to attend the recent ES Bicentennial Conference on Wilderness in the Northeast, "Something Wild, Something Managed," that took place on October 5–6 at Middlebury College. Finally, let me encourage you to send any thoughts or comments you might have as we assess our strengths and weaknesses and plan what we'd like to do in the next few years.



ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS  
INTERNSHIPS:  
FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

During Winter Term 2000, seven Middlebury students participated in the environmental focus internship program. These students are Michael Cocchiaro, Adam George, Abigail Smith, Karen Pren, Caitlin Ryan, Margaret Symonds, and Nathan West.

Students completed internships, respectively, at the Dolphin Institute (Hawaii), Glacier Country Avalanche Center in Flathead National Forest (Montana), City of Boulder Water Quality and Environmental Services (Colorado), National Weather Service/ NOAA (New Mexico), Glacier Country Avalanche Center (Montana), St. Croix Environmental Association (Virgin Islands), and at Lincoln Applied Geology Inc. (Vermont). Elana Wilson '01 received the Ron Brown internship to study national parks in Russia this summer.

ES PROGRAM FOUNDER,  
HOWARD WOODIN, REMEMBERED

BY STEVE TROMBULAK

When Howard Woodin, Emeritus Professor of Biology, passed away last October after battling diabetes for the past 15 years, he left a legacy that has enabled Middlebury College to become a leader in environmental studies and awareness. Howard was the founder of the ES Program at Middlebury College, and is thus remembered as one of the first pioneers in the pursuit of environmental studies.

In the mid 1960s, ten years before the first Earth Day and before widespread public recognition of systematic assaults our society was making on the environment, Howard, along with a small handful of other faculty at the college, con-

vinced then Middlebury College President Armstrong to create an interdisciplinary major in Environmental Studies. The Program was the first of its kind in the country. Howard served as the Program's first and only director for almost 20 years, right up until his retirement in 1985.

Later initiatives to restructure and reenergize the program were made infinitely easier by the groundbreaking work of Howard Woodin. As beneficiaries of his good work, we owe Howard a debt of gratitude that has perhaps never fully been recognized and can never be repaid in full. The best we can do is to remember Howard Woodin as the visionary he



was: the man who created the first undergraduate environmental studies program in the U.S., and perhaps the world.

In honor of Howard Woodin's great contributions to Environmental Studies at Middlebury College, the Colloquium series has been renamed "The Howard E. Woodin Environmental Colloquium." Gifts in memory of Professor Woodin can be made to the College, in support of the Woodin Environmental Colloquium Series.



## STUDENT NEWS

# SENIOR STUDENT PROJECTS: CLIMBING THE PEAK OF EXCELLENCE

**Martin Beale** explored approaches to energy-efficient building construction, solar and renewable heat sources, and electrical self-sufficiency through case studies of five off-the-grid homes in Maine and Vermont. He also examined each owner's experiences with these systems.

With funding from the College's Environmental Council and the National Wildlife Federation, **Lara DuMond** developed a wetland restoration plan for the old hayfield and former wetland west of Bicentennial Hall. Lara's plan included having the wetland serve as a research laboratory.

Creating his own environmental focus in physics, **Peter Falcier** explored ways to make a photovoltaic energy system always operate at its point of maximum efficiency, despite conditions of changing sunlight and electrical energy demand.

**Alexa Gilbert** examined the nectar characteristics of hummingbird-pollinated plants in Peru. She researched nectar quantity and concentration in different elevations and found that nectar volume decreased with increasing elevation.

After being inspired by what she learned while being a crew leader for the Student Conservation Association, **Allison Greenwood** went to Philadelphia and visited schools and met with teachers to examine environmental education in urban areas. Her research shows that urban environmental education ignites action that supports environmental justice, especially when combined with service learning.

**Wilson Scott Leach** wrote an essay titled "Like Father..." about the ways in which particular characteristics of modern-day environmental organizations may have been inherited from John Muir's personality, who in turn may have inherited his traits from his somewhat troubled father, Daniel Muir.

In a project involving encounters with grizzly bears and mass blueberry consumption, **Kate Shick** looked at the impacts of porcupine herbivory on white spruce in the Seward Peninsula of Alaska. Kate worked with three other summer research assistants and Professor Andi Lloyd on this project.

**Marty Beal, Janeen Hetzler, Dave Jareckie, Dave Selkowitz, and Kate Shick**, for their ES360 project, studied winter wildlife use of road and trail edges in the Green Mountain National Forest. This work will be helpful to planning management in the National Forest.

