



State University of New York  
College of Environmental Science and Forestry

**INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOLARSHIP IN  
LAND USE AND ETHICS**

Northern Forest Institute  
June 6 – 8, 2014

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Special thanks to the Rich Lake Dining Hall staff led by Cook Theresa Taylor and thanks also to Business Manager Zoe Jeffery for her tireless efforts.

**Keynote Speaker and Scholar-in-Residence**  
**Ellen Miller**



Ellen Miller is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion Studies at Rowan University where she has taught for twelve years. Her book, *Releasing Philosophy, Thinking Art: A Phenomenological Study of Sylvia Plath's Poetry* (Davies Group Publishers), the first full-length philosophical examination of Sylvia Plath's poetry, claims that art and philosophy need each other and have much to say to one another about questions that overlap each medium. Her publications and scholarly presentations focus on topics in philosophy of art, feminist philosophy, and environmental ethics. In her book chapter, "The Giving Tree and Environmental Philosophy: Listening to Deep Ecology, Feminism, and Trees" (*Philosophy in Children's Literature*, Lexington Books), she claims children's literature can help adults retrieve the more

poetic modes of reveling discussed by Heidegger, especially in his later writing. This chapter emphasizes the importance of sustaining childlike aspects of our existence that we can discover in adulthood.

Her current research shows how Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty's views on nature, environment, and technology resonate with work in educational and environmental thinking. In addition, she is exploring how Sylvia Plath's questions about poisons, toxicity and technology can help readers become more attuned to our contemporary environmental crises. In her teaching, she remains committed to applied philosophical approaches and has received a grant in order to facilitate service learning in Ethics courses.

**Friday, June 6**

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**12p: Registration/ Check-in**

Adirondack Interpretive Center (AIC)

**Research Poster Display**

AIC

**“Environmental Ethics & Entrepreneurship:  
Transforming Urban Public Education for the 21<sup>st</sup>  
Century”** Mischelle D. Brown (Case Western  
Reserve University, Weatherhead School of  
Management)

**6 – 7p: Dinner**

Rich Lake Dining Center (RLDC)

**7p: Keynote Address & Reception**

AIC

**“Eco-criticism and Sylvia Plath’s Poetry:  
Dwelling in Plath’s Environmentalism”** Ellen  
Miller (Rowan University, Department of Philosophy  
and Religion Studies)

Will the hive survive, will the gladiolas  
Succeed in banking their fires  
To enter another year?  
What will they taste of, the Christmas roses?  
The bees are flying. They taste the spring.

---Sylvia Plath, from “Wintering,” 1962

The birch tree never oversteps its possibility. The colony of bees dwells in its possibility. It is first the will which arranges itself everywhere in technology that devours the earth in the exhaustion and consumption and change of the artificial. Technology drives the earth beyond the developed sphere of its possibility into such things which are no longer a possibility and are thus the impossible.<sup>1</sup>  
---Martin Heidegger, "Overcoming Metaphysics," in *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh

Theorists in the interdisciplinary field of eco-criticism share a commitment to exploring ecological themes in literature. Broadly understood, eco-critics examine the demarcation between nature and culture, its construction and reconstruction; they question our comportment toward nature in general. In my presentation, I examine environmental themes in Sylvia Plath's poetry. Here, I concentrate on four poems: "The Moon and the Yew Tree," "Elm," "Pheasant," and "The Arrival of the Bee Box." Plath's biography and reductionistic readings of her work can cover over the political, environmental, social and ethical dimensions of her poetry. Plath's work, like Rachel Carson's, combines literary and ecological concerns. Plath was among the first of a series of writers to use *Silent Spring's* themes in prose and poetry. Plath's environmental themes, namely, her insistence that there is no separation between poisons and persons, her depiction of the high cost of technology, and her affirmation that humans are at once part of nature and other than

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Overcoming Metaphysics," in *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 109.

nature, resonate with questions in contemporary environmental philosophy.

