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By Nick Houtman

Researcher Profile

Kathleen Dean Moore is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and the founding director of the Spring Creek Project for Ideas, Nature, and the Written Word. She specializes in environmental ethics and philosophy and nature. She has published three award-winning books of essays: The Pine Island Paradox (Milkweed Editions, 2006); Holdfast: At Home in the Natural World (Lyons Press, 1995, 2004); and Riverwalking: Reflections on Moving Water (Harcout Brace, 1998). Moore’s essays are widely published and anthologized, appearing in magazines such as Orion, Discover, Audubon, Wild Earth, Hope, and Field and Stream. She is the author of Par- dons: Justice, Mercy, and the Public Interest, which explores the moral justification for presidential pardons, and a textbook on critical reasoning. At OSU, where she was twice named a Master Teacher, she teaches a Philosophy of Nature course, which meets in the high Cascade mountains.

A Premier Forest Research Facility

The H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest, site of Spring Creek’s Long-Term Ecological Reflections program, is one of the world’s foremost centers for environmental research. OSU scientists and their students use the 15,800-acre facility in the Cascade mountains for studies of land use, climate, biodiversity, hydrology and other disciplines, often in collaboration with state and federal agencies and other universities. Established by the U.S. Forest Service in 1948, the Andrews forest became one of the first sites of the National Science Foundation’s Long-Term Ecological Research program in 1980. OSU research in forest ecology, much of it done at the Andrews, achieved the number one national ranking in a recent analysis of research productivity published by Ecological Society of America.

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science alone. We need to have places that foster interactions and discussions between people who understand vari- ous facets of the issues involved.”

20/20 Vision

From a cabin deep in the Oregon Coast Range to the shoulders of a Cascade volcano, the Spring Creek Project asks a difficult question: “How should we understand our relationship to nature?”

Read more about the cabin on Shotpouch Creek at springcreek.oregonstate.edu

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about the plumbing under the mountain and how often it has cracked and heaved in cycles of cataclysm. In the face of such power, there is also poetry and song. Folksinger metaphors for human aspiration. They watch the full moon rise and roll up a neighboring slope. As moonlight strikes the valley floor behind them, once destroyed, have given way to a carnival of new life. They find pockets that had been left standing after layers and branch. They discuss the differences between human-caused and natural catastrophe — and the meaning of recovery. The Spring Creek Project has inspired students such as OSU marine biology graduate Roly Russell. “Places like Shotpouch are necessary, a remarkable opportunity for environmental scientists to integrate their intellectual, left-brained worldview with the spiritual, right-brained perspective of environmental writers, poets, and artists,” he says. These exercises are “essential for successful conservation and sustainability efforts.”

Moore, Goodrich and their colleagues bring diverse academic and literary expertise to the task. Moore has a Ph.D. in the philosophy of law. She has written seven books, including three compilations of essays exploring the cultural values of wet, wild places. That has not always been her focus. Her first book, published in 1989, was a guide to selecting a presidential pardon. Since then, she has won a Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award for Riverwalking (1995) and the Oregon Book Award for Holdfast (1999). In addition to several volumes of poetry, Goodrich has written a book of essays (maybe I should have asked not how we can bring wildness into our lives, but how we can remember to notice the wildness in every sweating pore, every steamed carrot, every solid step; in the morning air noisy with rain; in the reeling stars.”

— Kathleen Dean Moore, The Pine Island Paradox, 2004

Science blends with art and writing in Spring Creek’s Long-Term Ecological Reflections (LTER) project at the H.J. Andrews Experimental Forest. In 2004, nature writer and scientist Robert Michael Pyle served as the first LTER writer-in-residence. He focused on a 200-year long log decomposition study. Its purpose: to understand growth and decay cycles in the forest. Other participating writers have included Robin Kenney, author of Gathering Moss (OSU Press, 2003); Scott Stoll, writer, artist and educator; and poet Pat Havdavn Rogers. The U.S. Forest Service co-sponsored the project.

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The moss grows, the raven harks, the trees go to soil—first bemocks, then fire, finally cedar. All the while the decomp team is there, watching how the cookies crumble. Maybe looking to the future is a way of hoping there will still be something to see when we get there. Maybe it’s the only way to make sure of it.”

— Robert Michael Pyle

“The Long Haul,” Orion magazine September/October 2004
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Shotpouch Creek flows out of the Coast Range into the Marys River.