**Cindy Withington** reconstructed fire and vegetation history from samples she collected on the Seward Peninsula of Alaska during research with Professor Andi Lloyd. She found that, contrary to previous thought, fire is more common in tussock tundra and shrubland than in spruce forests.

ES401 projects by graduating seniors included "Implementation of a Sustainability Focus in ES," "The Living Machine: A Biological Solution to Wastewater Treatment," "Small Farms in Addison County: Oral Histories and Environmental Inquiries," "Life Boundaries: Nature, Economy and Identity in the Lower Otter Creek Watershed," and "Spirituality, Sustainability, and Education: Proposals Inspired by the Munroe Sisters Project."



### Pride in Our Students: ES Majors Win Awards

Dane Springmeyer '02, a double major in ES and geography, was awarded the prestigious national Udall scholarship in Environmental Policy. Showing exceptional academic merit among students across the nation interested in pursuing environmental careers, Dane was awarded \$5000 to go towards his college tuition.

Two ES majors were awarded a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship this year. Adina Racoviteau '00, a double major in French and ES with a geography focus, and Jenna Sigman '00, an ES major with an English focus, were selected from a pool of over 1,000 nominees from colleges around the country to receive this honor, bestowed upon seniors with exceptional promise. The Watson Fellowship will enable Adina and Jenna to engage in a year of independent study and travel abroad by providing each of them with \$22,000. Adina will study the myth and morphology of "sacred mountains" in Nepal, Tanzania, Cameroon, Peru and Bolivia. Jenna will examine how penguins could serve as catalysts for conservation. She will travel to Australia, New Zealand, Argentina and South Africa.



Earth Day gave the nation the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts, but perhaps it also gave Vermont John Kassel '80. As a student at Middlebury College in the seventies, John was introduced to post-Earth Day environmental activism. As the Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, John Kassel's awakening interest blossomed into a lifetime passion.

"Making environmental issues personal and raising people's awareness of their effects on the environment is the achievement that, as Secretary, I am most proud of," says the alum, who's interest in the environment has always been personal.

As a Russian major in college, John had no preconceived notions of ending up at the top of the ladder to environmental protection in Vermont. "Middlebury has given me a great liberal arts background. It takes people with a lot of skills other than just scientific to work for the environment," says the alum, who taught math after college and then pursued a law degree at Cornell University. "I'm proof that it doesn't take a predetermined strategy to get into an environmental career."

However, it appears that an early interest in conservation does help. During college summers, John was a wilderness trip leader for the Sierra Club, and he worked on Mo Udall's Presidential campaign, which was characterized by a

## ALUMNI PROFILE

# MAKING SURE THE GREEN STATE LIVES UP TO ITS NAME

strong stance for nature conservation. A memorable J-term was spent in Washington D.C. with several other Middlebury students working at the national Sierra Club office.

"It was a bitter cold winter; the Potomac was frozen and we skated across," he remembers. Perhaps, it was this experience in the nation's capital that taught John about the "thin ice" we skate on, as far as the environment is concerned. This concern for the environment didn't resurface as a career pursuit until John's career in law led him to the Vermont Agency for Natural Resources.

"When I became General Council for the Agency, I became more and more involved in the policy side of things and then I ended up running the Agency," explains John, who is doing his part to keep an eye out for thin ice in Vermont.

As Secretary, he established three priorities for the Agency. These include growth, watershed issues, and the "It's Not Me Syndrome." Because of this allusive syndrome, the other issues — growth and watershed issues — are hard nuts to crack.

"The biggest environmental challenge we face is ourselves. It is easy to say 'its not me'," he explains, using watershed issues as an example. "Many of our water bodies don't meet water quality standards. We figure that in one boating season, we're spewing a half million gallons of gas and oil into the water uncombusted every season as a result of our inefficient two-stroke marine engines," he explains. "People would be shocked if we had an oil tanker spill on Lake Champlain. But it's pretty much the same thing."

As far as growth is concerned, John describes an all-too familiar story. "Williston is a real disaster for Vermont. We call it the 'gift of Taft Corners' because it makes people realize that this kind of development can happen here in Vermont. We say to big box retailers that if they can come with Vermont-sized stores and put them in locations that are right for Vermont, we can make it easier for them."

Perhaps among all these issues, the most personal to John is transportation and its associated environmental costs. "Transportation is clearly the biggest thing we do on a daily basis that has an impact on the environment," he says, later recounting a childhood memory. When he first started driving, his mother said to him, "Remember John, this is the most dangerous tool you'll ever use." This memory helps fuel the passion he has for groups like EVERmont, a public-private partnership focused on bringing more alternative vehicles into Vermont, which he chairs.

