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The Fierce Green Fire

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# The Fierce Green Fire

A Newsletter of the Wofford College Environmental Studies Program

Volume 5, Issue 8

*Terry Gifford talks with students during an eco-writing class at the Goodall Center.*



## *Sustainability and the Post-Pastoral with Terry Gifford*



*Dr. Gerald Thurmond's snakes are always a hit at the annual Halloween party at the Goodall Center!*



*A new weather station, sponsored by ENVS and Physical Plant, has been installed on campus. Can you find it?*

Eco-poet, critic, John Muir and Ted Hughes scholar Terry Gifford stopped off at Wofford on his way to California to spend an afternoon at Goodall with John Lane's environmental writing class, then later in the evening he asked a group in Olin Teaching Theater to consider the literary and cultural implications of the Anthropocene and the climate crisis. "The crisis is more than science," he said, "It is a crisis of culture."

At Goodall Gifford focused the eco-writers on natural history, cultural history, and how these observations intersect in their own narratives. The students created notes out of turkey vultures, screaming spiders, fake and real webs, oak branches, mill towers, nasturtiums, and nibbled mustard greens. He told them they don't have a poem until they have a form, and offered alternative line breaks.

The evening lecture was well attended and all present left with ample post-and-anti-pastoral tools to

assess the climate crisis. He left us with six questions to consider in an age with skyrocketing carbon and rising sea levels:

1. "can awe in the face of natural phenomena, such as landscapes, lead to humility in our species?"
2. "what are the implications of recognizing that we are part of ...[a] creative-destructive process?"
3. "if the processes of our inner nature echo those in outer nature in the ebbs and flows of growth and decay, how can we learn to understand the inner by being closer to the outer?"
4. "if nature is culture, is culture nature?"
5. "[can] our distinctively human consciousness ... be used as a tool to heal our troubled relationship with our natural home?"
6. "how should we address the issue that the exploitation of our planet emerges from the same mind-set as our exploitation of each other?"

Maybe applying Gifford's six questions for the post-pastoral to our current environmental crisis should become a global activity.

## Upcoming Events and Opportunities

- October 31<sup>st</sup>** *Deadline to apply for South Carolina Wildlife Federation educational grants:* Any full time student pursuing environmental education at South Carolina schools of higher education is eligible to apply. See Dr. Savage if you are interested in applying.
- November 5<sup>th</sup>** *Shaping Space:* Artist Talks, 4:00pm at the Goodall Center. 10 temporary environmental art works by 12 Wofford students will be on display at Glendale Shoals, November 3-21.
- November 10<sup>th</sup>** *Fierce Green Fire Student Group:* Next meeting at 8:30pm in BSA 1.
- November 14<sup>th</sup>** *BSA Courtyard Cleanup:* Join FGF at 2:30pm to help clean up the courtyard!
- November 16<sup>th</sup>** *Appalachian Soul: The Music & History of the Southern Mountains:* 4:00-6:00pm at the Goodall Environmental Studies Center. *Featured speakers:* **TIM SILVER**, a professor of history at ASU and author of *Mount Mitchell and the Black Mountains: An Environmental History of the Highest Peaks in Eastern America*. **PHIL JAMISON**, the coordinator of Warren Wilson College's Appalachian Music Program - also a nationally known dance caller and flatfoot dancer, performing and teaching at music festivals and events around the world. **DOT JACKSON** is a journalist and the author of *Refuge*. She is also a co-founder of the developing Birchwood Center for Arts and Folklife. *Music by YAM (Young Appalachian Musicians).*
- November-December** *American Rivers announces 2015-2017 Lapham River Conservation Fellowship:* Applications deadline: January 5, 2015. The Fellowship gives talented post-graduates the opportunity to engage in relevant research and work in the field of river conservation. This is a paid, two-year, full-time position. See <http://www.americanrivers.org/about/lapham-fellowship> for more details.

Visit our [www.thinkinglikeariver.com](http://www.thinkinglikeariver.com) website!



More photos from the Ghoully Halloween Party at Goodall!



## PROFILE OF THE WEEK:

### *Iowa State University – Sustainable Agriculture Program*

The State of Iowa is the natural location for the nation's first comprehensive graduate program in sustainable agriculture because it is one of the most rain-fed agricultural regions in the world.

Iowa State University has the first graduate program in sustainable agriculture and boasts many "firsts" in agricultural research and teaching. Among those "firsts" are: the first land-grant university, the first to offer forestry and dairy science, the first Masters of Science degree in farm mechanics, and a leader in sustainable agricultural research with the largest group of faculty working

on sustainable agricultural issues.

The issues that face the agricultural industry today are complex and jobs are available in research, education, the food systems industries, governmental policy, non-governmental organizations, and commercial agriculture. Students who graduate with a Masters of Science in sustainable agriculture are highly qualified to deal with environmental, agronomic, and social challenges facing the industry. Visit <http://www.sust.ag.iastate.edu/gpsa/> for information on this program.