It is my pleasure to share several positive developments that have occurred in the last year. Of course, we have another strong crop of new graduate students this fall. We were also fortunate to receive a new one-year Teaching Assistantship from the College of Arts and Sciences that we should have to offer the next year’s incoming class as well. This is the first new teaching assistantship EVST has received in my 17 year tenure with the program. Award of the TA to EVST marks a significant new resource available for graduate recruitment/support and recognition by the administration that among the many graduate programs deserving support EVST ranks quite high. In addition, EVST was successful in gaining funding to support a new Rocky Mountain Climate Conservation fellowship through the Cinnabar Foundation. Alumni support of EVST made the match we provided to this program possible. Thus, we have many reasons for optimism about the future of our graduate program.

The UM Forum for Living with Appropriate Technology is also showing signs of steady growth under the leadership of co-Directors Kate Sheridan and David Wise. The 2.8 kw solar power system donated by Northwestern Energy was installed with the aid of the Journeyman’s and Apprentice Training Committee of the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and local business Solar Plexus and zeroed out the July and August electrical bills for the main house. We are anxious to see how the net metering credit affects the electrical bill for the rest of the year. A new bike shed, rainwater collection system and rabbit hutch have also arrived and the cob oven was in full use for the open house in October, baking pizzas for the attendees. The garage is nearing completion after 2 years of work. Residents are currently working on funding the replacement of the outdated, energy hog refrigerator, washer and dryer in the main house with the most energy efficient appliances they can find.

To recognize the many accomplishments of alum Bob Kiesling we initiated the Kiesling Conservation Lecture Series this fall through the generous support of the Greve Foundation. Among the many excellent speakers have been Caroline Byrd, Bob Knight, Bruce Bugbee, Jen Ferenstein, Don Snow, and David Quammen to date, with Ted Smith, Richard Manning, Melanie Parker Judge, Dick Dolan and others to follow. Grad students are able to access the history of conservation in Montana and the latest approaches through this series. We have been recording the talks, in part to preserve the history of the movement to allow future students to access it.

In order to keep up with the competition, EVST has moved into the 21st century, with an official program Facebook page and Twitter feed. Like us, follow us or whatever the heck you do with these things! Grad student Nadia Soucek is providing the technical support and faculty are now recording what we are up to so you can keep track if you are so inclined. Our hope is that this provides an outlet for prospective grad students to discover the program and what it offers, so feel free to refer others to it and to spread the word about EVST.

Finally, the 40th Anniversary fundraising effort was a great success thanks to the generosity of alums, faculty and friends of the program. Student needs, however, rebuild with each new class and the continued support of alumni is a vital piece of providing the kind of experience that makes EVST unique in building future environmental leaders. We would greatly appreciate your continued support or a new gift—no amount is too small.

Sincerely,

Len Broberg
Faculty Update:

Phil Condon - from room 104

I watch orange leaves drift down from maple trees north of Rankin Hall. They remind me it’s been two years since I wrote in this newsletter. I enjoyed my first sabbatical year in 2009/10, and enjoyed my first year back, last year, just as much. A fine idea that, a year of rest every seven or so, and rest I did, stepping away from the fast flywheel of everyday classes. I worked on at least two books—the fluid colors of dream, the precision of black words on white—and rebuilt my terraced garden beds, hauled PEAS Farm compost home to them, spent two months with Celeste on the California coast in an 82-year-old rental beach cottage, and played with my grandson in the winter sands of the Pacific.

These last years saw truly deft EVST writers graduate and fall forward into their futures, not unlike the bright leaves through this Rankin window.

Books waiting to be: Wash Out, Fences, While Glaciers Slept, and Thirst, by Oskar Cole, Russ VanPaepeghem, M. Jackson, and Michelle Lanzoni. And more: evocative essays in both thesis and portfolio work by Alex Johnson, Beth Raboin, Greg Peters, Bethany Taylor, Tim Gibbins, and Micah Sewell. Where are they now? Missoula, Turkey, Alaska, New England, Oxford, San Francisco—if you think of a place, EVST students have been there or will be soon.

