Environmental Education in Turbulent Times
Perspectives from Rachel Carson’s Hawk Mountain and Wangari Maathai’s Karura Forest

Delivered by David W. Orr and Peter Blaze Corcoran

Wednesday, January 28, 2015 5:00 p.m.
Florida Gulf Coast University
Cohen Center 247

Friday, January 30, 2015, 7:00 p.m.
Saint Michael and All Angels Church
Sanibel Island, Florida

Free and open to the public

For more information, contact the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education at www.fgcu.edu/cese or 239-590-7492
Florida Gulf Coast University Mission
Florida Gulf Coast University continuously pursues academic excellence, practices and promotes environmental sustainability, embraces diversity, nurtures community partnerships, values public service, encourages civic responsibility, cultivates habits of lifelong learning, and keeps the advancement of knowledge and pursuit of truth as noble ideals at the heart of the university’s purpose.

Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education Mission
The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education works toward realizing the dream of a sustainable and peaceful future for Earth through scholarship, education, and action. The Center advances understanding and achievement of the goals of environmental and sustainability education through innovative educational research methods, emergent eco-pedagogies, and educational philosophy and practice based on an ethics of care and sustainability. The Center seeks to elevate the environmental mission of Florida Gulf Coast University and serve the University community, the local community of the Western Everglades and Barrier Islands, and the wider community of scholars.
Environmental Education in Turbulent Times
Perspectives from Rachel Carson’s Hawk Mountain and Wangari Maathai’s Karura Forest

The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education at Florida Gulf Coast University is pleased to announce the 2015 Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture, to be delivered by David W. Orr and Peter Blaze Corcoran on January 28, 2015 at Florida Gulf Coast University and on January 30, 2015 on Sanibel Island.

This guide has been prepared as a resource for faculty and staff in advance of the lectures. It contains background information on the themes of Orr and Corcoran’s talks, links to articles by the lecturers that may be used in courses, and a bibliography of selected materials.

“All education is environmental education. By what is included or excluded, we teach students that they are part of or apart from the natural world.”

—David W. Orr, Earth in Mind, 1994, p. 12

Environmental education in turbulent times

David W. Orr and Peter Blaze Corcoran are distinguished environmental educators and authors who express the need for a new comprehensive and critical pedagogy centered on human survival. Orr and Corcoran express the need for education that addresses the most pressing issues humanity faces, namely education that prepares students to address the preeminent issue of our time, climate change, and the meta-narrative of our time, sustainability. Our current society is nowhere near sustainable. Fundamental changes are needed in education and our cultural values. Both suggest a very different curriculum for higher education and education in general.

David Orr writes and speaks on many of the interconnected issues surrounding sustainability. Topics he discusses frequently are politics, ecoliteracy, biophilia, and ecological design as it applies to land and resource use, urban planning, agriculture, forestry, transportation and energy systems.

Peter Blaze Corcoran writes, speaks, and teaches about the ethical dimensions of sustainability in environmental education and education for sustainable development. Corcoran has extensive expertise in education for sustainable development and teaching sustainability in higher education institutions.

The current crisis of unsustainability is a crisis of values, or lack of certain values, which is why education reform is at the forefront of both of their many publications. Insights into the gaps between theory and practice elucidate both Corcoran and Orr’s readers to possible solutions to the current problems of education.
Rachel Carson and Hawk Mountain

Rachel Carson’s work is the inspiration for the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education. The Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture is named in her honor to keep her legacy alive among rising generations. Carson’s contribution to human understanding of our environment is unparalleled. *Silent Spring* has been called the most important book of the twentieth century - it launched the environmental movement. Rachel Carson’s contributions, most relevant to the mission of the Center, are public policy-based on sound science and ethics, active participation of an ecologically literate citizenry, and appreciation of the natural world through the literary arts and environmental education.

Hawk Mountain, along the Appalachian flyway, is an officially designated refuge for raptors. Scientists at Hawk Mountain study the patterns and processes of raptor migration. They use the sanctuary’s long-term migration database to monitor changes in raptor populations. Monitoring raptor populations is particularly important because raptors are at the tops of food chains and act as bioindicators. Changes in the numbers of raptors reflects changes in the health of the environment. Data collected at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary provided some of the evidence for *Silent Spring*. Rachel Carson used declining counts of immature bald eagles at Hawk Mountain as evidence of DDT’s harmful effects on the environment.

