

New ASEH Committees

ASEH Diversity Committee - Call for Participation

The ASEH Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity solicits participation from the membership in a directed effort to continue building diversity within the organization. Since diversity of all kinds within the ASEH is crucial for the continued relevance and viability of both the ASEH as an institution and our work as scholars, we invite others who share these concerns to participate in building diversity in a number of ways: helping to form a standing committee to work on building diversity, sharing ideas and concerns with such a committee, joining in projects and initiatives that such a committee or others will put forward in the coming months. As we put together a standing committee that will be devoted to building diversity in ASEH, we also welcome information and suggestions in general that might help a standing committee develop initiatives that reflect the specific concerns of the membership. Please contact the Ad Hoc Committee if you are interested in participating:

Ted Steinberg, Case Western Reserve University,
theodore.steinberg@case.edu

Mart Stewart, Western Washington University,
Mart.Stewart@wwu.edu

Ellen Stroud, Bryn Mawr University,
estroud@brynawr.edu

ASEH Establishes Education Committee

Today's schools have a need for environmentally-based curricula that can help future citizens understand issues of ecological health and social justice confronting our nation and the world. Students and teachers benefit from content-rich instruction integrating social studies, humanities, and science at the K-12 level. To address these needs and capitalize on the accumulated knowledge and resources of membership, ASEH established a new Education Committee at the 2007 annual meeting. Committee members include Aaron Shapiro, historian for the US Forest Service in Washington DC, Thomas Andrews of the University of Colorado at Denver, and Vicki Garcia of St. Agnes Academy in Houston. The Committee will help fulfill the obligation a learned society should uphold to the educational systems which make our work possible and necessary; it will also help expand ASEH membership, enhance its public profile, and magnify its social significance.

Many ASEH members teach future teachers. The American Historical Association recently issued a challenge (<http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/historyteaching/>) to history departments to consider innovative and effective ways for educating future history teachers among students. In an unscientific poll on the ASEH

website, 82% of respondents favored ASEH including pre-collegiate education in its outreach efforts. Many members are already active with schools in their local communities and participate in teacher workshops, but the opportunity exists to improve networks. The committee will focus on issues relating to the practice of teaching and learning environmental history from the primary grades through the graduate level.

Committee goals include:

- Fostering networks among environmental history scholars with professional or personal concerns in K-12 education
- Encouraging K-12 educators to join and participate in ASEH
- Gathering existing curricular materials developed by membership for publication on a new ASEH educator page on the website as well as linking to relevant external materials
- Overseeing new collaborative initiatives to produce high-quality, content-rich materials for use in schools that take advantage of new media
- Establishing a speakers' bureau for Teaching American History and other professional-development workshops
- Securing grant funding for curricular initiatives and teacher workshops at the ASEH conference that would facilitate projects throughout the year
- Organizing education and teaching-related panels and roundtables for future ASEH meetings
- Developing partnerships with history education organizations and relevant repositories to foster primary-source and place-based instruction
- Exploring partnerships with environmental education and science education initiatives
- Coordinating with museum professionals and local, state, and national government agencies to provide the public additional opportunities to explore environmental history

The committee will also coordinate with future subcommittees to maximize ASEH education outreach efforts and minimize overlap. A future internship subcommittee, for instance, would apprise the Education Committee of its efforts. Graduate students selected to participate in an internship program could be asked to develop lesson plans or locate primary source materials for use in K-12 and undergraduate teaching.

We welcome suggestions as to how this committee can best serve the organization and encourage your participation in this effort. Please feel free to contribute to our blog at <http://aseheducate.blogspot.com> or email us at ASEHEducate@gmail.com

From the President's Desk

“Who cares?” Environmental History and the Public

Last week, flying back from Iceland, the Swedish geneticist sitting next to me described his research on cancer genes and then politely asked me about my research. I told him that I was considering a project in Iceland that would try to disentangle competing hypotheses about the extent, timing, and causes of deforestation. Iceland is one of the least forested countries in the world, and many scientists argue that a combination of sheep grazing, woodcutting, and pasture clearing led to an extraordinarily rapid loss of forests one thousand years ago, accompanied by some of the most extreme soil erosion ever recorded. Iceland's forests never recovered, and today only a few remnants of birch woodland struggle to survive.

