

Colorado College

EV Program Newsletter



Block 3, 2013



Walt Hecox Receives Lifetime Conservation Award

Walt Hecox, 43 year faculty member of the Colorado College Economics and Business Department and for the past decade EV program, was conferred the Stuart P. Dodge lifetime achievement award for dedication to conservation by the Palmer Land Trust this fall. According to Beth Byer, a spokeswoman for the Trust, The Stuart P. Dodge award has been granted for the last four years to an individual who has "gone above and beyond to protect Colorado's Land and water resources." She went on to cite Professor Hecox as "as a true leader. He's unusual in that the impact he's made on the study of ecology and the economy and the influence he has had on students has really fostered a whole next generation of very aware students who want to be in the field."

Professor Hecox started teaching at Colorado College in 1970, the first year of the then new Block Plan; he quickly started taking full advantage of the college location in the Rockies and Block flexibility to get students into the field as much as possible. Articulating this idea in his acceptance of the award, he stated that "I am honored to be recognized for the some four decades of insistence that students get out of the classroom and into the field, where experts on all sides of issues can be heard as students can search for their own solutions to complex conservation issues."

Hecox Continued on second page

Every Step Counts: A Letter from Roz Naylor, parent of Nicki Naylor '13

Professor Roz Naylor of Stanford University, parent of Nicki Naylor ('13), recently gave a generous gift to the Environmental Program in support of senior thesis research. We are grateful, and hope that her contribution can catalyze further support for undergraduate research supervised by EV faculty, as Professor Naylor explains below:

"As a long-term mentor of undergraduate honors students in environmental science and policy, I invite you to help me support undergraduate thesis research in the Environmental Program at Colorado College. Over many years of teaching at Stanford University, it has become clear to me that students who are actively engaged in advanced research as undergraduates show great promise of becoming future leaders in the environmental field. Their ability to ask good questions, conduct independent research, and see their projects through from conception to public presentation to actual implementation is phenomenal. Having had a daughter in the EV thesis program, I have witnessed the enthusiasm, skill, commitment, and adept advising of the CC faculty. As a parent and a professor, seeing the "ah-ha!" moment when a student realizes that she can turn an excellent undergraduate education into a force of positive change for the planet is one of the most rewarding moments of a lifetime. Small donations can go a long way in building our future environmental leaders through the Colorado College Environmental Program, so please join me and support an EV student for a year of independent thesis research. Every step counts!"

Rosamond Naylor
Professor of Environmental Earth Systems Science and
Director of the Center on Food Security and the
Environment,
Stanford University

Taking this philosophy forward, Hecox founded the State of the Rockies Project at CC 11 years ago with the goal of increasing public understanding of the environmental issues facing the 8-state Rockies region. In the ensuing decade, the State of the Rockies Project has blossomed into broad student-faculty collaboration encompassing each year research across many disciplines, and projects spanning from the annual Rockies' Report Card, to a speaker series at CC, and a soon-to-be released documentary entitled *Spine of the Continent* about large scale landscape conservation in the West.

Professor Hecox's fieldwork-emphasizing teaching practice and The State of the Rockies Project have served to bring the theories of economics and sustainability "from the global to the local" and allowed many CC students the opportunity to gain immense real-world experience through contact with stakeholders on all sides of many divisive issues in the region, including mining, grazing, recreation, agriculture, and timber. Professor Hecox has noted that "stereotypical assumptions of the good versus bad sides of issues quickly disappear as the sincerity and complexity of environment versus humans unfolds."

Hecox was conferred The Stuart P. Dodge Award along with three other recipients at the annual Southern Colorado Conservation Awards on October 9th.



Updates to the EV Majors Marion Hourdequin – EV Program Director

Last year, under the leadership of Professor Eric Perramond, the EV faculty held a series of retreats to examine and reflect on our major tracks in Environmental Science and Environmental Policy. We affirmed our commitment to the core elements of each major, while refining the requirements in each to provide greater flexibility for students. Both major tracks now offer students the opportunity to take two electives to deepen their knowledge in an area of particular interest. An EV science student eager to pursue senior research related to earth science, for example, might take elective classes in geochemistry and hydrology. On the policy side, an EV major might take upper-level coursework in economics, or seek insight into the power dynamics of environmental issues by taking ecofeminism along with political ecology of the Southwest. Both major tracks include two capstone elements, an environmental management class and a senior paper, thesis, or synthesis class. In addition, the revised majors preserve the strong interdisciplinary foundation that has been the hallmark of the EV curriculum. By offering both an Environmental Science and an Environmental Policy track, the Environmental Program enables students to gain deeper knowledge of either science or policy while developing the capacity to think flexibly across disciplinary boundaries, and to better understand the complex relationships in socio-environmental systems.