Wangari Maathai and Karura Forest

Wangari Maathai was a visionary leader in environmental protection and education. She was a great friend of the Earth and a brave pioneer for environmental sustainability, the rights of women and girls, and democracy in Africa. She was the first woman in East and Central Africa to earn a doctorate, the first woman to serve as a professor in Kenya, and was the first African woman awarded a Nobel Peace Prize. In 1977, she founded the Green Belt Movement, which has since planted over 47 million trees in her native Kenya and across the world. The methods of Maathai and Green Belt Movement encourage young adults to become agents of change.

Karura Forest is located just a few kilometers from Nairobi’s central commercial district. Karura Forest is the largest of three urban forests located in Nairobi. Due to pressures of development, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw large parcels of forest land allotted to private housing developers. Today, the forest is a fraction of its former size. However, portions of the forest were preserved by the heroic efforts of conservationists. Professor Maathai was instrumental in the preservation of the forest through acts of civil disobedience, which included women from the community and students from the University of Nairobi who demanded that the forest be preserved. Karura Forest has become a symbol of controversial land grabbing in Kenya and serves as an example of the success of grassroots organizing and acts of civic engagement.

For the last two years, Peter Blaze Corcoran has been working on curriculum development at the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies at University of Nairobi. Through experiential learning, Wangari Maathai inspires the next generation to critically reflect on their world and to become agents of positive change. Maathai was an International Advisor at the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education.
About the Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecturers

DAVID W. ORR is Counselor to the President at Oberlin College and a fellow at the Cleveland Foundation. He is founder and Chair of the Board of the Oberlin Project. He was formerly Oberlin’s Paul Sears Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics. Orr is the author of seven books, including Down to the Wire: Confronting Climate Collapse (2009) and co-editor of three others. He has authored over 200 articles, reviews, book chapters, and professional publications. In the past 25 years he has served as a board member or advisor to eight foundations and on the Boards of many organizations, including the Rocky Mountain Institute and the Aldo Leopold Foundation. Currently he is a Trustee of the Bioneers, Alliance for Sustainable Colorado, and the Worldwatch Institute.

Orr has been awarded eight honorary degrees and a dozen other awards, including a Lyndhurst Prize, a National Achievement Award from the National Wildlife Federation, and recently a “Visionary Leadership Award” from Second Nature. He has lectured at hundreds of colleges and universities throughout the U.S., Europe, and Asia. He headed the effort to design, fund, and build the Adam Joseph Lewis Center, which was named by an AIA panel in 2010 as “the most important green building of the past thirty years,” and as “one of 30 milestone buildings of the twentieth century” by the U.S. Department of Energy.

PETER BLAZE CORCORAN is a Professor of Environmental Studies and Environmental Education at Florida Gulf Coast University, where he serves as Director of the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education. Corcoran was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship for the 2013-2014 academic year at University of Nairobi in Kenya. In 2014-2015 he continues to work at the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies. He has been a faculty member at College of the Atlantic, Swarthmore College, and Bates College, and a visiting professor in Australia, The Netherlands, Malaysia, and Fiji. He is Past President of the North American Association for Environmental Education.

Corcoran is a Senior Advisor to Earth Charter International in San Jose, Costa Rica. He serves as a member of the UNESCO Reference Group for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. He is a member of the President's Council of the National Wildlife Federation, America’s largest conservation organization. He was recently appointed as a Senior Fellow with the US Partnership for Education for Sustainable Development. He represents North America on the steering committee Global University Partnership for Environment and Sustainability of UNEP. Corcoran is a member of the editorial board of several scholarly journals and has edited books on environmental education, Earth Charter education, and sustainability in higher education.

“Future generations are unlikely to condone our lack of prudent concern for the integrity of the natural world that supports all life.”

