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The Fierce Green Fire

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### The Fierce Green Fire: Vol. 10 Issue 16

Wofford College Environmental Studies Program

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# The Fierce Green Fire

A Newsletter of the Wofford College Environmental Studies Program

*We welcomed  
Dr. Paul  
Robbins and  
Dr. Katharine  
Owens to  
campus this  
week to talk  
about  
environmental  
issues.*



Volume 10, Issue 16

## *Plastic, birds, coffee, and Kerala (India)*

*Visiting speakers Katharine Owens and Paul Robbins brought  
Environmental Studies perspectives to complex issues*

An amazing array of birds grace the monsoon-fed forests of the Kerala region in southwest India. How can biodiversity be promoted in a region where crops such as coffee, areca, and rubber are of critical economic importance? Paul Robbins, this year's Phi Beta Kappa speaker, investigated with colleagues in the Western Ghats mountains. They discovered a complex relationship that hinges on labor availability and coffee pricing.

The more flavorful arabica coffee beans, which fetch a higher price than robusta beans, require careful coppicing of diverse overhead canopy that supports a wide array of birds but also demands skilled labor. The robusta crop is more compatible with silver oak monoculture which can provide timber as an additional income source when coffee prices are low. Robbins and his colleagues interviewed a thousand farmers about their choices and found that the availability of labor, along with a higher price difference between the two types of beans, are factors that promote arabica farming and thus the conditions more suitable for bird biodiversity. They

see eco-labeling as one possible means of keeping the price for arabica beans high enough to incentivize farmer preference. Speaker Katharine Owens, here as part of the *Engaged Scholarship for the 21st Century* speaker series hosted by Dr. Barbas Rhoden, also spent time in Kerala, but focused on coastal accumulation of plastic. Plastic in marine debris is a multifaceted problem related to consumer behavior, commercial and industrial practices, and waste management. Dr. Owens focused on characterization of plastic debris on coastlines, its impact on wildlife, and how to bring this information to policymakers and the public through artistic practice. While in India with a Fulbright grant, she worked with local students, interns, and teachers to bring science, art, and policy to bear on this challenging global concern. While at Wofford she also led a workshop focused on print-making as environmental and social advocacy.

We are grateful to both speakers for bringing fascinating research and interdisciplinary perspectives to Wofford!



***Dr. Telligman's ENV5151 students collected campus waste and recycling to study the estimated rates of contamination of recyclables with regular trash.***



## Upcoming Events and Opportunities

*\*These count toward your two required extracurricular events for the semester.*

March 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>

***C2C Fellows Workshop at Bard Center for Environmental Policy:*** Undergraduates and recent graduates aspiring to leadership positions in sustainable policy, politics and business can [apply](#) for this upcoming workshop. A \$30 registration fee is due upon acceptance to the workshop – meals and housing included.

March 12<sup>th</sup>  
3:00-4:30pm  
Room TBD

***ENVS Senior Seminar Capstone Presentations\****: Join us as our seniors display and discuss their capstone projects. Drop in or out as you are able during the presentations. Presenters are: Eleanor Crawford, Reeves Goettee, and Carson Howell. A poster session with all the seniors' projects will follow these three presentations.

March 19<sup>th</sup>  
7:00pm  
Rosalind S. Richardson Center  
for the Arts

***Quilted Stories\****: Join us for a gallery walk with Humanities Scholar Laurel Horton as part of the quilt exhibit now on display through March 21<sup>st</sup>. The exhibition features quilts of Wofford faculty and staff, displaying storytelling and shared cultural connections. Sponsored by Wofford Cultural Affairs Committee and South Carolina Humanities.

March 26<sup>th</sup>  
2:30-5:30pm  
Gray-Jones Room, Burwell

***Tyson Family Lecture Series – Panel Discussion\****: *Environmental Studies, Liberal Arts and the Future* with panelists Dr. Ellen Goldey, Centre College; Dr. Drew Lanham, Clemson University; and Dr. Jim Warren, Washington & Lee University. Moderated by Dr. Kaye Savage.

March 26<sup>th</sup>  
7:00pm  
Olin 101

***Tyson Family Lecture Series Featured Speaker\****: *The Greening of Wofford* will feature guest speaker John Lane, Professor of Environmental Studies. Introduction by Dr. Laura Barbas-Rhoden.

March 28<sup>th</sup>  
9:00am-2:00pm  
Spartanburg County Admin  
Building, 366 N. Church  
Street, 29303

***12<sup>th</sup> Annual Spartanburg County Household Hazardous Waste Collection & Rain Barrel Sale:*** Spartanburg County residents may bring household hazardous waste to be disposed of. [Link here](#) to find a list of acceptable and unacceptable items. Rain barrels will be available for \$95 (*cash/check only*). This event is rain or shine.

Ongoing

***Job Opportunities in Conservation and Restoration:*** [The Great Basin Institute](#) is a nonprofit organization that specializes in conservation and restoration all throughout the West. They are currently hiring for over 60 paid positions ranging from ecological monitoring, wildlife monitoring, trail maintenance, range land management, and fuels reduction.

## PROFILE OF THE WEEK:

### *University of Vermont – MS in Natural Resources*

The [Rubenstein School of Environment & Natural Resources](#) maintains a small graduate program of 70-100 students to keep a personal and community-oriented atmosphere. The MS in Natural Resources offers concentrations in Aquatic Ecology and Watershed Science; Environment, Society and Public Affairs; Environmental Thought and Culture; Forest Sciences and Wildlife Sciences.

The Aquatic Ecology and Watershed Science concentration works closely with the *Vermont Water Resources and Lake Studies Center* and the *Vermont Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Unit* to provide students with training and research

experience in the aquatic sciences. Students in the Environment, Society and Public Affairs concentration focus on social issues that include land use planning, policy and planning, ecological economics, and park and wilderness management. The Environmental Thought and Culture concentration is an individually designed master's degree with a foundation in the ethical and philosophical traditions that inform environmental theory and action. The Forest Sciences and Wildlife Sciences concentrations work closely together while maintaining their traditional and individual distinctions, allowing students to choose from a broad range of topics -- from sustainable forests to wildlife habitats.