

## **Lecture 1: Precontact Native American Cave Art in the Southeast**

Featured Speaker: Dr. Jan F. Simek, Distinguished Professor of Science and President Emeritus, Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee-Knoxville

### **Bio:**

An archaeologist with a Ph.D. in 1984 from the State University of New York at Binghamton, Dr. Jan Simek has been at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville since 1984.

Throughout his career, he has focused on ancient human use of caves for habitation, exploration, and religion. Since 1976, he has worked in southern France studying the relationships between Neanderthals and Modern Homo sapiens. He has excavated several deeply stratified Paleolithic cave sites in France as part of a thirty-year collaborative relationship between the University of Tennessee and the University of Bordeaux. In 1995, Dr. Simek became interested in prehistoric cave use in Tennessee and the South, and since then he has documented more than 90 prehistoric cave art sites in the region, representing the first cave art tradition ever discovered in North America. His research has received funding from the National Science Foundation, the Ministry of Culture of France, the National Geographic Society, the Wenner-Gren Foundation and the Leakey Foundation. Simek has published five books and more than 110 articles in journals and edited collections. In 2016, he was awarded The Chairman's Award for Achievement in Historic Preservation from the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and in 2013 he received the inaugural Patty Jo Watson Award from the Southeast Archaeology Conference for the best publication on Southeastern prehistory. He won the Watson Award for a second time in 2020. Simek was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2013.

At the University of Tennessee, Dr. Simek is currently Distinguished Professor of Science in the Department of Anthropology. He has held a variety of administrative positions, including Head of Anthropology twice, Director of the School of Art, Interim Dean of the College of Architecture and Design, Chancellor's Chief of Staff, and Interim Chancellor of the Knoxville campus from 2007-2008. From 2009-2011, he served as the 24<sup>th</sup> President of the University of Tennessee and was named President Emeritus by the Board of Trustees when he stepped down from that position. Dr. Simek was the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Macebearer for 2013, the highest faculty honor given by the University.

## **Lecture 2: Unpaved Roads, Ditches, Missing Riparian Buffers, Fertilization: Why Many Mountain Streams Aren't Cold, Clean, and Pristine**

Featured Speaker: Dr. C. Rhett Jackson, John Porter Stevens Distinguished Professor of Water Resources, Warnell School, University of Georgia

Bio:

Dr. Jackson's research focuses on the effects of human land use activities, specifically forestry, agriculture, and urbanization, on water quality and aquatic habitat. He conducts applied research into the effectiveness of best management practices (BMPs) in reducing nonpoint pollution, erosion, and flooding. He also conducts basic research into the subsurface routing of water and solutes from hills to streams. He has a particular interest in the relationships between riparian vegetation, channel structure, stream temperature, and aquatic habitat. Dr. Jackson collaborates with ecologists, animal biologists, biogeochemists, and engineers. He is a member of the Institute for Resilient Infrastructure Systems and the River Basin Center at UGA. Dr. Jackson has published over 100 peer-refereed publications. Dr. Jackson has three degrees in Civil and Environmental Engineering: a BSE and MSE from Duke University and a PhD from the University of Washington.

---

## **Lecture 3: Meet the Conservation Heroes Who Are Saving the Wild South**

Featured Speaker: Georgann Eubanks, Writer, Consultant, and Executive Director of the Paul Green Foundation

Bio:

Georgann Eubanks is a writer and consultant with more than 30 years of experience in the nonprofit sector. She has published five books with the University of North Carolina Press and is an Emmy winning documentarian. She has served as chair of NC Humanities, president of Arts North Carolina, and president of the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association. Last year, Georgann was named executive director of the Paul Green Foundation, making her the literary executor for the works of North Carolina's most celebrated playwright, the late Paul Green.

## Lecture 4: Managing the Coastal Zone in a Changing Climate: Everything We Are Doing Is Wrong

Featured Speaker: Dr. Rob Young, Director, Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines, Western Carolina University

Bio:

Robert S. Young is the Director of the Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines, a joint Duke University/Western Carolina University venture. He is also a Professor of Coastal Geology at Western Carolina University and a licensed professional geologist in three states (FL, NC, SC). The Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines (PSDS) is a research and policy outreach center serving the global coastal community. The primary mission of PSDS is to conduct scientific research into coastal processes, storm impacts, and sea level rise and to translate that science into management and policy recommendations through a variety of professional and public outreach mechanisms. The Program specializes in evaluating the design and implementation of coastal engineering projects.

Dr. Young received a BS degree in Geology (Phi Beta Kappa) from the College of William & Mary, and MS degree in Quaternary Studies from the University of Maine, and a PhD in Geology from Duke University where he was a James B. Duke Distinguished Doctoral Fellow. Dr. Young has approximately 100 technical publications and he serves on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Coastal Research* and *Environmental Geosciences*. He currently oversees more than \$3.5 Million in grant-funded research projects related to coastal science and management.

Current research projects include: 1) an NSF-funded project examining the coastal impacts of the Elwha River dam removal project; 2) a major scientific effort to restore native rivercane *Arundinaria gigantea* to the southern Appalachians; 3) building a national, geo-referenced storm surge database in partnership with NOAA; 4) a National Park Service funded project to map coastal engineering activities in coastal parks; and 5) working at the local level to help communities plan for rising sea level.