Wild Mercy Reading Series had its 6th year at The Missoulian Angler Fly Shop. Those who came by know those nights were un-recreatable: the bright lures on the walls, the Orange Street traffic muffling by, the writers reading. And many of you also know firsthand how fun the 40th Reunion was last fall. A highlight for me was the Saturday writing panel of four fine and diverse writers from different EVST eras: Carolyn Duckworth, Tara Rae Miner, Ryan Newhouse, and Nathaniel Miller.

The 20th Environmental Writing Institute happened in April as Rick Bass worked with EVST students and writers from six other states. The next EWI is October 2012, overlapping with the Montana Festival of the Book and featuring environmental journalist Richard Manning. The EVST Visiting Writer Program continues with David Oates from Washington in Spring 2012, and then, tentatively, Rick Bass in 2013, Janisse Ray from Georgia in 2014, and William DeBuys from New Mexico in 2015. This lineup of terrific writers will help EVST continue to recruit outstanding writing students.

And Camas? Russ VanPaepeghem and Bethany Taylor secured a Humanities MT grant to produce a special Glacier Park issue in 2010, and Alex Johnson and M. Jackson steered two terrific issues to publication. They also convinced UM President Engstrom to pledge a generous gift to Camas from his office, evidence of his faith in the magazine’s future. Which brings me to my only entreaty—think of it as a leaf from a tall tree landing on your desk, wherever you read this.

The current editors’ goal is to show the President that his faith in Camas is matched by its friends. If you subscribe now, please renew, and if you don’t yet, please try it. Your subscription can help ensure the future of Camas—now in its 20th year: started by students then and sustained by students now. It will take you back in time to your years here and propel you forward into the 21st-century visions of its writers and editors. The reminder and the vision are only a few clicks away at www.umt.edu/camas.
This year, along with colleagues in DEQ, I assessed how the Clark Fork River is responding to over a decade of efforts to reduce nutrient loads and nuisance algae levels in the river. Answer – the lower river is improving (despite Missoula’s population increasing by 20% over the past decade), but the upper river seems to be getting worse. This is likely because nutrient reduction efforts have been less effective in the upper river, and scouring flows have been less powerful in recent years. 2011 was an exception with powerful flows that scoured the river squeaky clean – and made many folks more aware of the need to protect floodplains from development.

Meanwhile, progress on the Clark Fork River Superfund cleanup continues. The EPA will decommission its work site at Milltown by the end of this year, declaring remediation work done. Restoration work continues, and the site will soon become a state park. Work on Silver Bow Creek will be wrapped up in about one more year, and already native trout have returned to this once near lifeless stream.

As always, the Watershed Clinic and its community partners organized numerous field trips throughout the basin and a variety of opportunities for students and other community members to perform service projects, such as river cleanups, stream restoration, weed pulls, old fence removals, household haz waste collections, studies requested by community groups, etc.

Indirect cost funds generated by Clinic grants were used to cover out-of-pocket expenses of student projects, and co-sponsor conferences, workshops, publication and other activities of watershed groups and the Clark Fork Basin Task Force.

I continued to serve on UM’s Recycling Committee, which has been able to expand the level of recycling at UM, thanks to increased funding from students, and improvements in efficiency within the program. My efforts to support a wide variety of local sustainable efforts were recognized this year when I received the Sustainable Business Council’s Sustainability Advocate of the Year award. While it was a humbling experience to receive this award in a town full of effective and hardworking sustainability advocates, seeing Missoula become more locally self-sufficient through the hard work of these thinkers and doers has been thanks enough.

