

Dear Dr. Lehr and Search Committee Members,

15 April 2009

I am writing to you to submit my name as a candidate for the position of Director of Outdoor Studies. Please find enclosed a copy of my CV along with the names and addresses of three individuals who have agreed to serve as references. Over the past ten years that I have worked at St Lawrence, I have seen the outdoor offerings at SLU grow wonderfully and immensely from a relatively small but very active program housed in Whitman Hall to a combined Outdoor Program and Adirondack Semester that is nationally recognized and increasingly stated as a primary reason for students choosing SLU for their college education. Given this growth and my own personal interests in all things outdoors, I am very excited by the prospect of serving as its director. Below I briefly outline for you my strengths, my weaknesses, and my vision for the program.

My Strengths: experience and service, outdoor knowledge and skills, clear vision.

I have taught in the Adirondack Semester for five years, teaching Natural History and Ecology of the Adirondacks, and working closely with Baylor Johnson and four different assistant directors of the Adirondack Semester. I am also well acquainted with the existing personnel who support and contribute to the ADK semester – woodworkers, farmers, musicians, and practicum hosts – and would be able to further facilitate these and other relationships. From this experience I have become familiar with many of the logistical details and current workings of the semester. For the past three years I have also been teaching ODST/BIOL 121: The Natural World on campus which contributes to the Outdoor Studies Minor. I have also gotten to know and work well with the current Outdoor Program staff and look forward developing those relationships further.

I have served on the Outdoor Council for seven of the ten years I have worked at SLU. I have also served on several committees directly related to Outdoor Studies including selection committees for Adirondack semester students, search committees for assistant directors, and a new committee organized to revise the outdoor studies minor.

In addition to being familiar with the Outdoor Studies program, I have extensive field-based instructional experience. I know what it is like to work with students outdoors in various capacities under various conditions and how their experience of the outdoors (academically and recreationally) influences their learning of course material and skills as well as developing their own sense of self and how they understand their (our) relationship with the natural world. I am knowledgeable and skilled at maintaining off-grid electrical systems as well as basic carpentry skills, water treatment techniques, waste management skills, first aid, CPR, and wilderness rescue techniques, all of which are needed or advisable for the safe and proper running of the Adirondack Semester. While I recognize that teaching outdoor skills is not part of the director's responsibility, I do think that having such skills facilitates the role the director can play.

Finally, as I elaborate on below, I have a clear vision of the potential for further development of the Outdoor Program, the Outdoor Studies Minor, and an additional off-campus semester. But first I would like to address the weaknesses I have for such a position.

My Weaknesses: contacts, administrative experience, “continuing” faculty member status.

I am not personally familiar with or know those individuals (alumni, board members and others) who have or would be interested in supporting our mission in Outdoor Studies (such as the Munro family

or Burt family). I do however recognize the importance such individuals can play in program development and would look forward to helping the communications and development offices strengthen those relationships, especially as it pertains to the development of an additional off-campus semester program.

I do not have direct SLU administrative experience. I have not served as a department chair, although, I do have experience managing budgets and supervising workers associated with grants, specifically an NSF grant that I was a co-PI on and a Walker Fellowship grant in which I directed 2 SLU students who worked with me in the summer. While these are arguably minor experiences, they did give me the opportunity to develop my skills at managing budgets and directing participants in task oriented activities. I have also served on and contributed constructively to numerous search committees, selection committees and the Outdoor Council as described above.

Finally, I am not a “continuing” faculty member at SLU which I recognize has been a requirement for this position in previous years. I support the idea of the director being someone within the SLU community, as opposed to someone from outside the university. I also support the idea that the directorship not be a permanent appointment but rather one that rotates in order to bring in new ideas and energy. Additionally, it is important for past directors to be ongoing members of the SLU community to not only help provide valuable transitional experience between directors but more importantly to provide institutional memory and support of the program. All of these factors seem to point to the need for a tenured, or at least tenure-track faculty member to serve as its director, unless there was an active faculty member who met the above requirements without having the official designation of “continuing.” I humbly submit to you that I am such a person. I have experience working in several departments over the past ten years and am committed to staying in Canton and teaching at SLU for the foreseeable future. I am also NOT looking to this position as way for me to establish a more permanent position at SLU. I see it as a temporary appointment that would allow me to help shape and develop an SLU program whose importance I personally and professional believe in very strongly.

