

Environmental History in Europe – ESEH Activities and Developments 2011–2013

Environmental history in Europe is on the rise. Over the last two years the European Society for Environmental History has been more active than ever before. It has organized summer schools, sponsored academic events, expanded its research projects, awarded prizes, and redesigned its website, which is now hosted by an independent server. Furthermore, the society published the first volume in its series with Berghahn Books. Today ESEH boasts about 800 members from 49 different countries; its membership has almost doubled within the last two years (up from 425 in 2011). Likewise, the attendance of its biennial conferences has risen dramatically within a two-year period, from 320 in Turku 2011 to over 630 in Munich 2013. The key architects and executives of the society's activities were the members of its board as well as its regional representatives. From 2011 to 2013 the ESEH board consisted of the following delegates: Christof Mauch (President), Stefania Barca and Julia Lajus (Vice-Presidents), Phia Steyn (Secretary), and Ulrich Koppitz (Treasurer). Five regional representatives were also elected to the board: Stephane Frioux (France), Alexei V. Kraikovskii (Russia), Finn Arne Jørgensen (Nordic countries), Andrea Kiss (Hungary), and Christian Rohr (German speaking countries).

Among the most exciting projects that ESEH got involved with is the Arcadia project, a collaboration of the ESEH and the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society (RCC) at LMU Munich. Arcadia is an online platform that presents short, illustrated environmental histories. Forty-three articles written by ESEH members have been published so far, and about the same number are currently under review. Arcadia's short environmental histories on specific topics – like how Danube floods created telegraph networks, or how the European Green Belt transformed a zone of death into one of conservation – give researchers a way to share new work with peers and general audiences online. Each Arcadia entry includes a profile of the researcher, links, and suggested readings, and it is peer-reviewed by an international board of ESEH members and RCC staff (currently the Arcadia Board includes Kimberly Coulter, Andreas Grieger, Finn Arne Jørgensen, Julia Lajus, Christof Mauch, Timo Myllyntaus, Wilko von Hardenberg, and Verena Winiwarter).

A highlight among the educational activities of the ESEH was its first writing and publication workshop, hosted by the Rachel Carson Center in Munich on August 21, 2013. ESEH secretary Phia Steyn served as convener, and

presenters included Dolly Jørgensen (Umeå University, Sweden), David Moon (University of York, UK), Sarah Johnson (White Horse Press and publisher of the journal *Environment and History*), Katie Ritson (Managing Editor, Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society) and Anne Boden (Editor, Imre Kertész Kolleg, Jena, Germany). The workshop addressed topics such as article writing techniques, book and grant proposal writing, academic prose style in English, and publisher expectations. Among the participants of the workshop were graduate students and postdocs from 14 different countries.

Since the ESEH organized its first summer school in Versailles, France, in 2010 (convener: Gregory Quenet), ESEH summer schools have become a regular feature of the annual ESEH calendar. In 2011, an ESEH summer school titled 'Water – Culture – History' took place in Venice, Italy (organized by Christof Mauch). In 2012 the ESEH hosted not just one but two summer schools: the first one took place in Flaran, France, on the topic of 'Rural vs. Environmental History' (organized by Emmanuel Huertas and Gregory Quenet), the second one, titled 'Natural Resources: Historical Ideas, Exploration, and Exploitation' took place in St. Petersburg, Russia (organized by Julia Lajus). Finally, in August 2013, Marcus Hall and Patrick Kupper hosted a summer school in Lavin, Switzerland on the topic 'Mountains across Borders'.

A number of additional academic events were sponsored by the European Society for Environmental History between 2011 and 2013, including the conference 'Time in Environment: Methodological Implications of Narrating' that took place in Tallinn, Estonia, in March 2013. Since 2011 the society has also created an overview of members' book publications (the bibliography, which is prepared by Julia Lajus, includes images of book covers) and it has provided links to electronic resources for environmental historians; these and many other features have been permanently updated on the website by the ESEH webmaster, Wilko Graf von Hardenberg.