I find Plath's work instructive for reconciling more theoretical debates in ecocriticism. In this paper, I put Plath's work into dialogue with Heidegger's environmental themes in order to address questions about the usefulness and dangers of using Heidegger's work for eco-critical analysis. Two seminal books of eco-criticism are indebted to Heidegger's methodology, and many others use his writings and themes.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, from *Being and Time* until his later writings, Heidegger emphasizes how our concern-ful relations with nature, our sensitive attunement to the fourfold of earth-sky-mortals-divinities, have ethical and social import. His insistence that poetry serves an important role in confronting the dangers within our relations with technology gives the humanities a role in mitigating our environmental crises. Unsurprisingly, familiar criticisms about the dangers of Heidegger's thought have emerged within eco-criticism.

I hope to illuminate how Heidegger's distinctive transcendental ethical realism and emphasis on care and empathy are more helpful than harmful for ecocriticism. Plath's work is instructive for addressing Heidegger's omissions. In particular, her attention to the body, social relations, and her exfoliated poetic language concretize Heidegger's ideas. I undertake a phenomenological approach to Plath's work, inspired

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<sup>2</sup> See Jonathan Bate, *Song of the Earth* (Harvard University Press, 2002) and *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (University of Chicago Press, 1993).

by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. This reading supports an understanding of Plath as something other than a death-obsessed, nihilistic, purely confessional poet. Plath can be read as a nature poet, and her work has much to offer environmental philosophy. Her poems impact the reader following the four aspects of embodiment articulated by Merleau-Ponty: perceptual, affective-emotional, motor-tactile and rational/cognitive linguistic.<sup>3</sup> These interconnected regions of existence unearth Plath's emphasis on the gaze of nature, connections among color imagery and nature, and her understanding of the connection between individual bodies and ecosystems.

## **Saturday, June 7**

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### **7 – 8a Guided Bird Walk along the Sucker Brook Trail** Charlotte Demers (SUNY-ESF, Wildlife Biologist)

This 1.0-mile mostly flat trail runs along the outlet to Rich Lake providing opportunities to glimpse mink and otter in the open water. The surrounding hardwood forest is an ideal place to spot pileated woodpeckers. There are some open areas including an abandoned beaver pond that is a great spot for kingbirds and flycatchers. **Meet at the AIC**

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel Mallin articulates these four dimensions in an explicit way in *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy* (Yale University Press, 1980).

## **8 – 9a: Breakfast**

RLDC

## **9 – 10a: Wilderness as a Recreational Commodity**

Discussant, Marianne Patinelli-Dubay (SUNY-ESF's Northern Forest Institute)

### **“Understanding Recreation in a Complex Landscape: Building a Trail Use Database”**

Abigail Larkin (SUNY-ESF, Department of Forest and Natural Resources Mgmt., Environmental and Natural Resources Policy Program)

Recreation is an important activity among local and global visitors to the Adirondack Park, and as such, serves as a key component of the region's service economy. As the result of land-use decisions and policies that protect environmental quality and wilderness character, recreation is often the focus of decision-makers and a driver of economic development. However, a gap exists in our understanding and ability to manage this important resource for a sustainable landscape. A system of over 250 trail registers currently contains empirical information on the diversity of users and the distribution of recreational use across the Adirondack Park. This information was collected and digitized from 2012, and used to create the Adirondack Park Trail Register Database (ADK-TReD). To quantitatively understand the benefits of recreation across the trail register system, TReD was used to spatially map and profile the flow of over 400,000 global and local users to destinations along a 2,350 mile trail network in the Adirondack Park. TReD can be analyzed as a relational and spatial database to



support recreation and land use management, broader conservation decisions, community and economic development, and the stewardship of land-based resources. This information also supports further research that situates recreational tourism as an important component of the larger Adirondack social-ecological system.