Dr. Young is a frequent contributor to the popular media. He has written numerous articles for outlets like the New York Times, USA Today, Architectural Record, the Houston Chronicle, and the Raleigh News and Observer, among others. He has appeared on shows ranging from PBS Now to CNN's Anderson Cooper. He is co-author of two books, *The Rising Sea* and co-editor of *Geologic Monitoring*, both released in 2009. Finally, Dr. Young has testified before congress and numerous state legislatures on coastal issues. He currently serves the State of North Carolina as a member of the Coastal Resources Commission Science Panel and the State of South Carolina as a member of the Blue Ribbon Committee on Shoreline Management.

He is President of Sialia Environmental, Inc— a firm that provides environmental consulting and restoration design.

---

## **Lecture 5: The "Lit" Lives of Dark Fireflies**

Featured Speaker: Dr. Luiz Felipe Lima da Silveira, Assistant Professor, Western Carolina University

Bio:

Luiz Silveira studies the patterns and processes that drive biodiversity. His research combines old-school natural history with modern phylogenetic methods and statistical analysis and statistical analysis to understand the diversity, ecology, and evolution of insects, especially fireflies. Luiz has described over 30 new species and 6 genera of beetles, particularly fireflies, and provided tools to facilitate their identification and conservation across the Americas. Luiz concluded his PhD in Ecology at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 2018 and was a postdoc for a year at the University of Georgia. Since 2019, Luiz is an Assistant Professor of Invertebrate Zoology at the Western Carolina University, and a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature specialist group for fireflies.

---

## **Lecture 6: Connecting Conservation to Save Wild Spaces: A Benefit to Flora, Fauna, and Economies**

Featured Speaker: Mallory L. Dimmitt, Chief Executive Officer of the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation

Bio:

Mallory is CEO of the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation, a non-profit organization that champions a collaborative campaign to permanently connect, protect, and restore a statewide Corridor for people and nature. She co-founded the organization and has served in many capacities over time, including expedition team member, Executive Director, and board member, before becoming CEO in 2021.

For the previous five years, Mallory was Vice President of Strategic Development and Business Relations at Lykes Bros. Inc., a family-owned company with five generations of agricultural operations and natural resource management experience across significant landholdings in Florida and Texas. Mallory led strategic planning and new business development to identify new ventures, revenue streams and ways to add lasting value including sustainable resource management.

Mallory earned her B.S. in Natural Resources from the University of the South (Sewanee). Mallory was awarded a Doris Duke Conservation Fellowship at Duke University's Nicholas School of Environment and earned a Master of Environmental Management in Environmental Economics and Policy.

Mallory and her husband, Bert Martin, live in St. Petersburg, Florida.

---

## **Lecture 7: The Hitchhiker's Guide to Biological Dependency: Plant and Fungal Support Networks on the Highlands Plateau**

Featured Speaker: Dr. Paul Manos, Professor of Biology, Duke University

Bio:

Paul Manos ([pmanos@duke.edu](mailto:pmanos@duke.edu)) is Professor of Biology at Duke University, Durham, NC and Chair of the Board of Directors at Highlands Biological Station (HBS). He studies the evolution and systematics of Northern Hemisphere woody plants with an emphasis on oaks and other nut-bearing trees, and regularly teaches Blue Ridge Flora at HBS. Interests include natural history outreach, forest ecology, and plant biogeography.

---

## **Lecture 8: A Light in the Dark: How Light Pollution Affects Avian Conservation**

Featured Speaker: Murry Burgess, Urban Ecologist, North Carolina State University

Bio:

Murry Burgess is an Associate Wildlife Biologist®, Urban Ecologist, Environmental Educator, and Children's Author. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Wildlife and Conservation Biology at NC State, researching the impacts of sensory pollutants on songbirds. Murry is also an avid birder and DEI advocate. Murry conducts a field experiment with Barn Swallow chicks, testing their physical development and metabolic health under artificial natural light at night and natural conditions.

---

## **Lecture 9: Land Protection and Path Forward for Climate Resilience in the Southeast**

Featured Speaker: Dr. Maria Whitehead, Vice President and Director of Land, Southeast, Open Space Institute

Bio:

During her professional career, Maria Whitehead has held positions as an ornithologist, professor, and conservation professional. She was worked for 15 years in the direct conservation of land and water and the interdisciplinary realm of climate adaptation and community resilience. As a coastal program manager for The Nature Conservancy, she worked at the land-water interface – helping to initiate a water fund program, establish oyster restoration sites, and protect tidal wetlands and wetland migration space. Today, as Senior Program Manager at Open Space Institute, she works across the eastern United States on varied conservation projects and initiatives including interpreting climate science for land-protection professionals and communities impacted by climate change.

## Lecture 10: George Masa's Wild Vision: A Japanese Immigrant Imagines Western North Carolina

Featured Speaker: Brent Martin, Executive Director, Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy

Bio:

Brent Martin lives in the Cowee community in western North Carolina where he works as the executive director of the Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy. He has also served as the southern Appalachian regional director for the Wilderness Society, executive director of Georgia ForestWatch, associate director of the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee, and executive director of the Armuchee Alliance. He has an MA and ABD in history from Georgia State University and is the recipient of the Southern Environmental Law Center's Southern Environmental Leadership Award. Martin is the author of three chapbook collections of poetry—*Poems from Snow Hill Road* (New Native Press, 2007), *A Shout in the Woods* (Flutter Press, 2010), and *Staring the Red Earth Down* (Red Bird Press, 2014) and is the coauthor of *Every Breath Sings Mountains* (Voices from the American Land, 2011) with Barbara Duncan and Thomas Crowe. His non-fiction includes *The Changing Blue Ridge Mountains: Essays on Journeys Past and Present* (History Press, 2019) and *George Masa's Wild Vision: A Japanese Immigrant Imagines Western North Carolina* (Hub City Press, 2022).