What has been saved; what has been lost: John Muir’s Legacy, 1914-2014

60th California History Institute

University of the Pacific, Stockton

March 21-22, 2014

Please join us at University of the Pacific for the 60th California History Institute to celebrate the 100th anniversary of John Muir’s death, the 150th anniversary of the Yosemite Grant, and the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.

March 20  Field Trip for John Muir Class and other Pacific students to Martinez to visit John Muir National Historic Site

March 21  Field Trip to Coulterville (John Muir Geotourism Center), John Muir Highway, Groveland, Crane Flat, with lunch in Coulterville at the historic Jeffery Hotel (a fee event)

March 22  “What has been saved; what has been lost: John Muir’s Legacy, 1914-2014”--An all-day symposium on campus in Grace Covell Hall. 9 AM to 4:30 PM by registration only. Reception to following in the University Library.

In the one hundred years since John Muir’s death, we raise the question: what has been saved; what has been lost that can be directly associated with Muir’s pioneering efforts in conservation and his philosophy and vision of preservation, protection, and wise-public-use which led to establishment of many federal, state, and local parks, preserves, and recreational areas throughout the world, and especially in North America.

8:30 AM  Registration in the lobby of Grace Covell Hall (coffee, tea and scones provided)

9:00  Welcome; President Pamela Eibeck, University of the Pacific;

9:15  John Muir’s Connection with University of the Pacific.  W. R. Swagerty, Director, Muir Center

9:30  Terry Gifford, “Muir, Ruskin, Uncle Sam, Planet Earth: Gains and Losses”


10:30  Graham White, “John Muir: The Moral Imperative of Environmental Education”
Graham White holds a first class honors degree in History of Ideas, Modern European Literature and Political Science as well as a Teaching Diploma in English and Liberal Studies. From 1998 onwards he was founding Director of the Edinburgh’s Environment Center, which pioneered environmental education in Scotland from 1979 until 2001. In the 1980s he served on the Education Committee of the John Muir Trust in Scotland and in 1986, proposed that a John Muir Award should be established by the Trust in the UK as a national scheme for people of all ages; over 150,000 people have now completed the Award in the UK. He is author/ editor of: The Scottish Environmental Handbook; The Nature of Scotland - Landscape Wildlife and People; John Muir- Journeys in the Wilderness; John Muir; From Scotland to the Sierra; Sacred Summits-John Muir’s Greatest Climbs. As a beekeeper and conservationist, he has devoted much of the last eight years to campaigning against the global use of neonicotinoid pesticides, widely held to be responsible for the deaths of over ten million bee colonies in the United States, and for the deaths of uncountable millions of birds, amphibians and other pollinating insects. He was very involved in the campaign to get these neurotoxic pesticides banned in the twenty-seven countries of the European Union, which came into effect in December 2013; they remain legal in the USA where they are used on over 200 million acres of corn, soybeans, canola, wheat, potatoes and fruit.

11:45 Lunch Buffet (a fee event; see registration form)


Andrea Wulf was born India, moved to Germany as a child, and now lives in Britain. She is the author of several books. Her book “The Brother Gardeners. Botany, Empire and the Birth of an Obsession” won the American Horticultural Society 2010 Book Award and was long-listed for the Samuel Johnson Prize 2008, the most prestigious non-fiction award in the UK. The “Founding Gardeners. The Revolutionary Generation, Nature, and the Shaping of the American Nation” was published under great acclaim in spring 2011 and made it on the New York Times Best Seller List. Andrea has written for many newspapers including the Guardian, the LA Times and the New York Times. She was the Eccles British Library Writer in Residence 2013 and a three-time fellow of the International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello. She is also appears regularly NPR in the US, and on radio and TV programmes on the BBC in the UK. She currently working on a book called 'The Invention of Nature' about Alexander von Humboldt and his influence on scientists, thinkers and poets (published by Knopf in late 2015).


Ronald Eber is Historian for the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club. He has held many Sierra Club positions including National Campus Coordinator in 1971 and Chair and Wilderness Coordinator of the Oregon Chapter from 1980–1985. He has written two previous essays for this conference entitled “John Muir and the Pioneer Conservationists of the Pacific Northwest” and “Wealth and Beauty – John Muir and Forest Conservation” that were published in the conference proceedings. He currently lives near Port Gamble, Washington.


Doug Scott worked for forty years as a lobbyist and strategist persuading Congress to designate additional wilderness areas. He is proudest of his leadership role in the campaign for the historic Alaska
National Interest lands Act of 1980. He is the author of The Enduring Wilderness: Preserving our Natural Heritage through the Wilderness Act (Fulcrum 2004) and Our Wilderness: America's Common Ground (Fulcrum 2009), and of Wild Thoughts, a collection of excerpts of great writing about nature, wilderness, and the people who love them (forthcoming).

3:00 Stephen Holmes, "Muir's Cultural Legacy: Science and Storytelling from 'The California Alps' to Climate Change Communication"

Steven Pavlos Holmes, Ph.D., is an independent scholar of the environmental humanities, with a special interest in the emotional, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of our interactions with the natural world. He is the author of The Young John Muir: An Environmental Biography (winner of the Modern Language Association's Prize for Independent Scholars) and of A Healing Landscape: Environmental and Social History of Mass Audubon's Boston Nature Center and most recently editor of Facing the Change: Personal Encounters with Global Warming (Torrey House Press, 2013). He has taught at Harvard University and at the Cambridge (Mass.) Center for Adult Education. He lives with his partner Carlene Pavlos and their cat Millet in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts.

3:45-4:30 John Muir Class University of the Pacific

Six students chosen from the twenty-six in Pacific’s University-level course focusing on “John Muir’s World: the Origins of the Conservation Movement” will summarize their research project connecting Muir with legacy people and places.

4:30-4:45 Wrap Up.

5:00-6:00 PM. Reception, University Library