

## **To Feel and to Know: The Art and Science of Environmental Writing**

ASLE 2017 Mid-Conference Workshop

Friday, June 23, 1-5 pm

One of the purposes of ASLE is to bring together thinkers who might not otherwise readily meet each other: ecocritics and environmental artists, academics and public officials, humanists and scientists. In this spirit, our pre-conference workshop will both explore the phenomenon of environmental science writing and serve as a foundation for ongoing collaborations between scientists and writers. Led by a writer and an ecologist, this workshop aims to facilitate potential “writing teams” that will encourage scientists to find their literary voices and writers to embrace and express the insights of environmental science.

During this four-hour pre-conference workshop at ASLE 2017, we will work with fourteen participants (ideally, seven scientists and seven humanists/writers) to discuss the philosophy and practice of writing creatively about environmental phenomena and issues. Prior to the workshop, we will circulate bios of participants and a few sample readings. After introductions at the workshop, we will discuss the writing samples as fellow writers, identifying effective strategies to communicate to our diverse audiences. We will also talk about the pros and cons of writing individually or as part of a team. Participants will work on a writing exercise during the workshop and share the outcomes with the group. Finally, we will pair up participants in the June workshop and give everyone an assignment to work on in advance of our next “companion” workshop.

We hope this will be a “longitudinal workshop” that will extend beyond the 2017 ASLE conference, with participants meeting again in August 2017 to participate in a pre-conference workshop at the annual meeting of the Ecological Society of America in Portland, Oregon, and then again in a follow-up conference on environmental science writing for which we are currently seeking funding. Our vision is that this workshop will create model processes for other collaborations between scientists and creative writers.

### **Workshop Leaders:**

**Scott Slovic** is professor of literature and environment and chair of the English Department at the University of Idaho. He served as the founding president of ASLE and has edited *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* since 1995. He has published twenty-four books, including *Seeking Awareness in American Nature Writing* and *Going Away to Think*, and has taught environmental writing in workshops throughout the world and in Idaho’s Semester in the Wild Program.

**Nalini Nadkarni**, professor of biology at the University of Utah, is a forest ecologist and a science communicator. Her research has focused on the ecology of plants and animals that live in rainforest canopies. She is a passionate communicator about nature and science to people in all walks of life, and has innovated engagement and conservation programs for non-traditional public audiences such as urban youth, artists, rap singers, legislators, and incarcerated men and women. Her work is supported by the National Science Foundation and the National Geographic Society.