Beyond the Notches: Available This June

The Monadnock Institute is delighted to announce that Beyond the Notches: Stories of Place in New Hampshire’s North Country is scheduled to appear in bookstores across New Hampshire in June. The anthology includes fifty unpublished essays by North County writers, journalists, teachers, and students. The volume is designed by Stephen Stinehour and features artwork by local artists as well as one hundred and sixty photographs. Thanks to the generous support of Jane’s Trust and the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund, the price of this 400-page collection of essays will be only $29.95. The softcover book will also be available in gift shops throughout the North Country.

At left: Unknown Pond and the Horn are mentioned in Steven Smith’s essay “The Lure and Lore of the Kilkenney.” / Photo by Steven D. Smith

Sustainability Center Joins Institute

The Center for Sustainability at Franklin Pierce University is now a program of the Monadnock Institute. The joining of the Institute and the sustainability center will strengthen efforts in environmental and community sustainability at FPU and in the Monadnock Region. Institute director John Harris will serve as a member of the sustainability center’s steering committee and sustainability coordinator Michelle Comeau is now a member of the Institute’s executive committee.

The Center for Sustainability is the hub of environmentally sustainable practices on the Franklin Pierce Rindge campus. The center is charged with annual collection and reporting of all data in regard to resource consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The center also provides educational programs for students, staff, faculty, and the local community.

Programs within the center encourage cooperation and involvement from all academic, administrative, and facility-based departments, institutes, and centers. The center also coordinates the Sustainability Certificate program, which was launched in fall 2010.

The certificate program provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills from several academic areas to the practical problems of reducing the environmental impact of modern living. An interdisciplinary group of faculty offers courses with the theme of sustainability. Through practical projects in resource conservation, environmental art and communication, ecopsychology, clean energy technology, green business, place-based studies, and community vitality, the program encourages students of any major to become deeply involved in the process of creating a sustainable society.
The Foreword to Our Anthology, *Beyond the Notches*

By Richard Ober, president, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation

*If you don’t know the ground, you are probably wrong about nearly everything else.*

Norman Maclean’s line from *Young Men and Fire* is about smokejumpers who parachuted into an unfamiliar Montana valley in 1949. It could just as easily be the motto for the North Country. That’s why David Dobbs and I chose it as an epigraph in our book, *The Northern Forest.*

Before writing that book in 1994, I thought I knew a bit about North Country “issues.” Then, as now, there was no end of information available about changing land ownerships, paper industry economics, biodiversity, logging practices, sustainability. I had read hundreds of pages of studies, attended public meetings from Boston to Colebrook, fished in the rivers and flown over the woods. I thought I understood what was going on.

Then we met Leo Roberge of Berlin. A paper mill worker and hunter and conservationist in his own right, Leo showed us how little we actually knew the ground—physically and otherwise. During long days in the marshes at Umbagog and sometimes raucous nights at deer camp, it was Leo, and his late brother Don, who first showed us that the relationship between people and land was more than a good way to tell the complex story of the North Country; it was the story.

That’s what this book is about. Unlike Maclean’s firefighters, and unlike many good people from below the Notches who have been trying to “solve” the North Country’s problems for the last generation or so, the gifted writers in these pages do know the ground. Either firsthand as residents or as gifted listeners and storytellers. Or, in many cases, as both.

Just as a good topographic map shows the dips and folds of the land, and the little-known place names, and every house and rivulet and dead end dirt road, so this book brings into sharp relief the multi-dimensional human and natural landscape of the North Country. History. Geography. Culture. Art. Work. Play. Hope. Despair. It’s not sentimental about the region’s stunning beauty, and it doesn’t flinch from the reality of a boom-and-bust economy. It is, in short, a collection worthy of the singular place it chronicles so well. Pay attention.

*The cover (pictured at center) of this forthcoming book features a painting of Mount Lafayette, in the White Mountains of northern New Hampshire, by Amy Delventhal.*

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**Want to read more excerpts from the book?**

Visit our website, [www.northcountrynhstories.org](http://www.northcountrynhstories.org), to read featured stories such as

- “The Last Great Place,” by John Harrigan, in which he postulates a land ethic for the North Country and traces how attitudes have changed over time.

