

Call for Papers

The Country and the City: Connecting People and Their Places in Environmental History

An international conference to be held in Beijing, at Renmin University of China,
May 29-June 1, 2014

Co-Sponsored by the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, LMU
Munich, and the Center for Ecological History, Renmin University of China

Do rural people live in harmony with each other and with nature? Are urban people alienated from the land and exploitative in their ecological behavior? These questions point to cultural myths that have persisted across time and space, from ancient China to modern Africa. This conference seeks to scrutinize such cultural perceptions, in the spirit of famed British cultural critic Raymond Williams, and at the same time examine the material connections that have long bound rural and urban habitats together. We are especially interested in comparative studies that cross national boundaries, in papers that bring neglected parts of the world into view, and in perspectives that extend back in time before the twentieth century.

We seek papers on such topics as the cultural views of nature on the farm and in the city; the production of food and its export to the city; the disposal of urban wastes in the countryside; vectors of disease; the links forged by trade, capital, and the state among the various places, big and small, where people make their living; urban-rural conflicts over the meaning and practice of conservation; “green” cities and “eco villages”; and the city as habitat for nonhuman species.

This conference is open to all ranks and all scholars, from graduate students to senior professors. Paper proposals should be one-page long (or about 300 words) and include a title and a one- or two-page CV. ***The deadline for consideration is 1 January 2014.*** Successful proposals will be announced by 1 February, and complete drafts of papers (5,000-7,000 words in English or the equivalent in Chinese characters) will be required by 1 May.

All papers will be circulated to the participants in advance for careful reading and will not be orally presented during the conference. The organizers have no plans to

publish a conference volume, although some of the papers may be translated into Chinese for publication in China, with the authors' full consent. Also, we may ask a few of the presenters to provide post-conference "thought pieces," short reflections on the themes and issues that emerged, for publication in the *Perspectives* series of the Rachel Carson Center.

Travel expenses for scholars living outside of China will be paid by the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. Scholars living within China should depend on their own universities for covering travel expenses. For all participants, hotel expenses for four nights will be covered by Renmin University of China.

The last day of the conference will be devoted to a field trip that will explore the links between Beijing and its hinterland in food, water, and energy.

Send proposals in Chinese or English to all of the conference organizers:

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Mingfang Xia is director of the Center for Ecological History, Renmin University of China, Beijing, and professor of history and director of the Qing Institute. Christof Mauch is director of the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, and professor of American cultural history, Ludwig Maximilians University, Munich, Germany. Donald Worster is Hall professor of history emeritus, University of Kansas, USA, and distinguished foreign expert, Renmin University of China. The organizing committee also includes Professor Shen Hou, deputy director of the Center for Ecological History and associate professor of history at Renmin University of China. The conference secretary is Agnes Kneitz, assistant professor of history at Renmin University of China.