My Vision: database and newsletter, revised minor, “St. Lawrence Watershed Semester”, departmental community development.

Since joining Outdoor Studies four years ago I have enjoy watching and contributing to its development primarily through teaching in the Adirondack Semester. This involvement has affording me the chance to think about the program and how it might best continue to develop. The four main development opportunities I see are: 1) the development of a “participants and friends” database and Outdoor Studies newsletter, 2) revising the Outdoor Studies Minor to better serve our students, 3) developing a second off-campus semester program, and 4) developing a greater departmental sense of community within and around Outdoor Studies.

Because of the growth in popularity of the Adirondack Semester and the Outdoor Program in recent years I see an excellent opportunity and need to further develop a database to track student involvement in our program. All incoming SLU students are asked to indicate their interest in the ADK semester and the Outdoor Program on the Academic Information form they fill out prior to matriculation. These self-identified students along with those who participate in pre-trips provide a valuable database that could be used in several important ways. Some of this potential is already being realized but could be further enhanced. Such a database, combined with those students who participate in our programs throughout their time at SLU could be used as a mailing list to send out a

new Outdoor Studies Newsletter to share news of our activities and initiatives. Newsletters are an invaluable means for maintaining contact with past students as well and other interested friends of the program. The recently created ADK Semester alumni group on Facebook and the upcoming 10th year reunion are other excellent examples of the types of activities which will help to build an alumni support and information network for the program.

Secondly, the most underutilized offering within Outdoor Studies is the Outdoor Studies Minor, specifically, the on-campus track of this minor. Work is already beginning to redesign this minor to better serve the interests and needs of our students. I am currently serving on the informal committee that has begun this work and am enthusiastic about my continued participation. The redevelopment of an academic minor in Outdoor Studies, potentially focused more on Outdoor Education, has the potential to serve our students well who are interested in the outdoors and initially pursue employment in outdoor education upon graduation.

A third important development task that I would welcome as the director is facilitating the development of a second off-campus semester program. I think this new semester would best be focused on and organized around the St. Lawrence River watershed and bioregion of which SLU is a part. Such a semester could further support and directly compliment ongoing developments within the CBL program, the Akwesasne Program, Canadian Studies, Global Studies, Conservation Biology, and Environmental Studies. The watershed is a microcosm of numerous global issues: international politics, fresh water management issues, sustainable agriculture, invasive species, land use development, and more. I think such a semester would complement the ADK semester and draw on an obvious and under-utilized geographic strength of SLU. I believe strongly that any such off-campus semester initiative (and vision of it – mine or someone else's) be driven by a faculty committee similar to or the same as the Outdoor Council that developed the Adirondack Semester. This will be critical for both the shape of the program and as a way to develop a pool of faculty members who would be committed to staffing the program.

Finally, all of these ideas and initiatives would benefit from the further development of a departmental sense of community within Outdoor Studies, one in which there is a shared familiarity with what we each do as well as a shared vision of what our mission is. For example, off and on over the last few years we have had a few “departmental meetings” but without much success or sense of purpose. While I am no fan of needless meetings, my sense is that there is a missed opportunity to strengthen for ourselves and the students we serve an open, dynamic sense of community. The most tangible outcome I would expect from this would be a further strengthening of our existing programming and minor, and a more defined presence in the larger SLU community. The possibilities are numerous and exciting and I would welcome the opportunity to work with the current faculty and staff toward their realization.

Thank you for your consideration of my application. I look forward to talking with each of you about my qualifications and my ideas about how this integral part of the St. Lawrence curriculum can continue to develop and serve our students.

