



a non-profit institute

NEWS FROM...

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Hudsonia

Bard College
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SPRING SLEUTHING

✿ Spring flowers that can be found around the Hudson River wetlands include: tree and shrub willows (most flower in April, dispersing fluffy seeds in May); red maple (April - red fruits appear shortly afterwards); marsh marigold (second half of April into early May); yellow iris (mostly Hudson River - end of May to end of June). You may also see the Pennsylvania sedge, a small, grass-like plant of dry oak woods, which flowers in April (pictures ►).



Osprey

✿ Ospreys migrate through the area from early April to early May, when they can be seen along the Hudson River and occasionally inland. Their main food in the Spring is alewives and red goldfish. Currently a "threatened" species in New York State, their population began to decline after World War II when DDT caused excessively thin eggshells. In the last several years, however, the ospreys have staged a comeback along the upper East Coast. As they become more numerous you may be likely to see nesting attempts.

✿ By the end of March or the beginning of April, our two earliest-flying butterflies are active on warm days. The mourning cloak has purplish-brown wings with yellow margins. It overwinters as an adult and its larvae feed on willow, poplar, and elm. The small, bright blue spring azure lays its eggs in flower buds of dogwood, blueberry, sumac, and other plants. It can be seen most easily around mud puddles and in other moist places.



Mourning Cloak



White Sucker

✿ Fish spawning runs: white suckers ascend tributaries from the Hudson shortly after ice-out, and are most obvious in April. At this time, they assume their breeding colors of rust with a horizontal black stripe. Alewife herring are most conspicuous during May, when they can be seen chasing and splashing along shorelines and in stream mouths.

✿ Snapping turtles emerge from winter dormancy in the mud during late April and early May. In the second week of June, when cattails are releasing their pollen, the female snappers leave the marshes and ponds to dig in the soil and lay their eggs. Most of this activity is early or late in the day, and is pronounced during and after a warm rain.



Snapping Turtle

A VISION OF COMMUNITY VALUES: PROFILE OF JIM STAPLETON

Based on his work on apple pomace utilization, wind power, and other environmental studies, Jim Stapleton has designed a workshop in community project evaluation. Jim has created a format offering citizens an opportunity for self discovery and development of new insights with regard to land use and other complex issues. Quoting Lovins', *Soft Energy Paths*, Jim believes "making values explicit is essential to preserving a society in which diversity of values can flourish."

Jim Stapleton was born in Toledo, Ohio, and received his undergraduate education at both the University of Detroit and the University of Goettingen, West Germany. In the early days of his career, he taught physics at the University of Detroit and at Marymount College. Later, Jim moved to Galeton, Pa., where he built a cabin in the woods and lived for eight years as a writer and farmer. It was apple farming which brought Jim to New York. Later, after leaving the farm, he began helping Dan Smiley with his natural history and ecological studies at the Mohonk Trust (Preserve). He is now resident naturalist at the John Burroughs Sanctuary in West Park, N.Y.

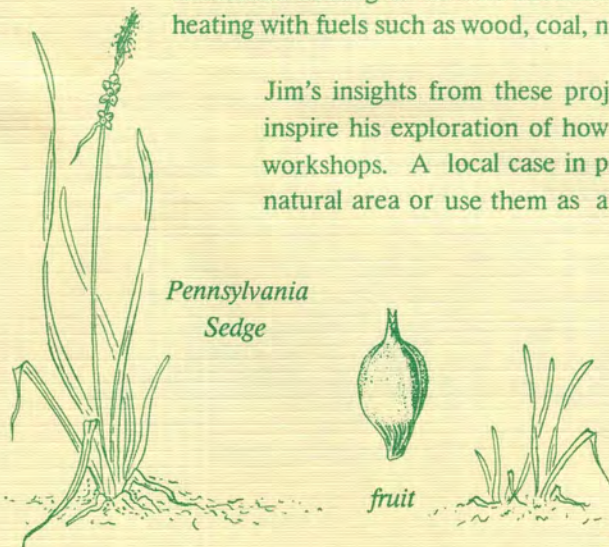
With an MS degree in ecology from SUNY-New Paltz and as a doctoral candidate at the Union Graduate School, Jim continues to study environmental science. He currently teaches environmental science at The New School for Social Research in New York City.

For eight years now, Jim has served as a member or chairman of various citizen boards such as the town of Esopus Conservation Commission, the Ulster County Environmental Management Council, and the Hudson Valley Economic Development District Board. Presently, Jim serves as a director and environmental researcher at Hudsonia, Ltd.

