New England Climate Summer
By Sara Orvis

For my capstone experience I was given the opportunity to be part of New England Climate Summer. This program is trying to start a movement and connect communities around the idea that we need a rapid and responsible transition from fossil fuels. To spread this message, six teams of five people rode bicycles across New England. Everything we needed for the summer fit on our bikes or in one of the two trailers that we attached to our bikes and carried with us. We would ride in to a community and see what ways they were moving away from fossil fuels. We got to meet with amazing passionate people who were looking to make a better future for us all.

My team was in Massachusetts for the summer and rode over 1000 miles. We worked to connect the communities we visited by spreading the ideas we saw across Massachusetts. We had the amazing opportunity to meet with everyone from Alden and Lissa, who ran a sustainable restaurant, to Jim Hunt the Chief of Environmental and Energy Services for the City of Boston.

Over the summer we kept recognizing that the environmental connections we had learned about in our classes were real and visible in every town. I saw the environment affect health, politics, economics and social well-being. I also learned that for there to be a change we all need to change our relationship to nature in Jamaica Bay, near New York's JFK Airport.

Hi ENVF folks!

I am Kristen Van Hooiweghe, the newest faculty member in Environmental Studies and Sociology. My husband and I just moved here from Brooklyn, NY where I attended the Graduate Center, City University of New York, and taught at Brooklyn College – CUNY. My dissertation work involved ethnomethodological methods to study the role of place in people’s relationships to nature in Jamaica Bay, near New York’s JFK Airport. While we miss the hustle and bustle of the city, we are happy to be breathing clean air!

As a sociologist, I focus on the societal dimensions of environmental issues (e.g., population growth, technological development, poverty, etc.). I teach Introduction to Environmental Studies, Environmental Justice, and Globalization and the Environment. My research interests involve understanding how people form relationships to the land (to borrow from Aldo Leopold) as well as how political and economic decisions impact this relationship. I look forward to exploring this topic within the context of the North Country by researching the social factors impacting North Country residents’ beliefs about wind energy projects, as well as the local Amish population’s relationship to the land.

Outside of school, I am obsessed with all things food. I love to cook and read recipes. My guilty pleasure is food TV. I will watch almost anything. I look forward to having a “real” garden, one that isn’t on my fire escape, and trying my hand at composting, canning, and all sorts of other homesteading activities. I also enjoy hiking, cross-country skiing (though I’m still a novice), Cubs baseball, and movies.

My office is in the Sociology department in Satterlee Hall; feel free to stop by and chat. I look forward to meeting the greater SUNY-Potsdam community. Have a great semester.

Environmental Studies Students Attend Youth Climate Summit 2011:
By Sara Orvis

During the two day conference students and professors began exploring how we could make our campus greener. This was kicked off by speakers, such as Jerry Jenkins, who emphasized the role of local action in combating the environmental problems we face. The inspirational speakers continued with Dominic Frongillo who has worked through his local government in Caroline, NY to create a more sustainable town. Lastly, we were visited by Mark and Kristen Kimball who own a farm in Essex, NY. They spoke on the importance of local agriculture and the connections between world environmental problems and their agriculture.

The conference also addressed issues for energy efficiency, renewable energies, waste management and climate action plans. During each session there was time to brainstorm and work with other schools to find what has been working within Northern New York. SUNY Potsdam walked away with a great list of ideas to help make our campus greener in the coming years.

To Nepal and Back
By Adrienne Traub

It is difficult to summarize what I learned from my internship working at a rural plant nursery in Nepal. During my three months there I became more knowledgeable about agriculture, but it doesn’t compare to what I learned from the culture, people, and places that can vary so vastly from what I am used to. Officially I was an Environmental Studies student, yet my subjects really ranged from anthropology to sociology, politics to religion, and my own cultural identity as compared to those in Nepal.

Boarding a plane for some unknown destination to do an internship or study abroad can be a daunting and exciting task for any student; it certainly was for me. Despite my initial nervousness and endless questions, it remains an experience of the utmost importance (and not just for your resume). It gives opportunity for self-growth by providing new challenges and obstacles to learn from.

A big challenge for me was to accept things the way they are, and not to impress my own ideas of how they should be. For example, I found it hard to accept a women’s traditional role in the household, but over time adjusted to the fact that gender roles are very different in Nepal. This is not to say equality isn’t a goal, but it is necessary to be accepting and understanding of cultures that are different before jumping to conclusions and forcing opinions about gender roles on others. Traveling to a developing nation also taught me a great deal about the things I take for granted. I never truly understood the significance of roads and bridges until there weren’t any. I didn’t comprehend the importance of rice until I ate rice and lentil soup every day for three months. I couldn’t appreciate political stability, women’s rights, or environmental protections until I experienced lacking them. Since returning from Nepal, I realize just how much I learned from my ex-

New England Climate Summer Team

On November 4, 2011, Potsdam Environmental Studies students were given the opportunity to attend the Adirondack Youth Climate Summit.
periences and find that I continue to learn from them even after coming home. It is an experience unlike any other, and therefore would highly recommend that all students consider studying abroad or doing an internship.

