

President's Message Board

Dear Friends, environmental historians,

We are happy to report that over the last few months our Society has made progress in many areas. Perhaps most importantly, we launched our planned series of ESEH European Summer Schools in Environmental History. The first one took place at the Musée National de Port Royal des Champs in Yvelines, close to Paris, from June 30 to July 2, 2010. It was organized by Grégory Quenet (Versailles) and counted among its sponsors Sciences Po Paris (Bruno Latour) and NiCHE. Thematically, the school focused on risks and disasters, on climate history and on environmental history writing. Among the special features of the Summer School were field trips to national parks, to an explosives factory, and to the king's vegetable garden at the Château de Versailles. The Summer School brought together doctoral students and lecturers from about a dozen different countries. The second ESEH European Summer School is now already scheduled to take place in Budapest, Hungary, in early July 2011, immediately following the ESEH conference in Turku. The school will be organized by József Laszlovszky of Central European University Budapest and its thematic focus will be rivers in environmental history.

Considering that most ESEH conferences have been held in the more northerly parts of Europe, it was a pleasure when we were approached by our Portuguese colleague Angela Mendonca, who organized a workshop on "The History of Environment and Global Climate Change: Water, Ecology, De-Forestation, Agriculture, Politics, and the Management of Nature" together with Ranjan Chakrabarti, the President of the Association of South Asian Environmental Historians. The conference was held at the Do Diogo de Sousa Museum in Braga, Portugal, on May 7 and May 8; ESEH became a co-sponsor of the event, and members of the ESEH board served on the Scientific Committee. The workshop brought together a group of scholars in the fields of environmental studies and environmental history from European and non-European countries for two days of intensive debate. The event was part of a larger initiative – a series of conferences and events throughout the "year of biodiversity" – sponsored by the National Commission of UNESCO.

Finally, we are very happy that the program for our big event in 2011, the 6th annual ESEH Conference that will take place in Turku, Finland, from 28 June to 2 July 2011, is taking shape. It will feature a record number of panels, and our Society's new prize, the Turku Book Award in Environmental History, will be awarded for the first time during this conference. These plans augur well

for the ESEH in 2011 and we look forward to an exciting year ahead.

Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud, President
Christof Mauch and Petra Van Dam, vice-Presidents
Paris, Munich and Amsterdam, September 2010

Report on the Upcoming Turku Conference

The Call for Papers for the Turku Conference was widely read and well received. When the extended deadline expired on 17 May, more than 2,100 unique visitors had visited the conference website. Over 360 paper and poster proposals were submitted by the final deadline. Including co-authors, the number of potential contributors was more than five hundred, representing 43 countries from all five continents. More than half of submitters were from six countries (in decreasing order by submitters): the United States, Finland, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia and France. An interesting feature seems to be that the world east of the Oder-Neisse line will presumably be better represented at Turku than at any previous ESEH conference.

The topics of submissions are also extremely varied. On the one hand, due to the main theme of the conference being entitled “*Encounters of Sea and Land*”, it appears that a great many submitters will focus on coasts, seas, fishing, marine biota, rivers and floods. Conservation and wild animals will also be among major subthemes in the forthcoming conference. On the other hand, there are several submissions on urban and intellectual environmental history, landscape history, historical climatology, and environmental movements in the past. It is delightful that preindustrial periods, especially the 16th to 18th centuries, are well represented among submissions. The geographical distribution of research topics is also broad.

The Scientific Committee held its 3-day meeting in Turku in mid-July, and accepted 312 paper and poster proposals and divided them into 88 sessions. Notification letters were sent to all submitters on 3 September. Besides regular sessions, the scientific programme also includes five keynote lectures on the core themes of the conference.

The Local Organising Committee has been engaged in planning social events for the conference. Because we have received requests for Finnish-specific cultural events, we are going to provide social events that can be experienced only in Finland alongside the more conventional receptions. In coming months our website (<http://eseh2011.utu.fi/>) will provide detailed information on both scientific and social programmes.

In sum, the conference will be a great forum for meeting new people and will offer fascinating insights into current research on environmental history around the globe.

Timo Myllyntaus
Chair of the LOC

2011 Summer School: The Environmental History of Large Rivers

In 2011 the ESEH will support the summer school hosted by the Department of Medieval Studies of the Central European University, organised by the director Prof. Dr József Laszlovszky. The date is 4–16 July 2011, with an international workshop on 9–11 July. This event takes place immediately after the ESEH conference 2011 in Turku.

The course will be held in the beautifully renovated Monument Building of the CEU which offers top quality seminar rooms and a new library with many e-resources. It is situated in the heart of Budapest near the cathedral. Students will be lodged in the university student quarters, situated in the outskirts of the town, but with good public transport facilities. More news will be published at the ESEH website in due course.

First workshop/mini-conference of Hungarian ESEH members

Besides the systematic e-mail contact and circular letters among the members, this summer we decided to organise a first meeting of Hungarian ESEH members. The original aim of this first workshop, taking place on 25 June 2010 at Szeged University, was to meet each other personally and get familiar with each other's research interests; moreover to exchange ideas on the present situation of environmental history and on the possibilities of future cooperation inside and outside Hungary.

In general we found it important to establish a relatively strong, common platform for Hungarian ESEH members, providing a link between the wider international ESEH community and the mainly Hungarian-speaking environmental history-related scientists in the country. Since the average age of the present Hungarian ESEH members is around 30, information from Hungarian colleagues with more experience in international communication, can have special importance. In this sense, the workshop provided a good opportunity for the exchange of (international) experience.

The first Hungarian ESEH workshop was divided into two main parts:

- The official part that consisted of oral presentations of ESEH members in Hungarian (and information sent by colleagues who could not be present)
- A roundtable discussion and a short environmental history tour of Szeged (with dinner)

The official part of the workshop consisted of eight presentations/scientific papers which covered a wide range of topics, including landscape history, historical climatology, environmental pollution, all covering the Carpathian basin. Examples

of paper themes include the industrial pollution of former communist factories in Miskolc area; the reconstruction of late 18th-century weather conditions and extremes, based on instrumental measurements and weather observations; and forest history and dendrochronology-based environmental research/reconstruction. Those members who could not be present at the event sent information on their research activities and thus the workshop practically covered all the research fields represented by current ESEH members in Hungary.

The roundtable discussion was more informal and consisted of oral presentations and a short introduction to ESEH to new members. The decision was also taken to convene annually in future, and to have regular national meetings in which the language used will be Hungarian. Further discussions consisted of various topics, including increasing the number of Hungarian ESEH members, cooperation/application possibilities, information exchange over future Hungarian and international conferences, and the creation of a website for Hungarian ESEH members. Some members raised the possibility and showed an interest for an active participation in organising one of the future ESEH biannual conferences in Hungary. Discussions ended up with an environmental history walk along the Tisza River and the downtown of Szeged.

Andrea Kiss
Hungary ESEH Regional Representative

Notepad Editor: Phia Steyn

Items for the next Notepad should be sent by 15 December 2010 to the address shown below.

All correspondence should be directed to the secretariat:

c/o Dr Phia Steyn
School of History and Politics
University of Stirling
Stirling
FK9 4LA, United Kingdom
E-mail: m.s.steyn@stir.ac.uk