

the Spring Creek Project

for ideas,
nature
and the
written word



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

FROM OUR PROGRAM MANAGER

We started this year in pandemic lockdown with our windows taped shut in a futile attempt to avoid the hazardous breathing conditions of Oregon's worst-ever wildfire season. The year catapulted forward through civil justice uprisings, insurrection, ever-changing COVID restrictions, and the steady rise of fossil fuel emissions.

Through it all, I have been grateful that our staff was willing to take programmatic risks from our makeshift home offices, that the Spring Creek community persevered through online registrations and Zoom gatherings, and that our collaborators graciously showed us the ropes of everything from documentary filmmaking (see *Bedrock Rights*) to the resonance of a tuba solo with a whale essay (see *Music to Save Earth's Songs*).

Whatever lies ahead, Spring Creek Project remains committed to thinking in new ways about the most pressing environmental issues of our times, whether that is shoulder-to-shoulder in a lecture hall or on Zoom.

Keep taking good care,
Carly Lettero

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

We extend our gratitude to the following groups and organizations that partnered with us on programming this year: 350 Seattle • 350 Vermont • Alaska Institute for Justice • Anarres Project for Alternative Futures • Beyond Toxics • Center for Humans & Nature • Coalition to Protect New York • Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde • Corvallis Audubon Society • Corvallis-Benton County Public Library • Corvallis Sustainability Coalition • Counterpoint Press • Grass Roots Books & Music • Greenbelt Land Trust • HJ Andrews Experimental Forest Long-Term Ecological Research Program • Marys Peak Group of the Sierra Club • McKenzie River Trust • NAACP Eugene-Springfield • *Orion* Magazine • OSU ART-SCI Group • OSU College of Forestry • OSU Environmental Arts and Humanities Initiative • OSU Office of Sustainability • OSU Press • Permanent Peoples' Tribunal • Post Carbon Institute • Protect the Bush Alliance • Rogue Climate • Safina Center • School of Law at Queensland University of Technology • Sitka Center for Art and Ecology • *Terrain.org*

THE NATURE OF ISOLATION

“The Eros of Home” by Leslie Green



When we were asked to shelter in place in early 2020, we were suddenly isolated from the people and natural places we love at a scale previously unimaginable. We invited writers and artists, the great meaning makers, to explore their home ecosystems and reflect on the nature of isolation during the pandemic. The response was heartening. From 300 submissions, we selected creative work from 28 people, and then asked each contributor to record a video of their piece from home. While each piece was created in isolation, they speak to our common humanity. We released one video per day during the month of October, 2020. Find all the videos—from poems and lyric essays to visual art and sound works—on our YouTube channel.

“I loved the juxtaposition of details about living things amid the atmosphere and uncertainties of isolation—how the pandemic makes those details seem much more vivid and precious in these poems.”

*Steve Dieffenbacher,
Nature of Isolation viewer*

PANDEMIC AS PORTAL: CREATING A JUST FUTURE ON EARTH

*Erin Moore's Pipeline Portals |
Photo by David Paul Bayles*



As so much reconfigured in the unfolding wake of the pandemic, we invited visionary thinkers to imagine the world anew. During spring term, we hosted a nine-week lecture series, *Pandemic as Portal: Creating a Just Future on Earth*, in partnership with OSU's Environmental Arts and Humanities Initiative. The speakers in the series came from many perspectives, including writing, philosophy, history, architecture, music, and filmmaking. The series featured Kim Stanley Robinson, Erin Moore, J. Drew Lanham, Mazin Jamal, KJ Song, Michael Paul Nelson, Elizabeth Sawin, Bathsheba Demuth, and Vanessa Raditz. Find the lectures, and more information about the speakers, on our YouTube channel.

“This was hugely educational on a number of current issues. Much of it has stuck with me today and gives another perspective on a deep dive into life before and after COVID. This series has provided essential viewpoints to interject into our daily lives. Thank you for this unique and inspiring experience.”

*Randee LaSalle,
Pandemic as Portal
attendee*

“Your series of short videos promoting *Earth’s Wild Music* with people reading sections paired with musicians was brilliant and moving. I loved every one!”

Susan J. Tweit, Animal Interlude viewer

MUSIC TO SAVE EARTH’S SONGS

Music to Save Earth’s Songs was a series inspired by Kathleen Dean Moore’s book *Earth’s Wild Music: Celebrating and Defending the Songs of the Natural World*. It included the release of 20 tiny concert videos called Animal Interludes. Each video, just a few minutes long, is an original composition of words and music in honor of a threatened or beloved animal.

