

World Forum for Acoustic Ecology

WFAE NEWS QUARTERLY



g. ferrington

July-September 2014
Volume 11, Number 3

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WFAE President's Report by Eric Leonardson

The 2013 issue of *Soundscape: The Journal for Acoustic Ecology* is being sent to WFAE Affiliates and their members in mid-June. Guest editors Makis Solomos and Kostas Paparrigopoulos present informative and provocative articles from the symposium, "Music and Ecologies of Sound: Theoretical and practical projects for a listening of the world," which was held in Paris in May, 2013. The WFAE thanks [Université Paris 8](#) for its financial support in helping the WFAE produce this volume of our annual professional journal. Planning is underway for this year's and next year's *Soundscape*. Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Phylis

Johnson, and I continue our efforts to return the publication date back to its intended cycle, having the 2014 issue out before the end of this year. Past issues are free to download from the [Journal web page](#). We welcome both library and individual subscribers. The new journal is available at no charge for WFAE members.

Recent and upcoming conferences

[Invisible Places | Sounding Cities](#), a WFAE endorsed symposium on sound, urbanism, and sense of place, happens July 18-20 in the charming city of Viseu, Portugal. Keynote speeches by Jean-Paul Thibaud, Brandon Labelle, and Salome Voegelin explore an integrated, holistic approach to understanding and resolving current and future problems addressed by urban planning, architecture, and sound as a public art form. We are grateful for the support of the Mayor of Viseu - Câmara Municipal de Viseu for its support in the annual [Jardins Efémeros](#) (Ephemeral Gardens) arts festival. Francisco López is the featured artist, providing a performance and workshop. I look forward to reporting back to you on the discussion on starting a new WFAE affiliate group in Portugal.

The WFAE endorsed, [Sound in the Land](#) festival and conference on music and the environment, took place from June 5-8 at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo University, Ontario, Canada. The conference sought new perspectives on Mennonites, and included a culturally diverse participation of First Nations people, scholars, composers, poets, authors, scientists, theologians, teachers, and students. The music ranged from folk, to religious hymns and choirs, classical orchestra, to electro-acoustic, soundscape compositions, and phonography. "Earth Songs" was a superb multi-media production by Korean artist [Cecilia Kim](#) using Korean traditional instrumentation and players, and visual projections. Students from Hochschule Darmstadt, Germany, gave informative



presentations and served on a panel discussion along with students from Canada. Matt Griffin and Eric Powell represented our WFAE Affiliate; the [Canadian Association for Sound Ecology/Association Canadienne pour l'Écologie Sonore](#) (CASE/ACÉS). Under the moniker, "Electricity Is Magic," Matt and Eric presented their projects, "Half Steps Are Okay" in Chicago and "Under Living Skies: Swede Lake," in Saskatchewan.

Canadian composer and World Soundscape Project founder, [R. Murray Schafer](#) and his wife, Eleanor James told us about interspecies communications in sound, and spontaneously engaged us in songs with participants of Schafer's ongoing Wolf Project. From the Biological Sciences, keynote speaker [Gus Mills](#) fascinated us with sounds, images, and information from his life-long study of large carnivores of the cat family in South Africa. His wife, Margie Mills, presented her experiences—wonderful and at times tragic—of fieldwork with her husband, of child rearing, of loss, and of helping local people and refugees around Kruger National Park. Professor Carol Ann Weaver organized the conference, the third in a series starting in 2004. Her endless energy and enthusiasm drove the conference. Eight hours after the end of this conference Carol celebrated her retirement from 29 years of teaching at Conrad Grebel. I hope and believe this is the start of great projects for her in our shared futures. *(Photo: Dawn Concert on June 8 featuring music by R. Murray Schafer, Jennifer Butler, and Emily Doolittle, performed on and around Columbia Lake, Waterloo, Ontario. Pictured at left, R. Murray Schafer with his wife Eleanor James)*

On March 27 and 28 I had the pleasure to present in the [Urban Soundscapes and Critical Citizenship](#) conference at the beautiful campus of University of Limerick. This was not a WFAE endorsed conference, however it deserves mention because of its concern with soundscapes. Many WFAE members from Canada, U.K., U.S., and Germany participated, too. The 17 presentations, including keynotes by Dr. Ursula Hemetek, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Dr. Giacomo Bottà, University of Helsinki (Urban Studies), Peter Cusack, CRiSAP/University of the Arts, London (Sound Arts Practices), and Milena Droumeva, Simon Fraser University (Acoustic Ecology), provided an in-depth and interdisciplinary look into the social, aesthetic, and technological aspects of this multi-faceted topic. We were essentially our own small audience. This made for especially substantive and memorable discussions. Plans are underway to publish some of the presentations later this year

WFAE leadership update

The WFAE owes a debt of thanks to Secretary Gary Ferrington for his care and dedication to the WFAE. For more than 18 years the WFAE website and this newsletter have been his labor of love. He is retiring from his post at the end of this year. We now seek a new member to carry on in Gary's place. He has been highly active, responsive, skilled, and immensely supportive in my role as President. Gary has been instrumental in organizing, communicating, and publishing the WFAE's online presence, among other Internet resources that help us to function. Are you the next WFAE Secretary? [Contact me](#) if you are interested.

To help understand our association, I will provide some explanation. The structure serves to support our relationships as an associated group of societies and organizations around the world. Most are identified by nationality and region, but other identities, e.g. professional, can form the basis for becoming an affiliated organization. These are the many bodies around the world where Acoustic Ecology is applied and made meaningful. The main page of the WFAE website states: "The World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE), founded in 1993, is an international association of [affiliated organizations](#) and individuals in Europe, North America, Japan, and Australia that share a common concern with the state of the world's soundscapes. WFAE members represent a multi-disciplinary spectrum of individuals engaged in the study of the social, cultural and ecological aspects of the sonic environment." We are very excited about helping people form new affiliates.

The WFAE's Executive officers, of which I serve as President, is a small group of unpaid volunteers. We serve as non-voting members of the [WFAE Board](#). Members of our affiliates

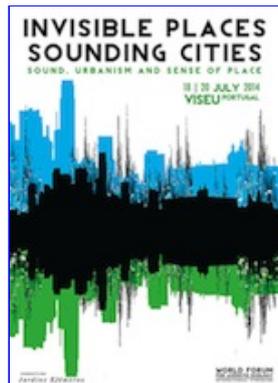
serve as voting Board representatives and any ad hoc committees as needed. Members also serve on the Journal Editorial Committee, chaired by Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Phylis Johnson. Please visit the [Journal Editorial Committee](#) page to learn more.

Every conference we are asked to "support," or "endorse," is a unique event. We depend upon the interests, actions, and resources of others, including our [Affiliate Organizations](#) to organize them on a local level. Comprehensive administrative protocols for vetting and organizing conferences have yet to be created. Given the various situations in which these events arise, having a "system" that addresses all contingencies is an elusive, time-consuming process. Perhaps this is a task for a new generation of WFAE members who will tirelessly and devotedly volunteer time and ideas to tasks such as these. Until then, we depend on friendly and open communications to conduct WFAE activities in as uncomplicated and straightforward a way as possible.

To reiterate, the WFAE Board is comprised of elected representatives from each of our Affiliates. Every member of an **Affiliate Organization** is a member of the WFAE. As a WFAE member your ideas, concerns, and participation are welcome and necessary for the WFAE to function and thrive as a network of associated groups. As a WFAE member you have a voice in the WFAE through your Affiliate Representative. I invite you to see their profiles on the [WFAE Board Members page](#).

Groups from, Spain, Brazil, and Peru have expressed their interest establishing affiliates. I am excited and eager to help—likewise for continued discussions on making formal associations with established, like-minded organizations. The WFAE welcomes more input to help coordinate and inform the world about all the exciting and disparate activities happening in and sound and the environment. For information on forming an affiliate please visit the [Affiliate Organization page](#) and contact us. to learn about abundant, diverse, and inspired activities of our members, please visit the [WFAE News](#) section of this newsletter.

Last but not least, please remember, on July 18, 2014 all are invited to participate, observe, engage, and celebrate ways of listening with care for our sonic environment in the annual [World Listening Day](#). This year's theme is "Listen to you!"



18-24 JULY: INVISIBLE PLACES - SOUNDING CITIES

(Sound, Urbanism and Sense of Place) Viseu, Portugal. Often acoustic space is ignored in the construction of a public space, yet the negative impact this has does not seem to get many complaints. People rarely require more quality of the sonic world, because the average consumer does not have the necessary references to change this state of affairs. We know that the prevalence of noise or sounds that do not convey any social significance and are a disturbance of the quality of life, reduces the ability to identify with the place we inhabit. It is therefore urgent to think about the acoustical problems societies are facing today and integrate that thinking in urban

planning, architecture and management of public space, because the idea we have of ourselves, our personal awareness and the relationships we build in the external world, are inextricably linked to a space. We all exist somewhere. And personal identity also relates to this. [Read More](#)

Header Photo: "Sky Pond" Ridgefield, Washington State (USA) Wild Life Reservation by Gary Ferrington, WFAE Secretary.