Sincerely,

William P. Rivers

Curriculum Vitae

WILLIAM PETTY RIVERS

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EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN. 1999. Dissertation: *Landscape-level control of population dynamics: Late-Quaternary paleoecology of beech in Upper Michigan.*

Master of Science, Department of Geological Science. University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN. 1994. Thesis: *Holocene uplift and vegetation history along the northern shore of Lake Michigan.*

Master of Science, Graduate Program in Ecology. University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN. 1993. Thesis: *Seedling growth and mortality of four shade-tolerant canopy tree species in the rain forest of Puerto Rico following Hurricane Hugo.*

Bachelor of Arts, Department of Biology. Grinnell College, Grinnell, IA. 1987. Major: Biology with a concentration in Environmental Studies.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Visiting Assistant Professor: 2005-present. Outdoor Studies. St. Lawrence University. Canton, NY. Duties include the design and teaching of the following introductory and upper-level courses: Natural History of the Adirondacks w/lab, The Natural World w/lab, Field Methods for Environmental Scientists w/lab, and Global Questions, Local Action (First-year Program, team-taught with Dr. John Collins)

Visiting Assistant Professor: 2002-2005. Department of Biology. St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY. Duties included the design and teaching of the following courses: Forest Ecology w/lab, Biology of Vascular Plants w/lab, Field Methods for the Environmental Scientist w/lab (team-taught), Landscape Ecology w/lab, General Biology w/lab (team-taught), Natural History of the Adirondacks w/lab, Research Methods in Paleoecology w/lab, and Global Ecology Seminar. Advising of student independent research.

Adjunct Assistant Professor: 1999-2002. First-Year Program (FYP). St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY. Duties included the design and teaching of interdisciplinary, team-taught courses for first-year students; service as academic advisor for 30 students; coordination of college activities and service on FYP Chairs Council. Courses: Observing the Outdoors - The Powers and Problems of Perception; Famous Observers of the Outdoors; The Gaia Hypothesis: Science or Religion?

Graduate Teaching Assistant: 1994-1999. Dept. of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Univ. of TN, Knoxville. Duties included: laboratory instruction, student evaluation, laboratory curriculum development. Courses: General Biology and General Ecology.

Graduate Teaching Assistant: 1991-93. Dept. of Geological Sciences, Univ. of TN, Knoxville. Duties included: laboratory instruction, student evaluation, lecturing. Courses: Historical Geology, Geomorphology, Landscape Ecology, and Geology of the National Parks.

Instructor: 1989-90, 1994. College of Arts and Sciences, Univ. of TN, Knoxville. Duties included: full responsibility for course design, lecture and laboratory, and student evaluation. Courses: Ecology and Environmental Science (an introductory environmental studies course required of all education majors), and General Biology.

Field Research Supervisor of Undergraduate Senior Thesis: 1990-91. Advised undergraduate student from Marlboro College during development and execution of his senior thesis research in the rain forest of Puerto Rico.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Landscape Development in Northern New York State. 2002-present. My ongoing research program at St. Lawrence University is focused on documenting the changes in vegetation in Northern New York at the landscape level as a function of human and non-human influences. Using field botanical surveys, palynological techniques, historical records, remotely sensed images, and GIS technology, this multifaceted research program is examining the interactions between, and relative influence of invasive plant species, climate change, environmental contaminants, human activities, and defoliating insect outbreaks on the plant communities of this region. So far, I have had 6 students participate in this research program over the last five years through development of their own independent research projects.

Ecology of Early Food Production among late-Archaic people in eastern Kentucky. 2000-2005. This ethnobotanical research involved collaboration with Dr. Kris Gremillion, an archeologist at Ohio State University who has identified sites of early agriculture among the peoples of the Late-Archaic period. My work involved using fossil pollen assemblages and charcoal to identify cultivated plant species and vegetation change associated with the development of agriculture.

Landscape development and forest dynamics in Upper Michigan. 1993-1999. This research was completed as part of my Ph.D. degree in ecology and evolutionary biology. Major professors: Dr. Paul Delcourt and Dr. Hazel Delcourt.

Late-Quaternary landscape reconstruction of the Shafer Mastodont Locality in Indiana. 1996. This paleontological research was conducted under personal contract with the Indiana State Museum. Museum contact: Mr. Ron Richards.

Isostatic rebound and beach-ridge formation in Upper Michigan. 1991-1993. This research was completed as part of my M.S. degree in geology. Major professors: Dr. Paul Delcourt and Dr. Hazel Delcourt.

Tropical rain forest recovery following Hurricane Hugo, Puerto Rico. 1988-91. This research was completed as part of my M.S. degree in ecology. Major Professor: Dr. Frank McCormick.

Acid deposition in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, TN-NC. 1986. This research was conducted while I was an undergraduate at Grinnell College and participating in a summer research program in the Environmental Science Division of Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Supervisor: Dr. Steve Lindberg.