**“Touring the Wild: The Co-Construction of Nature and Tourist in Adirondack Park”**

Elizabeth S. Vidon (Indiana University)

While wilderness and tourism are recognized as enjoying a symbiotic albeit problematic relationship, little scholarship addresses the mutual dependence and co-construction of wilderness and tourists. This paper examines the co-construction of the ‘Nature Tourist’ and Adirondack Park as wilderness, paying particular attention to the ways the Park is strategically scripted to attract a discrete type of tourist while also interrogating the role of the tourist in the construction of the Park’s wilderness. This research, through examination of the ways alienation and ideology work in tandem in the construction of place and subject, seeks to further illuminate tourists’ motivations for visiting wilderness. Lacan’s formulation of alienation provides the foundation for exploring tourists’ motivations for visiting wilderness, while Althusser’s notion of interpellation is employed to further investigate the formation of the ‘nature tourist’ as subject. Coupled with the ideological scripting and branding of Adirondack Park as wilderness, examination of the tourist as subject and tourist motivations rooted in alienation provide a more thorough understanding of the ways

wilderness and nature tourist as subject are co-constructed. Further, by attending to tourists' performances in wilderness, this paper contends that nature tourists and wilderness are constructed not solely through the workings of ideology or alienation, but through the active, corporeal practices in which tourists engage in wilderness.

### **10 – 11a: The Ecological Legacy of Land Use Decisions**

Discussant, Yamuna Sangarasivam (Nazareth College, Department of Sociology and Anthropology)

**“Place Based Advocacy: Equality, Water Quality, and Mountaintop Removal in Appalachia”** Teagan Dolan (SUNY-ESF, Department of Environmental Studies; Policy, Planning, and Law)

The purpose of this research has been to understand the ways in which grassroots groups in Appalachia have coalesced and gained legal and political successes in the battle against mountaintop removal coal mining (MTR). This controversy is unique in that the culture of the region is configured fundamentally around the very land that the coal industry is taking away—their mountains. As an isolated region often deemed ignorant and helpless, the struggle towards empowerment is difficult. But, tight knit communities formed due to geographical isolation have actually served as a strength in this battle. Using Sabatier's Advocacy Coalition framework we have traced the journey of advocacy from individual groups to the formation of coalitions. We observed that grassroots organizations are using

an inclusive approach based on the belief of “equality” as a means to unite various individuals and then “water quality” is utilized as a means to achieve legal and political successes.

I am interested in presenting this paper in a way that emphasizes the history of mining in Appalachia, current socio-economic situations, and how grassroots groups have become empowered as a result. Essentially, I don’t want this paper to limit discussion only to policy and strategy, but, rather, foster a discussion on how grassroots groups are empowered because of the place they live and how that fundamentally influences their successful operation within those structures.

**“Lessons from the Past: Historical Ecology of a Superfund Site”** Catherine Landis (SUNY-ESF, Department of Environmental Forest Biology)

An ethical relationship with land would include plants and animals in telling the history of a place. To know “where we are,” we must move beyond stories that are monospecific, focused narrowly on human welfare. This project aims to reconstruct the historical ecology of Onondaga Lake, one of the most severely polluted lakes in the nation, from earliest records up to 1825. The main focus is on vegetation, and I have compiled species lists for about 14 plant communities present around Onondaga Lake ca. 1800. Sources include old maps, journals, herbarium records, floras, newspapers, and other evidence. As Euro-American settlers moved in and stepped up salt production along the shores of this lake, what happened to the native biota? Moreover, indigenous

people lived in the central New York area for thousands of years prior to Euro-American settlement. As subsistence cultures they drew from the land but did not degrade it in the way the later immigrants did. I will also examine these different cultural relationships and their implications for restoration of Onondaga Lake today.

**11a – 12p: Living Together in Ecosophic Residence: Time- and Place-Sharing Among Cohabitant Species**

Discussant, Ralph Acampora (Hofstra University, Department of Philosophy)

**“Promoting Durable Communities in the Adirondack-North Country: A Neo-Homestead Response Linking Economics, Ecology & Diversity”** Brett McLeod (Paul Smith’s College, Department of Forestry & Natural Resources)

This paper presents an alternative model for reconstructing and promoting a more sustainable rural landscape. Using the Adirondack-North Country as the focus of this work, I present a durable communities concept, which argues for a fundamentally different approach to the rebuilding of this socially, economically and politically bifurcated region. Central to this thesis is the explicit recognition of economy and ecology being mutually inclusive from the homestead level on up; this approach stands in sharp contrast to the historical debate that has pitted the economy against ecology in the Adirondack-North Country and beyond. This linking of economics, ecology and diversity in the context of durable communities is significant because

it operates at a scale that avoids the perils of misguided individualism that has contributed to current conditions.

