

***aseh news***

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**ASEH Annual Conference 2022**

**Eugene, Oregon**

**March 23-27, 2022**

**Register for ASEH 2022**

[ASEH 2022](#) will feature more than [100 panels and roundtables](#), a plenary session about [Indigenous Environmental Histories in Oregon](#), receptions where you can meet friends and colleagues, and an awards ceremony. Check out the [schedule](#) to see all of the planned events.

The Local Arrangements Committee has planned many exciting [field trips](#) including a brewery and cidery tour, a trip to the site of the Holiday Farm Fire, a tour of toxic sites in West Eugene, birding at William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge, a trip to a working tree farm, a Sunday trip to the Oregon Coast, and more (If a trip does not appear on the registration, it is sold out).

There will be a large exhibit area at ASEH 2022 where you can talk to editors and view the latest scholarship in environmental history.

We can't wait to see you in Eugene!

**REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!**

**ASEH MEMBERS CAN REGISTER AT DISCOUNTED RATES**

## JOIN ASEH OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

***All presenters on the program must register and must do so by January 15, 2022. Registration for members and early registration are discounted, so [register now](#).***

The conference sessions and events will take place at the [Graduate Eugene](#) hotel.

ASEH has reserved a block of rooms at a low conference rate.

**[Book your room at the ASEH 2022 Conference rate](#)**

ASEH has also reserved a limited number of rooms at a lower STUDENT rate. Please do not book these rooms if you are not a student.

**[Book your room at the ASEH 2022 Conference STUDENT rate](#)**

***Staying at the Graduate helps ASEH meet its room block obligation and ensure the financial health of the Society.***

*ASEH and the hotel will adhere to and enforce all local COVID-19 protocols in place during the conference. ASEH will require all conference registrants to show proof of vaccination to attend conference events.*

## Register for ASEH 2022

***ASEH offers many opportunities to sponsor receptions, breakfasts, coffee breaks, plenary panels, and other events. Sign up to Exhibit, Advertise, or Sponsor [HERE](#).***

## EXHIBIT/ADVERTISE/SPONSOR at ASEH 2022

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## See you in Eugene, Oregon for ASEH 2022



Three Sisters



Clear Lake



Blue River Reservoir

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## *Environmental History*

The January issue will arrive soon!

Access [Environmental History](#) online.

# environmental HISTORY

The January issue (Volume 27, Number 1) of *Environmental History* is the first issue published in partnership with [University of Chicago Press](#) and with a new design.

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

I spent a rainy morning last week in a special exhibition of Richard Estes' *Urban Landscape* silkscreen prints at the [Portland Museum of Art](#). Estes layered color and shape to construct urban landscapes that echo with the conventions of Ansel Adams' photographs of Yosemite, and the monumental wilderness landscapes of Thomas Cole and Albert Bierstadt. In *D Train*, Estes catches the view of the Manhattan skyline across the East River, a mosaic of train interior complete with ads and bright, hard seats; a bit of waterfront; the girders of the rail bridge framing and fragmenting Manhattan; dramatic clouds in a pale sky. This cold love letter to the city celebrates infrastructure rendered in a sourball candy sheen, and utterly devoid of people. As I stood before the giant print, I recognized immediately Estes' invocation of the romantic tradition of landscape paintings. But all I could really see was the isolation of the pandemic.

I do have a solution to that isolation: Join us in Eugene in March and plan an event for Environmental History Week in April!

If you are planning to come to Eugene, please do three things: 1) register by January 15, 2) stay at least part of the time at The Graduate, the conference hotel, and 3) get vaccinated and pack your proof of vaccination.

Registering early and staying at The Graduate will help ensure ASEH's future financial stability. Why? When ASEH holds a conference, we contract for meeting space, catering, AV equipment and other services with the conference hotel. The hotel discounts those services based on how many rooms we book. These discounts make the conference affordable for ASEH; the hotel offers discounts because it makes its money from hotel room rentals and catering. I know that you have many alternatives to staying in the conference hotel, and can probably find a cheaper option, but if you stay at least one night in The Graduate, you will help us earn the discounts we need to make this conference a financial success.

We are also asking you to register now so that we will know if we have to prepare for a smaller-than-expected conference. And if you are wondering why we are so worried about conference attendance and those hotel rooms: we signed this contract with The Graduate before the pandemic began.

As for vaccinations: Vaccinations are required to attend the Eugene conference. If you are not vaccinated, please get vaccinated so you can join us! If you can't come to Eugene, because you aren't ready to travel yet, can't afford the trip, because Omicron has you rethinking large, in-person gatherings, or because you cannot or prefer not to get vaccinated, you can break out of your isolation by joining in the Twitter stream of the conference, and by planning an event for Environmental History Week 2022 in April!

Sarah S. Elkind, ASEH President

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*As another pandemic year comes to an end, **please consider donating to ASEH** to support our research fellowships for graduate students and underrepresented scholars, prizes and awards, conference travel grants for underfunded students and scholars, conferences, journal, and other programs and operations. We greatly appreciate your membership and generous support.*

**Donate to ASEH**

**Renew your ASEH Membership**

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**Teach This!**

*This new section of aseh news suggests and reviews environmental history teaching materials.*

**From Nancy Jacobs:**

**Teach This: Harms, [Games Against Nature](#) (Cambridge University, 1988).**

Through clear writing and common-sense arguments, in *Games against Nature*, Robert Harms makes a far-away time and place accessible. The book recreates the landscape in the Congo River basin in the late precolonial period. It populates this landscape with the Nunu people who know their environment well, work hard, and bet that their expertise and labor will pay off. It narrates how they built societies around their rivers, swamps, dams, and fish.

