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The Fierce Green Fire

A Newsletter of the Wofford College Environmental Studies Program

A group of students from ENVS Senior Seminar traveled to the lowcountry this weekend with Drs. Brewitt, Blackwell, and Simmons to visit the Yawkey Wildlife Center Heritage Preserve.



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Senior Seminar Visits Yawkey Wildlife Preserve by Jessica Borucki

Upon arriving to the Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center Heritage Preserve near Georgetown, SC, we hopped onto a pontoon boat to make the (very) short trip to the other side of the Intracoastal Waterway to Cat Island. In the tour van, we headed down a dirt road while Mr. Jim Lee, our tour guide, explained why they burn certain sections of the preserve at certain times of the year. As he talked, we looked out the windows. To one side, the skyscraping longleaf pine trees with ash, logs, and infant plants at their bases, and to the other, we saw the longleaf pines, but at their bases were tall ferns and other plants filling the entire forest bed. The contrast between the two sides opened our eyes to how important the process of burning is for the long-term resilience of the ecosystem.

Into our tour, Mr. Lee mentioned how the alligators are trained to be weary of



Kujo!

humans, but from the van we heard a loud BANG! The front left tire had blown, so we made our own fun during the situation at hand. We munched on apples, PB&J's, took group pictures, and tried to stop a gator or two.

We learned about the land's ancient rice culture adopted from the West African people. The water fowl that these practices attracted caused New England elites to purchase the land. However, these families quickly saw more to the land than just duck hunting, so conservation efforts began. Now, the dykes and rice trunks are still in place while alligators, water fowl, longleaf pines, and the red-cockaded woodpecker are thriving.

After touring Yawkey's guest meeting house, we made our way to Blackout House to spend the night. Pulling up to the house, Mr. Lee told the story of Kujo—a man who went out at night to consume “libations” and was found floating in the marsh the next morning. Along with this was the story of Kujo—the almost 13-foot, 80-year old gator who likes to hang out in the marsh near the house. Regardless of these interesting, yet chilling stories, we were excited to see our home for the night!

We hiked a bit before settling in and found Kujo chilling in the sun. We all stopped to

take pictures and stare in amazement until he moved causing most to walk/jog/run back. After watching the sun set on the beautiful marsh horizon, we had a nice dinner and ate s'mores while we shared endless stories. As our night ended, I was shocked by what I heard—nothing. No engines. No AC units. No music bumping. Not even a cricket. As an environmental student, this, along with the many memories made with my classmates and professors, was a priceless gift.

The next morning after breakfast, we went on a short tour with Mr. Phil Wilkinson who grew up in the area and worked with Mr. Yawkey. His experience with and passion for the preserve was inspiring to us. He ended his tour with another Kujo spotting; this time, when Kujo moved, Mr. Phil was there to tell us that since we pose no threat to him, Kujo poses no threat to us at the safe distance we kept.

On our way to the dock to go home, we saw a bald eagle soaring around the pine trees, a dolphin popping in and out of the waterway, and a pelican cleaning his feathers. This scene encompassed the trip for me—the fact that I got to see several amazing species at once. Once again, this trip was priceless.

Lowcountry sunset



Upcoming Events and Opportunities

March 9th

Applications for Summer Conservation Internship at Vermont Center of Ecostudies: Paid 12-week Alexander Dickey Conservation Internship (May21-August10) in wildlife research and monitoring projects in Vermont. Visit the [Alexander Dickey Conservation Internship](#) for more information.

March 10th

9:00am-11:00am

201 Emma Cudd Road, Glendale

Glendale Shoals Clean Up Day: Join our friends at Spartanburg Area Conservancy for a clean-up day in Glendale. For more details about volunteering, sign up at [Eventbrite](#).

March 12th

Applications for Clean Energy Advocacy Interns at Vermont Law School: VLS Institute for Energy and the Environment is offering two summer internships working with teams of masters and law grad students (May29-Aug3). Applications should include resume, cover letter explaining the student's interest in a clean energy advocacy career, and one letter of recommendation from an undergraduate professor. Email applications and/or questions to Sue Folger, IEE Program Coordinator, sfolger@vermontlaw.edu.

March 14th

7:00pm

Jerome Johnson Richardson
Theater, Richardson Center
for the Arts

The Way I See It: A Particle World View and Rooted Abstraction: Speaker Judith Kruger is a visual artist whose paintings, prints and mixed media works address Human-Environment connectivity and their shared vulnerabilities. She is recognized internationally for her advocacy of natural painting materials and historic, ecological processes. Her exhibit, *Mingled Terrain*, is open in the Richardson Family Art Museum.

March 15th

7:00pm

Richardson Family Art
Museum

Gallery Talk by Judith Kruger: Join us for a gallery talk by Kruger. The on-going work of the artist is the byproduct of a deep engagement with environment, place and the physicality and materiality of all phenomena. Her exhibit, *Mingled Terrain*, is open February 6–April 7 in the Richardson Family Art Museum.

March 22nd

7:00pm

Leonard Auditorium

Tyson Family Lecture on Restoring & Preserving Southern Ecosystems presents: Dr. David Shields, McClintock Professor of Southern Letters at the University of South Carolina, will speak about his recent book *Southern Provisions: The Creation & Revival of a Cuisine*. Shields is known for his efforts to bring back lost Southern foods such as the Bradford watermelon and the Carolina African runner peanut. At USC he teaches courses on early American literature, Southern literature and Southern foodways.

PROFILE OF THE WEEK:

Northern Arizona University – School of Earth Sciences and Environmental Sustainability

Set in the southern Colorado Plateau near San Francisco Peaks, the Grand Canyon, and the red rocks of Sedona, *Northern Arizona University* (NAU) offers a great, natural research area for learning. NAU's School of Earth Sciences and Environmental Sustainability offers Master of Science (MS) degrees in Geology, Environmental Sciences and Policy, Quaternary Science, and Climate Science and Solutions.

A MS in Geology offers opportunities to research those surrounding areas. A MS in Environmental

Sciences and Policy prepares students to deal with environmental issues in the natural and political sciences. Since the area is a prime example of the Quaternary period (the past 2.6 million years), a MS in Quaternary Science studies and recreates the past in order to infer future climatic changes. And the MS in Climate Science and Solutions addresses socially relevant issues related to global climate change. There is also an opportunity to study for a Ph.D. in Earth Sciences and Environmental Sustainability. Visit their website:

[School of Earth Sciences and Environmental Sustainability](#)