

The Fierce Green Fire

A Newsletter of the Wofford College Environmental Studies Program

*Southeastern
Friends of the
Pleistocene
examined sites
around
Spartanburg
County
including
Glendale Shoals*



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Revisiting the 1930s and 40s with Dr. Ferguson



The Environmental Studies Department sponsored a three-day field conference of the Southeastern Friends of the Pleistocene entitled, *Revisiting the forgotten 1930s and early 1940s Piedmont research of the Soil Conservation Service: landscape erosion, legacy sediments and deeply buried organic deposits*, February 24-26. The conference was attended by geologists, geographers, soil scientists, botanists, and environmental studies professionals, as well as graduate and undergraduate students primarily from Georgia, North and South Carolina, and Virginia.

The presence of buried organic deposits and filled ancient valleys dated to over 50,000 years ago was also discussed. These organic deposits document a little known but significant chapter in the development of the Piedmont landscape that challenges conventional thinking about its history during the Pleistocene epoch (2.6 million years ago to about 12,000 years ago). These deposits are exposed in deep gullies that eroded due to agricultural practices following European settlement in the region (see photo, left).



On Friday the 24th, Dr. Ferguson presented a lecture on “forgotten” research conducted by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service into upland soil erosion and bottomland sedimentation since the mid-1700s. Dr. Ferguson investigated library archives in several different locations to find the older data. Knowing this history of erosion and sedimentation is vital to understanding past and future human impacts and the agricultural potential in this region.

On Saturday and Sunday the 25th and 26th, Dr. Ferguson (with the assistance of Dr. Savage, Professor Lane and Ben Thomas '16) took conference participants to see six field localities that had been investigated in the 1930s and again during Dr. Ferguson's current research in Spartanburg County. Behind-the-scenes efforts of Mark Olencki and Chris Overcarsh, along with awesome weather, helped make the conference a success.

Participants survey deep gullies eroded by agricultural practices of European settlers.

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

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

March 15th
7:00pm
Olin 101

Christian Hunt – “Red Wolf Revival” Film*: Join us for this film about the Red Wolf recovery program in NC. A discussion will follow led by Christian Hunt from Defenders of Wildlife.

March 23rd
11:00am
Milliken 121

“Coyote Research on the Savannah River Site”*: John Kilgo '89 is a research wildlife biologist with the US Forest Service Southern Research Station's Center for Forest Watershed Research in Aiken, SC. Since 2005, he has studied the ecology of coyotes and their effects on Southeastern ecosystems, particularly deer populations, and for the past three years he has also been studying wild pigs.

March 23rd
7:00pm
Leonard Auditorium

5th Annual Tyson Family Lecture*: Featuring “*Coyote: A Conversation between Dan Flores & John Lane About One of the Most Resilient Animals in America.*” Dan Flores (*Coyote America*) and Wofford's own John Lane (*Coyote Settles the South*) will discuss the increasing presence of this mezo-predator among us.

March 25th
9:00am-2:00pm
Rain or shine

9th Annual Spartanburg County Household Hazardous Waste Collection & Rain Barrel Sale: Spartanburg County residents may bring hazardous materials to the Spartanburg County Administration Building, 366 N. Church Street (enter from Magnolia Street). See website www.spartanburgcounty.org/166/Recycling for lists of acceptable and unacceptable items or visit their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/RecycleSpartanburg>

March 28th
7:00pm
Olin 101

“Counter-intuitive Public Policy: Federal Oversight of New Chemicals”*: Warren Muir, retired from the National Academy of Sciences, will discuss the new chemical review provisions that are now part of the Toxic Substances Control Act. This lecture is co-hosted by the Environmental Studies and Chemistry departments.

PROFILE OF THE WEEK:

Monterey Institute of International Studies – MA in International Environmental Policy

Monterey Institute of International Studies, located in Monterey, California, is affiliated with the Graduate School of Middlebury College. It offers a Masters of Arts in International Environmental Policy (MAIEP), which focuses on an international scope instead of just on U.S. policy issues. Three specialized tracks are offered in Natural Resource Policy & Management, Ocean & Coastal Resource Management, and Business, Sustainability & Development.

Along with the core course and elective specialization course work, there is also a foreign

language course work requirement.

This area of California is home to marine and ocean conservation and policy as well as the “greentech” revolution and many environmental groups and there are opportunities to collaborate with many of these environmental institutions.

According to their website, “Monterey Institute is one of the most environmentally-conscious campuses in the country and plans to be a carbon neutral campus by 2016.”

<http://www.mii.edu/academics/programs/environmentalpolicy>