

ASEH Election 2017

Statement of Candidates

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Vice President/Incoming President

Edmund Russell:

Edmund Russell is a professor of history at Boston University. He previously taught at the University of Kansas (where he was the Hall Distinguished Professor of U. S. History) and the University of Virginia.

Russell's research focuses on the intersection of environmental history, history of technology, American history, and biology. Topics of interest include the environmental history of war, the role of anthropogenic evolution in history, and the environmental history of telegraphy. His books include *War and Nature* (Cambridge, 2001), *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally* (Oregon State, 2004, co-edited with Richard Tucker), *Evolutionary History* (Cambridge, 2011), *CQ Guide to U. S. Environmental Policy* (CQ Press, 2014, edited with Sally K. Fairfax), and *Greyhound Nation* (Cambridge, In Press). His articles have appeared in *American Historical Review*, *Journal of American History*, *Environmental History*, and *Technology and Culture* (among other journals). His research has received prizes from the American Society for Environmental History (Rachel Carson Prize and Leopold-Hidy Prize), Society for the History of Technology (Edelstein Prize), and the Forum for the History of Science in America.

Russell is vice president of the American Historical Association and co-editor (with John McNeill) of the Studies in Environment and History book series for Cambridge University Press. He has served as book review editor and editorial board member for *Environmental History*, program chair for the ASEH annual meeting, member of the United States National Committee for the International Union for the History and Philosophy of Science, member of the executive council for the Society for the History of Technology, and member of the advisory board for *Technology and Culture*.

Treasurer

Mark Madison:

Mark Madison has been a member of ASEH since 1994. He has been ASEH Treasurer since 2001. During his tenure ASEH finances have more than doubled, tax returns and oversight procedures were begun and standardized, our investment portfolio has been broadened strategically, and many financial duties formally carried out by partners have been brought back to the Society. When he is not balancing books, Mark is the Historian for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, where he teaches courses at the National Conservation Training Center and manages a Conservation Archive with approximately 500,000 items related to environmental history—including the ASEH archives.

Secretary

Sarah Elkind:

I am a professor of History at San Diego State University, where I teach courses in American and global environmental history, often with some public history mixed in. My books, *How Local Politics Shape Federal Policy* (North Carolina, 2011) and *Bay Cities and Water Politics* (Kansas, 1998) focus on politics and policy-making in American cities in the nineteenth and twentieth century. My current projects include a textbook on global environmental crises, and two smaller studies that examine American western expansion and water resource development in the context of transnational discussions of national identity and nation building in the nineteenth century. I have held distinguished Fulbright and NSF fellowships.

I value ASEH as an intellectual home for a wide variety of scholars; the strength of this organization lies in its active support for new scholars and colleagues. I would like to see the organization continue efforts to diversify our membership through mentoring programs and outreach to local environmental organizations. Because environmental history has so much to contribute to larger public debates on environmental and social policy, I would also like to see the ASEH reach out to the larger community, perhaps as a source of expertise for community action groups, public officials and the media.

I attended my first ASEH conference in Houston in 1991, and have served several terms on the executive committee since 1998. I compiled the first environmental history syllabus collection (1998), have served on nominating, prize, site-selection, diversity, and development committees. I have always prized ASEH for its collegiality and intellectual richness; I would be honored to contribute further to the organization.

Executive Committee:

Vote for THREE

Peter Alagona:

I attended my first ASEH conference as a graduate student in Denver in 2002, and I have considered the society my intellectual home ever since. I am honored to have been nominated to serve on the executive committee. If elected, I would work to build on our society's firm foundation in four areas: I would (1) aim to increase its ethnic, geographic, and disciplinary diversity, (2) seek to create more opportunities for promising undergraduate students to participate in our events and activities, (3) work to provide more professional development for scholars seeking to acquire grant funds to support their research, and (4) advocate for our society to play a more prominent role in public discourse about the environment.

In my day job, I am an associate professor of history, geography, and environmental studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Although I identify foremost as an environmental historian, I consider myself an interdisciplinary scholar with diverse training and interests in science studies, conservation biology, wildlife ecology, and nature-culture geography. My first book, *After the Grizzly: Endangered Species and the Politics of Place in California* was published in 2013. I am currently working on a second book project about the history of wildlife in American cities.