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WFAE: MEMBER NEWS

~ World Listening Day

The World Listening Project (WLP) and the Midwest Society for Acoustic Ecology (MSAE) invite WFAE members to participate in the 2014 World Listening Day, on Friday, July 18. On-going events will happen over the week of July 14th-20th.

The purposes of World Listening Day are to: Celebrate the listening practices of the world and the ecology of its acoustic environments; Raise awareness about the growing number of individual and group efforts that creatively explore the Acoustic Ecology based on the pioneering efforts of the World Soundscape Project, World Forum for Acoustic Ecology, La Semaine du Son, Deep Listening Institute, among many others; and Design and implement educational initiatives that explore these concepts and practices. This year's theme for World Listening Day is "Listen To You!" For suggested activities and events visit [The World Listening Project](#) web site.

Participation in the past four World Listening Days exceeded expectations. In this fifth year even greater activity and interest is anticipated. Please join in the 2014 World Listening Day activities by emailing worldlistening@gmail.com about your plans. Be sure to include "World Listening Day" in the subject line or [download](#) the 2013 World Listening Day participation form.

~ Australian Forum for Acoustic Ecology: Reports by Anthony Magen, Leah Barclay, and Susan Frykberg

AFAE Members **Susan Frykberg** and **Warren Burt** are busy with a *Melbourne 60*60*. They note, "We have invited local composers to submit a work one minute or less, which is then sequenced for an hour long presentation. However, we got so many entries that we now have 2 *Melbourne 60*60s*!! The presentations will take place at [ACMA 2014](#)".

A new work by Susan Frykberg *Remembering Robin*, for 'Cello and pre-recorded voice, is to be premiered at the Australasian Computer music Conference this July in Melbourne. It is the last in her series called The Audio Birth Project, featuring interviews with her mother and sisters on birth-giving, combined with soundscape, electroacoustic sound/processing and live instruments. The Audio Birth Project was funded by the Canada Council. Susan is also developing soundscape courseware based on her work with Barry Truax, the World Soundscape Project, her teaching at Simon Fraser University, Canada and her activities with the AFAE in Australia. She is intending to make it available from 2015 in a variety of

formats ranging from block courses (in Europe, North America, Australasia and Asia), and on the internet.

The AFAE launched a new members newsletter in 2014 that includes updates on projects, events and opportunities across Australia. The organisation has continued to expand beyond Melbourne with new members and partnerships in Queensland and several national projects in development.

The AFAE is supporting [ACMC 2014](#), the annual conference of the Australasian Computer Music Association. The conference provides a forum for composers and researchers with an interest in sound, music technology and computer music to showcase their research and creative work. ACMC 2014 is hosted by the Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) and the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music (MCM) on July 9-11, 2014. AFAE board members **Susan Frykberg** and **Anthony Magen** will lead a sound walk and acoustic ecology session during the conference.

AFAE President **Dr Leah Barclay** was recently awarded a prestigious Synapse grant from the Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT) to work with the Australian Rivers Institute to explore new methods for acoustically monitoring three Queensland river systems. The project involves the establishment of site-specific listening labs to experiment with hydrophonic recording and sound diffusion to measure aquatic biodiversity including fresh-water fish populations – a key indicator of river health. River Listening explores the creative possibilities of aquatic bioacoustics and the potential for new approaches in the management and conservation of global river systems. As a pilot project, Barclay is joined by music technologist **Dr Toby Gifford** and **Dr Simon Linke**, one of Australia's leading freshwater conservation scientists, to produce Listening to the Thames at the 25th Anniversary Electronic Visualisation and the Arts in London, July 2014. Based on a live hydrophone audio-stream from the Thames, this immersive AV installation will deliberately inhabit a liminal space at the arts-science nexus, seeking to highlight the positive contributions each domain can have on the other, and document an emerging model of aesthetic-scientific exploration.

The AFAE is supporting the 'Listening and Environment' symposium, a one-day event on Sunday 10th August, with workshops, panel discussions, installations and performances all revolving around acoustic ecology. Hosted by Cooroora Institute on the Sunshine Coast of Australia, participants will be invited to create their own sonic responses to the local environment and collaborate in creating site-specific sound installations. Workshops, panels and performances will be led by **Dr Vanessa Tomlinson** from the Queensland Conservatorium, AFAE President Dr Leah Barclay and **Dr Tamsin Kerr**, the director of Cooroora Institute. Visit the [Cooroora Institute](#) for more for further information and registrations.

AFAE members will be attending the WFAE endorsed conference Invisible Places in Portugal in July 2014 and will look forward to connecting with other members of WFAE affiliated organisations during the conference.

~ American Society for Acoustic Ecology: Report by Hethre Contant

On June 10th, ASAE member **Hethre Contant** led the first of a series of three listening workshops at the College of Fine Arts in Sydney, Australia. She also answered interview questions for the student association [publication](#).

Member **Stephan Moore** reports that his [exhibition at Caramoor](#) has finally opened this past weekend. It received a nice [preview article](#) and [video](#) in the Wall Stree Journal, and a favorable review of the opening day activities from from [A Closer Listen](#)

The artist-team Biocultura (ASAE board member [Andrea Polli](#) and architectural designer **John Donalds**) has received Art Place funding to create The 'T' House at Ideafactory in Springfield Missouri opening August 1st. Inspired by the structure and function of traditional teahouses, The 'T' House is a temporary built structure for sharing and exploring microbiology and culture through screenings, dialogues, workshops and performances.

The ['T' House](#) is the second phase of a project that began with the Biokitchen (([video](#) and [images](#)), a mobile, hybrid kitchen/biology laboratory. The Biokitchen was initially hosted by the Explora! Science museum in Albuquerque for the International Association of

Science and Technology Centers (ASTC) 2013 Conference and is currently in use at the University of New Mexico. On August 16th, Polli and Donalds will air a radio program on [free103point9](#) about the project including excerpts from a interviews with a series of international art and biotechnology experts. For more information and to [hear the broadcast](#).

Christopher Preissing and **Greg O'Drobinak** incorporated field recordings into sound scores created for *NON:op's* opera project *f(H2T) from Here to There*, an immersive, self-guided, site-specific opera presented on April 24-26 at Chicago's Bridgeport Art Center. Source materials for Preissing and O'Drobinak's work came from urban and natural soundscapes collected on the streets of Chicago's loop area and the Midewin Tallgrass Prairie, among other places. For the production both O'Drobinak and Preissing constructed platforms fitted with low frequency transducers that allowed the spectator to feel the sonic vibrations.

Earlier this year, MSAE member **Norman W. Long** began his "Washington Park Sun Ra Sound Walks," a multimedia project celebrating the soundscape of Chicago's Washington Park on the 100th anniversary of Sun Ra's birth. Its focus is on the park as a conduit for creative thought, cultural history, ecological preservation, and recreation. Learn more on his blog [Into The Breaks](#)

Following their success with [Sounding Out! Podcast Episode #7: Celebrate World Listening Day](#), MSAE members **Tom Haigh** and **Monica Ryan** are working with **Eric Leonardson** on a second podcast. This production will feature interviews with **Barry Truax** and **Sabine Breitsameter**. This podcast reflects on anniversaries of the WFAE and **R Murray Schafer's** 80th birthday in 2013, while mainly focusing on recent developments in urban soundscapes. This production is meant to serve students and teachers, and may also serve as a prelude to 2014's [Invisible Places | Sounding Cities](#) symposium in Viseu, Portugal. The podcast publication date and host will to be announced soon.

On September 29–October 5 in Frankfurt, Germany ASAE member and Midwest Society for Acoustic Ecology (MSAE) co-chair **Eric Leonardson** will lead a one-day Children's Hörspiel Workshop. He will also lead an environmental audio production and FullDome soundscape concert with university students. They will use a Wave Field Synthesis system provided by the Fraunhofer Institute for Digital Media Technology.

On August 1–31 MSAE member **Norman W. Long** will have [Electro-Acoustic Dubcology III](#) performed in [Florasonic](#), the environmental sound series in the Fern Room of the Lincoln Park Conservatory, 2391 N Stockton Drive in Chicago. Florasonic is open to the public and curated by **Lou Mallozzi**, a founding member and Executive Director of the Experimental Sound Studio.

Saturday, July 19 the MSAE and World Listening Project (WLP) will lead a soundwalk in Miller Woods, in the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore for World Listening Day 2014. Meet us at the Paul H. Douglas Environmental Education Center, 100 N Lake Street, Gary, Indiana. This year's theme is "Listen To You!" July also marks the fourth year that the MSAE and WLP have partnered together with the U.S. National Park Service in leading soundwalks for the public at Miller Woods.

On Tuesday, June 10 The Nature Conservancy Canada published "[Acoustic Ecology and Ethical Listening](#)" by **Eric Leonardson** on its blog: This article is a abridged version of an earlier piece written and published in the City Creatures blog.

On Saturday, June 7, Eric Leonardson's soundscape composition entitled "Awash, Interior/Exterior Survey" was played in the "Soundscape Concert" program in Sound in the Land 2014, an international festival/conference of Mennonites and music endorsed by the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE), held June 5–8, at Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo, Canada.

On Friday, June 6, Eric Leonardson presented "Acoustic Ecology and Ethical Listening" at Sound in the Land 2014 international festival/conference.

