Constructing Landscapes: Changing Views of Human-Environment Relationships on the Northwest Coast
Colin Grier

The classic anthropological view of hunter-gatherers is that they live in small groups and move around a lot. That perspective has changed in the last few decades with the recognition of what have become known as complex hunter-gatherers (CHGs). CHGs typically have permanent communities, live in affluent (often coastal) environments, and have quite high population densities.

Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast have long been recognized as CHGs, with the harvesting of vast amounts of salmon supporting their “complex” lifeways. However, that fairly straightforward picture has been eroding lately, with documentation of the incredible diversity of resources that have been utilized for many thousands of years. Archaeological data now clearly show that Northwest Coast peoples actively pursued a broad range of resources. Their subsistence clearly included salmon, but was as much focused on harvesting herring and many other small fish, a variety of invertebrates, and a diversity of plant foods.

This diversity goes beyond just issues of diet, however. It speaks to the complex relationship of Northwest Coast peoples to their physical world. Recent research I have conducted in the southern Gulf Islands of British Columbia—the traditional territory of the Hul’q’umi’num Coast Salish (see map)—has involved documenting a range of constructions that were high-intensity resource harvesting features. Clam gardens are perhaps the most intriguing of these. These are linear piles of rocks at the lowest tide line that trap sediment and increase the habitat and productivity of clams. Clams from other beaches may have been brought in to maintain a harvestable “crop.” Also, wetland areas near major habitation locations were engineered, often by the addition of shell midden material as construction fill, to create freshwater environments more favorable for various plant species and waterfowl.

These are just two examples of how extensively Coast Salish people shaped their landscapes over the last 5,000 years. Across the Northwest Coast, archaeologists have been increasingly recognizing and documenting intertidal fish traps and weirs, managed plant gardens, the anthropogenic burning of landscapes, burial mound and cairn cemeteries, large defensive earthwork structures, monumental residences, terraced village ridges, and the use of shell midden as fill for all kinds of construction projects.

Such features force us to see landscapes and shorelines as much more anthropogenic than previously imagined. The scale of these efforts and practices is also impressive. Many of these features required large numbers of people and long periods of time for construction and maintenance, and
Dr. Andrew Duff

The faculty and students in the Department of Anthropology have had another productive year. The Museum of Anthropology launched two successful new exhibits, each accompanied by a guest speaker, and several hundred people have passed through the museum. Our faculty and graduate students have received competitive grants and fellowships, and continue to be active in the field, both in the United States and throughout the world. Anthropology graduate students and faculty continue to publish their research in some of the field’s most prominent venues. Last summer, WSU signed Memorandum of Understanding agreements with Hawassa University and Arba Minch University (both in southern Ethiopia) that will facilitate the continued collaboration between scholars from these institutions and several of our faculty and graduate students. Our undergraduate major numbers continue to expand and we are able to provide increasing numbers of them with research opportunities. In short, it has been another successful year on many fronts.

Particularly noteworthy for 2014 is that Regents Professor Tim Kohler received the Alfred Vincent Kidder Award for Eminence in the Field of American Archaeology at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association. The Kidder award alternates between a Southwestern and Mesoamerican archaeologist, and Tim follows in the footsteps of Dr. William Lipe, the 2010 Kidder Award recipient.

This year, North American archaeology and the Department of Anthropology lost a great friend when Richard Daugherty passed away. “Doc” Daugherty shaped the Department of Anthropology at WSU, mentored dozens of students, impacted federal legislation, directed research at some of the most important archaeological sites in the Northwest, and was at the forefront of collaborative research. His legacy continues and we are grateful for his efforts on behalf of the department over his long career.

The department continues build on its tradition of excellence and, as always, we appreciate your support.

Andrew Duff
Chair, Department of Anthropology

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so can be thought of as monumental in scale. The clam garden at the Shingle Point village site on Valdes Island is almost a kilometer long.

Given the labor organization required, the building and use of these constructions reshaped not only the physical landscape, but also the social landscape. A recent paper of mine (Grier 2014) lays out a more complex argument concerning how such shaping of the landscape through human action created “ownable” places. The creation of such places likely lies at the root of how very formalized systems of ownership developed amongst the Coast Salish people.

This archaeological research also connects with the broader current of colonial history. In the late 1800s, the ephemeral relationship of First Nations peoples to their lands (as construed by early Canadian government officials) was used as a justification to alienate them from their traditional territories and long-standing livelihoods. That position was clearly politically motivated, but now is being shown as empirically inaccurate. The archaeological record is revealing a complex, substantial, and enduring relationship of Northwest Coast peoples with their physical world, mirroring much of what Coast Salish peoples have been telling us all along.

