

Northern Woodlands Conference

Friday, October 12 – Sunday, October 14, 2018

Hulbert Outdoor Center, Fairlee, Vermont

*Thank You to our Sponsor:
The Bailey Charitable Foundation*

Friday, October 12

- 4:00 – 5:00 pm** **Registration** - *Library*
- 5:00 – 6:00 pm** **Social Hour** - *Conference Hall*
- 6:00 – 7:00 pm** **Dinner** - *Dining Hall*
- 7:00 – 8:00 pm** **Plenary Session** - *Conference Hall*

Music, Landscape, and Narrative with Ben Cosgrove

Musician Ben Cosgrove will perform a concert of his music - including several pieces written during artist residencies at various National Parks - on solo piano, and tell the stories behind the conception and development of each song. Ben has spent the better part of the last decade traveling around the country and documenting his experiences of its different physical environments in the instrumental music he writes and performs. This practice has required him to think critically about the process by which we construct and relate to place, about our tendency to project our inner lives and intellectual preconceptions onto natural landscapes, and about different strategies for representing something so subjective in a wordless medium.

Saturday, October 13

- 6:45 – 7:45 am** **Early Bird Woods Walk** - *Front Porch*
Walks with Ginny Barlow & Dave Mance; Dan Lambert & Bryan Pfeiffer
- 7:30 – 8:30 am** **Breakfast** - *Dining Hall*
- 8:00 – 8:30 am** **Registration** - *Library*

8:45 – 9:45 am **Plenary Session** - *Conference Hall*

A Forest on the Wing of a Butterfly with Bryan Pfeiffer

They are the glow and glitter of summer, of meadows and flower gardens, of poetry and the exuberance of youth. But Bryan Pfeiffer also finds butterflies where few of us expect them: among the trees of remote northern forests. In Bryan's plenary talk, you'll take flight with three rare butterfly species, specializing in either black spruce, American beech or Atlantic white cedar. Along the way, and in their shared evolution with trees, you'll discover how butterflies and other insects can change the way we look at time, plants, landscapes, and even our own place in the world.

9:45 – 10:00 am **Break**

Morning Sessions - *Choose TWO 1-hour sessions (A & B) or ONE 2-hour session AB*

10:00 –11:00 am **Morning Session A (1 Hour)**

1. Captivated by Trees: The Work of Rutherford Platt with Michael Wojtech - *Conference Hall*

The career of Rutherford Platt, an esteemed Burroughs Medal winning naturalist, writer, and photographer, and his captivation by trees, was set in motion in 1929 when he first realized that buds were present on the branches of winter trees. Through an exploration of Platt's life and work we will broaden our perceptions of trees through ranges of scale and time, and discover the functional advantages of their distinct characteristic as they grow, reproduce, and interact with their environment. *This session will transition into the Morning Session B3 Woods Walk.*

2. Visual Storytelling Workshop with Erik Hoffner - *Danny's Room*

Publications normally have two problems to solve for every good story idea: finding good words and also interesting images to illustrate those words. Being able to provide both text and high quality photos not only increases your chances of having an editor accept your pitch, it also better your potential payday from a writing project and opens new opportunities like photo essays and public programs. During this workshop we'll discuss topics like composition, shot selection, and strategy for creating high quality images. While this is not a photography class, feel free to bring whatever camera you most often use to practice some of these techniques and ideas during the conference.

3. Called to the Wild: Lucas St. Clair's Controversial Conservation Mission with Ian Aldrich

- *Upper Dining Hall*

Lucas St. Clair's mission was nearly impossible: to win support for Maine's biggest swath of national park land despite controversy around its benefactor — who also happens to be his mother. This presentation will draw from the speaker's experience writing an article about St. Clair for the January 2018 issue of *Yankee Magazine*.

4. “Shinrin-yoku” Practice in the Woods with Susie Spikol and Marilyn Wyzga - Bridge Club House

Join Susie Spikol and Marilyn Wyzga for this outdoor sensory excursion and discover how the emerging practice of “shinrin-yoku” can deepen your own and (for teachers attending this workshop) your students’ experiences in the natural world. Shinrin-yoku, as developed in Japan and now practiced in the states as “forest bathing,” is a multi-modal approach to being in nature. Forest bathing incorporates simple yoga poses, deep breathing techniques, sensory awareness experiences, and quiet walking while being outside in various habitats. Experience a forest bathing walk and discover what the benefits of this deep immersion in nature can be for both you and your students.

