**Event Title:** Not Your Parents’ Nature Walk

**Event Description:** The country or woodsy stroll is a staple of “nature writing.” But circling Walden Pond or pacing wilderness trails doesn’t cut it today. We live in cities and suburbs. Our communities are diverse. Species are vanishing and “invading.” Climate is changing. Presented by the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, this panel will explore how the pedestrian nature essay of old might give way to something fresh, feral, and footloose, exploring new environments, histories, and voices.

**Event Statement of Merit:** Environmental writing still has a reputation for being snooty, polemical, and pie in the sky. Now more than ever, we need to push its boundaries and find new models, whether by examining neighborhood streets rather than preserves, or emphasizing irreverence over sanctity. This panel also will be direct about the privileges and perils inherent in environmental flanerie, the importance of promoting marginalized histories and voices, and the need to also celebrate built and damaged environments.

**Event Category:** Nonfiction Craft and Criticism

**Event Participants:**

MICHAEL BRANCH is Foundation Professor of English at the University of Nevada, Reno. He is the author or editor of nine books and more than 200 essays and reviews. His most recent books are *Raising Wild, Rants from the Hill,* and *How to Cuss in Western.*

JULIA CORBETT is a Professor in the Department of Communication and Environmental Humanities Graduate Program at the University of Utah. Her latest book *Out of the Woods: Seeing Nature in the Everyday* won the 2018 Reading the West Book Award in Nonfiction.

MAYA L. KAPOOR is an associate editor at *High Country News,* where she writes about science, environmental policy, and social justice in the urbanizing West.

KATHRYN MILES is the author of four books, including *Quakeland.* Her writing has appeared in publications including *Best American Essays, Boston Globe, The New York Times, Outside,* *Popular Mechanics,* and *Time.* She serves as writer-in-residence at Green Mountain College.

NICK NEELY’s most recent book is *Alta California: From San Diego to San Francisco, a Journey on Foot to Rediscover the Golden State.* He is the recipient of a PEN Northwest Boyden Wilderness Writing Residency, the 2015 John Burroughs Nature Essay Award, and a AAAS Kavli Science Journalism Award.

**Moderator Questions (evolving):**

- This panel is about the future, about finding new forms and a way forward to more inclusive and varied environmental nonfiction, but to start let’s acknowledge that the way forward may
be to take a fresh look at the past and reframe what’s been called “nature writing.” Lauret Savoy points out that a “segregation of ideas” has prevailed for a long time, that is there has been a narrow view of what constitutes “nature writing” and “the environment.” Are there overlooked essays and books that we should turn back to as models of what environmental writing really is or could be?

- As a follow-up, how do you feel about the term “nature” in this day and age. Is it still useful, or is it holding us back? Is there “no nature” as Gary Snyder put it, now long ago, or is it useful to parse various “natures”?

- To what extent do you feel like you are “pushing the boundaries” in your own work, and how else would you like to?

- There’s an assumed trade-off between experimentation and a) the clarity of one’s argument and/or the scope of one’s readership. Environmental writing often has had a distinct cause to promote. Is there a tension there? Is it holding us back?

- What texts do you turn to as models of a “new environmental writing,” or what texts would you point us to? Who is successfully pushing the boundaries today, and how are they doing it?

**Reading List (preliminary, nonfiction only):**

*The Environmental Justice Reader*, eds. Rachel Stein, Mei Mei Evans, Joni Adamson  
*Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, and Nature*, ed. Greta Gaard  
*Sisters of the Earth*, ed. Lorraine Anderson  
“Toward a Wider View of Nature Writing,” Catherine Bruni  
*Black Faces, White Spaces*, Carolyn Finney  
*The Colors of Nature*, eds. Lauret Savoy and Alison Hawthorne Deming  
*Trace*, Lauret Savoy  
*The Home Place*, J. Drew Lanham  
*Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, Janise Ray  
*Seven Years to Zero*, Amy Benson  
*Body Toxic*, Susanna Antonetta  
*Living Downstream*, Sandra Steingraber  
*Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America*, Jenny Price  
“Thirteen Ways of Seeing Nature in LA,” Jenny Price  
*About a Mountain*, John D’Agata  
*Suburban Safari*, Hannah Holmes  
*My Green Manifesto*, David Gessner  
*City Wilds: Essays and Stories about Urban Nature*, ed. Terrell Dixon