Sheep farmers in Iceland, on the other hand, prefer the argument that climate change, not people and their sheep, led to the loss of forests and soil in Iceland. The incredible richness of Iceland's archival records, combined with paleoecological research, might provide a means of testing these various hypotheses, I explained to my seatmate.

He considered for a moment, and then asked, “who cares?” I blinked, surprised. He tried again, more delicately this time: “why does it

matter what caused deforestation? Does it affect what people do today?” Of course, I assured him. Of course environmental history matters—local people trying to restore a landscape need to know why degradation occurred in the first place. Foresters need to know why most forests recover after logging, but some forests do not. Communities trying to live responsibly on earth need to understand why sometimes human efforts to do so succeed, and sometimes they fail. People across the globe who are faced with rapid deforestation and erosion might be able to learn something from Iceland's past.

Many community activists, environmental advocates, and resource managers are increasingly recognizing that environmental history research can help them understand their past and make better decisions about their future. But because they don't know about our work, they often try to do history on their own, in isolation from the larger scholarly and academic community that could help them. At the Baton Rouge ASEH conference, we learned that journalists and minority communities trying to understand patterns of flooding in New Orleans had laboriously pieced together the environmental history of flood control on their own. They were unaware of historians who might have been able to guide them with this task. Similarly, community activists seeking to understand toxic exposures along the Chemical Corridor assembled historical information about chemical plants in the area, but they often found themselves bewildered by documents that historians have been trained to interpret.

One of my priorities during my tenure as President of ASEH is to help bridge these divides between scholars and the public. We have formed a new diversity committee that will work on ways to encourage and fund research by members of underrepresented groups, and to help foster collaborative research guided by the concerns of affected communities. An internship subcommittee, part of the education committee chaired by Aaron Shapiro, is establishing programs that train students in applied public history, working with communities and agencies that need to know more about their past. The outreach committee, chaired by Kate Christen, has created an expert's roster to help members of ASEH connect with journalists, and the outreach committee is considering new programs to help bring our members' research to a broader public.

The plane from Iceland landed long before I could explain all this to my Swedish cancer researcher. If I had time, I would have argued to him that environmental history, like all humanities research, doesn't need to be useful to be worthwhile. Research for its own sake, research completely disconnected from concerns over environmental degradation and human justice, deserves an audience. But environmental history has enormous potential for helping us live sustainably and equitably on earth, and ASEH has an important role to play in this effort.

Nancy Langston
ASEH President

American Society for Environmental History

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The American Society for Environmental History seeks understanding of the human experience of the environment from the perspective of history, liberal arts, and sciences. The Society encourages cross-disciplinary dialogue on every aspect of the present and past relationship of humankind to the natural environment. ASEH maintains a website at <www.aseh.net>. Contact <webmaster@aseh.net> regarding material on the web page.

Items for the next newsletter should be sent by *September 14, 2007*, to: Lisa Mighetto, Editor, <director@aseh.net>.

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The Profession

Consulting Opportunities in Environmental History

By Lisa Mighetto, University of Washington – Tacoma

During my 15 years as a historical consultant, many people expressed surprised when I told them what I did for a living. Even some historians were unaware of consulting projects and the opportunities to work as a contractor for government agencies, museums, historical societies, tribes, companies, and other entities.

Many U.S. consulting projects involve environmental history. Natural resource agencies, for example, hire historians to write administrative histories and to document historical land and water use in specific geographic areas. Museums and historical societies hire historians to provide context for exhibits and interpretive materials. Government regulations drive some projects, including historic preservation and cultural resource management work that assists agencies and companies in complying with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Similarly, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) – and similar legislation at the state level – prompts historical research of the sources of contamination of Superfund sites. In the Pacific Northwest, endangered species listings have resulted in hired research for fish and wildlife agencies of early population distributions and historical habitat conditions. And attorneys sometimes hire environmental historians to serve as expert witnesses in Native American treaty rights and natural resource allocation cases. My favorite projects included researching the historical use of marine resources in the Pribilof Islands, surveying historical salmon-passage facilities at several hydroelectric projects, writing a history of the Klondike Gold Rush, and setting up a personal library – which included many environmental history titles – for a former Microsoft executive.