- “It Felt Like Death” by humorist Rebecca Rule, who spent forty days in Berlin collecting stories about the closing of the paper mills in spring 2007.

Two North Country businessmen worked closely with the Monadnock Institute to complete the anthology Beyond the Notches: Stories of Place in New Hampshire’s North Country. Publisher Mike Dickerman of Bondcliff Books in Littleton, New Hampshire, and designer Stephen Stinehour of Stinehour Editions in Lunenburg, Vermont, delivered the book to the printer at the end of January.

Mike Dickerman (pictured here, on the right), owner of Bondcliff Books in Littleton, is known throughout the region for his independent bookstore, specializing in titles related to the mountains of New Hampshire and northern New England. In 1997, Dickerman began the publishing arm of his business, releasing two or three new titles each year. These published books have primarily been hiking guides to the White Mountains or volumes on northern New Hampshire history. He has also reprinted several White Mountain books originally published in the mid-1800s.

Dickerman began working on the anthology project as an editor in early 2009. “Being involved in this project has been a great experience for both myself personally and for Bondcliff Books as a publisher,” said Dickerman. “With so many gifted writers contributing essays, and with one of northern New England’s top book design teams piecing everything together, the final product will be one I think all of the North Country will appreciate.”

Stephen Stinehour (on the left, in the picture above), whose family has been known for the design and production of fine quality books since early 1952, brings years of experience in all phases of book design and production to the project. Working first for his father, Roderick Stinehour, founder of the Stinehour Press, Stinehour has continued the family commitment to museum-quality art and literary books in his current business, Stinehour Editions.

Bondcliff Books will serve as both publisher and primary distributor of the anthology. The book features more than forty original essays about the region by well-known Granite State writers such as John Harrigan, Rebecca Rule, Edie Clark, Howard Mansfield, and Steven Smith as well as many new voices from the North Country.

“This is going to be an extraordinary volume,” said Kay Morgan, project coordinator. “Readers will delight in the variety of essays, the artwork by local artist Amy Delventhal, and the beautiful design and quality of the publication.”

The anthology project, which began in the summer of 2007, has been generously supported by grants from Jane’s Trust, the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund, the NH Humanities Council, the John and Joan Henderson Family Foundation, and the Byrne Foundation, as well as by several individual donors in the North Country.

The project will conclude with the book launch and community celebrations throughout the North Country in the summer of 2011. Mark your calendars: Saturday, June 4, at the Community Center in Littleton and at the Northern Heritage Forest Park in Berlin; Saturday, June 11, at the Conway Public Library; Saturday, June 18, at the Colebrook Public Library. Further locations and dates will be announced as we get closer to summer.
This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Monadnock Archaeological Project, a long-term project of the Monadnock Institute to study Native Americans in the Monadnock Region. The project, directed by Franklin Pierce associate professor of anthropology and Institute executive committee member Dr. Robert Goodby, was the focus of a panel discussion at the Northeastern Anthropological Association Annual Meeting hosted at Franklin Pierce in March.

Dr. Goodby led a panel titled “Monadnock Archaeological Project: The First Ten Years.” He presented an overview of the past decade’s fieldwork and discussed the 5,000-year-old Wantastiquet Mountain site in Hinsdale, where evidence of hunting for timber rattlesnakes was discovered during field schools in 2004 and 2005.

Since the beginning of the project, archaeological survey and excavation have been conducted from the headwaters of the Contoocook River in Peterborough to the terraces along the Connecticut River in Walpole and Hinsdale. Five summer field schools and excavations each fall have given hundreds of FPU students the chance to experience archaeological fieldwork. The results of their work have been shared with the people of the Monadnock Region in publications, museum exhibits, and in dozens of presentations to historical societies, community groups, and schools.