Jim's concept of community project evaluation has evolved from several studies done with other Hudsonia board members. In 1979, he and Erik Kiviat began researching the utilization of apple pomace, the solid that remains after pressing cider. "It has been a terrible problem in landfills in the Hudson Valley because it's too acidic to decay readily," says Jim. He studied its historic uses, in sachets, as fiber in cookies (jokingly referred to as "bowel buster"), and as animal feed. He also assessed its value as an energy source for local utilities and found it to be unpromising. Most recently, Jim and Joe Morreale, an economist at Bard College, have found, from both an engineering and an economic point of view, that anaerobic digestion is the most efficient way to get rid of apple pomace.

Another study that Jim did for Central Hudson Gas and Electric looked at air pollution due to residential heating in the Mid-Hudson Valley. It compared the economic and environmental impacts of heating with fuels such as wood, coal, natural gas, and electricity.

Jim's insights from these projects and his interest in alternative land use issues combined to inspire his exploration of how we value our natural resources, and ultimately led to his workshops. A local case in point: should we keep the Shawangunk Mountains as a natural area or use them as a wind resource for energy needs?



Willow

Marsh Marigold



At a Mohonk Preserve workshop, Jim asked the participants, "How do you feel about the mountains? What kinds of activities are consistent with your values? How can you be more effective in discerning your own values, articulating them to others, and having them heard where it counts?" Jim's seminars aim "to look at natural resources not as technical experts, but as valuing human beings."

None of the existing evaluation methods is well suited for calmly weighing the full range of competing human values. "I found it fascinating," says Jim. "Everyone pays lip service to the concept of balancing positives and negatives, but we hardly ever do it. And ... how do you do it? A number of methods have been developed, notably, cost-benefit analysis. But this turns out to be slanted towards money because it's based on dollars. Whatever you can't put a dollar figure on is not too important."

In part of Jim's format, he pinpoints attitudes and values with regard to time. "It's called 'future discounting'. Whenever you propose a project, it will have costs and benefits not only this year, but also years into the future. But this year's costs and benefits often seem more important than those of twenty years from now. So you end up discounting the future."

"There is an enormous effort to measure intangibles in dollars," Jim laments. "How much can I pay you not to have that view? If I find a dollar value for your aesthetic feeling for that, what I'll do is discount it over the next ten years. That works for money, but not necessarily for your aesthetic feelings or your sense of environmental well-being. Those things are not worth less to you next year. They may be worth more."

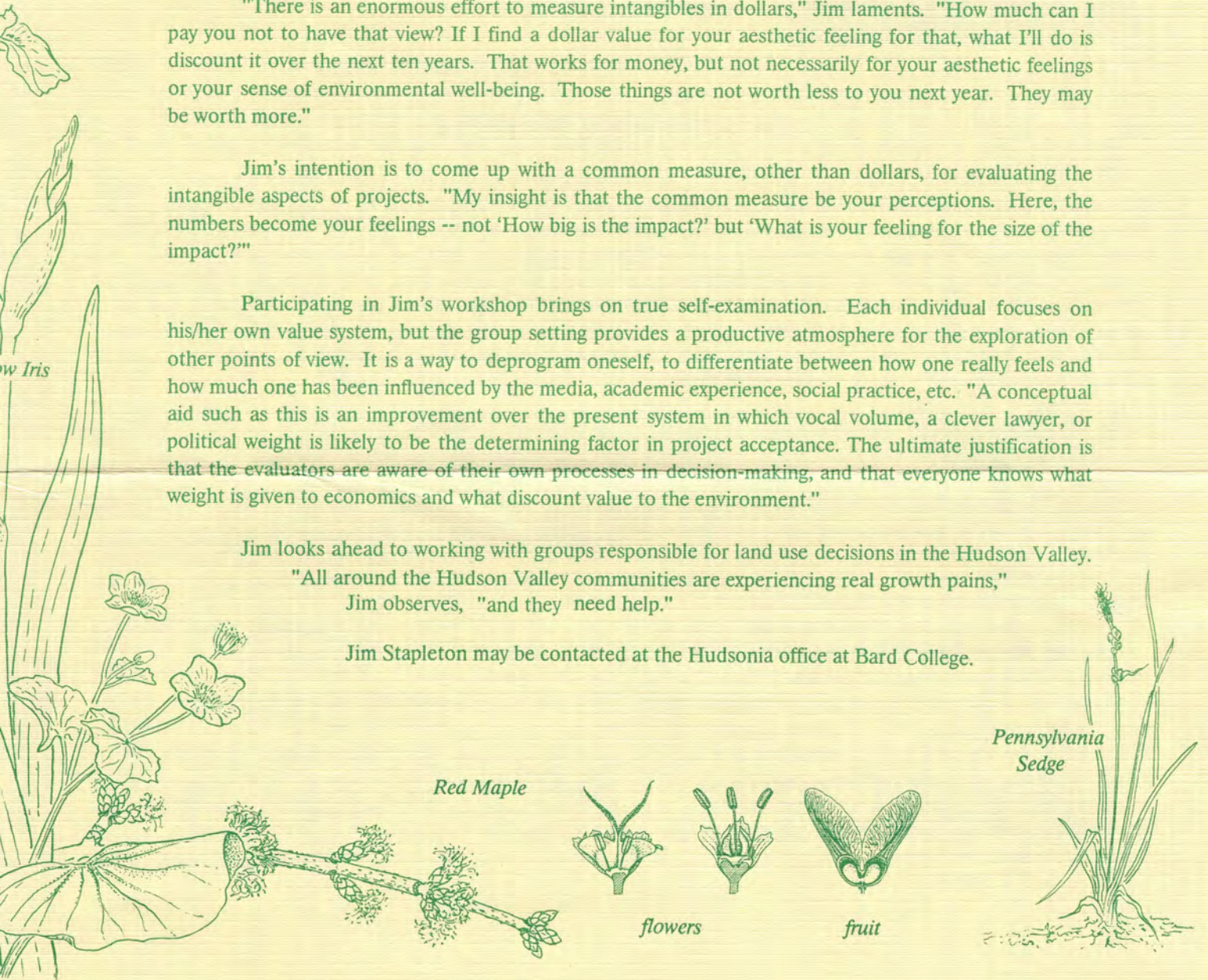
Jim's intention is to come up with a common measure, other than dollars, for evaluating the intangible aspects of projects. "My insight is that the common measure be your perceptions. Here, the numbers become your feelings -- not 'How big is the impact?' but 'What is your feeling for the size of the impact?'"