Faculty Update: Vicki Watson
Faculty Update: Robin Saha

Funding sustainability is also important. I am now in my second year serving as chair of the Kless Revolving Energy Loan Fund (KRELF) Committee, which solicits and reviews student proposals for energy and resource conservation and renewable energy projects on campus. This last year we funded solar panels for the UM FLAT and Todd Building, and reusable to-go containers for Dining Services. In April, we had a very moving reception to rename the RELF committee in honor of EVST late alumnus Sonny Kless, who conceived of and spearheaded the Fund. Sonny’s mother, grandmother and aunt were in attendance. We all miss Sonny but remember him through the good things being accomplished in his name.

On the campus front, I’m now in my second year of being on the Sustainable Campus Committee (SCC), where I was the sole voice of opposition to UM’s biomass plant, despite supporting renewable energy in concept, but at the right scale in the right place with the right technology.

Students in my undergraduate Environmental Citizenship service learning (SL) class and my graduate Environmental Organizing class carried out some excellent projects to help UM meet its Climate Action Plan goals. For example, one project, called CoolPool, analyzed the challenges of increasing carpooling on campus and gave recommendations to the SCC to reduce the carbon footprint of campus commuting (14% of campus greenhouse gas emissions). The SCC is currently acting on CoolPool’s policy recommendations.

Meanwhile, my environmental justice work continues to be multifaceted. Last spring, I had the honor of being invited by a Blackfeet tribal elder to co-teach a tribal environmental justice class for Blackfeet Community College instructors, together with Naricisse Blood and Ryan Heavy Head of Red Crow Community College in Alberta. They are respected experts on Blackfoot culture and have been pioneering the notion and practice of repatriating place.

I honestly think I learned more than I taught. It was a wonderful learning collaboration, and I hope one of others to follow. In addition to meeting several times in Missoula and Browning, we took an all day field trip to a ranch a near Valier, Montana, that for centuries was a Blackfeet tribe winter camp, until they were expelled in the 1870s. For my Blackfeet friends, this was their first time their people had been back since then and it was a bittersweet, moving and profound repatriating experience for all.

Currently, I’m working on a national environmental and climate justice study of biomass, trash and sewage sludge incinerators, some of which meet renewable energy standards in some states. Graduate and undergraduate students in the environmental justice SL course are helping out with this effort to expose the “greenwashing” and injustices of inherently dirty industries. I am collaborating with Dr. Robert Bullard, the Clark Atlanta University Environmental Justice Resource Center, Energy Justice Network and Earthjustice on the project. The report is due out in next spring.
As the end of 2011 approaches, I am humbled both by the enormity of tasks we face – protecting the planet and advocating for justice – and by the inspiring efforts of so many people. This year, we’ve witnessed massive uprisings, from the Arab Spring to Occupy Wall Street. Two amazing women – Wangari Maathai and Eloise Cobell – left this life, along with powerful legacies of persistence, bravery, and vision. Those legacies can inspire us all. Also, as the year comes to a close, I am reminded of the many ways EVST alumni are making a difference in the world – from serving in elected office, to educating young and old, to working in government, to writing and blogging, to advocating for better policies, to working with businesses on sustainability and industrial design, to organizing citizens, to producing organic crops, and raising some hell when need be. For example, it was a great pleasure to recently attend the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Agriculture and Human Values. It was a great chance to showcase many of the exciting things happening in western Montana through tours, sessions, and fantastic food served by the UM Farm to College Program.

As part of the conference, I delivered the Presidential Address for the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society. In the address, I explored the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) of 2011, which marked the first major overhaul of the US regulatory system for food safety since the 1930s. The movement for local and regional food systems influenced the debates around the FSMA and issues of scale became pivotal in those debates. An amendment, successfully championed by Montana Senator Jon Tester, means that the new regulations will not apply to small farms and processors who sell directly to consumers in local markets. In the address, I look at the discourse and arguments that amendment advocates used in justifying and securing this scale-sensitive approach.