Alumna of 2011 Sends Update
By Bianca Dygert, G.P.E.S. Graduate Program for Environmental Science

My name is Bianca Dygert, SUNY Potsdam Environmental Studies Class of 2011. I am currently in my second semester at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF). I am working toward a Master of Science degree in Environmental Science. I am in the Graduate Program for Environmental Science, known to us as G.P.E.S. My focus is Environmental and Community Land Planning. I chose this program specifically for the emphasis on the use of GIS in land planning.

SUNY Potsdam’s Environmental Studies program really gave me the background knowledge and preparation for the graduate program at SUNY ESF. Completing the capstone and senior project allowed me to develop the motivation and enthusiasm for graduate research. I took an introductory Geographic Information Systems class, which ignited the interest for me. With a minor in anthropology, I was required to take a professionalism course. That along with the E.S. capstone Field Prep helped me to develop my professional career.

For my thesis, I plan to research urban areas, more specifically the numerous abandoned or vacant areas in cities. I feel that these empty areas can be transformed into green space, which will ultimately improve the quality of life for residents through economic as well as aesthetic benefits. I plan to utilize GIS technology in my research as well as in my future career. Once I graduate, I hope to obtain a position with an environmental organization or local government in the land planning and urban design sector.

Summer Capstone Experience 2011
• Sean Chisholm: Backcountry Steward, NYS DEC/Student Conservation Association, Cranberry Lake, Adirondack State Park, NY.
• Chris Deck: Rock Climbing Director/Naturalist, Boy Scouts of America Greater Yosemite Council, Stanislaus National Forest, CA.
• Andrew Gillcrist: Outdoor Program Intern, Great Camp Sagamore, Raquette Lake, Adirondack State Park, NY.
• Janelle Holt: Summit Guide, Mt. Arab, Adirondack State Park, NY.
• Kyle Johnson: Intern, St. Lawrence County Planning Office, Canton, NY.
• Aurora Mosher: Intern, Save the River, Clayton, NY.
• Megan O’Keefe: Environmental Educator, Cayuga Nature Center, Ithaca, NY.
• Sara Orvis: Participant, New England Climate Summer, MA.
• Jordan Smith: Wildlife Technician (Herps), NYS DEC/Dr. Glenn Johnson, Jefferson County, NY.
• Ian Stone: Park Naturalist, Higley Flow State Park, Colton, NY.
• Brandon Hollis: Land Steward, Thousand Islands Land Trust, Clayton, NY.
• Janelle Hoh: Summit Guide, Mt. Arab, Adirondack State Park, NY.
• Aurora Mosher: Intern, Save the River, Clayton, NY.
• Megan O’Keefe: Environmental Educator, Cayuga Nature Center, Ithaca, NY.
• Sara Orvis: Participant, New England Climate Summer, MA.
• Jordan Smith: Wildlife Technician (Herps), NYS DEC/Dr. Glenn Johnson, Jefferson County, NY.
• Ian Stone: Park Naturalist, Higley Flow State Park, Colton, NY.

Environmental Studies Handbook
By Alyssa Lemmermann, Erica Herman, Andrew Gillcrist and Jessica Pote

The Environmental Studies (ES) Program has grown tremendously since its beginning in 2003. As students within this program, hopefully you are aware of the exciting opportunities that are made available to you. Recently, a group of Environmental Studies students (of which I was a member) compiled an Environmental Studies “handbook” that will help students successfully navigate through the program, whether you are an ES major or minor. There is a wealth of resources right at your finger tips- and our hope is that with this handbook you can access all of that information in one easy-to-read guide.

This handbook is meant to make it easier for students to plan their career goals early and to create awareness of the steps they need to take to achieve them. There are six main sections that are included in the handbook. We discuss the ES major and minor requirements, along with suggestions (and descriptions) of some interesting classes that students within the program can take. Another important section explains the various volunteer and internship opportunities that are available both locally and nationally, with some additional helpful tips! We thought it was also important to include, what we call, “extra-curricular excursions”. Some fun sites that students can visit are listed (such as Stone Valley Trail, Allen’s Falls, Indian Creek Nature Center, and various sites within the Adirondacks) along with brief descriptions of each. In another section, a list of potential career choices is catalogued, in addition to the specific skills that students would need in order to qualify.

This handbook is made by students, for students. The information within its pages is there to enrich students’ experience as they make their way through the program. Currently, the handbook is in the design phase and should be made available on SUNY Potsdam’s Environmental Studies webpage by the end of this semester, so stay tuned!