

The Fierce Green Fire

A Newsletter of the Wofford College Environmental Studies Program

Students in ENVS 150 examine wetland plants using a hand lens at the Cottonwood trail



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ENVS in the field by Dr. Kaye Savage

One of our commitments in the Environmental Studies program is to provide opportunities for students to learn “in the field.” Students in ENVS classes this semester have spent time at Glendale, the Cottonwood Trail, and the Calhoun Critical Zone Observatory (CCZO), among others.

Students in ENVS 150 (Earth Systems) courses recently measured stream flow of the Lawson’s Fork Creek and assessed streamside habitat conditions at the Cottonwood trail, a few weeks after identifying wetland plants there.

Students in ENVS 203 (Environmental Science) recently visited with a group of scientists conducting interdisciplinary research at the CCZO, investigating changes in landscape and soils associated with settlement, farming, and farm abandonment. We were fortunate to visit during their “Big Dig” excavation, where we observed the difference in soil profiles and tree

stands between an area that had been farmed and re-grown, and another that had not. The scientist in charge, Dr. Dan Richter of Duke University, described the farmed soil as “decapitated” due to the erosion that had occurred. While the current drought has been problematic for water supply and forest fires, it has provided very pleasant conditions for working outside!

“In the field” doesn’t only refer to science classes exploring natural processes. ENVS 101 (Introductory seminar) students recently used the town of Spartanburg as their field area. They met Chris Story, Assistant City Manager, and visiting the new Hub City Co-op, as well as historical sites, to learn about how the Spartanburg city code follows new urbanist design principles to improve sustainability.



ENVS 150 students conducted experiments on decomposition of organic material (apples, bananas and oranges) in soils. This was excavation day, after 5 weeks of burial.

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

**These count toward your two required extracurricular events for the semester.*

- November 14th**
7:00pm
Wofford Environmental Film Festival*: “*Deep Time*” (2015) – Winner of the Special Jury Award at the 2015 Environmental Film Festival at Yale. This film explores the effects of North Dakota’s oil boom on its small towns and other stakeholders. All films are in Olin Theater and admission is free.
- November 15th**
7:00pm
Wofford Environmental Film Festival*: “*Fata Morgana*” (1970) – One of Werner Herzog’s earliest documentary films about mirages in South Saharan desert. Herzog layers narration and music over the images to create a strange yet stunning film. All films are in Olin Theater and admission is free.
- November 16th**
7:00pm
Wofford Environmental Film Festival*: “*City of Trees*” (2016) – winner of the Audience Choice Award at the 2015 American Conservation Film Festival, it follows a nonprofit’s effort to implement a conservation-oriented jobs-training program for some of DC’s most impoverished neighborhoods. Although the efforts of the organization are admirable, the film avoids a predetermined narrative celebrating the inspiration and outcomes of such civic-mindedness. All films are in Olin Theater and admission is free.
- November 17th**
7:00pm
Wofford Environmental Film Festival*: “*An American Ascent*” (2015) – Winner of the Best Documentary Award at the 2015 San Diego Black Film Festival, this film chronicles the attempt by nine African-American climbers to become the first all African-American team to summit Denali, North America’s highest mountain. Even as they began preparing for the climb in 2012, they linked their effort as much to the issue of outdoor recreation and people of color as to mountaineering history. All films are in Olin Theater and admission is free.
- November 17th**
6:30pm-8:00pm
Wofford’s Labyrinth Meditation Celebration: Join *Philosophy in Action Living Learning Community* for the celebration of the new and improved labyrinth at Glendale Shoals. Food, entertainment, t-shirts and giveaways!
- Ongoing**
Middlebury School of the Environment Summer Session 2017: Six-week summer environmental studies program in Vermont (June 23-August 4) with undergraduate credits for 3-full courses. Applications accepted on a rolling basis until the program is full. Need based financial aid is available. Visit <http://www.middlebury.edu/environment/about> for more information.

PROFILE OF THE WEEK:

Aquinas College – Masters of Sustainable Business

Aquinas College, located in Grand Rapids, MI, offers a Masters of Sustainable Business (MSB) degree that uses new and innovative approaches to the idea of sustainable business - approaches that are community-focused, and that deliver positive results for individual businesses – not just revising the existing business model structure.

Their website states, “As first in the nation, the 12-course, 2-year program integrates science, commerce and environmental studies to prepare business leaders for the new economy. We’ll outline the problems of business today; discuss the

alternative of a durable, nature-based economic model; and highlight the competitive advantages for those businesses and communities that choose to move toward a sustainable model.”

MSB graduates will be the new leaders, generating new products, practices and policies that foster a sustainable economy and will possess the expertise to confidently direct businesses toward a meaningful and profitable transition to sustainable business.

<https://www.aquinas.edu/masters-sustainable-business/masters-sustainable-business-faqs>