So, that’s my news from Rankin Hall. Best wishes to you all. Stay in touch.
Faculty Update: Josh Slotnick

The 2010 season was a big year at the PEAS farm. We grew 15,000+ pounds of produce for the Missoula Food Bank, served the needs of our 90 CSA members and hosted 2500 schoolchildren on educational field trips. The farm also hosted 2 tours during the Agriculture and Human Values Society Conference in June. Those tours generated interest nationally for the work we are doing with students and the community. This fall I gave a presentation at the Farm Based Education conference at Shelburne Farms in Vermont, where alums Josh Carter (MS ’05) and Erica Curry (MS ’05) work. Carter runs the vegetable farm at the 1400 acre property, and Curry works in their education department.

While in the east I was able to follow up on interest in our program from the AHVS conference, and I gave talks at Brown University, Tufts, Bunker Hill Community College, Harvard, and Green Mountain College.

We had our best year ever for fruit at the farm—we brought in hundreds of pounds of strawberries in late June, and this fall saw our best apple harvest ever. Our orchard, now 10 years old, came fully into production with wonderful harvests of a diversity of apple varieties across the season. This next year we will add to our fruit plantings with an espalier apple tree project. Espalier is the creation of a living fence of apple trees, ours will be within the farm. This next year we are also planning on adding another hoophouse to increase our season extension efforts, and we’re going to graft tomatoes this spring to enhance disease resistance and production. We are also hoping to expand our composting efforts in partnership with the University’s Dining Services, and we’ll begin field trials of no till vegetables. All of these efforts will involve our students, from planning through fundraising to implementation and evaluation.

During Winter Session this January I will bring a class of 15 students to New Orleans. We will spend a week working and learning at the urban farm at Our School at Blair Grocery, in the lower 9th ward. I am also working on a project with a graduate student collecting farming stories from Montana farmers and ranchers, and I have a book of my own farming poetry coming out this coming summer.

Whenever you are in the area, please come visit the PEAS farm!

Faculty Update: Beth Covitt

EVST research assistant professor Beth Covitt is leading an NSF education grant aimed at helping middle school students develop deeper understanding of how connected natural and human-engineered hydrologic systems work. The project, titled Reasoning Tools for Understanding Water Systems, builds on six years of research into K-12 students’ ideas about water systems. The reasoning tools that the project is testing in schools are designed to help students focus on challenging aspects of understanding water systems—including thinking about the scientific principles that govern how water and other substances mixed with water move through connected systems. This type of deep understanding is necessary for people to make informed decisions about water issues that our society will confront as changing land use patterns and climate increasingly impact the availability and quality of freshwater on our planet. Project participants include 13 Montana middle school teachers and their students, several EVST master’s students, and a similar group of researchers, teachers and students based in Tucson, Arizona. The Arizona group is led by project Co-PI Dr. Kristin Gunckel at the University of Arizona. EVST master’s student Meghan Rorick served as RA for this project during 2011. She will complete a thesis drawing on project data and exploring how place-based experiences impact water systems understandings of Montana and Arizona middle school students. EVST master’s student Jen McBride will begin work as an RA on the project in January 2012.

For more information, please visit our project website at http://www.umt.edu/watertools/
The Environmental Studies Program seeks to provide students with the literacy, skills and commitment needed to foster a healthy natural environment and to create a more sustainable, equitable and peaceful society.

To this end, the EVST program helps students become knowledgeable, motivated and active in environmental affairs.

We want our students to acquire skills that will enable them to promote positive social change.

**We appreciate your gift to EVST!**

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A Sincere Thank You...

To the friends who supported the research of our EVST students by donating or pledging to the program this year.

Another Way to Strengthen EVST

As time goes by and your life evolves, you may consider how estate planning will affect your life and the lives of your family members. It may be time, you decide, to make a gift to benefit an organization that is very meaningful to you, like EVST. If you are planning a bequest, you can visit [http://www.umt.edu/umf](http://www.umt.edu/umf) and click on the links to “planned giving” to find out more.