On Thursday, June 5 Eric Leonardson addressed attendees as President of the WFAE for the opening Conference Welcome ceremony of Sound in the Land 2014.

On Thursday, May 29, Ravenswood Elementary School and the MSAE hosted a presentation by **Lauren M. Ronsse**, PhD entitled "Effects of Classroom Acoustical Environments on Student Achievement." Dr. Ronsse is an Assistant Professor of Acoustics

in the Audio Arts & Acoustics Department at Columbia College Chicago. More information on the acoustical state of public schools and Dr. Ronsse's talk will be posted on the MSAE website.

On Saturday, May 24 MSAE member **Monica Ryan** led a public soundwalk for the MSAE in [Miller Woods](#), in the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Attendance was great and participation of people from Chicago and Gary. National Park Service Ranger Julie Larsen was finally able to participate, and was so moved by the experience that she is now incorporating sound and listening into her future nature walks. Monica Ryan teaches at Columbia College Chicago and The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

On May 12, The Omnimuseum Project published "[On Sound, Listening and Public Engagement](#)," an online feature article by Eric Leonardson. The Omnimuseum Project is a non-profit, collaborative effort devoted to embracing the world as a site for informal learning, founded by M. W. Burns.

Thursday and Friday, May 1-2, in preparation for the Forum on [Forum on Ethics and Nature: A Cascade of Loss and Recovery](#), ASAE member and MSAE co-chair Eric Leonardson led a soundwalk for staff and presenters in a pre-conference workshop at Windblown Hill, childhood home of Strachan Donnelley, founder of the [Center for Humans and Nature](#). On the following day, Leonardson led two soundwalks focusing on bird sounds for attendees of the Forum on Ethics and Nature. This symposium was co-hosted by the Center for Humans and Nature and the Chicago Botanic Garden, to address the ethical dilemmas faced in responding loss due to massive species extinctions—including humans. This aim includes recovery of both cultural and biological diversity.

On Monday, April 28, "Acoustic Ecology and Ethical Listening" by Eric Leonardson was published in City Creatures, the blog of the Center for Humans and Nature. This coincided with the center's [Forum on Ethics and Nature: A Cascade of Loss and Recovery](#) on May 2, 2014. Leonardson's piece served as an introduction to explored his personal interests in human-animal connections in sound and acoustic ecology, and to playfully suggest what a "listening ethic" might be. The WFAE Quarterly News has re-published this piece in this July-August newsletter.

On Thursday, March 27 Eric Leonardson presented "Our Sonic Playground: A Model For Active Engagement in Urban Soundscape" in [Urban Soundscapes & Critical Citizenship](#)

~ Canadian Association for Soundscape Ecology: Report by Carmen Braden

The new [CASE website](#) blog has an entry from CASE's WFAE Representative **Carmen Braden** on the sounds of spring in Canada's sub-Arctic.



Another recent production in the world of Canadian soundscapes: [The Yellowknife Old Town Soundwalk](#) is a quirky audio tour that weaves together soundscape, original music and storytelling to create a unique guide through a city in northern Canada – Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. From bush planes to sled dogs to barges and stories told by the people who have made this scrappy, subarctic town their home, the soundwalk is a great way to experience life north of the 60th parallel. Originally created for radio broadcast via micro transmitter by radio producer **Janna Graham** of Umva Media, the freshly designed app by Strong Interpretation has made the walk accessible to both android and apple users. Featuring maps, archival photos and historical information, this is a great way to navigate your way through town. The Yellowknife Old Town Soundwalk app can be [downloaded](#) from online.

The Hellenic Society for Acoustic Ecology

The Hellenic Society for Acoustic Ecology (HSAE) is hosting, the 3rd Conference of Acoustic Ecology, "[Acoustic Ecology and Education](#)" 28-30 June 2014 at the University Museum of Athens, Dome 5, Plaka, Athens. It is organized in collaboration with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Education, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

~ Other News: Reports: Perla Olivia Rodriguez, and online sources and postings.

In Mexico: An April 30th *Día internacional de la lucha contra el ruido* (International day Against Noise) conference was held in Mexico City that included academic presentations and cultural activities featuring specialists, researchers, artists and sound designers. Participants were informed about issues regarding noise as a public health problem and the consequences it produces on the population.

The activities began with the presentation of a Noise Map for the Metropolitan Area of Mexico by **Dr. Fausto Rodríguez**, UAM Azcapotzalco. "The psychosocial effects of noise generated by urban activities" was presented by **Dr. Ana Lidia Dominguez**, who noted that regardless of the physical damage caused by noise pollution, there are effects that contribute to social disintegration, the low academic performance of students and damage to the psychological health of people, among other noise related effects.

Dr. Perla Olivia Rodriguez, researcher at the Institute for Library and Information Research, UNAM and **Mtra. Susana Arias Belmont** gave a lecture about noise in schools. In this presentation the researchers presented the *Project Sounds In The School* as a social violence prevention program in early childhood education.

The book *Sound Guide for a City* by **Dr. Jimena de Gortari** was presented in which the author analyzes noisy city environments, and explores the soundscape rehabilitation of a downtown section of Barcelona's sound history. He notes the urgency of improving acoustic urban spaces by looking for alternative solutions to noise issue problems.

In a politic fórum, in the Legislative Assembly of the Federal District (ALDF) held a forum for the discussion and analysis titled "Noise in the City", with the aim of finding a dialogue between different authorities and citizens to promote the exchanging ideas and solutions around noise pollution problems in Mexico City.

The International Day Against Noise involved the Fonoteca Nacional of CONACULTA, Universidad Iberoamericana, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, Instituto de Investigaciones Bibliotecológicas y de la Información de la UNAM, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Instituto Politécnico Nacional, Legislative Assembly of the Federal District (ALDF); Embassy of Spain in Mexico, through the Spain Cultural Center.

The organization and curation of this initiative was by **Jimena de Gortari Ludlow** and **Ana Lidia Dominguez Ruiz**, co-founders of *Project SOS Noise* sound information, who create a meeting point for researchers, artists, government institutions and citizens.

Svetlana Maras, composer and sound artist from Serbia, shared a poster presentation at the 2012 Global Composition Conference about her work *Armoniapolis*. At that point, the project was at its starting phase, but in 2013 a website was launched and work on the project continues. Maras writes, "Armoniapolis is a musical concept (a web application is only one realisation of it; a printed booklet is another, etc.) that provides a way to recompose urban sound environments with the use of short textual instructions. I would like to give workshops worldwide - teach people about the concept and at the same time, gather the material that will become part of the Armoniapolis website and booklet. Those interested in this project can access [Armoniapolis](#) online.

Jim Metzner, a phonographer who "uses natural sound the way that National Geographic uses photographs", has received a [Grammy Foundation award](#) for a project with the goal of preparing "... a sound archive for preservation, focusing on DATs, which are most at risk. Preparation involves organizing, labeling, cataloging, stabilizing and refining an existing database. The collection includes Metzner's music and ambient sound field recordings from around the world since the '70s. **Jim Metzner** has produced LPs, CDs and several award-winning radio series with recordings from Boston, Brazil, Cuba, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, San Francisco, and Turkey.



The July, WFAE endorsed, Invisible Places Sounding Cities conference is conducting three workshops related to "ear cleaning" for all ages. These include: Silences That Sound, with **Anan Bento** and **Bruno Pinto** for 3-6 years; How We Listen To The World, with **Joan Estevao** for 7-12 year olds, and Field Recordings| Sonic Details of the City, with **Luis Anter**. Read more about the upcoming on the conferences [Facebook Page](#).

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WFAE: SOUND BITES

Cerrado Ambisônico: Spatial-acoustic research on the cerrado from the perspective of the performing arts. Dr. Iain David Mott of the Departamento de Artes Cênicas at the Universidade de Brasília is setting about to " ...study the acoustics and soundscape of the landforms and vegetation types of the national park Chapada dos Veadeiros and produce virtual acoustic environments from the investigations with applications in the performing arts. The project will emphasize the human voice in particular and its integration with the soundscape of the cerrado. Raw data from the field research will be used in the creation of new artworks and made available on the Internet to encourage dialogue between disciplines and new research." [Read](#)

Ethical questions about working with soundscapes (Soundwalking Interactions) Dr. Andra McCartney, Concordia University (Montreal), shares the text from her keynote presentation at the WFAE international conference Ideologies and Ethics in the Uses and Abuses of Sound, Koli, Finland, June 19, 2010. [Read Paper](#).

Uncube features acoustics in architecture. Issue (No. 21) of the online architecture magazine Uncube focuses on acoustics in architecture, mainly concert halls. A brief article on the WSP (p. 49) is also included. [Read](#)

Engineering The Sound of Our World (NPR: On Point) "Technology is reshaping our sound environment – from the car door to the washing machine to the street." With Tom Ashbrook. [Listen](#).