The key overarching concept in all of my research is *habitat*. This idea may at first seem rather simple—habitat is where a species lives—but it has a long history and contested place in environmental science, management, politics, and law, as well as popular ideas about and experiences of nature. My work explores what happens when humans share space and resources (their habitats) with other species: how we interact with non-human creatures, how we make sense these interactions, why we fight so much about them, what we can learn from them, and how we might use these lessons to foster a more just and sustainable society.

www.peteralagona.com

Lynne Heasley:

I am an associate professor at Western Michigan University, jointly appointed in the Department of History and the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability. At WMU, I teach environmental and water history, the history of the (Laurentian) Great Lakes, and introduction to sustainability.

My earliest research was in West Africa, but today I am part of a community of scholars, writers, policy-makers, artists, and activists concerned with the vast Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system of inland seas. Following my first book, *A Thousand Pieces of Paradise: Landscape and Property in the Kickapoo Valley* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005; reprinted 2012), I co-edited and contributed to *Border Flows: A Century of the Canadian-American Water Relationship* (Calgary: University of Calgary

Press, 2016). Many of Border Flows' contributors are long-standing ASEH members. We also reached out to legal scholars, political scientists, policy-makers, and nature writers—a collaboration entirely natural to the ASEH's inclusive approach. My current book project, *The Paradox of Abundance: Essays on the Great Lakes*, represents a riskier effort (for me, at least) to unite environmental history with creative non-fiction and lyric essay writing.

Going on twenty years, the ASEH has been fundamental to my development as a scholar, educator, and environmentally concerned citizen. If I am elected to the Executive Committee, I'll contribute in any way needed. But I am especially interested in two areas: (1) how we can support our members' efforts to sustain complex research, educational, and outreach profiles while still maintaining a collective sense of identity and purpose; and (2) how we as a professional society of environmental historians will engage this larger political moment of uncertainty and disorientation, and this larger global moment of climate change.

Alan MacEachern:

I am a Professor of History at the University of Western Ontario. As the founding director of [NiCHE: Network in Canadian History & Environment](#), and an early participant and now board member in [ICEHO](#), I have long been active in promoting environmental history internationally. I have co-written and co-edited textbooks on [environmental history methodology](#), [Canada's history](#), and [digital history](#); co-edited a [Canadian special issue](#) of *Environmental History*; wrote "[The Academic Alphabet](#)" and "[The Associate](#)" columns for the higher education magazine *University Affairs*; and am the editor of the [Canadian History & Environment series](#) at the University of Calgary Press. In terms of my own environmental history research, I have written books and articles on national parks, climate, natural disasters, environmentalism, back-to-the-land movements, tourism, and Canada's size and territorial expansion.

I would welcome the opportunity to serve on the ASEH Executive Committee. For me as for many environmental historians from beyond the U.S., the association has been critical to my development in the field, and I have attended almost every one of its conferences over the past two decades. And I have sought to give back, having co-chaired the association's Nominating Committee and sat on its George Perkins Marsh, Leopold-Hidy, and Alice Hamilton prize committees. The ASEH seems poised for generational change, and it is critical that we draw in and involve young scholars more. While I can no longer consider myself among them, I believe one of NiCHE's signal successes has been in involving young scholars, engaging them as active members, training them in digital methods, and helping them disseminate their research results. If elected, I would seek to promote such activities within the ASEH.

Kieko Matteson:

I am an Associate Professor at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, where I have taught since 2009. As a forest historian, scholar of Revolutionary France, and former Executive Director of the World History Association, I am accustomed to bridging disparate

approaches to historical scholarship. My first book, *Forests in Revolutionary France: Conservation, Community, and Conflict, 1669-1848* (Cambridge University Press Studies in Environment and History, 2015) reflects these diverse influences.

A member of ASEH since I was a graduate student, I have served the organization in a number of ways: the Dissertation Prize Committee (2010), the Advisory Board for Professional Development and Public Engagement from 2012 onward, and most recently as a member of the 2017 Annual Meeting Program Committee. I was also researcher and co-coordinator from 2011 to 2014 for the ASEH's Special History of World War II Activities in Pacific Island Park Units, a public history project commissioned by the National Park Service.