Traditional approaches to rural sustainability often focus on economic development or capital infusion as a means of revitalization. Such approaches have been limited in their success and often ignore the ecological and social dimensions of rural community-building. The costs associated with a single-tined approach are often born to future generations in the form of degraded landscapes or brittle economies (Ostrom 1998). The question then becomes, what might an integrative and more inclusive rural sustainability model look like, specifically in the context of the Adirondack-North Country?

Addressing this question, particularly in the case of a region that struggles to balance economy, ecology and increasing diversity, is important as populations grow, values gaps widen, and traditional approaches to sustainability continue to fall short. Importantly, while the scope of this question is limited to the Adirondack-North Country, the durable communities model offers applicability outside of the region.

**“Changing Land Tenure: Re-balancing the Land Ethic - a Model”** Mark B. Lapping (University of Southern Maine, Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service)

The dialogue on land ethics has tended to focus on land use - how land is utilized and in what ways. Land tenure discussions focus, instead, on a different key question: who owns the land and to what ends?

This paper seeks to join together these two aspects of the land question, arguing that the ownership and control of the land resource is essential to understanding how land is understood and, ultimately, how it is used. Further, this paper outlines a model of land tenure reform firmly rooted in the Judeo-Christian ethical tradition that confronts fundamental issues of justice and equity through land redistribution, namely the institution of the “Jubilee.” The Jubilee was central to the Biblical vision of property rights - how land was to be distributed, used and then redistributed in a manner that a permanent rural/agrarian underclass was not created in ancient Israel. This paper discusses the ethical underpinning and intent of the Jubilee and why it continues to have power and salience in our contemporary context.

**12 – 2p: Lunch and Saunter Hour (Trails Open, Canoes Available)**

AIC

**2 – 3p: Toward a Restoration: Of Prairie Remnants and Forest Solitude**

Discussant, Craig Milewski (Paul Smith’s College, Environmental Science Program, School of Natural Resource Management and Ecology)

**“Refugia: Poems in Search of the Prairie”** Mary Pinard (Babson College, Division of Arts & Humanities)

Before the Euro-American (un)settlement of the North American middle west—about 150 years ago—the tallgrass prairie extended for approximately 145 million acres from Canada to Texas. Now, after

several generations of overgrazing, plowing, and the intensities of agricultural production, there remains less than 5% of what some scientists call our most endangered ecosystem. My current poetry manuscript in process, "Refugia," explores this loss (and potential repair) in historical, cultural, botanical, and artistic terms. Formally, I'm using as my inspiration the ABC book, a Polish form typically composed of short, alphabetically arranged sections; perhaps the best known example of this form—and a model for me—is poet Czeslaw Milosz's 2001 *Milosz's ABC's*, which in his hands becomes personal and public, celebratory and critical, poetic and expository. This form informs "Refugia," including a multi-poem sequence entitled "Prairie" and sonnets on the work of master weaver, Sheila Hicks (b. 1934), whose roots are in the prairies of Nebraska. In several of her smaller weavings, Hicks uses prairie materials (corn husks, grasses, fibers) and its history, and I see her work as a powerful example of how (visual) art offers modes for engagement and repair.

I'll offer a prose overview of how art—specifically poetry and weaving—offers formal ways to engage land ethics as it applies to the ever-increasing destruction of the prairie eco-system. I'll also read a selection of poems from my manuscript that addresses, imagines, and contextualizes the prairie, both as system and alas, as remnant.