11:15 – 12:15 pm Morning Session B (1 Hour)

1. Nuts about Mast with Susan Morse – Conference Hall

“Anyone who spends time in the woods has witnessed the bumper mast years, when trees and shrubs across whole regions produce prodigious quantities of seeds. Ecologists in California discovered that in a good year, a single blue oak tree may produce ten times its annual average of acorns - over 100,000 nuts. The same tree will produce few or possibly no nuts at all during a bust year. Measured across hundreds, or even thousands, of square miles, interspecific synchronized masting involving millions of plants, all producing an excess of seeds - or not - has profound effects on all that live there, affecting wildlife population dynamics, fitness, ecosystem functions, and evolution.” Sue Morse is as smitten with plants as she is the animals that are fed by them. This slide presentation will combine Sue’s selected readings from her favorite plant essays published in Northern Woodlands. Enriched with her stunning photographs, personal reflections and humor, this will be fun and full of information.

2. Short and Sweet: The Power of the Seven - Minute Writing Prompt with Gary Lee Miller

- Upper Dining Hall

Learn to use quick, simple prompts to jumpstart your creativity and help others do the same. We’ll do some writing, share and discuss our work, and talk about ways to implement the 7-minute prompt in almost any setting. It’s fun, fear-free, and there’s no experience required.

3. Walk Toward Moosalamoo with Hans Carlson - Danny’s Room

Hans Carlson will read from and speak about his newest book. *Walking Toward Moosalamoo* is a story of humans and the earth. It is also a chronicle of backpacking on the section of the Appalachian Trail which runs from Mount Katahdin to a place called Mount Moosalamoo, in the Champlain Valley of Vermont. At bottom, it is an environmental inquiry into the dialogue between humans and the land, one concerned with our current environmental crises, but also with the historical and cultural terrain of New England – its narrative geography. Along the way, Carlson muses on the ways we speak of the earth—how we often wound it with our words, but also how we limit our own freedom, and wound ourselves,

by misrepresenting our storied relationship with the land that supports all our lives. This is an environmental and political argument for listening to the earth, but also one for listening to each other.

4. Woods Walk: Perceptions of Trees Through Ranges of Scale and Time with Michael Wojtech

- *Front Porch*

No single view of a tree is a fixed snapshot that tells the complete story. As we walk we will examine the characteristics of trees and explore how every detail that we observe changes over days, weeks, seasons, and years, and has evolved to provide functional advantages as trees grow, reproduce, and interact with their environment. *Can be attended on its own or in addition to Morning Session A1.*

10:00 – 12:15 pm Morning Session AB (2 Hours)

1. Nature Journaling and Eco-Reporting with Adelaide Tyrol and Nona Estrin - *Barn*

This 2 hour field class will focus on using words and drawings together as a fresh and spontaneous way to communicate ideas and to open new channels for ecological awareness. We will talk about using nature journaling as a tool to further our conversations about the environment. Drawing outdoors can cultivate a profound attention to the natural world; a witnessing to be shared. The class will go over how to quickly record one's experience and observations of nature. We encourage people to bring a simple set of watercolors and/or watercolor pencils, a pad, and pencils.

2. Beyond Descriptive Nature Writing with Jim Collins - *Arts Building*

Too often, articles about the natural world describe flora and fauna and inform readers, but leave out the elements that transform articles into stories, or parts of the craft that make the writing memorable, or the techniques that create tension and emotion. This workshop — for experienced and ambitious writers — uses a single magazine article (ostensibly about loons) to explore how stance, voice, narrative, tone, use of metaphor, inclusion of human characters, and deep research all combine to accomplish something difficult and extraordinarily important in nature writing: to make readers care about a subject in which they may initially have had no interest whatsoever.

12:30 – 1:30 pm **Lunch - *Dining Hall***

1:30 – 2:30 pm Plenary Session - *Conference Hall*

“Making Rumble Strip in my Closet” with Erica Heilman

Rumble Strip is a show that features the extraordinary lives of ordinary people. In this session, we'll talk about finding stories, conducting interviews, editing, and the terrible faith required in finishing something that no one's particularly waiting for, without a deadline. And we'll listen to lots of tape.

2:30 – 2:45 pm Break

Afternoon Sessions - Choose *TWO 1-hour sessions (A & B) or ONE 2-hour session AB*

2:45 – 3:45 pm Afternoon Session A (1 Hour)

1. Climate Communications Round Table Discussion - Conference Hall

There's no lack of communication about climate change and other science facts, yet often these efforts seem ineffective in changing anyone's mind. This discussion, moderated by Hubbard Brook Research Foundation's Executive Director Anthea Lavallee, brings together four of our speakers to ask - what isn't working, why, and how can we be more effective communicators? Featuring Jay Heinrichs, Erica Heilman, and Bryan Pfeiffer.