These projects can vary in duration from a few weeks to several years. Some history consultants devote full time to their projects, while others, including historians at universities, work as part-time consultants. The products of these temporary jobs range from book-length histories and short reports to brochures and interpretive materials. Frequently the “deliverables” for my projects also included copies of historical documents as well as oral history transcripts.

While consulting is not for everyone, there are a number of advantages. The great variety of projects available might appeal to some scholars, while the opportunities

to collaborate with consultants from other disciplines, including scientists and engineers, is another benefit. And sometimes consulting projects produce reports that can later be developed into published books or articles. The drawbacks are related to the advantages. Working on a wide variety of projects simultaneously can lead to burnout. Another disadvantage to consulting is the lack of autonomy and independence, which some academics might find disturbing. Even consultants that are not collaborating with other professionals must confer with their clients. Although clients cannot dictate the conclusions for a project, they often help shape the questions and perimeters.

Historians interested in consulting will find a variety of skills useful. Not surprisingly, the ability to write well is very valuable. Research, too, must be conducted in an efficient, yet thorough and accurate, manner. Experience using a variety of archives and records is helpful. These are skills that serve all historians well. For consultants, the ability to shift gears quickly and multi-task, adapting to the needs of a changing project, is also essential. Because most projects involve at least some interaction with clients, history consultants will find that tact, poise, and the ability to negotiate are especially valuable. For many consultants, a willingness to market and develop *Continued on page 6*

Travel Grants Available for ASEH Conference

ASEH wishes to encourage graduate students and low-income, international, and minority scholars to attend its conference in Boise in March 2008. The following grants will be available:

- 11 travel grants of \$500 each for graduate students and low-income and international scholars *who are presenting research at the meeting in Boise*
- Minority travel grant for minority/non-white scholars from North America, Mexico, and the Caribbean to attend the meeting in Boise

If you are interested in applying for one of these grants, please provide the following items:

- Vita or resume;
- One-page statement outlining your interest and objectives in attending the ASEH conference, and your paper title, if you are presenting research;
- Specify all sources of funding received already or applied for;
- Specify which of the grants listed above you are seeking.

Send the required information in an electronic format to:

Lynne Heasley, Boise Program Committee Chair

E-mail: lynne.heasley@wmich.edu

Deadline for application: October 5, 2007

Recipients will be notified by: October 31, 2007

Planning Guide to ASEH's 2008 Annual Meeting in Boise

By Lisa Brady, Boise State University

“*Les bois, voyez les bois!*” Or I should say, “Boise, voyez Boise!”

If you’ve never had the opportunity, now is your chance – ASEH will be hosting its conference in the “city of trees” from March 12-15, 2008. I’d like to extend my personal invitation to you all to visit this gem of a city in the Gem State. Once you get here, you’ll know it was worth the trip.

We have great things planned for the conference, including a one-day fire history seminar to be held in conjunction with the National Forest Service and the National Interagency Fire Center. We’ll also have a half-day GIS workshop and top-notch birding at the Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. I’ve been assured that March is a great time for seeing these amazing raptors (and other birds, too, of course!). Other field trips include Boise National Forest, a tour of Boise’s “green” development, and a visit to one of several dam sites nearby.

Boise is home to one of the nation’s largest Basque populations, so our fund-raiser feast will feature amazing Basque foods. In response to Baton Rouge conference evaluations, we also plan to include live music at this event.

The Graduate Student reception will be held at the Idaho State History Museum, catered by Table Rock Brewery – a local micro-brewery.

Conference details are provided below.

Hotel

Accommodations at The Grove Hotel, \$104/night (single or double)

We’ve also reserved a block of rooms especially for graduate students at \$89 a night (these are limited; please book early)

Website: <http://grovehotelboise.com/> Phone number: 888.961.5000

Registration

(US dollars)	Before February 15	After February 15
ASEH/FHS Member	\$85	\$95
Non-Member	\$95	\$105
Student	\$40	\$50
Single Day	\$40	\$40

Sessions will be held next door to the Grove at the city convention center, the Boise Centre on the Grove. Website: <http://www.boisecentre.com/clients/boisecentre/facility.htm>

Boise State University, Idaho State University, and the University of Idaho are partnering to bring you an excellent annual meeting – we hope you’ll all join us in lovely Boise.

