The Spring Creek Project
for Ideas, Nature, and the Written Word

ANNUAL REPORT
2008-2009
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“Shotpouch Trillium” by Carol Chapel
The Spring Creek Project

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Change is in the air. We can hear it in the songs of the evening grosbeaks eating the seeds in the elms and see it in the elm seeds themselves, floating in sunlight onto the campus lawns. Change is in the headlines -- the calls for civil discourse, responsible consumer decisions, sustainable just-about-everything. Change is at the university, where new leadership in the College of Liberal Arts and new commitment to interdisciplinary dialogue across campus have opened doors for new programs in environmental humanities. In the green forests at the Cabin at Shotpouch Creek, guests who have gathered to walk the trails and exchange ideas are talking about hope.

With strong programs in place, and supported by a broad community of participants, the Spring Creek Project is doing its part to invite considered change, the 'great turning' toward responsible, long-sighted, just, and compassionate ways of living on Earth. This is our work in the world -- "to bring together the practical wisdom of the environmental sciences, the clarity of philosophy analysis, and the creative expressive power of the written word, in order to find new ways to understand and re-imagine our relation to the natural world." Here is an account of that work during the past year.
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THE CABIN AT SHOTPOUCH CREEK

Whether for deep solitude or hearty conviviality, the Cabin at Shotpouch Creek is a profoundly welcoming site for writing residencies, topical conversations, and gatherings of writers, artists, philosophers, ecologists, and naturalists. The Shotpouch land and Cabin remind all who come here of the importance of place in the life of the mind, the formation of values, and the making of a sane and foresightful culture.

WRITERS-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAMS

The Collaborative Retreat

Now in its fifth year, The Cabin at Shotpouch Creek offers a very special opportunity for two participants to pursue a collaborative project. This fall, playwright Sharmon Hilfinger (Palo Alto, CA) and composer Joan McMillen (Portland, OR) returned for their second residency at the Cabin, to complete work on their musical theatre production “Tell It Slant” based on the life and poetry of Emily Dickinson. Since the retreat, Sharmon and Joan have learned that the play will be produced at the Pear Avenue Theater in Palo Alto, CA, this September.

The Spring 2009 residency brought flutist John Savage and poet Claudia Manz to the Cabin for a two week immersion in music/word collaboration. Savage is completing a PhD in performance from New York University, and makes his living as a music teacher and performer. Manz is a free-lance writer and teacher. Both are from Portland. For the closing gathering, the two artists astonished the guests with a performance of interwoven flute and spoken word inspired by the trees, the wind, the creek. It was one of the most riveting performances the Cabin has inspired.
OSU Humanities Graduate Student Retreat

This year Spring Creek successfully hosted the first Graduate Student Residency. Kristen Winters, a graduate student in anthropology spent her residency working on her thesis in water management in the Middle East.

The residency offers an advanced graduate student whose work supports the Spring Creek mission an opportunity for uninterrupted writing time in a beautiful and inspiring place. Students are nominated by faculty and interviewed by Spring Creek staff to assess their responsibility and suitability for the residency. In response to suggestions from faculty, next year the residency will be offered in the interim between winter and spring terms.

Sojourner Retreats

Sojourner residencies are those rare opportunities to make the quiet and inspiration of the Cabin available to writers in response to special requests. These residencies may be granted to writers whose work is closely matched to the mission of the Spring Creek Project. These residencies provide opportunities for creative work of nationally recognized accomplishment or who are working on a project that will have far-reaching effect.

This year Spring Creek hosted Sojourner retreats for writer and climate change advocate SueEllen Campbell to work on her book project, The Face of the Earth. At the end of her retreat, SueEllen gave a seminar for students and faculty on her work at Colorado State University, “Changing Climates on Campuses.” In May, poet and essayist Alison Hawthorne Deming and her daughter, visual artist Lucinda Bliss, spent a week at the Cabin working on a collaborative project.
THE TRILLIUM PROJECT

An original folk song about three dwellers on Shotpouch Creek Road. An inventory of invasive plant species on the land. A vivid water color of a fully-opened blossom—the Trillium Project continues to inspire thoughtful and expressive work emanating from the land. This month-long residency project in Trillium season (mid-April to mid-May at Shotpouch’s latitude and elevation) offers a chance for a wide range of people—writers, botanists, photographers, musicians, philosophers, land managers—to spend part days and nights experiencing the forested Coast Range ecosystem. The participants eagerly contribute to our ongoing, cumulative, multi-faceted portrait of this much-beloved place. This year more than two dozen people from an array of backgrounds explored the creek and meadows, hiked the upland forest trails, and shared their perspectives and expertise. The treasury of poems, essays, photographs, collages, found objects, music, and scientific observations becomes richer each year, providing a growing record of creative, informed responses to the land.
CONVERSATION AT SHOTPOUCH CREEK

The Cabin at Shotpouch Creek is the perfect locale for these far-ranging conversations. Spring Creek invites people from diverse intellectual and experiential backgrounds, from campus and the wider community, to share a meal, a walk in the woods, and an evening of conversation related to Spring Creek’s ongoing mission: to imagine new ways to understand the relation of humans with the rest of the world.

