

UNH History Department Hosts April Conference on Environmental History

By [Erika Mantz](#)
UNH News Bureau

April 16, 2001

**Editors and News Directors:
Members of the media are invited to attend the
April 26-28 conference. See schedule following press
release.**

DURHAM, N.H. -- Do you live in a town that's struggling to preserve its open space? Are you serving on a volunteer planning, zoning or conservation board? Are you interested in history and its impact on the world today?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then an April 26-28 conference at the University of New Hampshire, "Landscape, Cityscape, and Identity: New Directions in Environmental History," is the place for you.

Sponsored by UNH's William L. Dunfey Endowment for the Study of History, and hosted by the Department of History, the conference will bring together the top people in the country in the field of environmental history, including three scholars from overseas. All of the sessions are free and open to the public.

Just what is environmental history? It's the study of the relationship between human action and changes in the natural world.

The conference's keynote speaker on Friday, April 27, at 9 a.m. is Richard Grove, author of "Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism," one of the first books to document the origins and early history of environmentalism. The closing speaker Saturday, April 28, at 4 p.m. is Alfred Crosby, author of "Ecological

Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900." Both men are experts on how human societies and nature have interacted on a grand scale.

"These are the people doing new, cutting edge research," says Jeffrey Diefendorf, UNH professor of history and a coordinator of the conference.

"Environmental history is a field that is growing and attracting a lot of attention. We chose this area because we felt it would be of interest to not only the academic community, but the general public as well."

A new feature at this conference is scheduled roundtables after the panels to encourage discussion and provide an opportunity for people to talk more about the issues that will be raised.

"This is a subject that looks at the past, but is also very closely related to the present," says Kurk Dorsey, UNH associate professor of history and a coordinator of the conference. "For example, the destruction of the bison is historical, but it's also a very contemporary issue. In my environmental history class, students are able to relate what they learn to their own experience, and I think people will at the conference, too."

The conference will take place in the Memorial Union Building's Granite State Room April 27 and 28 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. both days. It will open Thursday, April 26, with a roundtable discussion on Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" led by Peter Forbes, a New England conservationist, in Murkland Hall, room 110, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. A reception will follow.

The Dunfey Endowment was established at UNH in 1993 to promote "discussion and study to reach understanding and resolution of world and national problems." "Landscape, Cityscape, and Identity: New Directions in Environmental History" is the third Dunfey Conference. Past conferences were on Native American communities and America in the 20th Century.

Murkland Hall and the Memorial Union Building are located in the center of campus. Murkland is just north of Thompson Hall with its clock tower; the Memorial Union Building is just south. On Thursday evening and Saturday, parking lots A, B and C are open to the

public. Visitors to campus on Friday should register with the Visitors' Office at the bottom of Parking Lot A, across from the Field House.

For more information, call UNH's Department of History at (603) 862-1764.

Conference Schedule

Landscape, Cityscape, and Identity: New Directions in Environmental History

Sponsored by the William L. Dunfey Endowment for the Study of History University of New Hampshire

Friday, April 27

9 a.m. Keynote address by Richard Grove, Australian National University, Canberra

9:45 to 11:30 a.m. "Public Spaces and Open Spaces"
Andrew Isenberg, Princeton University
Elizabeth Blackmar, Columbia University
Nancy Langston, University of Wisconsin

1:15-3:15 p.m. "Building Empires and Collapsing Empires"
John McNeill, Georgetown University
James McCann, Boston University
Thomas Dunlap, Texas A&M

Saturday, April 28

9-11 a.m. "The Impact of Industrialization in Europe"
Paul Josephson, Colby College
Ursula von Petz, Universities of Aachen and Dortmund
Anthony Sutcliffe, University of Nottingham, Great Britain

1-3 p.m. "The American Urban Experience" Joel Tarr, Carnegie-Mellon
Dolores Hayden, Yale University
Sarah Elkind, San Diego State University

4 p.m. Concluding remarks by Alfred Crosby, University of Texas, Austin

[Back to UNH News Bureau](#)