In this time of economic boom, John's job as the watchdog of environmental threats to the state becomes even more challenging and vital. "When people are distracted by consumerism, it is really important to focus people's attention on what they are doing to the environment," says this alum who is doing his best to bring the energy of the first Earth Day into this era of new awareness and environmental sustainability.

*Note: In Summer 2000, John Kassel resigned as the Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to practice law. John continues to serve as the Chair of EVERmont. Scott Johnson is John's successor at the Agency.*



existed in print about the swamps was pretty unknown," says the historian, who has continued to conduct her own research on land uses in the swamp. She plans to team up with plant ecologists to examine the histories of the swamp flora.

It is doubtful that a student who takes Professor Morse's environmental history classes could ever find history boring. Instead, history, in the eyes of Kathy Morse, is full of color. History is something hidden among the branches and stones of the Otter Creek Swamp; it is something that must be experienced or seen. Hence, Kathy prefers using slides during her lectures.

"Slides help to illustrate an idea, they show places and names," says the professor. "Also, slides show rich visual records of how people have transformed a place. I often ask students to interpret what has happened to the land by looking at a slide."

However, Kathy doesn't shy away from book knowledge, evidenced by the towering six-stories of books lining her office walls. There is evidence in her voice that books can be as powerful a teaching tool as the neighboring swamp. "A book can transform your understanding of the past. You really have the power to hand someone a book and change how they think."

---

*"The most important thing to teach students is how to think critically about the human place in the environment..."*

---

In fact, Kathy's early introduction to the field of environmental history began in college with a class taught by William Cronon, the author of arguably the most transformational book of environmental

history. All history majors at Middlebury College are introduced to the writings of Kathy's mentor through the U.S. History Survey class, in which they read Cronon's famous book, *Changes in the Land*.

---

*"What existed in print about the swamps was pretty unknown..."*

---

From college on, Kathy was hooked on history. Starting with Yale, through her graduate studies at Utah State and at the University of Washington, she explored the historical impact of human society on the lands around her. "I always knew I wanted to study history," says Kathy.

The field of environmental history particularly interests this outdoor enthusiast and second-year member of the College's Environmental Council and ES Steering Committee. The academic pursuit of studying how human beings used and shaped nature in the past emerged in the 1970s, following the first Earth Day. According to the historian, "It is a field that is growing pretty fast and is pretty hot."

As one who loves a good challenge, Kathy is particularly drawn to this field because it involves complexity. "When the environment is involved, things are never very simple," she says. "You can study the history of how people think and the material everyday matters of how people survive, and how these can be connected."

"When I teach something like the Homestead Act, I teach that western lands were not only comprised of various ecosystems but they were also the politics and the myths that expressed what people wanted in their own lives," she explains. "Land was also nature, like water and plants."

Environmental history, as taught by Professor Morse, is about both the destructive history of human interaction with the land and the history of conservation efforts. "Students definitely react strongly to the clear record of transformation and destruction, and they yearn for positive stories."

One thing is certain. Whether Kathy Morse's students are learning about the demise of the northwest salmon population, historical uses of the Otter Creek Swamp, or the first Earth Day, they're sure to find themselves soaking in deep appreciation for a new awareness of their ability to transform the land.



**Environmental News**  
is now available  
on the web!

See [http://www.  
middlebury.edu/~es/  
newsletter/summer2000](http://www.middlebury.edu/~es/newsletter/summer2000)

Alumni can POST JOBS,  
LOOK FOR JOBS, ADVERTISE  
INTERSHIPS, and HAVE  
CAREER CONVERSATIONS  
with students through  
Middlebury's Career Service  
Office.

See the "For Alumni" page at  
[http://www.middlebury.edu/~  
cso/alumni.htm](http://www.middlebury.edu/~cso/alumni.htm).

Compliments of Career  
Services, the EarthWork job  
opportunity bulletin is available  
online at [www.sca-inc.org](http://www.sca-inc.org) at  
username "MiddleburyCareer"  
and with the password  
"678801."

won't need to do this background work because the consultants will come in with this knowledge as part of their expertise," explains Jenks-Jay, who calls herself a "hopeful optimist."

According to Arons, who is an architect and engineer himself, building consultants are starting to understand these concepts. "The time just seems to be right for all parties, from college administrators to architects, to rethink how they build," remarks Arons. "I think that Middlebury College is ahead of others, but there is a flood of other colleges who are now starting to do this, which is inevitable."