—RACHEL CARSON, Silent Spring, 1962, 1994, p. 13
Selected readings by the Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecturers

The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education has made available selected readings by David Orr and Peter Blaze Corcoran for use in classroom instruction. They are listed below and available for download from the Center’s website at www.fgcu.edu/cese/carson.html

Selected readings by David W. Orr

“What is Education For?”
Originally published as the lead chapter in *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect* (1994). Key themes are the challenges of education, “myths” of the modern education system, rethinking education, and reconstructing educational institutions. What went wrong with contemporary culture and education? How might we rethink education and higher education? What academic, analytical, and practical skills and knowledge must university students have?

“Four Challenges of Sustainability”
In *Hope is an Imperative: The Essential David Orr*. Island Press, 2010, pp. 66-72
Originally published as an article in 2006. Key themes are the challenges of sustainability and potential solutions. How will we transition to a sustainable way of life? How do we describe the human enterprise relative to the biosphere? What is the role of citizenship and governance in sustainability? What is the role of education and environmental education? How can we kindle a spiritual awareness and renewal to meet the challenges of sustainability?

Selected readings by Peter Blaze Corcoran

“To Walk Together: Intergenerational Learning and Transformative Leadership”
Introduction to a recent edited volume on *Intergenerational Learning and Transformative Leadership for Sustainable Futures*. Key themes are education for sustainable development, intergenerational learning, and leadership. If safeguarding the continued viability of people, organisms, and natural processes is the central ethical challenge of our time, what role might intergenerational learning and transformative leadership play within education for sustainability? What can the generations learn from each other? What kinds of leadership are required for the transition to sustainability?

“What if? The Educational Opportunities of the Earth Charter”
Article in the journal *Educational Studies*. Key themes are values and ethics in environmental and sustainability education, Earth Charter ethics, and education for sustainable development pedagogy. How can the Earth Charter be used in education? What are the education opportunities for teaching ethics and values? What are the aims of education in times of anthropogenic ecological crisis?
**Books by David W. Orr**


“Wangari Maathai taught us that we cannot have peace without democracy and nonviolence, that we cannot have democracy and nonviolence without social and economic justice, and that we cannot have social and economic justice without healing Earth.”

—Peter Blaze Corcoran, *Intergenerational Learning and Transformative Leadership for Sustainable Futures*, 2014, pp. 21

**Books by Peter Blaze Corcoran**


*Available from the Florida Gulf Coast University Library*
Past Rachel Carson Distinguished Lectures

“A Sense of Wonder: A play based on the life and works of Rachel Carson,” theatrical performance by Kaiulani Lee  
Friday, February 21, 2014

“Mary Oliver: A Poetry Reading with Commentary,” delivered by Mary Oliver  
Friday, February 17, 2012

“The Africa You Don’t Know: A Women’s Perspective,” delivered by Akpezi Ogbuigwe and Heila Lotz-Sisitka  
Friday, April 1, 2011

“Working on Behalf of the Beauty and Bounty of Earth: An Earth Charter Scholars Panel,” delivered by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Steven C. Rockefeller  
Friday, February 20, 2009

“Finding Beauty in a Broken World: An Ensemble for Earth,” delivered by Alison Hawthorne Deming and Terry Tempest Williams  
Friday, September 5, 2008

“Eyes to See Otherwise: The World of Homero Aridjis,” Delivered by Homero Aridjis  
Friday, February 23, 2007

“Environment, Politics, and Global Destabilization,” delivered by David W. Orr  
Friday, February 18, 2006

“A Barbara Kingsolver Weekend,” delivered by Barbara Kingsolver  
Friday, February 25, 2005

“Open Space of Democracy Tour with Terry Tempest Williams,” delivered by Terry Tempest Williams  
Monday, October 25, 2004

“Ethics of Sustainability: A Dialogue with Mary Evelyn Tucker and Alison Hawthorne Deming,” Delivered by Mary Evelyn Tucker and Alison Hawthorne Deming  
Thursday, March 25, 2004

“Activities that devastate the environment and societies continue unabated. Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life-support system. We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own. The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education at Florida Gulf Coast University is engaged in the shift to a sustainable future through its Earth Charter scholarly agenda. The Center’s work in environmental education and social education points toward a better world.”

—Wangari Maathai, Founder, Green Belt Movement, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, and International Advisor to the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education