Participating in Jim's workshop brings on true self-examination. Each individual focuses on his/her own value system, but the group setting provides a productive atmosphere for the exploration of other points of view. It is a way to deprogram oneself, to differentiate between how one really feels and how much one has been influenced by the media, academic experience, social practice, etc. "A conceptual aid such as this is an improvement over the present system in which vocal volume, a clever lawyer, or political weight is likely to be the determining factor in project acceptance. The ultimate justification is that the evaluators are aware of their own processes in decision-making, and that everyone knows what weight is given to economics and what discount value to the environment."

Jim looks ahead to working with groups responsible for land use decisions in the Hudson Valley.

"All around the Hudson Valley communities are experiencing real growth pains," Jim observes, "and they need help."

Jim Stapleton may be contacted at the Hudsonia office at Bard College.





Jim Stapleton, outside his home in the John Burroughs Sanctuary in West Park, N.Y.

Describing his workshop in exploring community environmental values, he says, "my ultimate goal is to engender confidence in citizens to engage in public debate with clarity about their value systems, to identify, appraise, represent, and trade off values that a specific project evokes in them."

OTHER HUDSONIA PROJECTS

✿ **BLANDING'S TURTLE.** Studies of this threatened species continue in southwestern Dutchess County. These turtles live in wetlands bordered by gravelly soils, and the habitats are affected by mining, filling, construction, and other alterations. Current field work focuses on visual searching, tagging, live-trapping, and attaching miniature radio transmitters to selected females so they can be followed to their nesting and hibernation sites. If you see a Blanding's turtle (recognized by its lemon-yellow throat), please do not pick it up, keep it, or otherwise disturb it. You may, however, move the turtle off a road to the nearest water or shade. Please report it to Erik Kiviat at Hudsonia, with the tag number if the turtle has a tag on the back of its shell. This project is being done in cooperation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the Nature Conservancy, and the State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, with additional support from individual donors.

✿ **THE BIG MOVE!** The expansion and renovation of the Bard College Field Station is nearly completed, and Hudsonia will have moved into a new office there by the time you receive this newsletter. The field station contains laboratories, a classroom, a library, specimen collections, offices, and living quarters for visiting scientists. We helped plan these facilities and will be sharing them with the Hudson River National Estuarine Sanctuary, Bard's undergraduate program, and the new Master of Science in Environmental Studies program. Funding for the construction came from the Estuarine Sanctuary. Tours and public seminars at the Field Station will be announced in the local news media. Tax deductible donations of office furniture, library materials, field and laboratory equipment are needed; call our office if you are interested in assisting.

✿ **RESTORATION PLANNING** and ecological studies of several Hudson River tributaries are being planned for the near future. In part, the quality of the Hudson River is determined by the quality of its tributary waters. Discovering problems and designing ways to restore tributary quality is a very important aspect of our Hudson River studies. This work is directed by Bob Schmidt.



Spring Azure

Hudsonia is a non-profit corporation founded to promote better scientific understanding of community-environment interactions in the Hudson Valley. Donations are tax deductible. We welcome your support.