Sonic Boom: How digital technology is transforming our relationship with sound (The Atlantic) "Since approximately 1831, the precise definition of "peace and tranquility" has also been a matter of controversy. There are, particularly when it comes to controlling the din of "the biggest disorganized street in the whole country," competing constituencies: tourists, residents, bar owners, professional musicians, and less-professional musicians. (Photo: Atlantic) [Read](#)

Brain Waves into Music (New Scientist) Josef Parvizi, neuroscientist, and Chris Chafe a musician, explain how they built the Brain Stethoscope, which is both brain scanner and musical instrument. [Read](#)

Silence and Listening as Resources of Tourism Expertise in North Karelia (University of East Finland) "A new two-year project at the University of Eastern Finland is kicking off in April after years of preparation. The goal of the project, designed and managed by Dr. Noora Vikman, is to develop the silence of North Karelia of Finland into a tourism asset." [Read](#)

Two articles of interest. The Inaugural Special Issue of *Moebius Journal* (12.12.12) includes two articles of interest to those in the study of the ecology of sound: *Listening to the Soundscape And The Necessity of Double Description* by David Dunn and *Music, Soundscape and Acoustic Sustainability* by Barry Truax. [Access Journal](#)

What is Black and White Sound? (Trebuchet Magazine) Author Steven M. Miller explores the question, "If the color spectrum of vision is analogous to the audible frequency spectrum of sound, what is the aural analog to black & white photography?" [Read](#)

Radio Aporee and World Listening Day 2014. Radio Aporee invites you to participate in the 5th World Listening Day and help create a sonic snapshot of the world, on July 18, 2014. [Read](#)

Preserving Audio For The Future Is A Race Against Time (NPR) The US Library of Congress is one of thousands of institutions, large and small, trying to make sure that future historians — and even future archaeologists — have access to sound recordings. [Read/Listen](#)

The Machine That's Saving the History of Recorded Sound (Atlantic) "A device in the basement of the Library of Congress produces images of sound, echoing the reason recording devices were invented in the first place." Includes link to de Martinville's April 9, 1860 recording of the French folksong, "Au Clair de la Lune," the earliest known recording of a human voice. [Read](#)

Tune in to some genuinely wild music (The Telegraph) "A new symphony will blend orchestral music with the harmonies of the wild to draw attention to vanishing natural soundscapes." [Read](#)

New Algorithm Turns the Emotion of Language into Music.(Hyperallergic) "A new experiment in automation is generating music in response to the emotion of words in literature." Includes recorded sound examples. [Read/Listen](#)

Sonic migrations: natural sounds on the international exhibition scene (British Library) "The British Library is home to one of the largest and most important collections of wildlife and environmental sounds in the world. Coming in at over 160,000 recordings that cover all animal groups and biogeographical regions, the archive has served the needs of researchers for more than 40 years, both at home and further afield." [Read/Listen](#)



Giant Denman Horn goes on display (BBC News) "More than 80 years ago one piece of sound equipment was just as revolutionary as today's, although it wouldn't fit inside your house, let alone in your ear." (Photo: BBC) [View video](#)

Australian film tries to convey terror of war through a soundscape. "Canopy director Aaron Wilson explains why his almost-wordless war film, shot in the jungles of Singapore, speaks volumes." [Read](#)

How to Record Waves (Quiet Planet) Phonographer Gordon Hempton discusses how to capture the magical sound of ocean waves. [Read](#)

New Approaches to Sound and Place (University of Aberdeen) The University of Aberdeen offers a Masters degree in Sonic Arts through its Department of Music. It places an emphasis on both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in sonic arts and sound technology. It is intended for students coming from diverse backgrounds in one or more of the following: music, computing science, informatics, visual art, performance, theatre, media studies and film. [Read](#)

Bug's Penis Makes Loudest Animal Sound (WIRED UK) It might be smaller than a drawing pin, but it's also the loudest animal on the planet. "Well, relative to its body size, at least. The male lesser water boatman, aka *Micronecta scholtzi*, can create mating calls as loud as 99.2 decibels, which is the equivalent of sitting in the front row of a loud, full-blown orchestra, or standing 15 meters away from a hurtling freight train." [Read](#)

Spiders know the Meaning of Web Music (Phys.Org) "Spider silk transmits vibrations across a wide range of frequencies so that, when plucked like a guitar string, its sound carries information about prey, mates, and even the structural integrity of a web." [Read](#)



12 Bar Blues (PetFlow.com) "Peter the elephant is part of a group of elephants who live at Elephant Stay, a rescue habit for elephants in Thailand. The man playing the piano in the video noticed that elephants like Peter seem to be more playful right around dusk, and decided to see what they would do if there was some live music around them! (Photo: YouTube) [View video](#).



Birds On A Wire (Wimp.com) "Jarbas Agnelli is a filmmaker and musician that noticed a picture in the newspaper of birds on electrical wires. He applied the bird's formation to musical notes on a scale, and this is the song that he produced based on those notes." Photo: Paulo Pinto. [View video](#).

Human language's deep origins directly from birds, primates? (EarthSky) "In a new paper in *Frontiers in Psychology*, two MIT professors assert that by re-examining contemporary human language, we can see indications of how human communication could have evolved from the systems underlying the older communication modes of birds and other primates." [Read](#)

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WFAE: FEATURE ARTICLE

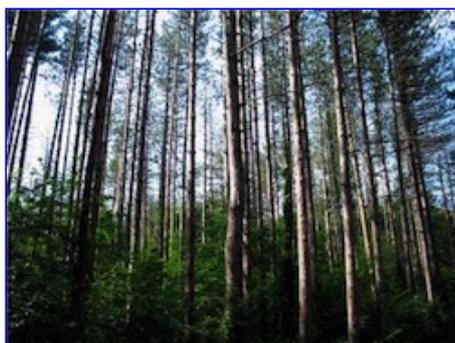
Reflections on Acoustic Ecology and Ethical Listening

By Eric Leonardson

INTRODUCTION: This article was originally published April 28, 2014 in [City Creatures](#), a blog for the Center for Humans and Nature. "Using personal experiences of animal encounters in the urban wilderness as his starting point, Leonardson suggests "ethical listening" as the acoustic ecologist's contribution to the multi-disciplinary conversation between the sciences and the arts as humanity faces complex and "wicked" choices about the planet's future. His article also serves as a basic introduction to Acoustic Ecology." Source: Nature Conservancy, Canada.

While I was walking alone in the Amherst College Wildlife Sanctuary last spring, I had a startling encounter. Without warning and from about twenty feet behind me, a dog barked. It was a single, short, sharp bark—the kind that my dogs make—a sudden short grunt from the gut—as if to say, "Alert! Who's that? Listen." We humans make a similar sound when surprised.

But this sound seemed to come from nowhere. I turned around, heart pounding and... no dog. No coyote either, nor a wolf or any other creature. Weird. What did I hear? The sound was certainly real enough to startle me. I looked toward the spot from where I thought the sound originated, judging from its timbre, loudness, and directional characteristics. No one there. I was still alone with the trees and plants. Perplexed and a little spooked, I scanned my surroundings for the phantom. With my ears and eyes trained and focused, and my heart still pounding, I tried to make sense of the scene, lest fear get the better of my imagination. I was standing in a small clearing amongst tall pine trees. The day was cloudy and gray. The tree canopy was swaying with the wind. That was the only sound: the stately ebb and flow of waves of wind passing through the conifers.



Differentiating between static features (ground, trees) and moving things (leaves and branches swaying in the wind above), I observed no shadows of birds or small mammals either. Just me, the wind, and the trees. Then, a minute later, I heard it again. As I turned to face the source of the sound, I could tell it was not at ground-level where I would expect a ghost dog to be, but emanating from above. I looked up. I noticed that the tall straight trunks of pines were not all growing perpendicular to the

ground. Some of the trees were partly uprooted and leaning against each other. Soon enough, when the wind velocity and direction was just right, I heard it again. Then I understood. The mysterious sound was a frictional noise at the point of contact between two of the trees, producing a resonant sound with a pitch and timbre that matched that of an animal voice, human or otherwise. I was reminded of similar sounds I make myself with a cello bow, rubber balls, and pieces of wood, all amplified with a piezo disc contact microphone inside my self-built instrument, the springboard. With this ghostly intrusion demystified, I remember being struck by how marvelous it was that the tree's bark could actually "bark." I usually avoid anthropomorphizing non-human phenomena, but I can affirm that the woods really do produce uncanny sounds that lie within the vocal range of animals and humans, creating a "voice of the forest." (Photo: Amherst College)

I share this simple story to highlight the importance of listening and how an awareness of sound can transform one's relationship to place. I also think my sonic misidentification and correction serves as an example—one among many—of how aural experiences can be difficult to translate into words. These experiences often remain unarticulated and therefore under appreciated.

If we are to find a way out of the current impasse, learning how to listen and developing an ethic of listening may be one way resolve it. Learning how to listen is particularly relevant to understanding the lives of other animals. Most wild birds and mammals instinctually avoid human presence, so depending on your eyes alone may be a less effective method of contact than relying on your ears. When the robins nest on my porch in May and the Canada geese fly over in October, I am reminded that each species has a special way of voicing needs and desires, according to their circumstances. I am a part of their acoustic worlds, both making and listening to the sounds of this place.

Some say that Acoustic Ecology places a negative emphasis on noise in urban environments. In fact, it is concerned with improving the quality of the sonic environment, or soundscape, by re-sensitizing hearing and listening faculties both on the individual and the social level. This approach was pioneered in the late 1960s by the Canadian composer, educator, and founder of the World Soundscape Project, R. Murray Schafer. He realized that it was better to set aside moralizing about noise pollution in order to objectively study all aspects of the soundscape.