Five of Goodby’s students joined him in the panel discussion. Sophomore Sarah Tremblay presented the results of their work on the 4,000-year-old Swanzey Fish Dam site. Alum Celine Rainville discussed her senior thesis research on the Raft Bridge site in Peterborough, occupied intermittently by Native people beginning 5,000 years ago. Seniors Cory Atkinson and Cara Tamiso discussed their thesis research at the mid-17th-century Fort Hinsdale site, where Ebenezer Hinsdale, with the help of an African slave, ran a trading post that served local Abenaki people and English settlers alike during the French and Indian War. The panel presentation concluded with Monadnock Archaeological Project field supervisor and Walpole resident Gail Golec discussing her five years of archaeological and archival research on Abenaki history in the Bellows Falls area.

A second panel at the NAA Annual Meeting brought together a team of scientists working on the Tenant Swamp, a 12,000-year-old Paleoindian site in Keene. Goodby discovered the site in 2009 at the location of the new middle school on Maple Avenue during an archaeological survey that was required as part of the permitting process for school construction. The site, eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, includes the traces of four structures reflected by well-defined oval artifact clusters, each with an array of tools and evidence of hunting and processing of caribou and other animals. The tasks were divided within family groups. Tools excavated include broken spear points, delicately made gravers, and scores of scraping tools made exclusively of rhyolites and cherts from sources in far northern New Hampshire and north-central Maine, reflecting social networks that extended for hundreds of miles across northern New England. Microscopic wear on the skillfully made stone tools tell of hide processing and butchering. Small fragments of burned animal bone have been identified as caribou and otter.

Furthermore, geological studies undertaken as part of the excavation determined that the Ashuelot River, now over half a mile to the west, had originally flowed along the high sandy terrace on the site, helping to reconstruct the late Pleistocene environmental setting that had attracted the region’s first inhabitants to this spot. The team of professional archaeologists working on the site include former and current students Brian Deshler, Yvonne Benney-Basque, Celine Rainville, Cory Atkinson, and Devin Batchelder.

Future work on this project will include creating a permanent exhibit in the new Keene Middle School, highlighting for generations of area children the long span of Native American history in the town and region.
Each spring the Monadnock Institute and the Center for Sustainability sponsor an Earth Day celebration on the Rindge campus. Here are a few highlights from this year.

Clockwise, from top: Welcome banner in front of Pierce Hall, student poster sessions featuring sustainability topics held in Pierce Hall, a student takes a closer look at an ecological design poster, two FP women demonstrate “upcycling”—the practice of reusing worn materials in new garments, showing off the wood pellet boiler on campus, wind turbine outdoor display, and the drummer for Colorado’s eco-band Morsoul.
In the fall of 2007, the project to capture the stories of local elderly residents in Keene was finally underway. The Keene Public Library initiated Reflections: An Oral History of the Monadnock Region, and soon created an advisory group to collect, preserve, and share the memories with the community. The result: five detailed one-hour documentaries outlining major events that shaped the Monadnock Region over the twentieth century. The five documentaries that make up the Reflections Project include The Hurricane of 1938; Trolleys, Trains, and Flyers: Rail Travel in the Monadnock Region; Pisgah: A Place Apart; The Cheshire County Complex: Farm, Nursing Home, Jail; and Flannels to Fuses: Textile Mills in the Monadnock Region. “One of the themes that runs through all five films is community; each film traces the transformations, tensions, and challenges facing local communities over the course of the twentieth century,” said Professor Melinda Jetté.

Six of our very own Franklin Pierce community members played an active role in this project: John Harris, executive director of the Monadnock Institute; Melinda Jetté, assistant professor of history; Franklin Pierce graduate Alex DiCicco (music and environmental science); and current Franklin Pierce seniors Cory Atkinson (anthropology and public history), Maribeth Côté (history and public history), and Cara Tamiso (anthropology and public history). Harris co-wrote the scripts for the first four of the films and Jetté co-wrote the script for the final film. Atkinson, an intern, conducted archival research for all five films, assisted by Côté and Tamiso for the film on the Cheshire County Complex. Alumnus DiCicco composed and produced the musical scores for all five films. “This project has helped local residents understand the community they currently live in, and the historical changes over the past century that have shaped the way things are now,” said Professor Jetté about the project.

