

# Why Political Ecology Now? A Left Coast Workshop

January 26-28, 2018, Berkeley, California

*“The potential power of a popularized political ecology is so great... [and] might make way for a very new world, emerging from these dark times when progressive politics in both human and non-human realms seem so painfully paralyzed.”*

(Robbins 2012: 4, cited in Osborne 2017: 844)

In 2015, an interdisciplinary and multi-campus cohort of political ecologists from UC Davis, UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz, the University of San Francisco, Portland State University, and the University of British Columbia gathered at the University of California at Berkeley for a two-day workshop to inaugurate the Left Coast Political Ecology (LCPE) working group. This network of graduate students and faculty continues to expand today as new scholars and activists join the field and engage with political ecology's theories and modes of praxis. LCPE now includes junior and senior scholars and practitioners up and down the West Coast -- and beyond.



In this weekend's workshop, our aim is to convene a dedicated, collegial group around the question "why political ecology now?" In thinking through political ecology's responsibility in the present moment, we intend to foster conversations around the field's current theoretical and methodological engagements with racism, colonialism, and other forms of oppression. We ask how we might strengthen our work toward anti-capitalist and anti-fascist ends. These questions are rooted in political ecology's commitments to praxis as well as to critique.

Practically speaking, we hope this weekend's workshop will strengthen our internal networks, building out towards future collaboration and cross-pollination. We hope you will come away from this event with new directions or stronger convictions of existing paths in your own research and activism. Our goal is to cultivate a collective dialogue among West Coast scholars at all stages of their careers, as well as to provide opportunities for new collaborations and senior-junior mentorships to grow.

After welcoming remarks, the workshop will open with a public talk on Friday, 26 January by Dr. Jade Sasser, Assistant Professor in the Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of California at Riverside, titled "Climate Activism, Reproductive Justice, and Anticipation: Navigating the Intersections." Mentors and mentees will have the opportunity to get acquainted before we all reconvene for dinner. On Saturday, 27 January, we will get to know each others' work through 2-Minute Flash Introductions, followed by workshops and mentoring sessions exploring a series of questions around the key practices, audiences, and collaborators of political ecology in the present moment.

Thank you for joining us, and we look forward to our growing discussion!

## Workshop Schedule

### Friday, January 26th

All events in **132 Mulford Hall**.

**3:30-4:00 pm:** Registration

**4:00-4:45 pm:** Welcome and Opening Remarks

**5-6 pm:** Mentor-Mentee Meet-and-Greet

**6:15-7:30 pm:** Keynote: **Dr. Jade Sasser**, "Climate Activism, Reproductive Justice, and Anticipation: Navigating the Intersections." Followed by Q&A.

**7:30+pm:** Dinner and Networking  
Dinner catered from Thai Rice Spoon. Vegan, vegetarian, and gluten-free options available.

### Saturday, January 27th

All events are in **575 McCone Hall** unless otherwise noted; coffee and tea will be provided throughout the day.

**509 McCone** is available all day Saturday as a childcare room or quiet space.

**145 McCone** is available as a locking lactation room and secure room in which to store belongings. An LCPE organizer will provide access as needed.

**9:00-9:30 am:** Coffee and Conversation

**9:30-10:45 am:** Flash Introductions: *Two Minutes, Two Slides*

**10:45-11:00 am:** Coffee Break

**11 am - 12:30 pm:** Workshop 1: *Methods in Political Ecology: Opportunities, Obstacles, and Political Engagements*

**12:30-1:30 pm:** Lunch  
Lunch catered from Ann's Catering. Vegan, vegetarian, and gluten-free options available.

**1:30-2:30 pm:** Mentor-Mentee Meet-up: *Research Praxis at All Stages*

**2:45-3:45 pm:** Workshop 2: *What is Left Coast Political Ecology?*

**3:45-4:00 pm:** Coffee Break

**4:00-5:00 pm:** Closing Remarks and Open Questions

**5:00-6:00 pm:** Happy Hour

Please join us for a hosted happy hour in 575 McCone, or, weather permitting, on the 5th floor balcony.