Schafer founded the World Soundscape Project in 1971 at Simon Fraser University (near Vancouver, British Columbia), where he and a team of six paid researchers studied sound and the environment. Schafer went on to coin many terms and phrases that he believed would make acoustic phenomena tangible and help others to comprehend their existence—including the term "acoustic ecology" to describe a new field that united social, artistic, and scientific aspects of the acoustic environment. This was among the WSP's first contributions to establishing a new kind of ecological awareness.

Prior to the WSP, sound had been studied either as a musician's concern or as an engineering problem. Schafer's *The Tuning of the World: The Soundscape*, published in 1977, changed this limited understanding of sound and became the seminal text on Acoustic Ecology. (The Handbook for Acoustic Ecology, edited by Barry Truax and mentioned in a post on this blog by Andrew Yang, also remains useful.) Tuning of the World was the culminating summation of the WSP's research and it inspired a global movement and interest in soundscapes. Of particular importance is Schafer's proposal that the complexity of a soundscape is not just a consequence of various phenomena in action, which we can passively enjoy or endure. Rather, he argued that we are also creators of this soundscape, often unaware, but nevertheless actively altering it, be it in the most remote wilderness or in the most densely populated urban centers of the world. Choices can be made about the quality your soundscape. Thus, Schafer launched a new field of acoustic design, an interdisciplinary effort of science and aesthetics. The effort includes actions that Schafer provocatively described as "practical repair work" as well as "utopian excursions."

Schafer's interests in such "utopian excursions" have prompted me to ask: *What might a "listening ethic" be? And, how might such an ethic apply particularly to understanding the relationship between humans and all other forms of life?*

In an attempt to gain some clarity about these questions, I have begun to keep a list of listening qualities that would support a "listening ethic." This list can be discussed, debated, and dismissed. I know it probably lacks many words—making it an assignment, a task, and a game for you to play and build upon, contributing to a transformation in ideas

that can be applied in private or public. My list is mostly adjectives that are descriptive of attitude. These adjectives are meant to be playful, inviting you to contribute to their meanings. They can also be placed before the word *Listening* in order to suggest different ways of listening and acting in the world:

Open – a simple, non-judgmental attitude, similar to peripheral listening, or listening without constructing a meaning from what is alien or opaque

Attentive – similar to “open listening” but with a focus on a particular feature or set of features that sounds bear; use your memory to record them instead of an electronic device

Balanced – if you make aesthetic value judgments about the sounds you like or dislike, are you being fair, and what criteria are you applying?

Focused – whether something on the periphery is teasing you into the liminal space between real and imagined, or the abundantly obvious oppresses you, use your imagination to follow the sound to its hiding place

Inclusive – what matters and what doesn’t?

Critical – listening inclusively, begin to parse your desire for meaning

Sensual – sounds touch you and move you—they caress, they rock; do sounds buzz, hum, and tickle you, luring you closer?

Transformative – how and when do sounds bring about an epiphany, a long-forgotten memory, or a strong emotional shift?

Restorative – a walk in the woods does it for me

Collective – the experience of listening with others; for example, a Quaker meeting occurs mostly in silence to achieve deeper spiritual meaning; this type of listening could connect “inside” and “outside”

Imaginative – make and listen to a sound in your mind that has never existed before; have you dreamt a sound that you never heard before?

Forgiving – there are words to express this, but what sound expresses this?

Analytical – a type of critical listening, which may be the opposite of forgiving and open listening

Responsible – obligations you may have when others do not listen

Peripheral – unfocused listening that explores the edges in order to be sensitive to all events all at once, it may be a little like aural multi-tasking in an open-ear state of “listening in readiness”

So, that’s my list so far. As I look over the words, I wonder: Can it work the other direction? Can recognition of listening as a learned, cultural practice engender or deepen ethical thinking and character more generally?

In 2009, I asked Bernie Krause to write a vision statement for the [World Listening Project](#). He immediately wrote back with this statement:

A few remaining societies in our vast world know how to listen. It is an inherent part of their existence. One in which the received soundscapes of the forests, high plains, deserts, mountains, and coastal regions combine seamlessly with the visual, olfactory, and tactile senses. In some tropical regions dependence on acoustic perception supersedes that of all the others. Natural soundscapes serve as inspiration for their song and dance. It heals them physically and spiritually. Western society bases most of what it hears, or what it knows on the visual. We actually hear what we see. The World Listening Project aims to transform that perception in our otherwise urban-centric and abstracted lives. At a time when we are facing not only a silent spring, but a silent summer, fall, and winter as well, it is clear that where a picture is worth a thousand words, a soundscape may soon be worth a thousand pictures.

Bernie's notion that "a soundscape may soon be worth a thousand pictures" is worthy of deep consideration. The turn of phrase is informed by a key tenet of Schafer's, a rejoinder to privileging visual over aural sensation and knowledge. And so, it may seem ironic that while you read this, my words about listening come to you as text, in a visual medium. I have given you nothing to listen to.

Or have I? Try to just listen, if you can. Now. Sounds are all around, and the sounds go 'round and 'round. What do you hear? The near, the distant, the barely audible... the "bark" of two trees? This practice is one to take to the city streets, the alleys, and the pocket parks, as well as the woods. There are new worlds awaiting active listeners.



Eric Leonardson is a Chicago-based composer, radio artist, sound designer, instrument inventor, improviser, visual artist, and teacher. He has been active in Chicago's art, sound, and performance scenes since the 1980's. Leonardson is director of the World Listening Project (founded in 2008) and founder (in 2009) of the Midwest Society for Acoustic Ecology, a regional chapter of the American Society for Acoustic Ecology (ASAE). He is currently President of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology. He is an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Sound at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.



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WFAE: FEATURE ARTICLE

ON SOUND, LISTENING, AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THE WORLD LISTENING PROJECT

By Eric Leonardson, President
World Forum for Acoustic Ecology

In 2008 a Chicago-based non-profit art organization called the World Listening Project (WLP) began by inviting people interested in field recording[1] and acoustic ecology to create an online map of sounds from around the world. The WLP and Midwest Society for Acoustic Ecology[2] provided official support to lead the annual World Listening Day, an international event initiated by Dan Godston in 2010. This day is an annual observation and celebration of listening and the acoustic environment occurring every July 18th, the date of Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer's birthday. Schafer was the founder of the World Soundscape Project at Simon Fraser University, in the early-70s. The WSP conducted pioneering research into the role of the acoustic environment and its in effect on the quality of life for its inhabitants. Coining the term "soundscape," among others, helped give names to what heretofore was beyond the reach of most everyone's consciousness, and thus begin to grasp what often is ignored about this pervasive and fundamentally important aspect of everyday life.

Held every July 18th, World Listening Day has been very successful at inspiring dozens of organizations and several hundred people to participate on six continents[3]. Many people observe WLD privately—by listening to their soundscapes, taking personal soundwalks, or by other methods and practices. Some held ambitious public events at museums, national parks, and arts centers during the week surrounding that day.

Social media and online Internet connectivity play an essential role in facilitating a global network around any concern. So we have learned with World Listening Day, using available technologies at very low-cost, we are engaging people with their interest in sounds and listening on many levels; engaging broad interest amongst professionals and amateurs, in ways both formal and informal.

The renowned bio-acoustician and author Bernie Krause was among the first to sign on to idea of creating the WLP. He is an advocate of natural environments as much as he is a technically adept scientist. Krause's book, *Wild Soundscapes: Discovering the Voice of the Natural World*[4] is a guidebook and invitation to explore "creature sounds and voices." He speaks to the world as passionate preservation of nature through what we can learn by listening to it. His 2012 book, *The Great Animal Orchestra: Finding the Origins of Music In the World's Wild Places* is part biography and part exposition on his revelatory experiences with non-human species through their use of sound. Building on Schafer's idea of listening

to the soundscape as if it were musically orchestrated, Krause formulated his "Niche Hypothesis"[5] to show how each species of sound-making animal in a richly populated and bio diverse environment of have evolved to avoid a cacophony, to modulate and occupy different species-specific frequency bands, enabling each to communicate without interfering with the audible communications of other species in that environment.

Being there

The formation of the WLP and MSAE are one local manifestation of a global explosion of interest in sound underway for at least the past ten years. Sparked, in part from increasingly accessible technologies for sound production and recording, that parallel earlier advances visual technologies that revolutionized the arts may in part be what has shown the sciences that the "background," the "empty space," and "silence" are the legitimate subjects of attention and interest. In music, the works and ideas of American composer John Cage (1912-92), the Italian painter Luigi Russolo (1883 -1947), and the French composer, researcher, acoustician, and radio engineer, Pierre Schaeffer (1910-95), changed the way we think about music. Their interest in the sounds of the world combined with new technologies for reproducing and transmitting sounds led to new ways of composing and listening. This is the historical foundation for the current activity and diverging ideas about the role of sound in the arts, sciences, and everyday life.

For the museum, engaging the public in soundscape awareness can catalyze its role in everyday life as well as in the arts and sciences. The study of sound can bridge experiences and it certainly has spawned an interdisciplinary field that we call acoustic ecology. Schafer wrote, "[T]he general acoustic environment of a society can be read as an indicator of social conditions which produce it and may tell us much more about the trending and evolution of that society." [6] As sounds in the environment are dynamically changing combinations over time, across different time scales, eventually some commonplace sounds disappear or become "extinct." Schafer asked, "Why are there no museums for sound?"