_Spring 2009, “Abandon Hope?”_

Michael Nelson believes that hope is a poor substitute for virtue. Visiting OSU from his post at Michigan State University, where he teaches environmental philosophy and also participates in long-term studies of the Isle Royale wolves, Michael argued that hope was a slim and maybe unreliable thread. "Instead of hope," he said, "what if we provide young people with reasons to live sustainably that are rational and effective. We need to equate responsible living not so much with hope for a better future, but with the basic virtues such as sharing and caring, which we already recognize as good in themselves." After the lively conversation, people wandered the trails at dusk, amid tall native larkspur in full bloom—energized by the virtue and hopefulness of wild nature.
SPECIAL EVENTS

5th Annual Shotpouch Writers Gathering

In mid-July, Spring Creek hosted our Fifth Annual Shotpouch Writers Gathering at the Cabin. When writers who work at the interface of nature and culture come together to talk shop and share their work, it renews everyone’s spirit. The beauty of the land, the joy of sharing a meal, and the passion for good literature conspire to make these writers’ gatherings a high point of the summer. On this glorious summer evening, special guest John Witte, poet and long-time editor of the Northwest Review, delighted us with his vivid poems, and many of the writers shared brief pieces of their own work.

Working and Writing the Woods

On a warm and blowsy Sunday in mid April, two dozen friends of Shotpouch gathered at the Cabin to wash windows, clean cupboards, prune grape vines, and regrade the forest trails. In the afternoon, Spring Creek Project Program Director Charles Goodrich lead a writing workshop focused on stories of jobs, tools, handiwork, and labors of love. The combination of vigorous manual labor in a beautiful, natural setting and imaginative writing never fails to inspire new ways to appreciate the gifts of community and the land.
CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Columbia River Quorum:
Bringing Science and Moral Imagination Together to Communicate about Climate Destabilization

Climate scientists warn us that environmental degradation and climate destabilization are fast exceeding society’s rate of response. But the bare facts have not moved people to significant action. Can we do a better, more effective job of alerting the public to both the physical, cultural dangers of environmental degradation, and our moral responsibilities to the future by combining the power scientific information with the moral values that are embedded in a culture’s literature and worldviews?

That question was the impetus for the Columbia River Quorum, convened this spring by the Spring Creek Project with support from the US Forest Service. Held at Menucha Retreat Center in the Columbia River Gorge, the gathering of sixteen environmental scientists, social scientists, philosophers, communications experts, and creative writers explored possible synergies between the world of the environmental sciences and the moral world as it is expressed in a culture’s literature and its moral philosophy. The symposium was organized by OSU philosopher Kathleen Dean Moore and marine biologist Mark Hixon. Other OSU participants included atmospheric scientist Andreas Schmittner, forest sociologist John Bliss, and Forest Service geomorphologist Fred Swanson.
Conference participants’ ongoing efforts will focus in these areas:

- **New Partnerships:**
  Increase the role of the arts in climate communication
  Engage philosophers in articulating the “Second Premise”—the place of values—in shaping climate responses

- **New Messages:**
  Find effective language for discussing climate disruption
  Create new metaphors and stories to promote new social arrangements
  Tell the stories of ordinary heroes

- **New Methods:**
  Understand how ‘framing’ can help transcend polarities
  Use new media such as eco-wikis, social networking, and web portals to reach broader audiences.

Through specific initiatives the Quorum participants hope to create a new context for climate education work, one that provides new leadership, new collaborations, and new conduits for funding. More information about the Columbia River Quorum can be found on the Spring Creek Project website: http://springcreek.oregonstate.edu/

Back row, from left:\  Bob Frodeman, Scott Russell Sanders, Steve Vanderheiden, Andreas Schmittner, Hank Green, Fred Swanson, Charles Goodrich

Front row: Kathy Moore, Carly Johnson, Michael Nelson, Pam Sturmer, Alison Deming, Kathie Olsen, Michaela Hammer, John Bliss, Mark Hixon
Fall Reading Series

*Paul Bogard, Let There Be Night*

In a new and fruitful collaboration, Spring Creek co-sponsored two public events this fall with the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library. In early October we presented a reading from the new book, *Let There Be Night: Testimony on Behalf of the Dark* with Kathleen Dean Moore, John Daniel and editor Paul Bogard. The reading was followed by star viewing party sponsored by Heart of the Valley Astronomers.