"Middlebury is a leader in this area," believes Jenks-Jay, "If you had produced a good project once, you are not necessarily demonstrating leadership. To learn from a project and incorporate that knowledge into future projects, and then influence the professionals that you work with...that's leadership and what Middlebury is striving to achieve."

This idea is repeated by Arons who says "Middlebury College made a clear decision to improve all the buildings as much as possible, that it wasn't looking for a single demonstration building."

Jenks-Jay acknowledges that there is still a lot of work to be done, and eventually the Project Review Committee will meet all its educational, institutional, and external goals. Regarding the external goal, says Jenks-Jay, "The goal is to broadly disseminate what we are doing to other institutions and those outside of the academic community. Other academic institutions are spending 20 to 40 million dollars on new buildings each year as we speak. Think of the influence Middlebury could bring to bear on capital projects!"

Jenks-Jay suggests that there has been more of a focus on the institutional goals. She explains, "The real goal of the Project Review Committee is to eventually become unnecessary as the goals of the committee become owned by the College."

In the meantime, small steps taken by the committee can make big differences in the College's impact. "We are looking very early at Atwater Commons and the Library. The environmental issues for the next buildings will be seriously considered," says Jenks-Jay, who is looking ahead to the next buildings on the college's construction schedule with enthusiasm and hope.



The Guiding Principles outline, in general terms, the College's environmental goals pertaining to construction, renovation, operation and maintenance of campus facilities. They define how the College and its appointees will make decisions pertaining to the relationship between the built environment and the natural environment. These Principles, below, were approved by the Middlebury College trustees in May 1999:

- Whereas the College is at a critical turning point with the Bicentennial in 2000, it moves into the next millennium with a respect for tradition and regard for change that reflect the values of the institution.
- Whereas the College recognizes its potential for the academy to be a leader, it understands the importance of embodying these concepts into all its buildings and landscapes.
- Whereas it is the College's intent to make sound decisions regarding construction, renovation and the landscape of the campus in order to achieve the best results and final products, it is therefore resolved that the College shall develop a Framework to implement Procedures and Practices that establish a more informed process in which to review alternatives and provide direction.
- It is resolved that through the Framework, the College and its appointees shall consider: energy systems, life cycles, water use, scale and location, light pollution, recycling and waste management, materials, community and product sources, community and regional impacts, transportation, aesthetics, indoor air quality, construction site management, viewsheds, open space and other issues related to the campus.
- The College recognizes that it must be a leader in the development of its own campus. The College also recognizes that as projects are developed, important information and resources are brought to bear on the unique situations of each project. This knowledge base should be preserved and enhanced to improve future projects. It is therefore further resolved that the College will develop the means and methods for coordinating essential information that can aid in the efficient use of its consultants and appointees.

## ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

Farrell House, Middlebury College  
Middlebury, Vermont 05753

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

### INSIDE:

## MIDDLEBURY'S ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT GOES PAST DEMONSTRATION

Printed on Recycled Paper



---

### NEWS FROM THE MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

## ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

This year, the Environmental Council counts among their accomplishments the genesis of an environmental grant program, a trial run of an electric-powered campus shuttle, and an Earth Day 2000 celebration that included seventeen events. The year was concluded with a three-part lecture series on the topic of "Caring for the Land" through a unique partnership with Middlebury College's and University of Vermont's Environmental Councils and Shelburne Farms.

In an effort to accomplish the goals set forth in the 1998 environmental audit report, the Council developed a small grant program which supports campus sustainability projects. This year's grant recipients included Lara DuMond '00, Catherine Turner '00/Jennifer

DeLeonardo '00, and Melissa Bahret from the Athletics staff. These recipients, respectively, focused on the Bicentennial Hall wetland, computer printers that print double-sided, and the chemicals used in landscaping. President McCardell has given the Council \$25,000 for next year's grant program.

The Council's own campus sustainability project involved a two-week trial run of an electric bus around campus, in a partnership with EVERmont. In less than two weeks of operation, 229 members of the campus community rode the bus. Surveys were collected, and the bus generated enough interest on campus to warrant five articles in the student newspaper. The Council is asking the administration to consider a campus shuttle service that runs on alternative power.

## ALUMNI! SEND ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS YOUR NEWS!

Please include your name, any nickname used while in college, your graduating year, your current profession and involvement in environmental initiatives. Send any information you wish to have published in ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS to:

Amy Seif  
ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS  
Farrell House  
Middlebury College  
Middlebury, Vermont 05753  
or E-mail: [aseif@middlebury.edu](mailto:aseif@middlebury.edu)

