



# Economics for the Anthropocene

Regrounding the Human-Earth Relationship

## E4A UPDATE

Winter-Spring 2015



*E4A Steering Committee and students, plus Community Scholar Harm Slöterdijk and York instructor Eric Miller, met for a retreat at the Adirondack Ecological Center in Newcomb, NY on Jan. 30 – Feb. 1. TOP: J. Erickson, E. Perkins, M. Burke, M. Wironen, P. Brown, E. Miller, H. Slöterdijk, C. Orr, J. Arruda. BOTTOM: P. Victor, C. Hammond Wagner, J. Gobby, K. Fevrier, A. Kusmer, J. Senisterra, M. Forrest, P. Spencer, G. Garver*

## THE E4A PARTNERSHIP IS COMING TO LIFE!

The Economics for the Anthropocene (E4A) partnership is up and running! In Fall 2014, the first cohort of E4A graduate students – the E4A Water Cohort — started their studies at McGill University, the University of Vermont and York University. After getting to know each other at a September 2014 retreat at Peter Brown's farm in southern Quebec, E4A's inaugural cohort has plunged into E4A courses on the Big Bang to the Anthropocene and ecological economics theory and methods. They

are also refining personal research plans and helping E4A shape research projects on Economics & Finance in the Anthropocene, Law & Governance in the Anthropocene and Ethics and Ontology in the Anthropocene. And they are keen to give E4A visibility at upcoming meetings and conferences touching on E4A themes – especially the joint conference of E4A partners CANSEE and USSEE in Vancouver in October 2015.

E4A Project Director Peter Brown

says, "We could not have hoped for a better slate of students to get E4A off the ground. Their talent and drive give hope for a more flourishing relationship between people and the Earth."

The E4A team at UVM is preparing to host the Water Field Course from May 26 to June 5 in Burlington, VT.

Several E4A partners and collaborators, along with E4A Community Scholars, will participate. The first E4A Community Scholar, Harm Slöterdijk is featured in this update.

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## MEET THE E4A WATER COHORT

The inaugural group of E4A graduate students got started in the Fall 2014 semester at McGill, York and UVM.

At McGill, Matthew Burke, Jennifer Gobby and Christopher Orr are all PhD students, and Anna Kusmer is an MS student, in Natural Resource Sciences.

PhD students Courtney Hammond Wagner, Phoebe Spencer and Michael Wironen make up UVM's contingent in the Water Cohort.

York's Faculty of Environmental Studies is the home base for PhD students Kesha Fevrier, Alvaro Palazuelos and Juan Senisterra, plus MES student James Coelho Arruda.

That's most of them in snowshoes on a frozen Arbutus Lake during the E4A winter retreat!

Check out the students' blog posts and profiles on [e4a-net.org](http://e4a-net.org).



E4A students and Community Scholar Harm Sloterdijk take a snowshoe break during the E4A winter retreat on February 1.

## DR. HARM SLOTERDIJK JOINS E4A AS A COMMUNITY SCHOLAR

Dr. Harm Sloterdijk, a retired aquatic ecotoxicologist who serves as a volunteer and board member with E4A partner COVABAR (*Conseil de concertation et valorisation du bassin de la rivière Richelieu* – the Richelieu River basin organization in Southern Quebec), has signed on as the first E4A Community Scholar.

Community scholars are non-academic community members working on outreach, community-based education, organizing and/or participatory policy development related to water, energy and climate justice. For example, they could be local community leaders, NGO staff members or volunteers, elders with traditional ecological knowledge,

youth coordinators, or sustainable business entrepreneurs. The partnership will offer them opportunities to share their perspectives and knowledge with students and researchers, as well as to learn from other E4A participants.

Dr. Sloterdijk has a B.Sc. in aquatic biology, a M.Sc. in marine sciences and a PhD in aquatic ecotoxicology and more than 30 years of professional experience, primarily involving multidisciplinary environmental evaluation studies on the aquatic environment and management of watersheds. In Quebec, his work has involved the Saint-Lawrence River and Transboundary Waters, including the Missisquoi Bay and the Richelieu



River), as well as the James Bay and salmon rivers on the North Shore. With COVABAR, he was involved in the follow-up of the 2011 flooding of the upper Richelieu River and has written a report on the potential impact of industrial-scale hog farming in the Richelieu basin. His work has also included assessment of water-related environmental impacts on Cree and Innu people. He has also

been extensively involved as a water quality advisor on projects in West Africa, Arab Emirates, Egypt, Indonesia, Venezuela, Guatemala and Barbados. In addition to his volunteer work with COVABAR, He is currently also a technical advisor with SMAC (*Solidarité Montérégie Amérique Centrale*), a project providing safe drinking water in Mayan villages in Guatemala.

## RECONCILING DISCIPLINES – RESEARCH PLANS SHAPING UP FOR ECONOMICS & FINANCE, LAW & GOVERNANCE, AND ETHICS FOR THE ANTHROPOCENE

Ecological economics frames the economy and society as systems embedded within ecosystems. To extend this core idea to other normative disciplines, we have begun to assemble research and outreach teams and develop multi-year work plans, on the themes of Economics & Finance for the Anthropocene, Law & Governance for the Anthropocene and Ethics for the Anthropocene. In conjunction with this long-term research, E4A students are also well along in developing syllabi for Fall 2015 group research seminars on the same themes – a great opportunity to draw on the broad expertise of E4A collaborators.

The Law & Governance research and outreach plan is the most advanced. A key area of interest is law and governance related to property. A research team of 20 scholars will have a teleconference in April or May to refine the work plan.

## 2015 E4A ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP MEETING SET FOR JUNE 5 IN BURLINGTON, VT

The second annual E4A partnership meeting will take place on June 5, 2015, in Burlington, Vermont. Representatives of all E4A partners will be invited to recap highlights and lessons learned in E4A's kick-off year, and to plan E4A activities for the 2015-16 year – which will mark the arrival of the energy cohort in the Fall.

E4A partners are listed on the E4A website, [e4a-net.org](http://e4a-net.org).

## E4A WATER FIELD COURSE AT UVM – MAY 26 TO JUNE 5

The first E4A field course, focusing on regional and transboundary water issues centered on Lake Champlain, will take place at the University of Vermont in Burlington from May 26 to June 4, 2015. The E4A water cohort, along with E4A community scholars, will attend the course, which is being co-created by E4A academic researchers and E4A partners involved with water management issues in the region and elsewhere.

The field course will be an opportunity for E4A students and academic researchers to apply theory and methods of ecological economics to find on-the-ground solutions to current water quality and water management issues that E4A partners are grappling with. A key pending challenge facing Lake Champlain is the need for Vermont to meet federal requirements to develop a "total maximum daily load" for nutrient pollution in the lake. The course will examine that and related questions by combining classroom learning with field visits in the Burlington region. Following the course, the E4A Water Cohort will synthesize and mobilize a solutions-oriented report.

E4A field courses are designed to bring theory to real-world problems –here's hoping for a successful effort this Spring!

