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Field Workshop: Carrying Care

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Carrying Care: Natural History's Path to Place

Dr. Lyn Baldwin, Thompson Rivers University

Naturalists and ecologists have argued that our ever-increasing “*extinction of experience*” with the natural world may, in fact, be its greatest threat. We know that place matters, but what in the Euro-Canadian tradition can work to restore care between people and place? *Carry* comes from the Latin word ‘carrus’ meaning wheeled vehicle, whereas *care* comes from the Old German word ‘chara’ meaning grief or lament. Tool, emotion. Is there a link between the tools we carry and our capacity to care? As an ecologist, my interest in the practice of field journaling arose when I began to understand that caring for the world demanded tools different than what my training as an ecologist, alone, could offer. By learning to listen to the land through art, my understanding of and willingness to protect its carrying capacity was deepened.

Illustrated with excerpts from my field journals and paintings, we will begin this workshop exploring how the art and science of natural history can help reweave a reciprocal relationship between ourselves and the ecosystems that surround and sustain us. Following this introduction, delegates will journey off-campus to explore illustrated field journals as an immersive practice in place and community. Through a series of observational exercises (none of which require prior drawing experience), we will pay close attention to the ground underfoot, giving voice to what we experience through schematic drawings, maps, diagrams, and contemplative writing pieces. Ultimately, this session will seek to demonstrate that the land’s care inspires and demands all the tools we have at our disposal.