Reforestation following the 1980 eruptions of Mt. St. Helens, WA. 1985. This research was conducted while I was an undergraduate at Grinnell College and working for the US Forest Service in Washington. Supervisors: Dr. Jerry Franklin and Mr. Peter Frenzen.

STUDENT INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS ADVISED

“Vegetation History of Massawepie Mire using Pollen Analysis, St. Lawrence County, New York” Nate Vogan, 2004.(co-advised with Dr. Steve Robinson)

“The Effects of the Forest Tent Caterpillar (*Malacosoma disstria*) on Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)”, Jessica L. Henty, 2004.

“Forest Edge Effects in Relation to Forest Tent Caterpillar (*Malacosoma disstria*) Outbreaks in Northern New York”, Jack Rowbottom, 2004.

“Campus Tree Inventory and GIS Database for St. Lawrence University Campus”, Joshua P. Earl, 2004.

“The allelopathic effects of pale swallowwort (*Cynanchum rossicum*) on germination of common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)”, Art Andrews, 2003.

“The role of cattail (*Typha latifolia*) as phytoremediator in the uptake of zinc and cadmium under varying pH”, Bryan Tolcsar, 2003.

“Anthropogenic eutrophication of Black Lake, New York”, Diana Odorczuk, Ed Cavallerano, Tim Bouchard, and Chris Stevens, 2003.

PUBLICATIONS

Gava, L. and **W.P. Rivers**. (In prep). Effect of Land Use on the Electrical Conductivity of the Grasse River Watershed.

Rivers, W. P., D. Odorczuk, E. Cavallerano, T. Bouchard, and C. Stevens (In prep). The vegetation history and historic role of anthropogenic eutrophication of Black Lake, New York.

Rivers, W. P. (In prep) Species migration controlled by soil development in Upper Michigan: the migrational history of American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*).

- Rivers, W. P.** (In prep) The influence of soil type and climate on the vegetation history of Upper Michigan, USA.
- Rivers, W. P.** (In review) Advance regeneration strategies of four primary tree species in the Luquillo Experimental Forest of Puerto Rico following a catastrophic wind disturbance. *Biotropica*
- Swinehart, A. L., R. L. Richards, **W. P. Rivers**, R. D. Hall, and A. K. Anderson. 2005. Paleocological Interpretation of pollen, macrofossils, polygonal fissures, and taphonomy of the Shafer Mastodont Locality, Warren County, Indiana. *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science* 114 (2):83-104.
- Petty, W. H.**, P.A. Delcourt, and H. R. Delcourt. 1996. Holocene lake-level and beach ridge development along the northern shore of lake Michigan, U.S.A. *Journal of Paleolimnology* 15: 147-169.
- Delcourt, P. A., **W. H. Petty**, and H. R. Delcourt. 1996. Late-Holocene formation of Lake Michigan beach ridges correlated with a 70-year oscillation in global climate. *Quaternary Research* 45: 321-326.
- You, C. X. and **W. H. Petty**. 1990. Effects of Hurricane Hugo on *Manilkara bidentata*, a primary tree species in the Luquillo Experimental Forest of Puerto Rico. *Biotropica* 23: 400-406.
- Petty, W. H.** and S. E. Lindberg. 1990. An intensive 1-month investigation of trace metal deposition and throughfall at a mountain spruce forest. *Water, Air, and Soil Pollution* 53: 213-226.
- Lindberg, S. E., D. Silsbee, D. A. Schaefer, J. G. Owens, and **W. H. Petty**. 1988. A comparison of atmospheric conditions at high- and low-elevation forests in the southern Appalachian Mountain range. Pages 321-344 in M. H. Unsworth and D. Fowler (eds.), Acid Deposition at High Elevation Sites. Kluwer Academic Publishers, London.
- Petty, W. H.** and S. E. Lindberg. 1987. An intensive short-term study of atmospheric lead deposition to a high-elevation spruce forest. Pages 272-274 in S. E. Lindberg and T. C. Hutchinson (eds.), Heavy Metals in the Environment. CEP Consultants, Publishers, Edinburgh.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

- Merwin Rural Research Institute.** 2004. "Impact of tent caterpillars on the local maple syrup industry". Grant to study the affects of cyclical outbreaks of tent caterpillars on sugar maple sap production in Northern New York.
- Rockefeller GIS Mini-Grant.** 2003. "Integration of GIS into a new course in Landscape Ecology." Grant for pedagogical advancement to develop a Landscape Ecology course at St. Lawrence University which incorporates GIS into course material and projects.

