

# Draining the Great Oasis: *A Colloquium on Environmental History*

Thursday, October 25  
Southwest State University (SSU)  
Student Center West (SCW)

From weed control and horse ecology to wetlands and recreational landscapes, *Draining the Great Oasis: An Environmental History of Murray County, Minnesota* demonstrates how science, history, literature, and philosophy can interact to interpret the history of a southwestern Minnesota county. This new book captures the detail of a specific place while addressing the broader experiences of life on the prairie, where major ecological changes accompanied large-scale agriculture. Join us as we explore the ways that the interdisciplinary study of a specific place sheds light on transformations in the greater environment.

## CONFERENCE AGENDA

- 9:00 a.m. **Welcome**
- 9:15 Introduction of the book,  
*Draining the Great Oasis: An Environmental History of Murray County, Minnesota*  
**Anthony Amato** and **Janet Timmerman**, Editors
- 9:45 “The Terrain of Murray County from Till to Tile”  
**Thomas Dilley** and **Douglas Spieles**, Assistant Professors of Environmental Science, SSU
- 10:30 Keynote Address: “Cosmos in the Local”  
**Laura Dassow Walls**, Associate Professor of English at Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania
- 11:45 Lunch (\$6.00, reservations required, 507-537-6288)
- 12:30 p.m. “Murray County as Our Microcosmos”  
**Joseph Amato**, Professor of Rural and Regional Studies and History, SSU
- 1:00 SSU Student Perspective
- 1:30 “Photographic Essay of Thoreau’s Local Landscape, Walden Pond and Concord”  
**Bradley Dean**, Media Center Director, Thoreau Institute, Lincoln, Massachusetts

- 2:30 Concurrent Panel Sessions:  
Dialogue will center on the direction of local environmental history and what future studies are needed for southwestern Minnesota
- 3:30 p.m. Closing Reception and Authors’ Celebration

## GUEST SPEAKERS

**Laura Dassow Walls** teaches American literature at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, where she also teaches Literature and Science and coordinates the Values and Science / Technology Program. She has published a number of articles on Thoreau, Emerson, Humboldt, and others, as well as a book, *See New Worlds: Henry David Thoreau and Nineteenth-Century Natural Science* (Wisconsin 1995).

**Bradley Dean** lives and works at the Thoreau Institute in Lincoln, Massachusetts (less than half a mile from Walden Pond), where he is director of the Media Center. He has published widely on Thoreau and has taught at several major universities.

**The conference is hosted by the Center for Rural and Regional Studies. It is free of charge and open to the general public.**


Pre-registration is not required. If you desire to reserve a lunch, the cost is \$6.00. Lunch reservations are required by Monday, October 22, 2001 at 4:30 p.m. and may be made by calling 507-537-6288.

**Questions & Information:**

Call Beth Spieles in the Center for Rural and Regional Studies at 507-537-6288; e-mail to [CRRS@southwest.msus.edu](mailto:CRRS@southwest.msus.edu); or visit the Center's webpage at: [www.SouthwestState.edu/regional](http://www.SouthwestState.edu/regional)

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