



# Smith Nature Symposium

## Past Speakers and Topics



### 2019 Smith Nature Symposium

#### Global Perspectives

**Award Recipients: Amory Lovins and Judy Hill Lovins**

Amory Lovins, a physicist, co-founded and chairs Rocky Mountain Institute, a 200-person independent nonprofit organization creating a clean, prosperous, and secure low-carbon energy future. He has served as energy advisor to major firms and governments in more than 70 countries and authored more than 30 books and 600 papers on energy. Educated at Harvard and Oxford, he has received the Right Livelihood Award, MacArthur Fellowship, Heinz Award,

and National Design Award, among many others.

Judy Hill Lovins is a renowned landscape photographer. Her overriding goal, she says, is to “inspire, renew, and illustrate our role as stewards of nature’s treasures.” Also a fine art consultant, Judy has counseled private and corporate art collectors and designed interior photographic programs nationwide for nearly five decades. The event included an art exhibition inspired by the Lovinses travels called Global Perspectives, featuring photography by the Lovinses as well as artwork by Gregory Leon Baird, John Wylie, and poetry by Ted Hazelgrove. The Lovinses photography features extraordinary landscapes, wildlife, and cultures in China, Galápagos Islands, Iceland, the American West, and other locations around the world. The Smith Nature Symposium was held in partnership with Lake County Forest Preserves.

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## 2018 Smith Nature Symposium

### The Way of the Rain

**Award Recipients: Robert Redford and Sybille Szaggars Redford**

Robert Redford has been a voice for nature since the beginning of his career. He is an advocate for environmental causes and the

visionary behind the creation of Sundance Preserve, more than 3,000 acres of protected land in Utah.

Sybille Szaggars Redford has dedicated her life's work to creating art informed by her spiritual consciousness of our connection to life, the land, and the world by raising awareness of our environmental unsound practices.

Prior to the benefit dinner and presentation at Brushwood Center, guests this year were treated to a very special performance entitled "The Way of the Rain—Voices of Hope for Brushwood Center." This performance was an homage to our planet Earth and told the artistic story about the formation of the Universe, the evolution of all galaxies, and eventually the birth of the unique and beautiful Planet Earth with all its elements. This version of The Way of the Rain is a creation of symphony, choir, solo voices, film, art, and spoken word.



## 2017 Smith Nature Symposium

### The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative

**Keynote Speaker: Florence Williams**

An intrepid investigation into nature's restorative benefits by a prize-winning author.

For centuries, poets and philosophers extolled the benefits of a walk in the woods: Beethoven drew inspiration from rocks and trees; Wordsworth composed while tromping over the heath; Nikola Tesla conceived the electric motor while visiting a park. Intrigued by our storied renewal in the natural world, Florence Williams sets out to uncover the science behind nature's positive effects on the brain.

From forest trails in Korea, to islands in Finland, to groves of eucalyptus in California, Williams investigates the science at the confluence of environment, mood, health, and creativity. Delving into completely new research, she uncovers the powers of the natural world to improve health, promote reflection and innovation, and ultimately strengthen our relationships. As our modern lives shift dramatically indoors, these ideas—and the answers they yield—are more urgent than ever.

In her keynote address, Florence Williams presented material from her new book, *The Nature Fix*, about the science behind why access to nature and green space is essential for human health. Partly drawing from assignments for *National Geographic* and *Outside* magazines, she explored how different countries are medicalizing nature and why everyone from schoolchildren to veterans of war to the urban poor can benefit. Attendees heard elegant stories of lives being changed, health being restored, and the conquering of debilitating mental health disorders through mindfulness in nature.