Two views of the clam garden that extends south from the major village settlement at Shingle Point, Valdes Island.
Visiting Scholars

Dr. Walelign Robele, visiting assistant professor (Hawassa University, Ethiopia) and Beza Oda (PhC, University of Gent) join the Department of Anthropology for the academic year 2014-2015. Wale and Beza are studying the consequences of “development induced displacement and resettlement” (DIDR) for ethnic minorities in southern Ethiopia.

“The primary causes of DIDR over the past half-century include: water supply; transportation; energy exploration and extraction; large mono-crop plantations; parks and forest reserves; population redistribution schemes; and urban infrastructure development. It is the poorest and most vulnerable members of a community who typically bear the heaviest costs of DIDR. Women, children, the elderly and indigenous groups are particularly vulnerable to impoverishment and disempowerment when forcibly displaced. For those indigenous peoples who value land as the core of their identity and way of life, the impacts of DIDR are particularly devastating” (Oda 2014 in Culture Technology and Development, Hawassa University).

The visit is an outgrowth of the WSU Initiative in Global Innovation Studies research capacity building efforts. Wale and Beza are collaborating with Drs. Rob Quinlan, Marsha Quinlan, and Courtney Meehan in anthropology, Dr. Martha Cottam in political science, and Dr. Tom Rotolo in sociology. The purpose of the visit is to help develop ongoing, large-scale, mixed method interdisciplinary research using state-of-the-art method and theory.

Recent Graduates

Master’s Degree

**Aletheia Bouknight:** Zooarchaeology of the Largo Gap Site, New Mexico

**Francisco de la Torre:** Class and Education in Miami: How Local Culture Can Shape the Relationship between Class and Education

**Caitlin Estalilla:** Changing Notions of Identity and Selfhood among the Homeless of Spokane, Washington

**Katie Flores:** Culturally Salient Herbal Medicines for Female-Specific Reproductive Conditions in Rural Dominica, West Indies

**Sonia Horan:** For Love of the Character: Animism and Materiality in Cosplay Dress

Doctorate

**Kyle Bocinsky:** Landscape-based Null Models for Archaeological Inference

**Maia Clay:** Isolation and Threat on Campus: A Comparative Study of Washington State University’s Ethnic Studies Students and the University of Auckland’s Maori Studies Students

**Courtney Malcom:** Maternal Energy Allocation and Investment among Central African Foragers and Farmers

**William “Buzz” Nanavati:** The Geoarchaeology of Terraced Agriculture in the Southern Peruvian Andes: A Case Study from San Francisco de Sangayaico

**Casiana Pascariu:** Roma Children in the Contemporary Romanian Educational System

**Kelsey Reese:** Over the Line: A Least-Cost Analysis of “Community” in Mesa Verde National Park

**Elizabeth Truman:** Geoarchaeological Investigations at 45PO429 (Pend Oreille County, Washington)

**Elizabeth Horton:** Space, Status, and Interaction: Multiscalar Analysis of Officers, Soldiers, and Laundresses at Nineteenth Century Fort Vancouver, Washington

**Ethan McGaffey:** Fishers of Men: Center-Men and Fish Aggregating Device Technology in Dominica
AGO News

This is going to be an awesome year for the AGO! Events last year provided engagement with guest speakers from the Lipe Scholar and the AGO visiting scholar programs for students, the Empty Bowls philanthropic program, and other rewarding programming involving educational outreach. This year we will continue to build on these outreach programs as well as reviving other successful opportunities that support graduate students in their academic endeavors, such as the monthly Brown Bag lectures. This year we also have new officers, some of whom are new faces to the department, and are all the more excited to facilitate new ideas involving educational outreach and fundraising events with the local community.

Here are the 2014-2015 AGO officers:

President: Paige Hawthorne
Vice President: Jason Chung
Secretary: Lori Phillips
Treasurer: Judith Card
Undergraduate Representative: Adam Sackman

Stream Representatives:

Archaeology: Tiffany Fulkerson
Cultural: Katie Flores
Evolutionary: Valda Black

Professional development and community engagement are the primary focus of AGO this year. We are actively pursuing more fundraising opportunities to support guest speakers, outreach events, and collaborations with other organizations to create a fun and eventful year. There will be a large emphasis on education programming in order to provide experience in engaging with the local community, especially K-12 schools, by raising awareness about topics in anthropology as well as providing experience in team and individual skill building to better enhance curriculum for future generations.