The ASEH has long shown a commitment to interdisciplinarity and outreach. As a member of the Executive Committee, I would like to expand on these efforts by cultivating connections with emerging subfields in literature, the natural and social sciences, and the arts, and by pursuing opportunities for engagement with communities underrepresented in academia whose pressing contemporary concerns -- potable water, pipelines, sea level rise, food sovereignty and more-- have complex yet comparatively little known historical roots. Such efforts could go hand in hand with the development of new research and professional opportunities for graduate students and post-docs while at the same time invigorating the ASEH's mission to advance understanding of current environmental issues and foster dialogue between the public and scholarly community.

Alan Mikhail:

I am professor of history at Yale University where I specialize in environmental and Middle Eastern history. I have long been an active and engaged member of ASEH, having served the Society in numerous capacities. I was on the Program Committee of our 2016 conference in Seattle and on the Alice Hamilton Prize Committee. Since 2013, I have had the pleasure and honor of serving on the Editorial Board of *Environmental History* and as such have also been a member of the Leopold-Hidy Prize Committee. Through my engagement with ASEH and through my scholarship, I have been part of the Society's and the field's expansion over the past decade into new geographies and scholarly communities. I have similarly worked hard to take environmental history out into the world by showcasing the field in Middle East Studies through my own research and teaching and by presenting at various Middle East Studies venues.

I am the author of three books and editor of another—all on topics in Middle East environmental history. The most recent, *Under Osman's Tree: The Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and Environmental History*, will be published by the University of Chicago Press in the spring of 2017. I have published in many of the major journals in the fields of environmental history, Middle Eastern history, and history writ large and serve on the editorial boards of several book series and journals, including the Palgrave Macmillan Series in World Environmental History. Both of my authored books won prizes, and my

article in the *American Historical Review* won the Alice Hamilton Prize and my article in *Environmental History* the Leopold-Hidy Prize. I have served on the board of the Middle East Studies Association and am currently the Director of Undergraduate Studies in my department. This and other professional and institutional experience I believe prepares me to do the work that the Executive Committee requires, and, needless to say, it would be an honor to serve ASEH in this capacity.

Conevery Bolton Valencius:

I have lived and worked in the mid-South, the Midwest, the West Coast, and the East Coast, and I have the academic degrees and seasonal allergies to prove it. I've taught at an Ivy League school (Harvard), an emerging-elite university (Washington University in St. Louis), and a public campus (UMass Boston), and I'm starting a new job now at a Jesuit Institution, Boston College. I worked out in the non-academic world before starting a PhD, I've taught as a history professor, and I worked as a free range academic raising kids while writing a second book.

As an ASEH council member, I'd try hard to listen to our membership, speak for the concerns of those in many institutions and job situations, and advocate for the public role of environmental advocates in the perilous situation in which we must face global climate change amid political denial of scientific and research findings. I graduated Little Rock Central High in 1986, got a degree in History at Stanford in 1989, worked in San Francisco, earned a PhD in the history of science at Harvard in 1998, and then started a career as a historian. I published *The Health of the Country: How Americans Settlers Understood Themselves and Their Land* in 2002, and was prouder than I'd ever been to receive the George Perkins Marsh Prize. I've written on American western exploration, early American environmental science, and the environmental work of writer Anton Chekhov. In 2013 I published *The Lost History of the New Madrid Earthquakes*, and I'm working now on a book about earthquakes and energy development.

Nominating Committee:

Vote for TWO

Sarah Mittlefehldt:

Sarah Mittlefehldt is an environmental historian who is interested in the use of history for thinking about current sustainability challenges. She is assistant professor of environmental studies and sustainability at Northern Michigan University, and author of *Tangled Roots: The Appalachian Trail and American Environmental Politics* (University of Washington Press, 2013). Her work has been published in *Environmental History*, *Environmental Justice*, *Energy Research and Social Science*, and in many non-academic venues. Her current research examines the cultural and political barriers that renewable energy advocates have faced in their efforts to decentralize power systems since the 1970s.