Greg Zimmerman ('06) Describes a Recent Project with Fellow CC Graduate, Spenser Shadle for Yale Forestry School

"Greg Zimmerman (EV major, CC class of 2006) and Spenser Shadle (IPE major, CC class of 2007), were part of a team from the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies and the Yale School of Management that won the 2012 National Forest Foundation Barrett Prize. The business plan competition challenged students to find market-based incentives that address forest stewardship challenges on National Forest System lands. Their business plan proposed the formation of the Deschutes Collaborative Conservation Fund, which would help drive development of a restoration-based economy to rehabilitate central Oregon's forest products industry and promote forest health." – Greg Zimmerman, by email.

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our Facebook Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/185424074892767/>

Interview: Elena Mihaly Talks about Her Current Projects, How the EV Program Helped Her Get a Meaningful Career, and What She Misses from Colorado.

1) What at first piqued your interest in environmental law and policy? Was it a class, a lecture, or club at CC, or something wholly unrelated? Did you become interested in sustainable agricultural policy at CC? Whether yes or no, How did you discover that?

I first became interested in environmental law and policy during Professor Phil Kannan's Environmental Policy course at CC. Through my science courses at CC, I was learning the "what" of our world's environmental problems--that is, what global climate change is, or what ecological effects occur when the temperature rises by two degrees. On the contrary, when in Professor Kannon's environmental policy class, I enjoyed learning the "how" of our [...]



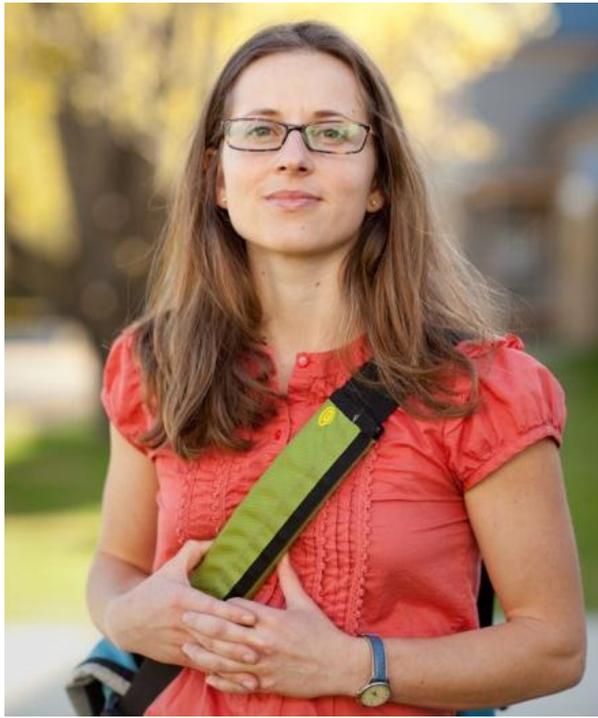
[...] environmental problems--that is, how can we use law and policy to change people's behaviors to curb greenhouse gas emissions, or how can we craft price structures to internalize environmental externalities? While the environmental movement needs folks working on both the "what" and the "how," I much preferred engaging with the "how" side of the equation - so I pursued environmental policy. It wasn't until after CC that I became hooked on sustainable agriculture policy in specific.

2) You're working for an environmental advocacy group in Boston on sustainable agriculture policy urban agriculture. How did the CC EV program shape your attitudes on what you wanted to post-graduation in an ethical and philosophical sense?

"If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail," the saying goes. If all I had leaving CC was a scientific understanding of environmental issues, I would try to fix those problems with science alone. However, CC's EV program included courses not only in science, but also policy, and economics, so I graduated well-equipped to tackle environmental problems with a multi-disciplinary approach. In fact, I now work at an organization whose mission statement includes the following mantra: 'Every day, we use the law, science, and the market to develop innovative, pragmatic solutions to New England's toughest environmental challenges.' Clearly, the EV program's diverse curriculum positively impacted my professional path.