Harms works from a few assumptions. First, that people preferred to stick to familiar sites and familiar fishing practices until something forced them to move and innovate. Second, that the lineage-based model of society justified inequality by gender, generational, and status of enslaved or free. Third, that

the “big man” ethos enabled quests for personal liberty and power. Ambitious men could shed the constraints within lineages by acting on this ethos. Becoming too rich was a problem, however; only generosity would prevent witchcraft accusations.

Coming from the north, the Nunu consolidated a society on the Nsangasi tributary of the middle Congo. During high water season, they fished in the inundated grasslands. As time went on and populations increased, more people moved to the flooded forest. Those who could not secure a spot for net fishing took up dam building. When there was no more room for dams, new households settled in dry land villages and fished in the river itself. A nimble reading of game theory inspired Harms to work out the strategies and tactics of lineage heads, estate owners, dependent workers, ambitious men, and farming women.

*Games against Nature* is written with clarity and elegance. The argument is so easily absorbed that Harms delivers an added lesson on how to do precolonial African history. He has no documents for the earliest period and memories have faded. Teachers who are not specialists can feel confident leading discussions on his methods. He draws on genealogies and migration stories to chart movement. Linguistic evidence allows him to parse out relationships. Ethnographic observations, including his own during fieldwork in the 1970s, prepared him to imagine the social dynamics and fishing practices of the past. Students will learn a lot about what different kinds of sources can do.

This book offers a hospitable tour of an inaccessible place. Along the way, it stimulates big questions about nature and culture and historical change. *Games against Nature* will not disappoint in your classrooms. It is available in paperback and electronic versions.

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**From Myrna Santiago:**

For a course on “Disasters in Latin American History,” I decided to include two assignments that end up working really well. One was a short research paper (7-8 pp) about a disaster in the students’ home towns. Since all the students were from California, they wrote about fires, pesticide contamination, water pollution, and the dirty secrets of small towns. Another assignment was a critical review of a disaster movie (5 pp). Because Covid kept us all at home, they enjoyed watching a film with siblings as homework. The assignment was to focus on the representation of nature in the movie, including the role of the state and the representation of gender, race, and class. Best review: “Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs.” That was indeed an introduction to environmental disasters for children!

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**From Whitney Barlow Robles:**

I recently launched an interactive virtual exhibition titled [The Kitchen in the Cabinet: Histories of Food and Science](#), which grew out of research related to my first book. I produced the exhibition in collaboration with three undergraduate students at Dartmouth College, who were generously funded as research assistants by Dartmouth’s Society of Fellows and the Andrew W.

research assistants by DARTMOUTH'S SOCIETY OF FELLOWS AND THE ANDREW W. Mellon Foundation. The site features the stories of centuries-old food artifacts that have survived to the present, despite their perishable nature, by being preserved in scientific collections. Several of the featured objects raise awareness of climate change, species extinction, environmental loss, and food justice.

I challenged the students to think about how we might communicate the exhibition's major themes and arguments not only through the text of the historical essays they would write for the website, but also through visual and interactive design. For instance, one theme we wanted to convey was a sense of historical contingency: though these objects ultimately came to be housed in natural history collections or other museums, that was not their inevitable destination. Through a brainstorming session, we decided to implement a feature we now call rollover images. When you arrive at each individual object's page on the site, hovering your cursor over the image at the top causes it to flip from its modern-day specimen form to an example of the food it might have become instead. The digital medium let us play with themes of contingency and taxonomical instability, and it offers students a chance to creatively devise different modes of historical argumentation.

**Want to suggest something for this section of *aseh news*? Email your teaching suggestions to [admin@aseh.org](mailto:admin@aseh.org).**

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## NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- The **Bates College Program in Environmental Studies** invites interdisciplinary scholars to apply for a full-time, tenure-track Assistant Professor position centered on climate justice, broadly conceived, beginning August, 2022. Scholars and artists trained in any relevant social science or humanities discipline are welcome to apply. **Review of applications begins on January 3, 2022, and will continue until the position is filled. Please apply here: <http://apply.interfolio.com/99735>**
- The **History Department at Old Dominion University** invites applications for a tenure-track position at the rank of Assistant Professor, beginning in July 2022, with research concentration in **Native North American History and a preference for expertise in Environmental History**. Field of specialization is open; applicants who can contribute to interdisciplinary programs in interethnic studies and are interested in community outreach are preferred. **Review of applications will be January 7, 2022, and the posting will remain open until filled.** For more information and to apply, please see <https://jobs.odu.edu/postings/14325>.
- The **Linda Hall Library** invites doctoral students, postdoctoral scholars, and independent researchers to apply for its **2022-23 fellowships in the history of science and related areas of science and technology studies, including environmental history**. The Library is offering both residential fellowships, which support scholars who travel to Kansas City to conduct research, and virtual fellowships, which support researchers working remotely using our digital collections. All application materials are due no later than **January 21, 2022**. For further information, visit <https://www.lindahall.org/fellowships/>
- The **University of Toronto Scarborough** seeks applications for **two Director & Associate Professor/Professor positions - [Director of the new Institute for Inclusive Economies and Sustainable Livelihoods \(IIESL\)](#) and [Director of the new Institute for Environment, Conservation, and Sustainability \(IECS\)](#)**. **Deadline for applications for both is February 25, 2022.**

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## Join us in Eugene for ASEH 2022



McKenzie River



Delta Ponds



Oregon Coast

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