**“Reveries of a Solitary Runner”** Janelle A.

Schwartz (Hamilton College, Department of English)

Loosely modeled on Rousseau’s unfinished autobiographical work, *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, and inspired in part by Leopold’s “Land Ethic” from *A Sand County Almanac*, my next book project considers modern-day solitude in the Adirondacks. Unlike Rousseau’s leisurely stroll through archetypal bucolic settings, *Reveries of a Solitary Runner* investigates the interrelations of long-distance running, the contemplative moment, and land use in one of our nation’s most unique examples of mixing public and private lands. Combining autobiographical anecdote, ecocritical theory and philosophy, and nature writing, I will examine the “biotic interactions between people and land... in terms of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient” (Leopold). In particular, I am interested to present on those biotic interactions found along the route of one of my regular runs in the High Peaks, the one I call the “Trout Stream Two-Step.” This run follows from the West Branch of the Au Sable River to the East Branch, over the roads from Wilmington to Keene Valley, and back again. In contrast to high profile and oftentimes professionalized, extreme sporting events such as the Ironman Triathlon, Tough Mudder obstacle course, or traditional marathon, I argue that amateur solo endurance pursuits—those that are self-supported, largely unseen and unpublicized, without sponsorships or immediate economic benefit to individual or community—provide an inimitable, albeit invisible opportunity for becoming a responsible citizen of our land-community. In short,



through the eyes of a solo runner, I offer a neo-Romantic perspective on today's ecocritical world.

**3 – 4:30p: Philosophy Afield**

Discussant, Ralph Acampora (Hofstra University, Department of Philosophy)

**“Hunting Wolves”** Thomas Thorp (Saint Xavier University, Department of Philosophy)

The removal, by legislative fiat, of the gray wolf population of the Northern Rockies from the purview of the Endangered Species Act conferred responsibility for management of the wolf upon the individual states: Wyoming, Idaho, Montana. And the states handed over responsibility to their respective Departments of Fish and Wildlife, which is to say that they opted to manage the gray wolf through hunting.

My essay attempts to weave analytically both of the possible meanings of the title: wolves-that-hunt, and the hunting of wolves by humans. The essay has three sections:

The first has to do with the political turmoil that surrounded the reintroduction of *Canis lupus* into the region in 1995, which reintroduction continues to define the local attitude toward wolf-hunting in the Greater Yellowstone Area. Here I draw upon my own fieldwork experience in the area, and my published research into the politics and the philosophical foundations of hyperbolic wolf-loathing.

The second question concerns the wolves themselves, and goes to the heart of the question “What is hunting?” Do wolves hunt? Although the term is ubiquitously employed to describe the activity of predators, I argue that it constitutes a vicious but enlightening equivocation to use the term “hunting” to refer both to what wolves do when they predate and to what humans do when they hunt. Here I draw upon published studies of the precise predatory practices of wolves, (Mech and Boitani 2003, Ripple and Beschta 2004) and especially the effects of wolf reintroduction on the Yellowstone elk population (Creel, et. al. 2009).

Third, and building directly upon the analysis of the equivocation—the resolution of which is my contention that wolves do not hunt—I offer a philosophical analysis of the guided hunt which I believe goes some way toward grounding many of the basic intuitions expressed in much of the literature on the ethics of hunting. My conclusion, briefly, argues that when outfitters guide non-local hunters with the objective of taking trophy bulls then the equivocation outlined in section two is replicated here, but with a conclusion that generates a three-fold ontology of the hunt:

- Wolves do not hunt, because although their joy in predation is oriented toward consumption, they do not have to objectify their prey or their own actions.
- Humans do hunt because they have to posit an end or “aim,” which act of taking-aim (ephiesthai is the term Aristotle employs) defines both the prey and the human who hunts. This bi-valence constitutes a definition of hunting.

- Conclude that guided trophy hunting, while it is hunting (because it requires taking-aim) also violates the Ethics of the Hunt which determination turns now not on the condition and treatment of the prey but the state-of-being of the hunter.

**6 – 7p: Dinner**

RLDC

**8 – 10p: Refreshments & Live Music by *The Morehouse Family Band***

AIC

**Sunday, June 8**

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**7 – 8a: Trails Open, Canoes Available**

**8 – 9a: Breakfast**

RLDC

**9 – 10a: Boundaries, Enforcement and the Natural Panopticon**

Discussant, Discussant, Yamuna Sangarasivam  
(Nazareth College, Department of Sociology and  
Anthropology)

**“Prisonland: Environment, Society, and Mass Incarceration on New York’s Northern Frontier, 1845-1999”** Clarence Jefferson Hall, Jr.(Stony Brook University, Department of History)