3) You mentioned a project to develop "a pro-bono legal services network for farmers and food entrepreneurs." Can you give a basic outline what that does? How does that fit in to the overall mission of the advocacy group that you are a part of?

I work at Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), a regional environmental nonprofit. As a part of our Farm & Food Initiative, CLF is in the process of creating a pro bono legal services network for farmers and food entrepreneurs in New England. Through working on a farm myself and speaking with farmer friends, I have heard feedback that legal services are not affordable for many farmers, particularly small and beginning farmers, and this is an area where CLF is well equipped to help. Our intention is to build a network of attorneys willing to provide their services for free to qualifying farmers and food entrepreneurs. CLF will serve as the managing entity, doing intake on new cases and making matches between program participants and attorneys with the necessary skills. We plan to work with experienced attorneys, and are also going to work with the Harvard Law School's Food Law and Policy Clinic to create a legal manual on issues specific to farmers and food entrepreneurs to help guide attorneys who join our network. Our eligibility criteria for farmers and food entrepreneurs would be centered on an income limit, to make sure that we are targeting our resources to the people who are most in need of assistance. Our hope is that through this program we can help keep more farmers in business. The program will ultimately be offered New England-wide, though we plan to pilot it during its first year just in Massachusetts, starting this spring.



4) Your job sounds very intellectually challenging and rewarding. Do you have any career advice for current CC EV majors? Any life advice?

One piece of career advice -- never be afraid to ask. Whether it's for a job, for monetary support, or simply to take someone you professionally admire out to lunch, this piece of advice has been invaluable for the launch of my career. The only reason I have a salaried position at CLF is because I asked a private family foundation if they would be interested in funding a two-year fellowship position. As a professor of mine who is originally from Spain once told me, "Ya tienes el no," -- meaning, you already have the answer 'no.' By asking, your situation can only get better!

5) What do you enjoy outside of work?

Rock climb. This passion DEFINITELY began at CC. Although I live on the East Coast now, I still dream of the splitter granite cracks of Turkey Rocks in the South Platte.

Block 4 upcoming courses:

- EV260: Environmental Education – Howard Drossman
- EV212: Energy – Mari Lee & Barbara Whitten
- EV374 –Environmental Law and Policy of the Global Commons – Phil Kannan
- EV272 – Cities Sustainability & Environmental Justice – Corina McKendry



Senior Matthew Zia Reflects on Summer Research on Pike's Peak

"I got really valuable experience on a research project. It was especially valuable and cool because Miro was gone for part of the summer so I got a chance to make some decisions myself and help decide on the direction of the project, not just be a student assistant doing what Miro said."

"I continued the research that Miro has been conducting over the past five years on Pikes Peak, investigating micrometeorological feedbacks at treeline. The initial question behind the project was 'why is the treeline advancing?' And 'why is the treeline advancing faster on Pikes than on most other mountains in the world?' Past years' research showed evidence of differential heating in the soil, as well as odd wind patterns in the treeline that extended out into the tundra. This summer we decided to investigate the wind patterns more closely and get a fine resolution picture of how the trees affect the wind. Our preliminary analysis of the results suggests there is a thin viscous layer that sticks to every surface which stays very warm. Above that is a turbulent layer extending to about three meters which is relatively homogenous [...]"

"[...] but does not mix much with the upper layer above three meters. The main hypothesis I will test in my thesis is that the trees create a 'wind shadow' or eddy behind them (the turbulent layer) which stays relatively warmer than the surrounding atmosphere and thus creates a more hospitable growing environment for seedlings. As those seedlings grow they begin creating their own wind shadows, thus creating a positive feedback loop which drives upslope treeline movement."

"There aren't many other summer research jobs I know of that involve hiking a 14,000 foot mountain several times a week and spending almost all my time outside. This research project in particular appealed to a lot of things I get really excited about, namely understanding climate feedbacks, thinking critically about the interactions between biota and their environment, and climbing mountains."

"Miro is an amazing mentor and advisor. I think he has a wonderful understanding of the environment and how to set students up for success. He does a great job of asking leading questions and giving students agency over their own learning, whether in the classroom or on the mountain. I think a lot of that comes from having spent a good deal of his life outside pursuing his passions, and it really shows in his interactions with students. Personally, this summer Miro always made me feel included in the decision-making process with regards to the research on Pikes which is incredibly empowering and makes me feel much more invested in the project and in my thesis."

-Mattew Zia, by email.