**6:00+pm:** Dinner and Hang-out

Please join us for dinner down the hill at [Cornerstone](#) (pay your own). Vegan, vegetarian, and gluten-free options available.

## **Sunday, January 28th**

All of Sunday's activities are voluntary. We welcome all participants who are available to join us on Sunday morning. All events will take place at [Way Station Brew](#) (2120 Dwight Way, at Shattuck) between 9 and 11 am (pay your own).

**9:00-10:00 am:** Breakfast and debrief

Please join us for a casual debrief and discussion of the weekend's events.

**10:00-11:00:** Planning for LCPE's future

Interested in joining LCPE's planning team? Let's keep our momentum going and start to gather ideas for the 2018-2019 year!

**Facilitator:** Jeffrey Vance Martin

**11:00 am-1:00 pm:** Writer's Workshop

This event is limited to 12 pre-registered participants, all of whom should have received an email with further information.

**Facilitators:** Ashton Wesner & Sophie Moore

## Session & Activity Descriptions

### **Welcome**

Who is Left Coast Political Ecology, and why are we gathered this weekend? After a brief reflection on 2017 and some get-to-know-yous, we will focus on some key conjunctures of concern to political ecologists in the present moment.

**\*Reading:** We will open with an acknowledgement of the workshop on Chochenyo Ohlone lands. For more thoughts on the possibilities and limits of territorial acknowledgments, please see [this piece](#) “Beyond Territorial Acknowledgments” by âpihtawikosisân.

**Facilitator & Speaker:** Gabi Kirk

### **Mentor-Mentee Discussions**

On Friday, mentees will circulate between four stations to get acquainted with mentors. Please come prepared with your questions -- you'll have the opportunity to share these on Friday, and to discuss in greater depth on Saturday. On Saturday, in a small group format, mentees will have the opportunity to discuss with assigned faculty mentors some of the opportunities and challenges political ecologists encounter in teaching, publishing, the job market, research design, and collaborative work.

**Facilitator:** Sophie Moore

### **Keynote Talk (Open to the Public)**

[Jade S. Sasser](#) is Assistant Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of California, Riverside. She holds a PhD in Environmental Science, Policy & Management and an MA in Cultural Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley, and an MPH from Boston University. Her forthcoming book, *Making Sexual Stewards: Population, Climate Activism, and Social Justice in the New Millennium*, explores activism linking climate change with women's reproductive rights in international development. Her broader research interests are focused on gender and environment, international development, and women's health.

**Facilitator:** Ashton Wesner

### **Flash Introductions**

Each participant will have 2 minutes to introduce themselves and to give us a taste of their work and interests, using two Powerpoint slides to illustrate points, or to show some photographic material from your fieldwork. Read text, show us photos, be creative: this is fun -- sometimes funny -- and we will all know each other a bit better afterward!

**Facilitators:** Ashton Wesner & Sophie Moore

### **Workshop 1: Methods in Political Ecology: Opportunities, Obstacles, and Political Engagements**

In this workshop session, we will first hear from [Tracey Osborne](#) and Diego Martinez-Lugo, Claudia Diaz-Combs, and Pradnya Garud about their research with the [Public Political Ecology Lab](#) at the University of Arizona. In the following discussion, our key questions are: *for whom* do we do political ecology, and *with whom* do we do it? That is, who are our publics and who are our collaborators? In the first part of this session, we will take Tracey Osborne's 2017 article\* on Public Political Ecology as our point of departure, hearing from some of its creators how that project came to life.. Next, [Casey Walsh](#) will introduce the [Journal of Political Ecology](#) and we will discuss publishing and reaching diverse audiences through political ecology.