Sarah has been attending the annual meeting of the ASEH since 2006, and the conversations at these meetings have shaped her ideas of what it means to be an engaged academic and a constructive colleague. She has been looking forward to becoming more involved in the organization, and would be honored to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Liza Piper:

I'm an environmental historian and an associate professor in the Department of History & Classics at the University of Alberta. I've been an active member of the ASEH for ten years: I was the webmaster for aseh.net for three years (2006-2009) and served as chair of the Alice Hamilton Prize committee in 2014-15. I present regularly at the annual meetings, I have published in *Environmental History*, and I won the Rachel Carson dissertation prize in 2006. Beyond the ASEH, I have worked hard to promote environmental history in Canada. My 2009 book, *The Industrial Transformation of Subarctic Canada*, was published in UBC Press's Nature History Society series. From 2007-15, I was an executive member with NiCHE, the Network in Canadian History and Environment. From 2012-15, I was the lone environmental historian on the editorial board of the *Canadian Historical Review*. I currently serve as a committee member with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the Awards to Scholarly Publications Program, the key research and publications granting agencies in Canada. I have also been very active in a mountain studies initiative based at the University of Alberta, including serving on the steering committee for our interdisciplinary international conference, Thinking Mountains, in 2012 and 2015. It would be an honour to serve on the ASEH's Nominating Committee, and I would bring to this position considerable energy and enthusiasm, as well as a commitment to equity and diversity that informs all of my service work.

Kendra Smith-Howard:

I am an associate professor of history at University at Albany (State University of New York), where I enjoy the opportunity to teach a diverse array of students about environmental history, history of food and agriculture, and the twentieth-century United States.

As a scholar, I am interested in the intersections between environmental history and the histories of consumer culture, agriculture, and public health. My first book, *Pure and Modern Milk: An Environmental History since 1900*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2013. I have also published in *Agricultural History* (for which I now serve on the editorial board), and in edited volumes. My newest project, a so-called dirty environmental history of cleaning up, examines the shifting cleaning practices, technologies, and industries in the twentieth century from dry cleaners to diaper manufacturers.

An active member of ASEH for more than ten years, I regularly attend and present at the annual meeting. These meetings, and the work of ASEH members as scholars, sustain my hope, sharpen my thinking, and stimulate my intellectual curiosity. I would be honored to serve the organization and its **members**.

Laura A. Watt:

It is a great honor to be nominated for the ASEH Nominating Committee; ever since I attended my first ASEH conference as a graduate student in 1995 (Vegas, baby!), this organization has been my intellectual home. I'm about as interdisciplinary as they come, with degrees in vertebrate ecology, natural resources management, and environmental policy, and professional experience working for The Nature Conservancy and a private consulting firm as a public lands planner—and now in my eleventh year (and recently promoted to full professor) at Sonoma State University, teaching in Environmental Studies and Planning, I continue to be anything but a classically-trained historian. Yet when people ask me what my “field” is, the closest I can come is environmental history, taking the changing relationships between humans and their environments seriously. Looking back over my CV, my involvement with ASEH stands out clearly: presenting papers and/or organizing panels at nearly every conference since 2001; publishing in *Environmental History*; serving on the Program Committee for the 2007 meeting in Baton Rouge and 2011 in Phoenix; and co-chairing the Local Arrangements Committee for our 2014 meeting in San Francisco. I also chaired the Sam Hayes Research Fellowship committee this autumn.

I've just published *The Paradox of Preservation: Wilderness and Working Landscapes at Point Reyes National Seashore* (UC Press), examining the impacts of agency management on a working, lived-in landscape over time, and am now starting a new project, an environmental history of the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory, tracing how changing trends in science and land use, particularly wilderness and outdoor recreation, have shaped both the landscape of the Lab and the science it produces. My work brings together threads from environmental history, public lands policy, cultural

geography, and the ecological sciences themselves—and at Sonoma State, I spend as much time collaborating with colleagues in other departments as with those in my own. I have always been impressed by the ASEH's embrace of interdisciplinary scholars, as well as journalists, advocates, and other kinds of working practitioners in environmental fields. If elected to the Nominating Committee, I will continue to focus attention on this important quality of our organization.