

Steven Hartman's Candidacy for the Position of Vice President ESEH

I am honored to be given this opportunity to make a case for my candidacy for one of the two vice-presidents' positions within the leadership of ESEH. I have only been an ESEH member for a relatively short period, but I have been working in environmental history in one form or another since I undertook my doctoral work as a literary historian examining cultural reenactments of the life, work and creative legacy of New England transcendentalist and naturalist Henry David Thoreau as these played out in twentieth century environmentalism and various other movements of political protest and social action.

Currently I am Visiting Professor in the Department of History, Faculty of History and Philosophy, at University of Iceland. I have approximately 25 years of experience (most of it full-time) teaching and researching in research institutions. From 2008 I coordinated the Nordic Network for Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies for over a decade and in this capacity I had a chance to contribute to the development of the field of environmental humanities in Europe. I have been involved in the project [Reflections of Change: The Natural World in Literary and Historical Sources from Iceland ca. AD 800 to 1800 \(ICECHANGE\)](#) (2017-2020), which I co-led with Dr. Astrid Ogilvie; in this project we co-authored a paper with four other colleagues (in climate history, geosciences, historical anthropology, archaeology and ecocriticism) that won ESEH's [St Andrews's Article Prize](#) in 2019.

Much of my energy has been devoted during 2019-2021 to coordinating the process of establishing a sustainability science coalition, [BRIDGES](#), within UNESCO's international science programme Management of Social Transformations (MOST). BRIDGES was approved by the MOST Intergovernmental Council during its 15th Ordinary Session on 31 March 2021 and its inaugural General Assembly and launch will take place on 24-25 May this year. The first humanities-led sustainability science initiative within UNESCO, the BRIDGES Coalition will promote potentially transformative collaborations across the academic domains of the arts and humanities, social sciences and natural sciences, as achievable in a range of regional contexts during the present United Nations Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs (2021-2030).

As BRIDGES now launches in 2021, and as it undertakes its mission over the next few years, one key challenge the coalition will face is that of helping to better articulate the policy relevance of historical cases and potentially actionable knowledge of past social-ecological change as applied to present and future directed governance (including efforts of planning, readiness and response) focused on environmental change. Should I be entrusted with duty of Vice President of ESEH by the society's membership, I would welcome the opportunity to create closer ties between ESEH and the BRIDGES Coalition, with the aim of addressing this challenge—also as a challenge for the field of Environmental History—in a series of jointly sponsored/jointly organized activities between ESEH and BRIDGES the coalition. I thank the members of ESEH for considering these remarks and for giving my candidacy serious consideration. It is an honor to be considered for this key role, which I can promise to devote myself to wholeheartedly as an important commission of trust from the ESEH membership.