**Facilitators:** Ashton Wesner

**\*Reading for Saturday's Workshop:** Osborne, T. (2017). Public Political Ecology: a community of praxis for earth stewardship. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 24(1), 843–860.

**Download here:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/bqiubjqk5wfxyp8/AAAIHuw6NV3JFNzRLm2Mq9OFa?dl=0>

**Workshop 2: What is Left Coast Political Ecology?**

In this workshop session, participants will discuss the significance of “Left Coast” for them as scholars, practitioners, and activists. We will generate and work creatively with ideas around what LCPE looks like now, and what it could grow into in the future.

**Facilitator:** Gabi Kirk

**Important Information:**

**Access all workshop materials here:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xr3eddocu327rff/AAAaUCMegFRpcZmORzquFIIZA?dl=0>

**Locations:** 132 Mulford Hall (Friday)  
575 McCone Hall (Saturday)  
Jupiter Tap Room (Saturday dinner -- pay-your-own-way)  
Way Station Brew (2120 Dwight Way) (Sunday)

[Campus Map](#)

**Parking:** Parking near campus is VERY limited. We encourage participants to use public transportation to get to campus if at all possible. The [Downtown Berkeley BART](#) station is one block from the West edge of campus. [AC transit buses](#) run frequently. Here is information on [campus visitor parking](#) and [city parking lots](#).

**Directions:** *To Mulford Hall:*

From [Downtown Berkeley BART](#), walk north on Shattuck, take a right on University Ave. Follow the footpath East from Crescent Lawn to reach Mulford Hall. (0.4 miles / 10 m walk).

*To McCone Hall:*

From [Downtown Berkeley BART](#), walk north on Shattuck, take a right on Addison St, which will take you to University Ave. Follow University until you take a right on the Library Front Rd. Follow McCone Walk footpath to reach McCone. (0.6 miles / 15 m walk)

Please **text Ingrid Behrsin** at **(510) 499-8071** with any day-of concerns or questions, including about directions or special transportation needs.

**Accessibility Needs:**

*Childcare:* Childcare will be provided all day on Saturday, January 27 from 9 am-5 pm. We can also provide childcare on Friday evening from 4-8 PM if there is a need. If you need childcare and have not already gotten in touch with Gabi Kirk, particularly if you

need it for Friday night, please [email her](#) **no later than Thursday January 18**. You can bring your child all day or drop them in/out (with prior arrangement).

*Mobility:* [Mulford Hall](#) has an automatic door on the Northwest entrance. [McCone Hall](#) has elevators and an automatic entrance on the west side of the building.

*Dietary needs:* All meals have vegan and gluten-free options. Foods and snacks will be labeled with ingredients. Please help us avoid cross-contamination by not mixing serving utensils between dishes and keeping the snack and food areas clean throughout the weekend.

*Gender neutral restrooms:* Gender neutral restrooms will be designated in each building for the weekend and a map will be provided.

**Find us online at:**

**Website:** <http://leftcoastpoliticalecology.org/>

**Email:** [info@leftcoastpoliticalecology.org](mailto:info@leftcoastpoliticalecology.org)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/leftcoastpoliticalecology/>

**Twitter:** @LeftCoastPE

Follow and post the workshop's activities on social media using **#LCPE2018**

While on campus, Wi-Fi access for those not affiliated with UC Berkeley is provided through the [CalVisitor](#) wireless network, with no passphrase necessary.

**Photography and Media Policy:**

We would like to use photos of workshop activities and participants to foster community and to enhance any future print materials, newsletters, the Left Coast Political Ecology website, social media, publicity, and fundraising materials. As a participant in this workshop, you have a right to opt out of inclusion in photographs/media. Please let one of the organizers know if you would prefer that your photograph not be included in these materials.

**LCPE thanks the following entities for their generous support of our 2018 Workshop:**

UC Berkeley Environmental Politics Working Group

UC Davis Humanities Institute

UC Davis Institute for Social Sciences

UC Davis Women's Resources and Research Center