The AGO is always interested in working with others in support of our mission to foster professional development and engagement in the WSU, local, and global community. Please contact the AGO (wsuago@gmail.com) if you are interested in getting involved.

—Paige Hawthorne

Graduate Student News

Kristin Safi

I have been conducting survey and excavation at the Largo Gap great house community for my dissertation research over the past four years. Largo Gap is a late Pueblo II (ca. A.D. 1050-1130) great house on the margins of the “Chaco regional system” in west-central New Mexico. My research examines the role of Chaco-era great houses within the context of their associated households to understand how great houses were used across the Four Corners region and how their local roles influenced regional interactions between great house communities. Through an NSF-funded Spatial Archaeometry Research Collaborations grant (sparc.cast.uark.edu), we flew a thermal camera attached to a small drone over Largo Gap and a portion of its surrounding landscape. The use of drones in archaeological research is relatively new, with data collection using thermal cameras attached to drones still in the experimental phase. We conducted multiple flights before any dawn light to maximize the difference in the thermal signature of construction stone versus the silty sand matrix covering the majority of the site. These experiments were a success. The thermal images illustrate the walls and structural features identified during surface mapping and excavation, as well as two additional room banks, another potential blocked-in kiva, and several superimposed wall alignments that suggest the structure’s overall layout and orientation changed through time. These interpretations are supported by the ground penetrating radar data. Together, the data highlight that Largo Gap was a much larger structure than its surface remains indicate and that its organization of rooms and public spaces changed through time. The combined use of aerial thermography and ground penetrating radar provides evidence of an entire architectural component of the great house that, to date, had been obscured through significant historic stone borrowing and erosion.

Samuel Jilo Dira

Over the summer I continued working on my dissertation project with Sidama farmers and Chabu foragers in southwestern Ethiopia. My project intends to compare cultural resilience to ecological risk in these two groups who practice distinct subsistence modes, but who both live in risky, uncertain environments. While a few anthropologists have studied Sidama farmers, the Chabu foragers are new to anthropology literature. The field experience with the Chabu is of particular interest because Barry and Bonnie Hewlett and I were the first anthropologists to visit them and we have continued working with them since the summer of 2012. Last summer I was fortunate to spend three months with both groups, collecting data on how adults and children perceive ecological uncertainties, how adults learn to survive difficult times, and how adults transmit survival knowledge and skills to their children. While my dissertation research is an ongoing project, my field assistants and I conducted 120 surveys with adults and 40 structured interviews with adolescents in Sidama, and 100 surveys with adults and 30 interviews with adolescents in Chabu. Besides doing surveys and interviews, I conducted direct systematic observations, including scan sampling and focal follows of adult–adolescent interactions while they were engaging in day-to-day activities. I particularly enjoyed going out for spear hunting and snare preparation, though I found myself lost in the forest several times during the focal follow. An International Fellowship from the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and the Halperin Memorial Fund of the Society for Economic Anthropology funded my fieldwork last summer. My dissertation project is currently at the stage of data entry and analysis. When completed, my results will contribute to a growing interest in ecological anthropology in applying social-ecological approaches to study cultural resilience, and will contribute to the ongoing debates in the anthropology of learning with respect to the modes and process of culture transmission.
Joint Publications


2014 New Directions in the Anthropology of Morality. In *Anthropological Theory*. Part of a special issue on morality organized by Julia Cassaniti and Jacob Hickman.


**Tim Kohler** The Village Ecodynamics Project, long coordinated by Tim Kohler, has provided a research platform for a number of WSU student projects over the years, so far resulting in four master’s theses and two dissertations through WSU. Phase II is now beginning to wind down, and a number of VEP and VEP-related final publications are either in the works or have recently appeared, including:


Courtney Meehan
Meehan CL and Hawks S.

Andrew Duff

Stele at Chelba Tutitti, Gedeo Zone.

My research project in west-central New Mexico continued with its thirteenth consecutive year of summer fieldwork in 2014. For the last four years, we have been conducting survey around the Chaco period (ca. A.D. 1030-1130) great house of Largo Gap to document its associated community. This has also included two years of test excavations at the great house itself, and one season of geophysical survey. Kristin Safi has directed this research (see story under Graduate Student News) and is using project data as the basis of her dissertation research.

