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The Fierce Green Fire

A Newsletter of the Wofford College Environmental Studies Program



*Morning mist in the
North Inlet at
Hobcaw Barony,
February 2018.*



Volume 9, Issue 1

Making “Art & Earth: Landscapes” by Dr. Kaye Savage

It was a misty morning on the coast during the first week of classes in February. For the first time in 17 years, I wasn't spending my days in the classroom. Thanks to a professional development leave for the spring semester, I was exploring the sights, sounds, and smells of Hobcaw Barony, the former home of Belle Baruch – equestrian, pilot, and conservationist – and before that, rice plantations. Today it is occupied by scientists from Clemson and University of South Carolina, who have been studying its maritime forest and marine ecosystems, respectively, since the 1960s.



*Scenes from
ENVS 203 in
their first lab on
the Upper Shoals
at Glendale.*

I was there to learn about their research, and to try to bring some of it into the public eye by making works of art that highlight their data. My medium would be paper, made by hand and incorporating materials from the site. The timing was good, coinciding with a research symposium there that allowed me to learn about a variety of ongoing studies. That morning, I was up for the sunrise before meeting researcher Paul Kenny to participate in a tidal inlet sampling event – an activity that has been happening every two weeks since 1981. Together with Dr. Dennis Allen, Kenny has been sampling zooplankton and measuring water quality parameters to discover long-term trends.

Such data sets are not very common, but they are tremendously powerful. Changes here include a reduction in populations of copepods, and in some taxa of larger mesozooplankton, that may be linked with a rise in winter water temperature and a decline in summer salinity, associated with climate change. Another day, researcher Brian Williams took me to the “Strawberry Swamp,” a cypress swamp that has become stressed with a salinity increase associated with sea level rise in a different part of the landscape.

After a week of exploration, which included collecting marsh grass and oyster shell sand to include in my paper, my charge was to somehow translate this very complex setting and interesting data into something visually exciting and grounded in the landscape. I used aerial photographs to inform a relief map of the site, and overlaid paper one layer after another. Some of it was made with the marsh grass, some with mineral pigments that I had purchased, some with indigo, and – after a wonderful workshop with artist Judith Kruger at the Goodall Center, in March – some with cochineal (a beetle excretion that is bright pink!).

I pondered many options about how to include the data, finally settling on the pinks and blues to represent ocean temperatures, a graph using copepods as the symbols for their abundance, and sharp pins poking out of the paper to represent salinity at the Strawberry Swamp and in neighboring Winyah Bay. The final piece, called “Don't Take it Littorally” is on display in the Rosalind Sallenger Richardson Center for the Arts through October, along with four other pieces that each have their own experience and story. Please come to the artist talks by myself and Professor Colleen Ballance on October 18, 7 pm, to learn more!



Upcoming Events and Opportunities

Welcome Back to School!

September 15th
 7:30am-12:00pm
 Lake Bowen Warden's
 Office

Spartanburg Water Lake Sweep: Help keep our watershed clean! Meet at the Lake Bowen Wardens' Office – registration and breakfast at 7:30am - Buses leaving promptly at 8:00am. Put together your team of 5 and register at <https://www.spartanburgwater.org/spartanburg-events/99/2018+Lake+Sweep> Lunch provided and a free t-shirt! Contact jonmorgan@spartanburgwater.org with questions.

September 18th
 7:00pm
 Gray-Jones Room,
 Burwell Building

Long Term Environmental Reflection, Arts and Humanities: The View from Shaver's Creek: A talk by Ian Marshall, Professor of English and Environmental Studies at Penn State-Altoona, and David Taylor, Assistant Professor of Sustainability at Stony Brook University, about the new Wofford Long Term Environmental Reflection program (LTER) and the Shaver's Creek LTER anthology.

September 27th
 5:00pm
 Morningside Baptist
 Church, 897 S. Pine
 Street, 29302

Public Meeting with AECOM and SCDOT: AECOM is working on behalf of SC Department of Transportation to make improvements to the Country Club Road corridor between Union Street and Clifton Glendale Road (3.3 miles). They will hold a public meeting to give residents and the community an opportunity to comment on the proposed improvements.

PROFILE OF THE WEEK:

Vanderbilt University – Center for Environmental Management

Vanderbilt Center for Environmental Management (VCEMS) was established “to study the coordination and sharing of environmental responsibilities that is required among a variety of stakeholders representing business, government, and community interests.” VCEMS is a joint initiative between the School of Engineering, the Owens School of Management, and the Law School. A wide-range of options for study focus is available through the three schools.

“As a leader in the environmental management

field, VCEMS is committed to fostering proactive, quality-oriented and customer-driven initiatives that advance the well-being of business and environmental health.”

VCEMS offers a customized interdisciplinary master's degree and Ph.D. degree in environmental management by applying to Vanderbilt's School of Engineering.

Visit: [Vanderbilt University - Environmental Engineering, Management and Policy](#)