2. Confessions of a Scat Collector: The How's and Whys of Natural History Collections with Susie Spikol - Danny's Room

Do you have pockets filled with rocks, mantels cluttered with nests, or bundles of feathers scattered throughout your home or classroom. Have you wanted to start a scat collection (or wondered why anyone would want to?) Then come to this workshop and find out the ins and outs of collecting and maintaining natural history collections. By looking at and handling a variety of collections maintained by the Harris Center for Conservation Education, learn about the history of collections and the valuable role they can play in all disciplines of education. Discuss the rules around collecting including safety, ethics and legalities. And think together of how our new technologies can encourage us to develop collections in new and more sustainable ways.

3. Curiosity, Connection, Creativity with Verandah Porche and Kathleen Kolb - Upper Dining Hall

Kathleen and Verandah will speak, show images and read poems from their collaborative exhibition project "Shedding Light on the Working Forest." This was a two year traveling show of Kathleen's paintings concerning the forest and human work there, and poems Verandah created with the people in the paintings.

4:00 – 5:00 pm Afternoon Session B (1 Hour)

1. ~~Nuts about Mast with Susan Morse~~ - Session rescheduled to AM

2. Nibbling on the Wild Landscape with Russ Cohen - Conference Hall

The landscape of the Northern Woodlands region is home to over 100 species of edible wild plants. Many of these species are more nutritious and/or flavorful than their cultivated counterparts. These include native species like Black Raspberry and Butternut, non-native weeds like Burdock and Chicory, and exotic invasive species like Dame's Rocket and Japanese Knotweed. The region is also home to dozens of species of edible mushrooms. Russ' afternoon talk will cover at least three dozen of the tastiest species the region has to offer. These include species everyone knows well, like Daisies and Dandelions, plus species they may never have even heard of, like Squashberry and Creeping Snowberry. At least a dozen of the easier-to-recognize edible mushrooms will be covered too, from Morels in the spring, to Black Trumpets in the summer, to Hen-of-the-Woods mushrooms in the fall. Keys to the identification of reach species will be provided, along with info on edible portion(s), season(s) of availability and preparation methods, as well as guidelines for safe and environmentally responsible foraging. Russ will also include a few details regarding some native edible plants he has grown successfully from seed, and the partnerships he has made with conservation groups and others to add edible native plants to their landscapes. Last but not least, Russ will accompany his talk with handouts and several foraged goodies made with wild ingredients.

3. Living Maps: Writing Setting as a Character with Sean Prentiss - Danny's Room

Whether writers live in small cabins in Vermont and write about the natural world or live on Long Island, New York, and write about their suburban experience, they can create place as something more than merely a backdrop for their action. Instead, writers can transform place into something that serves as another character, one important enough to influence characters, affecting characters' needs and desires. This discussion will talk about how to transform setting from a non-vital backdrop into something that enhances dramatic moments, reveals character, and affects tone.

4. Woods Walk with Celia Evans and Elise Tillinghast - Front Porch

5. Editor's Bull Session - Upper Dining Hall

Join Jim Collins, Ian Aldrich, Erik Hoffner, and others for a candid, wide-ranging, informal chat that pulls the curtain back on the sometimes-mysterious world of editing. Open to other editors, writers, and anyone else who has questions or has occasionally wondered, "How do they..." *Limit: 12*

2:30 – 4:30 pm Afternoon Session AB (2 Hours)

1. "A Place in Mind" Writing Workshop with Patrick White and Robert Kimber - Arts Building

This workshop will focus on developing short personal narratives about place. We will use indoor and outdoor writing exercises to explore specific aspects of successful place narratives. Some sample place-based nature essays will be sent to registered participants beforehand, and if you come to the workshop

with your own “place” in mind—a location you’d like to write about, and even a reason you’d like to write about it—you’ll have material to develop in the workshop.

2. **Woody Plants in the Field with Jerry Jenkins** - *Barn*

Finding and identifying about 20 nearby trees and shrubs, using a new field guide and charts.

5:00 – 6:00 pm **Social Hour** - *Barn*

6:00 – 7:00 pm **Dinner** - *Dining Hall*

7:15 – whenever **Open Mic Night** - *Conference Hall*

Emceed by Gary Lee Miller and Celia Evans, with special guest John Foster

Sunday, October 14

7:30 – 8:30 am **Breakfast & Thank You**

8:30 am **Check-out of Cabins**

8:45 – 10:30 am **Plenary Session** - *Conference Hall*

The Northern Forest Atlas: Graphic Tools for Ecology and Natural History with Jerry Jenkins

The Northern Forest Atlas project makes tools—books, imagery, charts, digital atlases—for people who want to understand the biology and ecology of the northern forest. One goal is identification; another is understanding diversity; another is understanding ecological pattern. Doing this has required new kinds of imagery and new kinds of graphics. This lecture is about our search for new visual tools: where we started seven years ago, what we needed, what we have done.

11:00 am **Check-out**