Experts to Address Urgent Environmental Challenges

Five top experts in the science, policy, and communication of global environmental issues will visit the URI Graduate School of Oceanography this June for Metcalf Institute’s five-day Annual Public Lecture Series. The lecture series is an integral component of the annual Metcalf Institute journalism fellowship (see page 2) that focuses on global change in coastal ecosystems.

Tuesday, June 7, 3:30 p.m.
How Will Efforts to Address Climate Change Impact Ocean Life?

Juanita John, NOAA Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Lab

The close links between Earth’s climate and ocean climate change has already affected ocean chemistry and ecosystems. As policy makers work to limit carbon emissions, scientists are trying to understand how different approaches might affect marine biodiversity. John’s models show a range of responses, with important consequences for ocean life and public health.

Wednesday, June 8, 3:30 p.m.
Flood Risk Policy and Law in the Era of Climate Change

Samantha Maddock, Executive of the President, Office of Management & Budget

As sea levels rise worldwide, flooding is a growing problem for communities, businesses, and policy makers, leading to broadly significant legal decisions and novel collaborations. Maddock will summarize federal policy advancements for managing flood risk and building more resilient communities.

Thursday, June 9, 3:30 p.m.
What Americans Really Think About Climate Change

Julia Krosnick, Stanford University, Political Psychology Research Group

Krosnick will describe 20 years of research findings on American beliefs that have yielded surprising results, shed light on the politics of climate change, and help set the stage for understanding how future climate change legislation may fare.

Friday, June 10, 11 a.m.
Uncovering Flint’s Water Disaster: Insights from the Reporter Who Broke the Story

Curt Guyette, American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan

Guyette reported that as many as 100,000 Flint, Michigan, residents were exposed to harmful toxic chemicals in the water supply. Guyette will share what he learned from reporting these surprising results, shed light on the politics of climate change, and help set the stage for understanding how future climate change legislation may fare.

Friday, June 10, 3:30 p.m.

Deke Arndt, NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information

Last year, researchers determined that a potential global warming hiatus in the early 2000s was explained by a technical correction in observed ocean data. The finding was reported in a major scientific publication, and generated millions of words in public commentary. Arndt will review the scientific basis and impact of the technical correction and how the findings played out in the public conversation.
Metcalf Institute has selected ten journalists from the largest pool of applicants in the workshop’s history to attend its 18th Annual Science Immersion Workshop.

Dojin Adice, Reporter, Nigerian Tribune in Oye, Nigeria
Richard Garelick
Independent reporter and producer in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Maddy Lauria, Reporter, Cape Gazette in Lewes, Delaware
Jeff Mosier, Reporter, The Dallas Morning News in Dallas, Texas
Susan Phillips, Energy reporter, WHYI in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Muhammad Qaseem Saeed, Reporter, GeoNews in Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan
Kate Siber, Freelance journalist in Durango, Colorado
Andy Uhler, Reporter, Marketplace in Los Angeles, California
Amelia Unry, Associate editor, Grist.org in Seattle, Washington

The 2016 fellowship, June 5–10, will bring these journalists into field, laboratory, and classroom settings to gain a greater understanding of how scientists approach, conduct, and analyze their research. Along the way, Metcalf Fellows sharpen their investigative skills.

Using Narraganset Bay, the world’s best-studied estuary, as a living laboratory, the Metcalf Workshop gives journalists opportunities to explore and understand the effects of human activities on coastal ecosystems. Metcalf Fellows build confidence in discerning the credibility of scientific sources as well as the skills needed to combat complex data so they can report stories on a broad range of science and environmental topics. The Workshop also provides an important and rare opportunity for Fellows to network with leading researchers, policy experts, and other journalists in an informal, off-duty atmosphere.

The Workshop will be held at the University of Rhode Island’s Graduate School of Oceanography, home to Metcalf Institute and a premier oceanographic research institution with a global reputation for excellence in marine research and exploration of the world’s oceans and coasts. Metcalf Fellows will benefit from a wealth of URI research on water quality in coastal waters, marine biodiversity, sea level rise, and extreme weather, as well as expertise from agencies, NGOs, and community organizations in the region. For example, partnerships with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Narragansett Bay Commission, and the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, among others, will help Fellows investigate impacts of climate change, pollution, and other human activities on the coast.

In addition to daily science immersion experiences, Fellows will also attend the annual public lecture series (see page 1) at the URI Narragansett Bay Campus each day. The lectures will feature top national experts on environmental policy, implications of a recent international agreement.

Erika Lentz, U.S. Geological Survey, talked about sea level rise in coastal environments on May 3rd. Recent studies have estimated that climate change could cause sea levels to rise at rates much greater than those projected only a few years ago. Lentz discussed her novel modeling technique that presents a more nuanced picture of how sea levels rise that might form a mosaic of dry land, wetlands, and open sea, and explained what we still need to learn to protect coastal habitats.

Katharine Hayhoe, Texas Tech University, named one of Time Magazine’s 100 Most Influential People, is a prominent atmospheric scientist committed to engaging citizens in discussions about climate change. Now that 195 nations have agreed to limit global warming to no more than 2 degrees, Hayhoe addressed the factors involved in staying below that global temperature target at Metcalf’s May 17 webinar.

Watch the webinars on Metcalf’s YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/ metc.allistinct.

Metcalf Fellows sharpen their investigative skills.

Sea level rise impacts are measured, analyzed and discussed by scientists and journalists via Metcalf’s immersion training model.

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P.S. Please join the journalists, scientists and other concerned citizens who support Metcalf Institute and help bring the benefits of our high-impact science and communication training to the public. When you give, you become a GSO Friend of Oceanography, too!