Conference programs and a registration form will be mailed to all ASEH members in late fall (and these will be posted on our website). For more information: Dr. Lisa Brady, Local Arrangements Chair, 208.426.4309 or LisaBrady@boisestate.edu

Boise, called the “City of Trees,” offers many urban parks, a river flowing through the heart of the city, and a 25-mile river front greenbelt. Among the many unique sites to visit are the Basque Museum and Cultural Center, Morrison-Knudsen Nature Center, Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial, Idaho Black History Museum, and the World Center for Birds of Prey. Southwest Idaho offers many outdoor and recreational opportunities at nearby forests, mountains, canyons, and rivers – and some of the field trips will visit these areas.



Boise is an excellent vacation place – if you can, plan a longer trip around the conference dates. Go skiing or boarding at Bogus Basin (or if tubing is more your style, there’s a tube hill, complete with tow rope, at the park as well). More information on skiing will be provided in the conference program and on ASEH’s website, beginning in the fall. Downtown is situated along the beautiful Greenbelt, a running/biking/walking trail that fronts the Boise River and connects a series of parks. Tunnels and bridges along the route mean you never have to stop for a traffic light.

Photos courtesy of Boise Convention and Visitors Bureau

Special Speakers

Mark Kurlansky

Plenary Speaker, March 13, 2008

Sponsored by the *Charles Redd Center for Western Studies*

Mark Kurlansky is well-known for his popular book *Cod: A Biography of the Fish That Changed the World*, and, more recently, *The Basque History of the World* and *Salt* (all published by Walker and Co.). He has written articles for *The New York Times Magazine*, *Harper’s*, *The International Herald Tribune*, and *Partisan Review*. He is also the author of two additional books, *A Continent of Islands: Searching for the Caribbean Destiny* (Ballantine) and *The Chosen Few: The Resurrection of European Jewry* (Ballantine).

Patricia Limerick

Speaker in Fire History Workshop, March 12, 2008

Sponsored by the *Joint Fire Science Program*

Patricia Limerick is the Faculty Director and Chair of the Board of the Center of the American West at the University of Colorado, where she is also a Professor of History. She has dedicated her career to bridging the gap between academics and the general public and to demonstrating the benefits of applying historical perspective to contemporary dilemmas and conflicts. For more information, see <http://www.centerwest.org/about/patty/index.php>

Workshops

Boise Workshop #1

“No Longer on the Fringe: The Wildland Urban Interface as History”

National Interagency Fire Center, Boise, Idaho

March 12, 2008

Sponsored by the Joint Fire Science Program, US Forest Service, and National Interagency Fire Center

This one-day workshop will take place on the first day of ASEH’s 2008 conference in Boise, and will bring together historians, scientists, journalists, and policy makers.

The morning session will include the following panels & speakers:

Introduction

- Stephen Pyne, Arizona State University

Westering and Burning

- Patricia Limerick, Center of the American West, University of Colorado, *“The West’s New Frontiers”*

Other Lands, Other Ideas

- Stephen Pyne, Arizona State University, *“Spark and Sprawl – Global Comparisons”*
- Jack Cohen, USFS Fire Sciences Laboratory, Missoula, *“The Evolving Science of the Interface Fire Problem”*
- William Sommers, College of Science, George Mason University, *“Forest Fire Science and Management”*

Reporting Fire

- Rocky Barker, Idaho Statesman, *“Fire & Disaster”*
- Mark Neuzil, University of St. Thomas, *“Fire & Disaster”*

Lunch is included.



In the afternoon, we will tour the National Interagency Fire Center, which includes the BLM base for smoke jumpers (firefighters transported to fires by planes and parachutes) and the Wildland Firefighters Monument.

A bus will leave the Boise Grove Hotel (ASEH conference hotel) for the National Interagency Fire Center at 7:30 a.m. and will return to the hotel to pick up people interested in the afternoon tour only. During the late afternoon, a bus will return all participants from the National Interagency Fire Center to the hotel, in time for the opening reception of the ASEH’s annual conference.

Admission is free, but space is limited. Participants can sign up for the morning session, afternoon field trip – or both. If you are interested, please contact Lisa Mighetto at director@aseh.net to add your name to the list. Please indicate your interest in morning only (panels and lunch), afternoon only (tour), or all day.