*Julia Whitty, The Fragile Edge*

In November, Julia Whitty, an award winning writer (*The Fragile Edge*) and environmental journalist, read to a full house at the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library. Whitty also lead OSU science faculty, grad students, and community writers in a fascinating writing workshop, “Writing Science, Scientists as Writers.”

*Tim Palmer, Trees and Forests of America.*

Also in November, Spring Creek teamed up with OSU’s Sustainable Forests Partnership to host a pair of readings and slideshows with author / photographer Tim Palmer, featuring his new book *Trees and Forests of America.*
Ideas Matter lecture:

UN Declaration of Human Rights at 60

As part of the Ideas Matter lecture series, Spring Creek sponsored a talk by University of Colorado philosopher, Steve Vanderheiden, whose talk examined “Environmental Degradation as a Human Rights Issue.”

The Magic Barrel

Spring Creek once again joined with other community organizations to sponsor “The Magic Barrel: A Reading to Fight Hunger,” which raised more than $2,400 for Linn-Benton Food Share to contribute to hunger relief.

Organic Growers Club Earth Day Hoo Haa

The OSU Organic Growers Club holds an annual farm work party and celebration of agrarian culture every Earth Day. This year Spring Creek organized the poetry and music events for the stage entertainment.
Environmental Humanities Initiative

Spring Creek continues to serve as a catalyst in the effort to inaugurate a new Environmental Humanities Program at OSU. In May, a brainstorming meeting hosted by Larry Rodgers, Dean, College of Liberal Arts, and Kathleen Dean Moore, Director of the Spring Creek Project, drew interested faculty from many departments in the Humanities and Sciences. Participants identified existing resources, outline opportunities for new programs, and envision potential new sources of revenue and other resources. Spring Creek will help convene a weekend gathering of interested faculty, administrators and selected outside consultants in the fall. (see Upcoming Events)

Native American Philosophies

Native American Philosophies, a university class and lecture series open to the public, provides a unique opportunity to hear Native American elders, artists, scientists and cultural leaders. As part of this year’s class and lecture series, Spring Creek sponsored a lecture, “Environmental Degradation as a Human Rights Issue,” by University of Colorado philosopher, Steven Vanderheiden.
**Blue River Writers Gathering**

In late September, Spring Creek hosted the second biennial Blue River Writers Gathering at the Andrews Forest. The three-day gathering was a restorative and contemplative weekend for twenty-four Northwest 'nature' writers. We met in a forest clearing at sunset to drink wine and eat salmon. And as we did, we explored the questions that brought us together: Where is the place, as Frederick Beuchner wrote, that our deep gladness meets the world’s deep need? What is our work in this world? How can we cultivate a sustainable imagination? How can we balance the integrity of our work with its political nature? Where can we find strength and hope when, as Leopold wrote, we live alone in a world of wounds?

After dark we congregated around a campfire among red cedar, vine maple, and hemlock to offer up the names of writers who inspire and nourish our work. During a Saturday afternoon outing, we read our prose and poems to each other amid old-growth moss and downed trees at the log decomposition research site. That night, back at the fire pit, with learned about the ways of the spotted owl from biologist Tim Fox, and we bellowed our best owl hoots into the starry night.
LONG-TERM ECOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

5th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION / RE-VISIONING

In late October, we celebrated the fifth anniversary of the Long-Term Ecological Reflections program. Scott Russell Sanders, Alison Hawthorne Deming and Robin Kimmerer came to the Andrews to help us celebrate the program’s success and look ahead to the future. Around a campfire in the forest, thinking aloud in the fire-lit darkness, we identified the values that underlie our aspirations for the LTEReflections program:

• Beauty. We share Aldo Leopold’s belief that beauty is the most likely value to affect a sense of connection and responsibility.

• Kinship. We believe in extending to all of nature the full range of moral, emotional, intellectual, and practical commitments we eagerly accord to family.

• Moral Imagination. In our experience, the essential faculty that links analytic, aesthetic and emotional perceptions through the medium of place is the moral imagination.

• Collaboration. We appreciate that there are many ways of knowing and we seek to actively engage with individuals and organizations who represent and embody them.

• Wholeness. We want to encourage the ability to apprehend connections.

• ‘Applied Secular Reverence’. We want to pay witness to the awe and wonder associated with emotional receptivity, while also encouraging engagement and activism on behalf of nature.