**2017 Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods Award Recipient: Deborah Lahey**

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## 2016 Smith Nature Symposium

### Range Mapping-Overlapping Habitat for Birds and People

#### Keynote Speaker: Dr. Drew Lanham

J. Drew Lanham describes himself as “a man of color in love with the natural world... a writer, birder, hunter, and naturalist wandering on the edge of the Blue Ridge in the Upper Piedmont of South Carolina.” He is also the Alumni Distinguished Professor of Wildlife Ecology at Clemson University, serves on board of directors of the Aldo Leopold Foundation, and is a thoughtful and nationally-respected voice on the deep connection between ethnicity, land and

conservation. In Range Mapping—Overlapping Habitat for Birds and People, Dr. Lanham will consider the prevalence of critical bird habitat in and around minority communities. His insights make it clear that successful conservation of many bird species, and the land upon which those species depend, requires a more diverse constituency within the environmental community.

**2016 Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods Award Recipient: Judith Stockdale**

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## 2015 Smith Nature Symposium

### Rachel Carson and the Origins of Environmentalism

#### Keynote Speaker: William Souder

William Souder, author of *The Life and Legacy of Rachel Carson*, spoke about the pioneering scientist and author's impact on the world of conservation and beyond in his keynote address at the 2015 Smith Nature Symposium. Rachel Carson loved the ocean and wrote three books about its mysteries. But it was with her fourth book, *Silent Spring*, that this unassuming biologist transformed our relationship with the natural world. *Silent Spring* was a chilling indictment of DDT and other pesticides that until then had been hailed as safe and wondrously effective. It was Carson who sifted through all the evidence, documenting with alarming clarity the collateral damage to fish, birds, and other wildlife; revealing the effects of these new chemicals to be lasting, widespread, and lethal. *Silent Spring* shocked the public and forced the government to take action, despite a withering attack on Carson from the chemicals industry. It awakened the world to the heedless contamination of the environment and eventually led to the establishment of the EPA and to the banning of DDT. By drawing frightening parallels between dangerous chemicals and the then-pervasive fallout from nuclear testing, Carson opened a fault line between the gentle ideal of conservation and the more urgent new concept of environmentalism.

#### 2015 Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods Award Recipients: Victoria and George Ranney



## 2014 Smith Nature Symposium

### What Killed the Mammoths: Ancient DNA and Mass Extinctions

#### Keynote Speaker: Beth Shapiro

What makes species go extinct? Can you clone a mammoth? Evolutionary biologist Beth Shapiro analyzes the genes of ancient plants and animals to trace the complex relationship between environment, extinction and the evolution of species. The discovery two decades ago that DNA could be extracted from fossil remains launched a new field of study — molecular paleontology. Using DNA recovered from these remains, it was possible to trace the evolution of species on a molecular level, actually watching evolution as it happens. By understanding how populations and species



evolve, that information can be used to make decisions on how to better manage problems such as species extinction or habitat destruction. An international expert on ancient DNA, Shapiro has worked with DNA from mammoths, dodos, passenger pigeons, and other extinct species.

**2014 Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods Award Recipient: Joel Greenberg**

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## 2013 Smith Nature Symposium

### Pieces of the Sky: Spring Migration as Science and Magic

**Keynote Speaker: Kenn Kaufman**

Every spring season, extraordinary numbers of birds move northward across the face of North America. Their pathway spans the entire width of the continent, and even extends far offshore. Some of these birds travel many thousands of miles, and their numbers run into the billions. These little travelers perform remarkable feats of strength, endurance, and pinpoint accuracy in navigating across land and sea. And yet, most of the time, this vast parade goes completely unnoticed by most human beings. After traveling the world to observe migratory birds, internationally renowned birder, conservationist and author Kenn Kaufman has spent the last eight spring seasons on the shores of Lake Erie, and he is now writing a book about the phenomenon of spring migration. In this program, heavily illustrated with pictures and maps, he will share some perspectives on these tiny migrants and their huge journeys.