Schafer called for a radically different kind of radio in the '70s. "Wilderness Radio"[7] for urban listeners who could tune in to the sounds of life in the wilderness. With current technologies the soundscapes of the wilderness can be transmitted to distant listeners in the city. We also have an urban wilderness that should not be ignored. Now wilderness sounds can be transmitted from Wi-Fi networks. Projects such as the Locus Sonus Streaming Audio Map and Reveil a 24 hour Dawn Chorus project by Grant Smith, offer listening networks and communities that are open active engagement. These communities of "web-mikers" and "soundwalkers" enable listeners to be the "broadcasters" themselves, operating outside the narrow and limited formats of commercial and public radio, that Schafer addressed decades ago. Perhaps the Parks Canada plan to offer Wi-Fi access will enable citizen scientists to create the Wilderness Radio that Schafer and Bruce Davis envisioned.

As wildlife habitat is fragmented and destroyed, creatures in urban and non-urban areas are seriously endangered. Many are either extinct or on the verge of extinction. Humans are a part of this habitat and not unaffected by the loss of bio-diversity. In fact, many species are not even identified, only in part due their existence beyond the normal range of human sight and hearing.

The relevance for the museum is that new technologies can provide new ways for sound to enhance awareness and learning about the environment. Listening to the world enables the individual and the public to gain a deeper and broader understanding of their own role preservation and restoration in relationship with the arts, sciences, and humanities.

When I was working to define the mission of the World Listening Project in 2009, Bernie Krause was supportive of our effort and I asked for ideas. He provided a text that plays on a tenet of acoustic ecology, the ocular-centrism of North American and European science and art, and the title of Rachel Carson's seminal book, *Silent Spring*[8].

A few remaining societies in our vast world know how to listen. It is an inherent part of their existence – one in which the received soundscapes of the forests, high plains, deserts, mountains and coastal regions combine seamlessly with the visual, olfactory, and tactile senses. In some tropical regions, dependence on acoustic perception supersedes that of all the others. Natural soundscapes serve as the inspiration for their song and dance. It heals them physically and spiritually. Western society bases most of what it knows on the visual. We actually "hear" what we "see." The World Listening Project aims

to transform that perception in our otherwise urban centric and abstracted lives. At a time when we are facing not only a silent spring, but a silent summer, fall and winter, as well, it is clear that where a picture is worth a thousand words, a soundscape may soon be worth a thousand pictures.

Nearly 40 years after the publication of R. Murray Schafer's *The Tuning of the World*, a widely read book in which he introduced the concept of the *soundscape*, and many other words to describe a fundamental and ever-present aspect of our everyday lives, a wave of interest has engaged many across professional disciplines and global borders in the arts and sciences of sound in the environment. Now, major art museums around the world are holding exhibitions of sound as art, giving their practitioners major awards. Publications on sound, listening, and silence are proliferating. Many composers of new music have adopted the term "sound art" to describe their own work and practice. "Soundscape" is a commonly used phrase in everyday speech and writing. This wave of interest engages us at the grassroots level, too. The "citizen scientist" and other activities are engaging people at both the formal and informal level.

Listening to the sounds of the world in their context is important. Instead of listening to isolated and disconnected sounds, in other words, in their recorded form, divorces them from the rich complexity in which they are created. Listening in context—for sounds and voices in their time and space—helps understand their meaning and value. This is not to suggest that field recordings have a diminished value. Recording sounds of the world serves as a touchstone for the future while emphasizing that the world exists now, in the present, as a "living museum." A museum of living sound can be constructed in different ways. I imagine that listeners from all sort of cultural approaches can contribute. Of course, recognizing that all acoustic environments are in change will the spatio-temporal nature of these future museums.

The WLP realizes its mission through the informal arts to provide educational opportunities that actively engage public participation in listening. You can say that in effect we, the WLP and similar activists, are turning the world into a "museum of sound." This listening also needs to happen in relationship with an awareness of our role as the makers of the soundscape. In this concept, it is important to understand that sound is caused in the environment, as it happens dynamically, not a fixed entity but always changing. We are both players and makers in the medium of sound. In this sphere of sounds-around we are observers and responders.^[9]

What we do

To explore these challenges acoustic ecology uses field recording, soundwalks, interviews, archives, publishing, music, mapping, and workshops, among its research and teaching modalities. Among other things it sets the stage for actively engaging the public in sound, increasing awareness in listening to the world. The field attracts researchers from the arts and sciences. Thanks to the approach of Schafer and fellow World Soundscape Project member, composer, and co-founder of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE), Hildegard Westerkamp, this engagement is not exclusive to the specialties of engineers, social scientists, musicologists, artists, and other professional disciplines. Children's education and public engagement remain an important part of his activity to this day, at the age of 80. Westerkamp herself has played an instrumental role in raising awareness through publishing the WFAE's annual journal^[10]; with Schafer, she leads public soundwalk events, and participates in WFAE conferences.

Field recording and acoustic ecology are two activities that embrace the world^[11] as a site for learning and public engagement with art, science, and the humanities. Whether we are conscious of it or not, our soundscape forms our sense of place and belonging. In 2008 it was estimated that more than 50% of the world's human population lives in cities. What impact urbanization has on their soundscapes and the role of critical citizenship is a topic of research and discussion among architects, ethnomusicologists, urban planners, acoustic ecologists, and others. At a recent conference in Limerick^[12] The role of local governments and other public institutions in engaging with the music and the environment, and

More than meets the ear.

Field recording may seem to serve a mere descriptive, documentary purpose similar to photography. When Bernie Krause said, "a soundscape may be worth a thousand pictures," like Schafer, he emphasizes that not only is the audible environment loaded with

information for study and collection, a fugitive and fragile resource easily ruined with mighty machines and manmade toxins, but this is also a living source of poetic and symbolic value that photos cannot begin to represent. With this, the diverse approaches and attractions to field recording practices, are first multiple reaching deeper than an indexical relation to the sounds, "all together richer, stranger, more varied and more complex." [13]

The role of sound is primary and essential to many diverse fields: filmmaking, architecture, urban planning, marketing, industrial and interior design, product design, education (not just music), museum and exhibition design, communications, biology, physics, tourism—the list goes on. On the other hand, listening is often taken for granted. While it may be difficult to speak about and identify the sounds we hear, to define listening itself is even more challenging. What is it? What are you doing when you listen? When you try to define it, beyond paying attention with your hearing, the process eludes us. In a conversation with American composer Pauline Oliveros[14], her answer to this question was, "Listening is like consciousness, and we still don't understand what that is." We do it and have yet, from an objective or scientific perspective, only begun to grasp the processes of thought and sensory perception that are involved. As an artist, teacher, and acoustic ecologist learning and exploring questions like these is both challenging but enjoyable.



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[1] "Field recording" simply defined is sound recording made outside a recording studio. Often it is with the aim—in varying degrees ethnological in its intent—to record the activity of that environment without disturbing it. The bio-acoustician Bernie Krause has devoted 40 years to recording natural soundscapes around the world. His archives are considered the most extensive in the world. In not a few cases it includes recordings from animal habitats and natural soundscapes that are now extinct.

[2] The WLP (founded 2008) and Midwest Society for Acoustic Ecology (founded 2009) are two volunteer organizations co-founded and led by the author.

[3] Only Antarctica had no World Listening Day events as far as we know.

[4] Publ. Wilderness Press, 2002

[5] Krause's 1993 article, publ. in *The Soundscape Newsletter*, and many others can be found in the online library page of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology: <http://wfae.proscenia.net/library/articles/index.html>

[6] R. Murray Schafer, *Tuning of the World*, McClelland and Stewart (1977) p. 7.

[7] "A few years ago Bruce Davis and I had an idea for what we called Wilderness Radio. The plan was to put microphones in remote locations uninhabited by humans and to broadcast whatever might be happening out there: the sounds of wind and rain, the cries of birds and animals - all the uneventful events of the natural soundscape transmitted without editing into the hearts of the cities."—R. Murray Schafer, "Radical Radio," *EAR Magazine, Festival for a New Radio*. New York, 1987

[8] Publ. Ballantine Books, 1962.

[9] Barry Truax in his *Acoustic Communication*, Second Edition, Ablex Publishing 2001, proposes the communicational model. This edition includes a CD-ROM version of the *Handbook For Acoustic Ecology* that he edited and published in 1978.

[10] Westerkamp served as editor of *Soundscape: The Journal for Acoustic Ecology* from 2000 until 2011. Dr. Phylis Johnson at Southern Illinois University succeeds her as Editor-In-Chief.

[11] From the Omnimuseum Project mission statement: The Omnimuseum Project is a non-profit, collaborative effort devoted to embracing the world as a site for informal learning. Our work involves the exploration and development of strategies and techniques for integrating enrichment opportunities into everyday experience. In so doing, we are finding ways for museums and other cultural and educational institutions to gain presence in places and among things that directly correspond to their missions.

