

Environmental redux

Not truly forgotten, but issues have been unreported for too long



Corbin Sullivan, a master's student in the School of Journalism at Michigan State University, is editor of *EJ*.

Some of you may notice that the face next to this column is different than the previous three issues. There's a simple explanation. I'm Corbin Sullivan, the second editor of *EJ*, following the co-creator, Kristen Tuinstra. I have some big shoes to fill, considering the recent accolades awarded the magazine. (See story below.)

My goal is to keep *EJ* on its current track, getting better with each future issue and eventually printing three and then four issues per year. This installment is a bit of a trip to the distant and not-so-distant past with forgotten environmental stories.

It's tricky to define what actually constitutes a forgotten environmental story. In truth, none of the stories we included in this issue are truly forgotten because there was someone around to interview, Internet sites to give us information and landscapes and animals of which to take pictures. But if we went by this measure, we'd be forced to go through much painstaking field research to

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dig up the stories that absolutely no one knows about. We're not scientists, we're writers.

The next option was to consider the audience's knowledge of environmental stories. Our ever-expanding audience is more educated about environmental issues than the general population, but our job is to inform, not rehash, so we had the task of out-sourcing our resourceful readers.

Forgotten environmental stories aren't hard to find; it depends on whom you ask. Odds are the majority of the U.S. population has either forgotten or never heard of the

demise of the passenger pigeon, and few if any could actually tell you anything about the damming of the Nelson River in Manitoba. But, like every story worth telling, a good environmental story is like the landfills and chemical dumps that our brethren so often report on. If there's enough "stink" surrounding them, the flies will gather, and soon the stories will no longer be unknown or forgotten.

The end result, as you will read, is an amalgam of stories we thought had been out of the press long enough to be forgotten, or were never reported, period.

Tuinstra wins MUCC's Ben East Award for *EJ* magazine

Kristen Tuinstra, the founding editor of *EJ* magazine, has been awarded the prestigious Ben East Award for her contributions in creating and editing the first three issues of the Knight Center for Environmental Journalism's magazine.



Kristen Tuinstra

Tuinstra received the award June 21 at the 66th annual banquet of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs in Marquette, Mich. The Ben East Award is the highest honor in Michigan environmental journalism and natural resources reporting.

The judges praised both Tuinstra and *EJ*, which is published each semester by students and faculty in Michigan State

University's Knight Center. The judges said the magazine has "earned enthusiastic reviews from the editors of *Time* and *Audubon* magazines."

Tuinstra earned her bachelor's degree in creative writing from Western Michigan University in 1997. She earned her master's degree from MSU's journalism school in December 2002. While at MSU she studied environmental journalism at the Knight Center and developed a five-year business plan for *EJ* as part of her master's degree project.

In the fall of 2001 she began editing *EJ News*, the Knight Center's 20-page newsletter. She proposed transforming the periodical into a full-color magazine. She enlisted Randy Yeip, another master's degree student, to design the magazine and under her leadership the first issue of *EJ* was

published in the winter of 2002.

"I'm delighted that Kristen has been honored for her hard work, dedication and leadership in creating *EJ*," said Jim Detjen, director of the Knight Center for Environmental Journalism. "This is the first time a student journalist has won this important award, which honors the best environmental journalism in Michigan."

The Michigan United Conservation Clubs is an organization of more than 500 conservation clubs and nearly 100,000 members. Founded in 1937, it is the nation's largest statewide conservation organization. It publishes *Michigan Out-of-Doors* and *Tracks* magazines; produces television programs about the outdoors and natural resources issues; provides environmental education; and works to conserve Michigan's natural resources.