My research explores the social experience and environmental politics of mass incarceration in five communities in New York’s Adirondack Park, with a

focus on the period 1975-1999. Historians, sociologists, and criminologists have enhanced our understanding of criminal law and its multitudinous impacts on lawbreakers, their families, and communities. By the same token, environmental historians have expanded our knowledge of the dynamic forces that contributed to the making of parks and recreational spaces across the United States. With rare exceptions, scholars in these fields have left unexplored one of the consequences of postindustrial decline, namely, the mass incarceration of predominantly urban, non-white men in penal institutions situated in rural communities far from their homes. My research, therefore, seeks to remove the barrier separating environmental historians and prison scholars and begin a conversation about the many people, environments, and economies that have been implicated in the United States' criminal justice system.

**“Colonialism as a Unifying Explanation for the Adirondack Park”** Michael D. Brennan

(Independent Scholar)

The Adirondack Park is often touted as a model for melding public and private lands into a regional reserve for the preservation of large landscapes and natural communities. In its current structure, New York State applies different standards of governance to its citizens residing within boundaries of the Adirondack Park. Both the regulations and the regulatory structure to ensure enforcement are in place to meet the wants and desires of New Yorkers living outside Park. In this paper the author compares the present situation in the Adirondack Park with

early American experience of non-representative governance and finds parallels in the oft-voiced frustrations of current Park Residents. An examination of the present level of representation in State government is made and a proposal for effecting fair representation for the Adirondack Park suggested. A change of this nature would allow the Park to make the next step in its evolution as a global model for people living on and democratically caring for their land.

### **10 – 11a: Past Preservation and Forward-Thinking Initiatives Related to Adirondack Waterways**

Discussant, Marianne Patinelli-Dubay (SUNY-ESF's Northern Forest Institute)

**“Protecting the Islands in Lake George: Strategies and Techniques Developed By John S. Apperson, Jr. (1878 – 1963)”** Ellen Apperson Brown  
(Community Archives of Southwest Virginia, LLC)

Lake George, once described by Thomas Jefferson as the most beautiful lake in the world, still enjoys that reputation. Today, non-profit organizations work hard to maintain water quality and prevent unwanted development along its shores. In 1905, when John Apperson, an engineer with the General Electric Company, first began camping on state owned islands, he noticed many "problems in paradise," and decided to try and fix them. Environmental historians have acknowledged his leadership, but no one has ever attempted to analyze his methodology or strategic goals. I intend to show that his most

important objective was the creation of a Lake George Park.

The list of his activities is impressive, especially considering his full time occupation as an engineer. To protect the islands he began rip-rapping the shores and evicting squatters and by 1917 legislators in Albany provided \$10,000 to expand his rip-rapping initiative. In 1939 he purchased Dome Island, and later donated it to the Nature Conservancy. During WWII, he became a state's witness and testified against the International Paper Company. Few people know about the relationships he forged, but his letters leave us a fascinating record of conversations he had with wealthy landowners and politicians. He kept carbon copies of his correspondence (covering 50+ years), allowing us to understand his thinking and his objectives. For example, they reveal how Apperson influenced FDR to move the "blue line," thus bringing Lake George into the Forest Preserve.

**“Solar Energy on Land and Adirondack Waters”**  
David Borton (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute,  
Department of Mechanical Engineering ) Howard  
Stoner (Hudson Valley Community College,  
Department of Mathematics)

Solar energy keeps you alive by providing air, water, and food. Solar energy also easily provides heat, in passive solar houses, for winter warmth. Transportation currently is a large consumer of fossil fuels. 300 years ago people, animals, and boats provided transportation all which was ultimately provided by current solar energy. Now electric cars,

including hybrid electric cars, can be powered by solar photovoltaic panels providing electricity stored in batteries.

Displacement boats can now be easily powered by current sunshine. Batteries can easily provide a 50 mile night time range for such boats. One such boat, “Sol”, operates on Indian Lake where there is no grid (and no road) for powering modern devices.

**11a: Closing Remarks** Brian Houseal (SUNY-ESF’s Adirondack Ecological Center Director)



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