Once each film was completed, the Keene Public Library hosted a premiere of the documentary at the Colonial Theatre in Keene. Cheshire TV also aired the documentaries on its public access channel, and DVD copies of the films were sold at the premiere and at local bookstores. In all, more than 3,000 individuals attended the five premiers. In addition, all forty participants interviewed for the films received copies of their full-length interview and each of the documentaries in the series. The revenue from sales after project costs will go towards the Historical Society of Cheshire County, Keene State College, and the Monadnock Institute.

After the final film premiere, members of the Franklin Pierce community wrote a detailed proposal to the Oral History Association and received an invitation to present their work at the national conference in Atlanta. In addition, the Reflections project was selected to receive the 2010 Elizabeth B. Mason Small Project Award. “The committee was deeply impressed by the high quality of this regional oral history project, the adherence to professional oral history methodology, the effective use of story circles, the broad range of active community partners, the project’s ability to produce five documentary films on a modest budget, and the successful efforts in making these films accessible to regional residents through the presentation of those films in a local movie house, broadcast through public access television, and DVD distribution,” said Michael Frisch, president of the Oral History Association.

This article originally appeared in the spring 2011 edition of Pierce Radius alumni magazine. To read the full version, go to http://www.franklinpierce.edu/about/news/radiusmag/index.htm.
College Writing and Freshman Seminar with Outdoor Focus

Twenty freshmen at Franklin Pierce University had the opportunity to participate in an integrated writing and inquiry seminar in the fall semester. Dr. Catherine Koning, a wetland ecologist, and Dr. John Harris, a humanities scholar, team taught the course. The students focused on exploring the natural and cultural history of land around campus. They observed the surrounding natural world, walked campus trails, read about environmental topics, and designed individual trail signs. Their work culminated in a month-long study of Converse Meadows, a protected wetland in the center of Rindge. Students researched specific topics ranging from a beaver lodge to a make-shift shelter constructed by a fugitive long ago. Students presented their discoveries to the campus and Rindge community, and trail signs summarizing their insights will be put up in the near future.

Observing and Recording the Progress of Spring

Students in Evolution of Environmental Thought, an environmental science elective, have been observing, measuring, and recording the advance of spring at five sites on the FPU Rindge campus. Undergraduates have taken weekly measurements of water temperatures at a vernal pool, at a more extensive wetland, and at Pearly Pond. They have also checked the length and width of buds of various species, including buckthorn, lilac, forsythia, ash, beech, apple, red and sugar maple, and birch. They have photographed and sketched wood frog eggs, caddis fly cases, insects, and spotted salamanders. Their record of the phenology of the campus will be compared with similar data collected two years ago in this class and with observations provided by Henry David Thoreau in his extensive journal records of spring advance between 1848 and 1855.

Institute Members to Present at Environmental Conference

Six members of the Institute's executive committee will give a presentation on our eTour electronic map of campus lands at the Association of Environmental Science and Studies Conference in Burlington, Vermont, June 23-26. The presentation title is “eTour of Local Lands: An Interdisciplinary Tool to Connect Students and Place-based Research.” The eTour project, based on Geographic Information Systems maps and PowerPoint slides, was initially developed by Neel Patel '08. The eTour highlights the Franklin Pierce Rindge campus trails, research by environmental science faculty and students, and wildlife sightings.

Documentary Studies Certificate to be Launched

As of fall 2012, the Institute will be coordinating a certificate in documentary studies for Franklin Pierce undergraduates. The program is a natural outgrowth of the work already completed with the Reflections Project (see story on page 6). Program highlights include the selection of an audio or video track for documentary work, an introductory course taught by Dr. Douglas Challenger, and a capstone six-credit seminar in which students will work with organizations and individuals in the Monadnock Region to design and develop a high-quality audio or video documentary.
Support the Monadnock Institute

The Monadnock Institute is supported in part by Franklin Pierce University, but the bulk of our operating funds come from grants and donations. You can help support the place-based educational work of the Institute with a tax-deductible donation. Please visit Franklin Pierce’s website at www.franklinpierce.edu/giving and follow the instructions to designate your gift to the Institute, or you can send a check (payable to Monadnock Institute at FPU) to the address above.