**2013 Friends of Ryerson Woods Award Recipient: Douglas F. Stotz**

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## 2012 Smith Nature Symposium

### Lessons From the Prairie

**Keynote Speaker: Wes Jackson**

Wes Jackson is president and founder of The Land Institute, an organization dedicated to developing an agricultural system with the ecological stability of the prairie and a grain yield comparable to that from annual crops. Drawing knowledge from the way the

world has worked for millions of years, Wes seeks to farm in nature's image by shifting away from the use of monoculture annual grains (like wheat) to inter-mixed (polyculture) perennial grains. Holding degrees in biology, botany and genetics, he is a leader in the international sustainable agriculture movement and has been recognized as a Pew Conservation Scholar and a MacArthur Fellow, as well as presented with the prestigious Right Livelihood Award ('Alternative Nobel Prize') for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people.

**2012 Friends of Ryerson Woods Award Recipient: Steven Apfelbaum**

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## 2011 Smith Nature Symposium

### Green Design

#### Keynote Speaker: Bill Browning

Bill Browning is one of the green building and real estate industry's foremost thinkers and strategists, and an advocate for sustainable design solutions at all levels of business, government and civil society. His expertise has been sought out by organizations as diverse as Fortune 500 companies, leading universities, non-profit organizations, the U.S. military and foreign governments. Bill was a founding member of the U.S. Green Building Council's Board of Directors, and he has served as an advisor on high-profile demonstration projects including Wal-Mart's Eco-mart and the Greening of the White House.

**2011 Friends of Ryerson Woods Award Recipient: William D. Sturm**

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## 2010 Smith Nature Symposium

### The Business of Being Green

#### Keynote Speaker: Will Raap

Will Raap is dedicated to developing enterprises that generate economic and social opportunity while protecting natural resources. Raap shared his experiences both with Gardener's Supply and his numerous environmental restoration and sustainability initiatives. One of the largest on-line catalog and gardening companies in this country, Gardener's Supply Company enjoys sales of over \$60 million and employs more than 250 people.

## 2010 Friends of Ryerson Woods Award Recipient: Steve Bartram

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## 2009 Smith Nature Symposium

### Locally Grown

#### Keynote Speaker: Will Allen

MacArthur Fellow and former basketball pro Will Allen is challenging the way we think about farming and food delivery systems. Committed to the vision of full access to fresh, healthy, local, affordable food in underserved, urban communities, Allen founded Growing Power in Milwaukee in 1995. Allen's thoughtfully integrated urban farming model provides a platform to address not only sustainable cultivation, production and food-networking practice, but also environmental and social justice issues.

## 2009 Friends of Ryerson Woods Award Recipient: Barbara Whitney Carr

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### Keynote Speakers prior to 2009

2008 Peter Annin

2007 Karsten Heuer

2006 Joe Duff

2005 Sy Montgomery

2004 Joel Sartore

2003 David Allen Sibley

2002 Lincoln Brower

2001 George Archibald

2000 Terry Root

1999 Lester Fisher

1998 John Fitzpatrick

1997 Peter Raven

1996 Peter Dunne

1995 Donald & Lillian Stokes

1994 Jack Horner

1993 William Cronon

1992 Melvin Tuttle

1991 Richard Clark

1990 Senator Gaylord Nelson

1989 L. David Mech

1988 Neil Rettig & Bill Kurtis

1987 John Fitzpatrick & Bill Kurtis

1986 William Burger & Tom Cade

1985 George Archibald & Kenneth Nebenzahl

1984 Joseph Hickey & Roger Tory Peterson

## **Award Winners prior to 2009**

2008 Cameron Davis

2007 Gerald W. Adelman

2006 Chicago Wilderness

2005 Debra K. Moskovits

2004 John Rogner

2003 George B. Rabb

2002 George Ranney, Sr.

2001 John W. McCarter, Jr.

2000 Adele Simmons

1999 Andrea S. Moore

1998 William J. Beecher

1997 Melvin A. Traylor

1996 Fran Harty

1995 Bill Kurtis

1994 Roy O. Gromme

1993 Abbott Laboratories

1992 Susan Spears

1991 Barbara C. Donnelley

1990 E. Leland Webber

1989 Maxine Hunter

1988 John Fitzpatrick

1987 Nancy Ryerson Ranney