[12] Urban Soundscapes and Critical Citizenship, March 27–29, 2014, University of Limerick, Ireland, <http://soundandsociety2014.wordpress.com/>

[13] *In the Field: The Art of Field Recording*, Cathy Lane and Angus Carlyle, p. 10, Uniform Books, 2013. Note: A logical sequel to this book is *On Listening*, by the same authors, published by Uniform Books, 2013.

[14] 2012 podcast interview on the *Sounding Out!* Blog produced with Tom Haigh and Monica Ryan: <http://soundstudiesblog.com/2012/07/18/sounding-out-podcast-episode-7-celebrate-world-listening-day-with-the-world-listening-project/>

This article first appeared April 28 in the [City Creatures blog](#). Its publication coincided with the [Forum on Ethics and Nature](#), a symposium co-hosted by the Center for Humans and Nature and the Chicago Botanic Garden

World Forum for Acoustic Ecology

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WFAE: RESEARCH AND PROJECTS

***subtleties*: a site-specific and interactive installation**

By Nayla Mehdi



subtleties was a site-specific and interactive sound installation that took place at the Aasen-Hull Hall at the University of Oregon School of Music. The installation allowed visitors to experience delicate and humble sounds capturing glimpses of the Oregon outdoors, as well as the soundscapes that resonance evokes. Clear glass jars were placed close to the walls and corners of the chosen physical space and acted as resonant chambers to mini speakers that were suspended from above and floated within the jars. Each jar carried a mini speaker that was outputting soft sounds throughout the duration of the installation, with the resonant qualities of the individual jars adding to the characteristic of the special sound worlds. Metal rods that act as capacitive sensors were suspended above each individual jar, and acted as the interactive component to the installation. The capacitive sensors responded to human touch, as well as to

human approach. Directions provided to the visitors asked them to explore these metal rods, leading them to approach the sensors and finally touch the sensors, causing events to happen in the sound world such as a shift in harmonic content, or a trigger of a new sound.

The intent behind *subtleties* was to allow visitors to walk into the room and be presented with whispers of sounds from afar. Discovery would lead them to be surrounded by multiple resonant jars that were populated by their own speaker. The visitors were able to walk to the individual jars, bring their ear closer to them, and listen to the sound world within, like you would listen to a seashell. The visitors were also able to walk around the space and compose their very own sound journey by listening to the differing sound worlds at each different location within the space. The interactive component to the installation allowed the visitors to interact with the installation in order to feel a part of it.

The works of soundscape composers and acoustic ecologists were of inspiration to the installation. There was a strive to encompass the subtle complexities that can be found in a soundscape composition; such as the highly sensitive listening, advanced field recording techniques, highly careful editing, careful layering and



transitions, the matching of pitches, and a keen awareness to directing the listener to the elements wanted to be highlighted. Field recordings of the sounds of nature and the city were recorded and were the material of focus toward the sound world of the installation. Sounds of birds, frogs, trees, and rain of the Oregon outdoors, and sounds of the train and bridge resonance of the city were recorded and manipulated. Each jar had manipulated sampled sounds layered together with

sustained tones that were extracted from the field recordings themselves. The result of this project was an interactive and site-specific sound installation in which visitors began to undergo a deep listening experience. One reaction of a visitor that spread to other visitors of

the installation was sitting on the floor, in the middle of the room, in front of the large window that viewed a field, the trees, the rain, and the clouds, and listen to the evolving sound world. This installation opens up the door to further curiosity in creating similar deep listening environments of subtle complexities.



Nayla Mehdi is primarily a sound artist. In her works you will most often find sound worlds that investigate the hidden intricacies of sound's deep structure, having an emphasis on [timbral](#) exploration, and that consider the space between elements. Her interests currently lies in installation art, video art, sound design, spectralism, quiet music, and soundscape composition. Nayla Mehdi has studied under Jeffrey Stolet, Chester Udell, Paula Matthusen, and Kristine Burns. She is a member of the 2014 graduating class at the University of Oregon, with an M.Mus. in Intermedia Music Technology.

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WFAE: EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Note: A current [updated listing](#) of Events and Opportunities is maintained on the WFAE Web Site.

June 18-19 Sound, Sight, Space and Play (SSSP) 2014 De Montfort University, Leicester, United Kingdom. A conference for postgraduate students working in the creative sonic arts that aims to stimulate co-operation and inspiration between postgraduate students across institutional boundaries and disciplines, leading to new perspectives on current works and research. [Read More](#)

June 27-29, 2014 30th Annual Field Recording Workshop - Yuba Pass. The Nature Sounds Society (NSS) will present the Thirtieth Annual Field Recording Workshop June 27-29, 2014 at San Francisco State University's Yuba Pass Field Campus in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Each year, this workshop brings together dynamic speakers and trip leaders with participants interested in learning various aspects of nature sound recording and the use of nature sounds in art, science, and music. [Read More](#)

June 28-29 Elima: Intensive Workshop of Soundscape Recording. "VacuaMoenia offers an intensive workshop in order to provide useful information on the theories and practices that enable the entry level user, even less experienced, record and compose the soundscape. The workshop will take place in Poggioreale, a country rich in history, entirely destroyed by the earthquake of Belice in 1968 and later rebuilt in the valley. The theoretical sessions will be held in the council room of the municipality and the recording sessions in the old country. The works tell a new territory through the sound and give energy to the stories of those who lived through the earthquake and rebuilding of this new story. In this respect, of great importance will be the sponsor, the Municipality of Poggioreale and the help of the Poggioreale Antica association that will enable participants to know the place and collecting the stories for the creative process." [Read More](#)

July 1, 2014 Call for works: See it! Read it! Hear it! (deadline) DIGITAL POETRY is defined as poetry creatively expressed through digital manipulations of visual and/or audio renderings of text in audio, fixed image, animation/video without sound, or animation/video with sound. The goal is to explore new media literature that comes to life in digital realms beyond the simple written word and spoken recitations. Electro-acoustic text/sound music and recorded sound poetry are also forms of digital poetry. [Read More](#).

July 1-4, 2014 Crossroads in Cultural Studies, Tampere, Finland . The 10th Crossroads Conference in Cultural Studies will be hosted by the School of Communication, Media and Theatre (CMT) at the University of Tampere jointly with the Society for Cultural Studies in Finland and the Association for Cultural Studies (ACS). [Read More](#).

July 10, 2014 Radio Art & Sound Art: "AIR / EAR" installation. Fourth collective installation of radio art and sound art will open in San Justo, Santa Fe, Argentina. [Read More](#)

July 16-19 GSSN Workshop (Maine). Calling for applications to attend the 2014 GSSN workshop! The third soundscapes workshop in a wildlife refuge (Wells Wildlife Refuge) where we get to explore coastal-ocean soundscapes. [Read More](#)

July 18, 19, and 20, 2014 Invisible Places | Sounding Cities International Symposium on Sound, Urbanism and Place. One of the fundamental premises of Acoustic Ecology is the idea of hearing education. It is in this sense that we will promote workshops, performances and sound installations in the public space in order to create a wider awareness of what is discussed by the researchers who will present their work during the symposium. Details yet to be announced. [Click2Read](#) about the conference and calls for papers and audio work submissions. Like on [Facebook](#).

August 28-29, 2014 Audio Fabric: Socio-Sonic Textures in the Real World. The fourth annual Irish Sound, Science and Technology Convocation (ISSTC 2014) will be held at National University Ireland, Maynooth. This year's Convocation examines the social impact of sound in the real world: natural soundscapes, music, technological sounds, mediated sounds, spaces, places and sites. Technology cannot be divorced from the interconnections with cultural output, social practice and aesthetics. We seek to contextualise all sound-making and its sciences and technologies. What is the societal impact of our artistic and technical practice with sound? How does our research and practice impact the wider community? Finally, given that our practice is, for the most part, financed by public funding, what is it that we are giving back? [Read More](#)

August 29, 2014, Call for Works for MUSLAB 2014. CaminArt Asociation and MUSLAB Ensemble are calling for works to be presented in the: Muestra Internacional de Música Electroacústica. This exhibition will take place in October and November in Mexico City and the states of Tamaulipas, Nayarit and Veracruz in 11 different locations. The International Electroacoustic Music Exposition / MUSLAB 2014 is a project that we do in order to help to recover public spaces as a way to promote social interaction and citizenship using artistic interventions with electroacoustic music and video projection on buildings (Video Mapping). [Read More](#).

October 4-5, 2014 Ecomusicologies 2014: Dialogues University of North Carolina at Asheville (USA). Conference will bring together artists and scholars to stimulate discussion on music, culture, and the environment. The conference is part of the multi-day event series, "Ecomusics" (3-7 October 2014), which will include concerts, soundwalks, workshops, and outings (e.g., field trips to the Moog Factory, Black Mountain College, and Great Smoky Mountains National Park). [Read More](#)

January 14-15, 2015 Hearing Landscape Critically: Music, Place, and the Spaces of Sound Harvard University. The third meeting of the 'Hearing Landscape Critically' research network will take place at Harvard University, 14-16 January 2015. The aim of this three-year project funded by the Leverhulme Trust is to transform our sense of sound in landscape, and to document, investigate, and provoke critical encounters between the social and acoustic agents involved in the formations of landscape. The network embraces an interdisciplinary methodology and brings together scholars from diverse geographical contexts and academic fields (including art history, literary studies, and cultural geography) alongside creative practitioners, prompting new ways of thinking about sound, music, space, and place. [Read More](#)

Open Call: Spazioersetti, a privately funded exhibition venue based in Udine, north-east Italy dedicated to sound and space. It is currently accepting proposals for multi-channel sound installations to be exhibited. Works must clearly focus on the relationship between sound and space, i.e. we are interested in sounds that are evidence of a dimension, a position, a proportion. [Read More](#).