• Long-term. We believe that seeing across long temporal spans is the only way to perceive wholeness, and that long term perspectives inspire hope.
ANDREWS FOREST WRITERS RESIDENCIES

Now in its sixth year of an envisioned two-hundred year life-span, the Long-Term Ecological Reflections program continues to attract keen interest from writers, ecologists, land managers, and policy makers around the country. Seventeen writers have now participated in the program, and their works posted in The Forest Log, comprise a unique window into the changing forest.

THE WRITERS-IN-RESIDENCE

Fall 2008: Scott Russell Sanders

Scott Russell Sanders, Distinguished Professor of English at Indiana University, is the author of more than twenty books, including Staying Put, Hunting for Hope, and A Private History of Awe. His writing has won the AWP Creative Nonfiction Award, the John Burroughs Essay Award, and the Lannan Literary Award. Scott wound up his residency by helping us celebrate our 5th Anniversary of LTEReflections, and envision the future of the program.

Fall 2008: Thomas Lowe Fleischner

Tom Fleischner is the author of two books, Singing Stone: A Natural History of the Escalante Canyons and Desert Wetlands, and teaches Environmental Studies at Prescott College. A co-founder of the North Cascades Institute, Fleischner has written widely about rangeland issues, Canyonlands ecology, and the importance of natural history. Fleischner concluded his residency by coming to OSU to lead a seminar and fascinating discussion on “Revitalizing Natural History.”
Maya Zeller grew up in the northwest, mostly near coastal environments. She now lives in Spokane, where she teaches English and creative writing at a community college and co-directs a literary reading series. Her poems appear in many literary journals, and her reviews and interviews can be found online.

Novelist, poet, and bioregionalist Jim Dodge is director of the Creative Writing program at Humboldt State University. His highly regarded books include three novels *Fuf, Not Fade Away, Stone Junction,* and a collection of poetry and prose, *Rain on the River.*

Jerry Martien is the author of a collection of poetry, *Pieces in Place,* a nonfiction book: *Shell Game: A True Account of Beads and Money in North America.* He has been a teacher of creative writing and nature writing at Humboldt State University for the past seven. A video of Jerry reading his poem, *return of the dead log people,* can be viewed via The Forest Log.

In November, Charles Goodrich and Fred Swanson met with the staff of the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology, to brainstorm ways for Sitka to inaugurate a Long-Term Ecological Reflections-like program.

In June, Kathleen, Charles, and Fred attended the biennial conference of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE) in Victoria, BC. Their presentation, “Descartes, Darwin, and Dickinson Walk into a Forest: Practical Models for Science / Humanities Dialogues,” drew a large and enthusiastic audience, and generated potential for new collaborations on Long-Term Ecological Reflections.
UPCOMING EVENTS 2009-2010

**Spring Creek Cafes**

This year Spring Creek will inaugurate a new program, Spring Creek Cafes. Modeled on the popular Socrates Cafes, these events will be held in a downtown Corvallis location and open to the public. This year's Cafes will focus on the question: "In the face of rapid climate destabilization, economic, social and ecological upheavals, what are our obligations to future generations?" The Cafes will offer opportunities for a wider public audience to practice philosophical inquiry and deepen their sense of participation in a vibrant, local, intellectual community.

**Vandana Shiva : Earth Democracy**

Spring Creek will host a lecture by Dr. Vandana Shiva, physicist, feminist, philosopher of science, writer, and science policy advocate, will be speaking at OSU on October 23, 2009, 7 pm, LaSells Stewart Center. In addition, a conference on the intersection of environmental justice and women’s lives, “Earth Democracy: Women, Justice, and Ecology,” will be held here at OSU on the same day.

Vandana Shiva is the Director of The Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resource Policy. She was the recipient of the 1993 Right Livelihood Award, commonly known as the "Alternative Nobel Prize". She was authored many books, including *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*, *Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, and Profit*, and *Soil Not Oil: Environmental Justice in Age of Climate Crisis*.

Dr. Shiva’s visit is co-sponsored by The Spring Creek Project; the Hundere Endowment for Religion and Culture; the Horning Endowment; and the Student Sustainability Initiative
Environmental Humanities Summit

In concert with the College of Liberal Arts, Spring Creek will convene the OSU Environmental Humanities Initiative Summit to draft the goals, strategies, action plans, and timelines for new Environmental Humanities programs. The Summit will be held October 30 – November 1, 2009 at the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest, Blue River, Oregon.