Throughout the summer and fall, we will post a list of people signed up on the ASEH’s website (www.aseh.net – see “Conferences and Workshops”). We will also post a notice when the workshop fills, and will provide additional information about this workshop as it becomes available.

Boise Workshop #2

“Using GIS for Environmental History: Teaching & Research”

Idaho Water Center, Boise, Idaho

March 14, 2008, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Geographic Information Systems technology provides the opportunity to apply the most highly-developed tools of spatial analysis to questions of environmental history. This workshop is designed to elicit productive discussion among scholars from history, geography, and other fields who have used GIS or who are simply interested in its potential contributions to expand the spatial components and analytical tools of our historical studies.

The workshop will take place during Friday morning of ASEH’s 2008 conference in Boise.

The location at the Idaho Water Center is about 5 blocks from the conference hotel. Transportation will be provided for those who prefer a ride. Morning snacks and beverages will be available at the location. The workshop will take place in classrooms and computer labs operated by the University of

Idaho and Idaho State University.

Admission is free, but space is limited. Participants can sign up when registering for the conference.

Throughout the summer and fall, we will update the schedule and list of speakers for the workshop. (www.aseh.net – see “Conferences and Workshops”).

ASEH Future Conferences

2009 Tallahassee, Florida (February 25 - March 1)

Copenhagen, Denmark, World Congress (August 4- 8)

2010 Portland, Oregon (March 10 -14)

See our website (www.aseh.net, “Conferences and Workshops”) for more information

Podcasts in Environmental History

By Robin O’Sullivan, University of Texas – Austin

Not everyone engrossed in the music streaming through their earbuds as they stroll around campus realizes that iPods are not simply enabled for songs but also for the digital media files known as podcasts. You can download podcasts over the Internet and listen to them on your portable media device or computer. Podcasts are a significant educational tool, and many are germane to environmental history. Since podcasts can be stored and played at the user’s convenience, podcasting allows you—and your students—to access instructional content in non-traditional times and places.

Jan Oesthook’s *Exploring Environmental History* podcast is a collection of interviews on historical topics ranging from Australian forests to flood protection in the Netherlands. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association produces an *Ocean Explorer Podcast*, with episodes on coral ecosystems, Alaska’s seamounts, and the Galapagos region’s ocean floor.

Environment Yale features discussions of ongoing research on subjects such as biophilic design, amphibian deformities, and “An Inconvenient Truth.” *The Best of National Geographic* is part travelogue and part human interest, with each show featuring an author or photographer discussing an assignment; these include excursions to the South Sandwich Islands, Kansas tallgrass prairies, and Newfoundland’s La Poile Bay.

Podcasts are often distilled from radio broadcasts, such as *Grist: Environmental News*, a ten-minute weekly roundup of environmental headlines. The *National Public Radio Natural Sciences* collection is a compilation of relevant environmental science news in a 25-30 minute weekly podcast. Episodes from *Sierra Club Radio*, a source for “green news you can use,” focus on activism and environmental politics. These podcasts can all be saved and listened to repeatedly, unlike ‘live’ radio.

Hiking enthusiasts can tag along on excursions in the Scottish highlands through *The Wilderness World of Cameron McNeish*; this mountaineer’s commentary while backpacking incorporates historical and literary tidbits. The *National Park Service* offers audio podcasts on Lewis and Clark and video podcasts on backcountry camping in Glacier National Park. The *Smelling Committee Audio Tour* is a short recording that conveys the olfactory sensations of particular urban neighborhoods (fortunately, iPods are not yet enabled to transmit odors).

Some universities have recorded lectures from entire courses, such as Carolyn Merchant’s class on *American Environmental and Cultural History* at U.C. Berkeley and Dan Sturgis’s *Philosophy 3140: Environmental Ethics* at C.U. Boulder.

Podcasting from the classroom has raised the question of whether students may stop attending class in person when they can simply download the soundtrack instead. However, in many cases, the files are not released until after the course ends, at which time even non-enrolled students can enjoy virtually being there for an entire semester.