SUBMIT EVENTS: Send press releases about acoustic-ecology events to [wfae \(dot\) organization\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:wfae(dot)organization(at)gmail.com). Put "Calendar Event" in the subject heading.

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Acoustic Monitoring Report, Denali National Park and Preserve - 2009

By Jared Withers (Author)

"Park staff deployed acoustic monitoring systems to ten locations in Denali National Park and Preserve in 2009. The purpose of this monitoring effort was to inventory the acoustic conditions and level of aircraft operations in Denali National Park as called for in the 2006 Backcountry Management Plan. Data collected included existing ambient sound pressure levels, natural ambient sound pressure levels, percent time audible, and loud acoustic event statistics for intrinsic and extrinsic sound sources. Deployed systems were configured to log sound pressure levels every second and continuous mp3 audio recordings, 24 hours per day. These data serve as a permanent record of existing acoustical conditions at these locations for the summer of 2009."

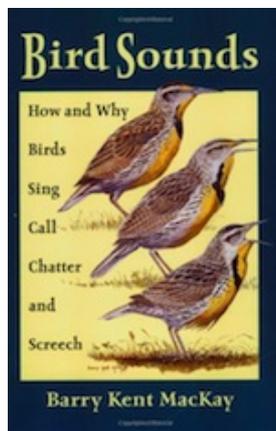
Paperback: 76 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (July 31, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1491099097

ISBN-13: 978-1491099094



Bird Sounds: How and Why Birds Sing, Call, Chatter, and Screech

By Barry Kent MacKay (Feb 1, 2001)

"A thorough and engaging examination of the variety of sounds birds make, from the familiar singing of songbirds and the hammering of woodpeckers to the harsh cacklings of crows. The hows and whys of bird vocalization, regional variation and speciation, and communication among species are discussed. Describes both native and exotic bird behavior and includes the latest research—all illustrated with full-color paintings by the author."

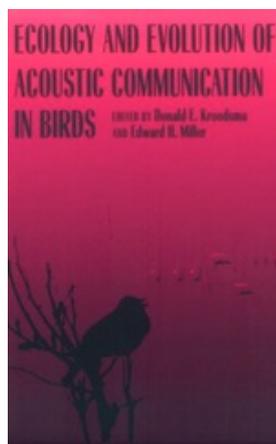
Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Stackpole Books (February 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0811727874

ISBN-13: 978-0811727877



Ecology and Evolution of Acoustic Communication in Birds.

By Donald E. Kroodsma (Editor), Edward H. Miller (Editor)

The editors of this volume approached the most distinguished authorities in avian acoustic communication and asked each to describe particularly exciting topics for current and future research. Their responses comprise a comprehensive reference on bird behaviour and animal communication. With song often serving dual strategies of territorial defence and female attraction, studies using playback techniques have shown how birds interact, how males and females differ in their perception of sound and how females might choose males on the basis of sound. Bird song has also been a model system for understanding the interaction of neural and hormonal systems in the acquisition and control of learned sounds.

Series: Comstock books

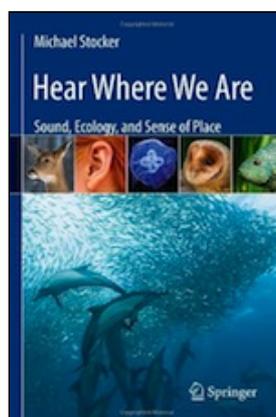
Paperback: 587 pages

Publisher: Comstock Publishing (July 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0801482216

ISBN-13: 978-0801482212



Hear Where We Are: Sound, Ecology, and Sense of Place

By Michael Stocker

"In "Hear Where We Are" the author continuously challenges many of the bio-acoustic orthodoxies, reframing the entire inquiry into sound perception and communication. By moving beyond our common assumptions, many of the mysteries of acoustical behavior become revealed, exposing a fresh and fertile panorama of acoustical experience and adaptation."

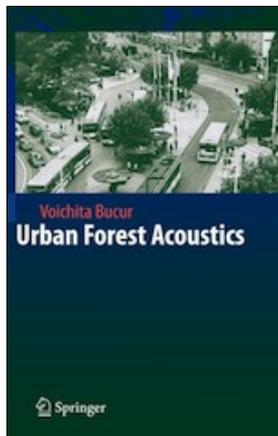
Paperback: 200 pages

Publisher: Springer; 2013 edition (August 26, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1461472849

ISBN-13: 978-1461472841



Urban Forest Acoustics

By Voichita Bucur

"Trees can reduce noise by sound reflection and absorption and this is the first book bringing together the widely scattered literature on noise abatement by urban trees. The book will interest those concerned with environmental management, noise control, and urban forestry."

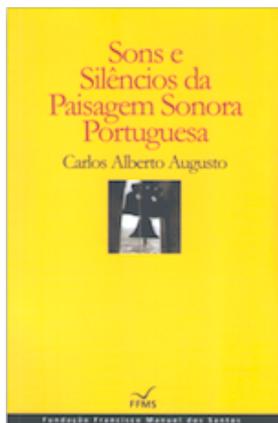
Hardcover: 181 pages

Publisher: Springer; 2006 edition (May 8, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 3540307834

ISBN-13: 978-3540307839



Sounds and Silences of the Portuguese Soundscape

By Carlos Alberto Augusto

What does the soundscape of Portugal tell us if we are willing to listen to it? Three dominant and problematic elements of the Portuguese soundscape, noise, silence and music, are analyzed here. The book presents an historical perspective tracing the contribution each of these elements contributes to defining the current Portuguese soundscape. Also described are several cases observed in Portugal, a harmonious relationship with your sound environment. Published by: [Manuel Francisco dos Santos Foundation Edition](#).

Her Noise Archive (web) 'This is a resource of collected materials investigating music and sound histories in relation to gender bringing together a wide network of women artists who use sound as a medium. Whilst it exists as a physical archive, key elements of the original project, including video interviews with a number of artists and musicians, are available on this site, as well as documentation of more recent events, guest 'curations' and other responses.' [Web link](#)

Nature Soundmap (web) "What does a humpback whale sound like? Or perhaps the White-cheeked Gibbon? The Nature Soundmap provides snippets of these sounds and much, much more. Visitors will find an interactive map of the world, complete with markers that allow audio wildlife travel from Central America to Central Asia a snap. Symphonies of animal noises can also be found here, as visitors can click on Greece to listen to "Summer Ambience" or France to find "Dawn in the Lezardrieux Forest." Each marker includes information about the animal or setting profiled, along with a link to More Info for the generally curious." (Source: Internet [Scout Report](#)) [Web link](#)

Interference (web) is an open access forum on the role of sound in cultural practices, providing a trans-disciplinary platform for the presentation of research and practice in areas such as acoustic ecology, sensory anthropology, sonic arts, musicology, technology studies and philosophy. The journal seeks to balance its content between scholarly writing, accounts of creative practice, and an active engagement with current research topics in audio culture. Interference Journal is supported by Trinity College Dublin. [Current Issue](#)

Sound Development City (web) Every year in late summer, Sound Development City sends ten artists on a three-week-long expedition between two European cities. During the expedition, artists can work on individual projects, explore new cities, cultures, and different living environments, and establish new connections. Artists are given time for processes to develop, for experimentation, for taking new paths – but also going astray, and for detecting and discovering the unexpected. [Web Link](#)

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WFAE: INFORMATION

The [World Forum for Acoustic Ecology](#) (WFAE), founded in 1993, is an international association of nine affiliated organizations that share a common concern with the state of the world's soundscapes. Our members represent a multi-disciplinary spectrum of individuals engaged in the study of the social, cultural and ecological aspects of the sonic environment.

WFAE AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

American Society for Acoustic Ecology	contact-asae@wfae.net
Australian Forum for Acoustic Ecology	contact-afae@wfae.net
Canadian Association for Sound Ecology	contact-case@wfae.net
Hellenic Society for Acoustic Ecology	contact-hsae@wfae.net
Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology	contact-fsae@wfae.net
Foro Mexicano de Ecologia Acustica	contact-mfae@wfae.net
Soundscape Association of Japan	contact-jase@wfae.net
UK and Ireland Soundscape Community	contact-ukisc@wfae.net

WFAE MEMBERSHIP: Become an individual or WFAE Affiliate Organization member. Visit the [WFAE Membership](#) page for more information.

WFAE NEWSLETTER: Back issues of the WFAE Newsletter dating to 2004 are archived [online](#). Back copies of *Soundscape*, *The Journal of Acoustic Ecology* are also available.

WFAE Newsletter Contact: wfae.newsletter@gmail.com

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- Gary Ferrington, WFAE Secretary, Editor
- Meri Kytö, WFAE Co-Vice President, Contributing Research Editor

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