During summer 2014, I travelled to southern Ethiopia and to visit several archaeological sites, as I initiate a new research direction to complement my southwestern research. Working with Hawassa University faculty member and current WSU doctoral student Ashenafi Zena, we visited previously recorded archaeological sites to explore research opportunities. I am particularly interested in the Holocene period archaeology of southern Ethiopia, hoping to identify villages or settlements associated with groups of early farmers in the region. This time period has not received much attention, and work to date has emphasized caves and rockshelters. Joined by Hawassa University faculty member Addisalem Melesse, we visited several rock art locations and stele sites in Gedeo Zone, and a few cave locations in Wolaita Zone. The rock art sites contain multiple images of cattle and are generally adjacent to flowing water; some of them are associated with artifact scatters while others appear isolated. The megalithic stele sites contain from as few as a dozen to as many as several hundred stele, many of which remain standing, some of which are over five meters long. Several feature carvings or decorations, but most of these sites are undated. Tuto Fela, a tumulus and stele site in the region that has been excavated, dates to roughly 1000-700 years ago. We are pursuing permission to initiate research at Chelba Tutitti, one of the larger stele sites, hoping to begin test excavations in 2015.

Shannon Tushingham

Field based research this year has focused on sites in the southern Pacific Northwest coast in collaboration with local tribal communities, including the studies “Historical Ecology of a Northern California Estuary: Collaborative Research Investigating 1300 Years of Human-Environmental Dynamics at the Manila Site (CA-HUM-321),” developed in partnership with the Blue Lake Rancheria, and “Analyzing Archaeological Materials from Redwood National Park to Investigate Historical Marine Environments,” a study funded by the National Park Service and developed in partnership with the local Tolowa communities of the Elk Valley Rancheria and Smith River Rancheria. I am also lead PI on the NSF-Archaeometry funded project “Human Use of Psychoactive Plants in Ancient North America: Experimental Method Development and Applications of Metabolomics Research in Archaeological Residue Analysis,” which commenced this fall. This three-year project focuses on method development and the application of archaemetric techniques (residue extraction and chemical identification via liquid/gas chromatography-mass spectrometry) to anthropological questions about the history of human use of psychoactive plants (e.g. tobacco, datura, cacao, “black drink,” etc.). Museum work has also kept me very busy. I am happy to report that we have secured grants from several local agencies to rehabilitate some major legacy collections. Diane Curewitz (our repository manager) is in charge of overseeing this work and is doing an amazing job with these complex and important collections. We’ve also developed some new museum programming, including two exhibits introduced this fall: Legacy of the Columbia River Fishery and Memories of Celilo Falls, which was developed in partnership with members of the Nez Perce Tribe.

Bettinger RL, Garvey R, and Tushingham S.

Collins M and Tushingham S.

Whitaker A and Tushingham S.

Tushingham S

Tushingham S and Bettinger RL
Shane J. Macfarlan ’10 Ph.D.

After completing his doctorate in anthropology from Washington State University, Dr. Shane J. Macfarlan spent two and a half years as an adjunct instructor at Washington State University Vancouver, Portland State University, and Oregon State University. In 2013, he received a postdoctoral fellowship in evolutionary anthropology at the University of Missouri where he worked in conjunction with Dr. Napoleon Chagnon to archive and analyze his extensive body of field research associated with the Yanomamö. Currently, he is an assistant professor of cultural anthropology at the University of Utah and a faculty affiliate of the Global Climate and Sustainability Center. Macfarlan has been pursuing two main lines of research. Related to his dissertation and postdoctoral research in Latin America and the Caribbean, Macfarlan has continued to examine the cultural, ecological, and psychological basis of cooperation, social relationships, and social cohesion in ethnographic and experimental settings. Specifically, he has been examining how kinship, gender, status, and spatial proximity affect the number and quality of social relationships a person forms and how these relationships change over time. These research aims are represented in recent publications in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA, Proceedings of the Royal Society B, Current Anthropology, Psychological Bulletin, and Field Methods. In addition, Macfarlan has been working on a collaborative project with Dr. Loren Davis (Oregon State University) and Dr. Celeste Henrickson (University of Utah) that investigates the peopling of the New World and intercultural relationships of indigenous populations of both the Columbia River Plateau and the Baja California Peninsula. This research is represented by recent publications in The Journal of Archaeological Science and The Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology. Macfarlan also has an emerging line of research with Montserrat Soler (Rutgers) and colleagues from the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (Mexico) examining the coupled human–ecosystem dynamics of the Sierra de La Giganta region of Baja California Sur, Mexico. This research seeks to document a unique cultural group—Oasiana Rancheros—whose lives have been tethered to an internationally important oasis ecosystem over the last 250 years and uncover how formal and informal rules modulate human interaction, oasis water management, and oasis water quality. Macfarlan can state definitively that his time at Washington State University as a doctoral student represents one of his most pleasant and formative times of his life.

Recent Publications

Hruschka D, Hackman J, and Macfarlan SJ. 