New podcasts are constantly appearing, so keep an eye on iTunes or other podcatchers for attractive content. Once you discover an intriguing podcast, you can first sample one episode or catch up on all the back issues. If you decide to subscribe, you will automatically receive new episodes when they are published. Have fun exploring the rich world of podcasts—a world that’s not quite as self-absorbed as it may appear to be.

A podcatcher, also known as an aggregator, can be used to subscribe to and manage podcast feeds. The most popular is iTunes; to download iTunes for free,

<http://www.apple.com/itunes/download/>

Another option is Juice Receiver, and the free software is available at:

<http://juicereceiver.sourceforge.net/>

Selected Links are provided below:

<http://www.eh-resources.org/podcast/podcast.html>

<http://www.sierraclub.org/radio/subscribe.asp>

http://webcast.berkeley.edu/course_details.php?seriesid=1906978345

<http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewPodcast?id=217105902>

from **The Profession** page 3

projects is also needed.

Government agencies list Request for Proposals for consulting projects in the Federal Business Opportunities website and other publications. History consultants can also be proactive and contact departments to ask about upcoming projects and to explain the advantages that history can offer. Some agencies and companies hire interns for temporary projects (see ASEH’s website at www.aseh.net/ “Resources” for a selected list). During the last several years, ASEH’s conferences have included breakfasts and sessions devoted to history consulting. If you would like more information, contact director@aseh.net

Announcements

Member News

Fritz Davis, Florida State University, has published *The Man Who Saved Sea Turtles: Archie Carr and the Origins of Conservation Biology* (Oxford University Press). He also received a University Graduate Teaching Award in April.

ASEH Award Submissions for 2007

2nd Notice

This year ASEH's prize committees will evaluate submissions (published books and articles and completed dissertations) that appear between November 1, 2006 and October 31, 2007. Please send three copies of each submission by November 7, 2007 to:

Lisa Mighetto, ASEH
c/o Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences Program
University of Washington
Box 358436
1900 Commerce Street
Tacoma, WA 98402-3100

What's New on ASEH's Website

(www.aseh.net)

In "Resources" Section:

- Advocacy Guidelines
- Resolution Opposing EPA Guidelines
- "How To" Articles for Students and New Professionals

In "Conferences and Workshops" Section:

- Boise Fire History Workshop
- Boise GIS Workshop
- Boise Conference – Exhibit and Advertising forms
- Boise Info. on Speakers, Registration, Hotel, and More

In "About ASEH" Section:

- Baton Rouge Conference Photos ("History of ASEH")

In "Awards and Funding" Section:

- ASEH Travel Grant Info.
- Expanded Section on "Other Funding"
- Baton Rouge Conference Awards Comments

Also check out the New Poll and sign up for the Experts Directory (see home page). The latest "News" appears in portlet on right.

New Graphics Editor for Journal

Kathryn Morse is stepping down from her position as Graphics Editor of *Environmental History* as of July 2007. In appreciation of her years of service, editor Mark Cioc offered the following comments, along with a plaque, to Kathy at our conference in Baton Rouge: "Adam Rome tells me that bringing her on board the editorial staff was one of the best decisions he ever made as Editor, and that's saying something in light of the many great decisions Adam during his years at the journal's helm. Her presence has greatly enhanced the quality and aesthetics of the journal, and she will be greatly missed. Fortunately, Neil Maher will assume the duties of Graphics Editor beginning with the October 2007 issue." Thank you, Kathy, for your invaluable energy and effort, and thank you, Neil, for agreeing to serve as the new Graphics Editor.



Newsletter Announcement – Final Notice

We have been posting quarterly issues of *ASEH News* on our website since 2001. The ASEH Executive Committee voted in Baton Rouge to offer the newsletter online only, to save money on printing and postage. We plan to send a quarterly e-mail message to members linking to the latest issue on our website, beginning in September 2007 with this year's fall issue. If you would like to continue receiving a paper copy of the newsletter, please notify Lisa Mighetto, Editor, at director@aseh.net. If you have already sent your name and address in response to the first message in the spring issue, there is no need to send it again.

If you would like to propose an article for the newsletter, please e-mail Lisa at director@aseh.net



In this issue ...

- Boise Travel Grants Available
- Boise Conference Planning Guide
- Reveiw of Env. History Podcasts
- ASEH Awards – Submissions Due

ASEH News 

American Society for Environmental History

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