Even though the programs and initiatives of the ESEH keep growing, the society's biennial conferences remain the highlight of its activities. Under the title 'Circulating Natures: Water – Food – Energy', the city of Munich, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) and the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society (RCC) hosted the 7th biennial conference on August 21–24, 2013. Munich proved to be an ideal location for an environmental history conference: As Mayor 'Hep' Monatzeder (a member of the Green Party) pointed out in his address during the grand opening of the conference in the Old Town Hall, Munich is not just Germany's 'secret capital'; it is also a green city. The Englischer Garten, which spreads more than three kilometres through central Munich, is considered the largest urban park in the world. City dwellers' water is piped directly from the Alps, and the surrounding area is largely agricultural, ensuring that a large part of Munich's food – fish, meat, vegetables, beer – is locally sourced. The Viktualienmarkt, a continuation of a medieval farmers' market, is today known for being one of Europe's exclusive

gourmet food markets. A great deal of Munich's energy comes from Alpine hydroelectric plants, and by the year 2025, Munich aims to produce enough renewable energy from its own plants to supply the entire city, making it the first city of more than a million inhabitants to achieve this goal. Thus, Munich's environs were, indeed, rich in inspiration for the theme of a conference on 'Water – Food – Energy.'

The program committee, chaired by Peter Coates (University of Bristol, UK), included members from seven countries from different parts of Europe (Inês Amorim, Marcus Hall, Arielle Helmick, Dolly Jørgensen, Andrea Kiss, and Timo Myllyntaus). They helped sift through a great number of excellent proposals and, after a two-day meeting in the spring, they selected the presentations and posters that constituted the academic part of the conference – over 100 panels and 40 posters. Additionally, 53 scholars were selected by the ESEH travel grant committee to receive travel grants from the society. The conference also featured a keynote speech by Marion Nestle on food politics, a 'Hall of Fellows' that introduced the work of 101 Carson Fellows and alumni, and a number of special events, such as book exhibits and launches, excursions, and evening receptions in historic locations across Munich. Among the sponsors of the conference was the Deutsches Museum, which hosted a reception in the main exhibition area, the American Society for Environmental History (ASEH), the Augustiner Brewery, several publishers (from Germany, Britain, and the United States), and many individuals who donated books for the silent auction. Moreover, the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society sponsored flying lunch buffets, afternoon excursions, coffee breaks, music, and more. During the final conference banquet on August 24, which was attended by 420 ESEH members, the society's two prizes were awarded by prize committee chairs Richard Hölzl and Franziska Torma. In the ceremony, the ESEH Best Article Prize 2013 was awarded to Ben M. Anderson (Keele University) for his article 'The Construction of an Alpine Landscape: Building, Representing and Affecting the Eastern Alps, 1885–1914', *Journal of Cultural Geography* 29:2 (2012), pp. 1–29; and the Turku Book Award (sponsored by the Rachel Carson Center) was conferred on Patrick Kupper for his book *Wildnis schaffen. Eine transnationale Geschichte des Schweizerischen Nationalparks* (Bern: Haupt Verlag, 2012).

When the founding members of today's ESEH met in Dietramszell, Germany, in 1999, they agreed that environmental history was not a strong field in Europe and not a visible discipline in their country. Today the future of environmental history looks bright. Professorships, research institutes, and informal networks have been established all across Europe, most of them over the last couple of years, and all of them with the involvement of ESEH members. The first volume in the joint book series 'The Environment in History: International Perspectives' of the RCC and the ESEH (*Civilizing Nature: National Parks in Global Historical Perspective*, edited by Bernhard

Gissibl, Sabine Höhler, and Patrick Kupper) was released in 2012, and 14 book manuscripts are currently under review or consideration. Preparations are also underway for the first ever virtual conference in European environmental history, scheduled for November 21–22, 2013; this event is being organized by a new generation of environmental historians in Eastern Europe: graduate students from Zadar, Croatia.

The electronic newsletter of the ESEH President, which was started in 2012 with 290 addressees, today goes out to 800 members of the society. Europe hosted the first World Congress in Environmental History in 2009 (in Copenhagen); few people had expected that. But Europe is now hosting the second World Congress in 2014 as well (in Guimarães, Portugal). Moreover, preparations have already begun for the 8th biennial conference of the ESEH. Organized by Gregory Quenet, this conference will take place at the University of Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, France, in 2015 under the promising title ‘Greening History, Studying the Environment across Disciplines: Past, Present and Future’.

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