Post-doctoral Research Grant. National Science Foundation. 2000-2002. Title: “The Ecology of Early Food Production in Upland Drainages of Eastern North America, 3000-5000 yr B.P.”
Co-author: Dr. Kris Gremillion. Funds sponsored paleobotanical research using palynological methods to reconstruct the long-term forest dynamics of the mixed-mesophytic forests of eastern Kentucky in an area where agriculture was developed by Late-Archaic people.

Outstanding Teacher Award. 1998. Semi-annual award given by the General Biology Program, University of Tennessee, to a graduate teaching assistant who provides outstanding instruction to students.

Science Alliance Graduate Student Award of Excellence. 1994-95. Annual award given by the Division of Biology at the University of Tennessee, to outstanding graduate students based on their excellence in teaching, research, and community service.

E. S. Deevey Award. 1994. Annual award given by the Paleoecology Section of the Ecological Society of America for the best student paper presented at its national meeting.

Best Graduate Student Seminar. 1992. Annual award given by the Department of Geological Sciences at the University of Tennessee, for the best student paper given at the departmental colloquium.

National GSA Student Research Grant. 1992. Research grant awarded by the Geological Society of America to support my master’s research in geology.

Science Alliance Stipend Upgrade. 1991. Merit-based stipend upgrade awarded to support my master’s research in geology.

Oak Ridge Associated Universities Travel Grant. 1990, 1991. Travel grant awarded to support my master’s research in ecology.

PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS ATTENDED

Great Lakes Research Consortium Student/Faculty Conference at SUNY-ESF, Syracuse, 2006

International Association of Landscape Ecologists Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, NV, 2004

Society for Conservation GIS Annual Meeting, Monterey, CA, 2003.

First Annual Ellen C. Burt Symposium on Education, Economics, and the Environment in St. Lawrence County, Canton, NY, 2003.

Annual Conference on the Adirondacks, Saranac Lake, NY, 2002.

Geological Society of America Annual Meeting, Reno, NV, 2000.

Ecological Society of America Annual Meeting, Snowbird, UT 1995.

Ecological Society of America Annual Meeting, Knoxville, TN. 1994.

American Quaternary Association Biennial Meeting, Minneapolis, MN. 1994.

American Institute of Biological Sciences Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX. 1991.

Sixth International Symposium on Heavy Metals in the Environment, New Orleans, LA 1989.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Conference Coordinator: 2002. Adirondack Journal of Environmental Studies Annual Conference. Helped establish session topics, reviewed abstracts, and organized registration. Held at Hotel Saranac, Saranac Lake, New York, May 2002.

Advisory Board Member: 2001-2003. NSF Teaching Scholars Partnership Program- A multi-year NSF funded Science Education Project for which I serve as an advisor. The goal of this program is to recruit excellent undergraduate science and math students into the profession of secondary education.

Board Member: 2001-2004. Community Energy Services (CES), Canton, NY. CES is a local organization, which promotes environmental sustainability and poverty relief by facilitating energy conservation.

Organizing Committee Member and Workshop Leader: 2000-2002. St. Lawrence County Sustainable Energy Fair, St. Lawrence County, NY. Annual event featuring speakers and demonstrations that highlight the viability of energy conservation measures and alternative energy sources in the North Country. Workshop title: Update on Fuel Cells.

REFERENCES

Dr. Erika Barthelmess, Assistant Professor
Dept. of Biology
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Colleague with whom
I have team-taught General
Biology, and Field Methods
for the Environmental
Scientist.

Dr. John Collins, Associate Professor
Dept. of Global Studies
St. Lawrence University
Canton, NY 13617
Tel. 315-229-5661
E-mail: collins@stlawu.edu

Colleague with whom
I team-taught an interdisciplinary
first-year course entitled
Global Questions, Local Action

Dr. Baylor Johnson, Professor
Dept. of Philosophy
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Colleague who is the current
director of the Outdoor Studies
Program at SLU and the
coordinator of the Adirondack
Semester in which I taught this past
fall.