The series also included two keynote events: a book launch party for *Earth’s Wild Music* and the world film premiere of *The Extinction Variations*, a moving call to action on climate disruption and mass extinction featuring words by Kathleen Dean Moore and music by classical pianist Rachelle McCabe.



BEDROCK RIGHTS DOCUMENTARY FILM PRODUCTION AND PREMIERE

In 2018, Spring Creek Project co-hosted an international tribunal that found that fracking and climate change violate human rights. To amplify these findings, we produced and premiered our first-ever documentary film, *Bedrock Rights: A New Foundation for Global Action Against Fracking and Climate Change*.

The film shows how the lens of human rights can transform the world's view of climate change and fracking to empower new action. It features stories from people on the front lines of fracking, comments from environmental justice activists, key points from the tribunal's advisory opinion, poetry, and interviews. The premiere event (June 2, 2021) included a conversation with anti-fracking activist Sandra Steingraber and environmental law expert Mary Wood.

“What a powerful and painful documentary ... I so appreciate your and your colleague’s trust and insistence on truth telling.”

*Susanne Moser,
film premiere
attendee*

Opposite: Listening to the Forest, a public art installation by Leah Wilson





OTHER PROGRAMMING

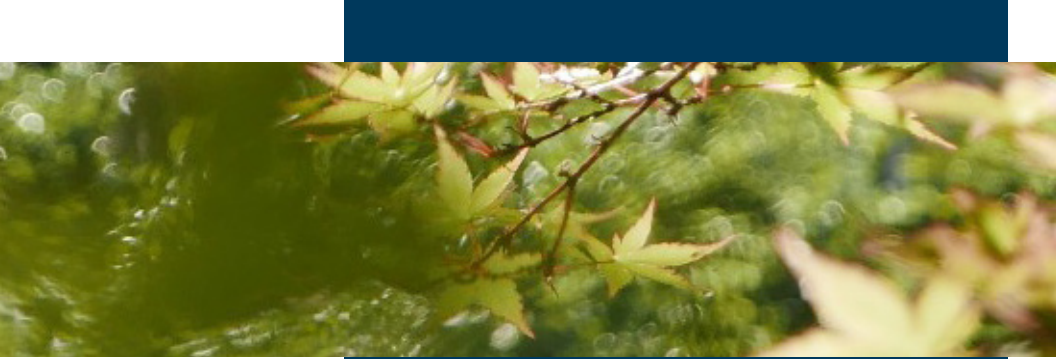
We were honored to host or co-sponsor many other events and programs this year, including:

- Environmental Justice Pathways Summit
- Blue River Writers Gathering with keynote by Emma Marris
- *Microbial Worlds* Virtual Art Tour and Reception
- Champinefu Lecture Series
- StoryMap Project: Indigenous Naming of Creeks on Marys Peak
- Book launch of *Bearing Witness: The Human Rights Case Against Fracking and Climate Change*
- Long-Term Ecological Reflections series on *Terrain.org*
- Readings with Bruce Byers (*The View from Cascade Head*) and Bill Robbins (*A Place for Inquiry, A Place for Wonder: The Andrews Forest*)
- Artist talks with David Bayles and David Buckley Borden and with Leah Wilson (*Listening to the Forest*)

RESIDENCY NEWS

With careful attention to COVID restrictions, we hosted 16 people at Shotpouch Cabin this year for three residency programs: the Collaborative Retreat, the Graduate Student Research and Writing Residency, and the Environmental Arts and Humanities Faculty Residency.

While we paused our Long-Term Ecological Reflections (LTER) residency program hosted at the HJ Andrews Experimental Forest because of COVID and wildfires in the Cascade Mountains, the future of the program is bright. We received a generous gift from a donor to begin an LTER endowment and a grant from the Ronald W. Naito MD Foundation to reimagine the program so it is more accessible to writers and artists of color.



Above: "Waking Dream of Another Spring" by Cub Kahn, a selection from the Nature of Isolation series; Front cover: Erin Moore's Pipeline Portals | Photo by David Paul Bayles

The Spring Creek Project

Our Mission

The Spring Creek Project brings together the practical wisdom of environmental science, the clarity of philosophy, and the transformational power of the written word and the arts to envision and inspire just and joyous relations with the planet and with one another.

Staff

Carly Lettero, Program Manager
Shelley Stonebrook, Program Coordinator
Jay Baker, Student Intern

Senior Fellows

Alison Hawthorne Deming
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