

Upper Midwest Nature-Society Graduate Annual Workshop

The Upper Midwest Nature-Society Graduate Workshop is held annually in Madison, Wisconsin. It is an opportunity for human geography graduate students and faculty at the Universities of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota to discuss ongoing research projects and develop collaborative relationships, with the goal of furthering scholarship of critical contemporary human-environmental issues. The workshop is held annually at the University of Wisconsin – roughly equidistant between University of Illinois and University of Minnesota.

The first nature-society workshop was held in February of 2011. A subsequent meeting was held in November 2011 and the third workshop is scheduled for October 2012 (see bottom for further details).

Graduate students from each school submit drafts of papers being developed for publication. Diverse topics have been covered over previous years, including:

- The human impacts of a Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) readiness program in Tanzania
- Boundary-making and pastoralism in West African drylands
- Social movements and conservation in the Indian Himalayas
- Healthcare and rural livelihoods in South Africa
- Urban sustainability and green capitalism in China
- Water scarcity and technology in Syria
- Local governance and forests in Senegal
- Identity and articulation in Hawai'i
- Community forestry and capitalism
- Natural resource decentralization and elite capture

Submitted papers are reviewed by workshop participants, and serve as the basis for discussion throughout the event. Approximately 40 graduate students and professors from three universities attend the workshop. It proved to be a great opportunity for creative cross-fertilization among scholars working in diverse areas of nature-society scholarship.

The workshop is co-sponsored by the SDEP initiative and the geography departments at the Universities of Wisconsin and Minnesota.

The next workshop will be held on November 13-14, 2012 in Madison, WI. For further information contact Shikha Lakhanpal at lakhanp2@illinois.edu.