The next decades will bring environmental and cultural challenges that are unprecedented in their danger and scale, as humankind makes the difficult turn toward more sustainable ways to live on earth. Meeting those challenges will require new forms of local and global leadership based not only on scientific understanding of Earth’s geochemical and biological systems, but equally important, grounded in an understanding of human wisdom and values. How can OSU amplify strengths in the humanities and the sciences, to make OSU the “go-to” place in the nation for research, education, and outreach in the environmental humanities? What particular environmental humanities programs will provide the necessary intellectual, educational, and community leadership, to enlist the full power of the human imagination to address the coming global environmental and social crises? The Summit will address these questions and outline the steps to create these programs.

Sixth Annual Shotpouch Writers Gathering

These annual gatherings of local environmental writers have become an important catalyst for community, inspiration, and heightened awareness of our region’s natural and cultural riches. Writers from the greater Mary’s River watershed and beyond whose work is dedicated to finding new ways to understand and re-imagine our relationship to the natural world will gather at the Shotpouch Cabin on Sunday, August 9. Our special guest this year will be writer and editor Brian Doyle.
Upcoming Events / 21

Working and Writing at Shotpouch

Also in the summer, we plan to host another daylong workshop: Working the Words, Writing about Work, where friends of Spring Creek can do volunteer labor on the land and participate in a free writing workshop at the Cabin. (September, 2009).

Readings, Seminars, and Lectures

Spring Creek is honored to host this coming year readings by two nationally renowned writers: writer and ethnobotanist Gary Paul Nabhan, and poet Jane Hirshfield. Nabhan and Hirshfield will be this year’s Blue River Writers in Residence at the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest, as part of the Spring Creek sponsored Long-Term Ecological Reflections Program.

Gary Nabhan is an Arab-American writer, food and farming advocate, and conservationist whose work has long been rooted in the U.S./Mexico borderlands. For his literary non-fiction, grassroots conservation and community-based ethnobiology projects, Nabhan has been honored with the John Burroughs Medal for Nature Writing, a MacArthur "genius" award, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for Conservation Biology.

Jane Hirshfield is the author of six collections of prize-winning poetry, and has edited and co-translated The Ink Dark Moon, and Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women. Hirshfield’s many honors include fellowships from the Guggenheim and Rockefeller Foundations, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Academy of American Poets.
SPRING CREEK PEOPLE

Spring Creek Director, Kathleen Dean Moore

Kathleen’s book project, *For All Time*—essays by world moral leaders arguing that we have an obligation to leave a future as rich in possibility as the world left to us—will be published next year by Trinity University Press. A new collection of her own essays, *Wild Comfort*, is forthcoming from Shambhala Editions. Kathleen serves on the Board of Directors of the Orion Society in Great Barrington, Vermont, and the Island Institute in Sitka, Alaska.

Spring Creek Program Director, Charles Goodrich

Charles has just completed a manuscript of short prose “dispatches,” *Going to Seed: Fifty Two Dispatches from the Garden*. His poems and essays have appeared this year in Northwest Review, Moving Mountain, and Oregon Humanities. After years of hosting other writers for Spring Creek residencies, Charles has been invited by Fishtrap to be the inaugural Werner-Ellithorp Nature Writer in Residence in Wallowa County for the month of July.
**Spring Creek Intern**

Spring Creek was again blessed to have the help of a wonderful intern, Michaela Hammer, undergraduate student in Liberal Studies. Michaela was an integral participant in the Columbia River Quorum. She also coordinated this year’s Trillium Project, and helped update the Spring Creek website, among many other tasks. Michaela is also a staff member for the OSU Student Sustainability Initiative.

![Michaela Hammer](image)

**Shotpouch Caretaker**

David Lettero continues to serve as caretaker for the Shotpouch Cabin and property. When he is not working on the land, Dave travels the region as the Solar Energy Education Director for the Bonneville Energy Trust.
GRATITUDE

Our profound thanks to the many supporters whose gifts of energy, wisdom, financial and moral support help sustain the work of the Spring Creek Project.

**Shotpouch Foundation Board:** Jonathan Dolp, Laura Dolp, Jeff Hale

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**Spring Creek Pals:** Frederick J. Swanson, Mark Hixon, Michael Nelson, Alison Hawthorne Deming

**Collaborative Partners**
Andrews Forest Long-Term Ecological Research Program
College of Liberal Arts
Hundere Endowment for Religion and Culture
Horning Endowment
Native American Collaborative Institute
Corvallis Sustainability Coalition
Corvallis-Benton County Public Library
OSU Valley Library
College of Forestry
Department of Philosophy
Department of English
Department of Ethnic Studies
Department of History
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Pacific Northwest Research Station
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Listening Ear Labyrinth, by Be Herrera (at the Shotpouch Cabin)
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Oregon State University (OSU)