

CULTURAL ECOLOGY SPECIALTY GROUP  
OF THE AAG NEWSLETTER

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Temporary Editor

The Cultural Ecology Specialty Group officially came into existence with the mailing of the recent AAG membership renewal form. Although the organizing petition received the required 50 signatures and an organizational meeting held during the annual convention at Louisville, we were not officially recognized until listed on the membership renewal form. Every member of the AAG, and not just those who attended the Louisville meeting, now has the opportunity to join. Hopefully, a few hundred members will check Specialty Group number 08 on the form. A minimum of 100 is necessary for the Group to remain solvent without additional justification. For every member, the Group will receive 50 cents from the AAG.

The Organizational Meeting. A small but enthusiastic group attended the organizational meeting in Louisville. Three things were accomplished at the gathering: (i) the purpose and the philosophy of the Group were discussed; (ii) officers were elected according to the guidelines for Group organization (AAG Newsletter, Dec., 1978, p. 1); and, (iii) plans for the Group's initial activity for the 1981 annual meeting were outlined.

Officers. The following people were elected as the Group's Board of Officers:

Chairperson: William E. Doolittle, Department of Geology and Geography, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Secretary-Treasurer: Lawrence G. Wolf, Department of Geography, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH 45221.

Director, Eastern States: Susan E. Place, Department of Geography, Radford University, Radford, VA 24142.

Director, Central States: James D. Clarkson, Department of Geography, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109.

Director, Western States: Michael J. Watts, Department of Geography, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

Each of these persons was elected for a two-year term. It has been suggested recently, however, that the terms of at least two of the officers be extended to three years. This procedure would result in a "rotating" Board rather than one in which the entire slate is elected at one time. Give this item some consideration. It will be brought up at the Los Angeles business meeting.

1981 Activity. It was decided at the organizational meeting that the Group's initial activity should consist of a single special session to be part of the 1981 annual meeting of the AAG in Los Angeles. The Group agreed that this session should involve position papers on the Philosophy and Methodology of Cultural Ecology by three invited scholars and a commentary of each paper by invited discussants. The paper presenters are as follows:

Ben Wisner, University of Wisconsin, Cultural Ecology and the Challenge of Development.

C. Gregory Knight, Penn State University, Cultural Ecology and Ethnoecology: Who Counts?

Margaret FitzSimmons, U.C.L.A., Beyond Cultural Ecology: Materialist Analysis of Human/Environment Relations.

B.L. Turner II and Douglas L. Johnson (Clark University), and Michael J. Watts, (University of California-Berkeley) have agreed to serve as discussants.

1982 Activities. Planning the 1981 activity was not an easy task. The five month period from May to the October deadline for submitting papers proved to be the greatest problem. It was exacerbated by the tendency of cultural ecologists to leave the country during the summer. Planning for the 1982 meeting to be held in San Antonio will be much easier, and the meeting will be much better (in quantitative terms), if more people partake in the organizing. Specifically, it would be to the betterment of the Group if a number of sessions (eg. Cultural Ecology 1: . . . , Cultural Ecology 2: . . . , etc.) could be organized on a variety of cultural ecological topics. Hopefully, some of you will come forward and agree to organize sessions on the topic of your choosing. Remember, one of our goals (as discussed in the organizational meeting) is to improve the quality of the AAG annual meeting.

Procedures for organizing an activity are as follows:

1. The activity organizer shall submit a detailed written request to the Chairperson and forward a copy of the request to each of the Directors and the Secretary-Treasurer. A stamped postcard addressed to the Group Chairperson will be included with the copies sent to officers other than the Chairperson.
2. Each officer will either approve or disapprove the request and state accordingly on the postcard. Other comments and suggestions also may be stated on the card. Cards will be forwarded to the Chairperson.
3. The Chairperson will review each of the officer's comments and cast a personal vote of either approval or disapproval. A minimum of three favorable votes is required for the activity to receive Board sanction.
4. The Chairperson will notify the activity organizer of the Board's decision. Suggestions made by the Board members may be included.
5. The organizer shall submit a detailed report to the Group chairperson upon completion of the activity. This report will be forwarded to the Secretary-Treasurer and retained in the Group's files.

Please do not be turned-off by the details involved with this procedure. Working with a five-person Board scattered across the country is a logistical problem that can be best overcome by using a format such as that outlined above.

Group Constitution. A constitution has been drawn-up and tentatively approved by the current Board of Officers. Of course, final acceptance is contingent upon approval of the membership. To simplify matters, and cut down on mailing costs and paper work, it is proposed that all voting (eg. the election of officers, ratifying and amending the constitution) be conducted at the annual business meeting. Give this item, and the constitution as a whole, your greatest consideration.

#### SUGGESTED CONSTITUTION FOR THE CULTURAL ECOLOGY SPECIALTY GROUP

##### Article I     Name

The name of this association shall be the Cultural Ecology Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers (CESG/AAG).

##### Article II    Purpose

The purpose of this Group is (i) to promote research, education, and other scholarly activities pertaining to cultural ecology; (ii) to advance communication between cultural ecologists and the geographical community; (iii) to promote interdisciplinary communications and activities among all scholars interested in the ecological aspects of culture; and (iv) to work with the AAG annual meeting program committee in organizing activities related to cultural ecology.

##### Article III   Philosophy

The Group, because it is composed of people with a variety of cultural ecological interests, will promote activities on topics that range from prehistory to third world development and from environmental to economic problems. The application and development of general theory is encouraged, but will not preclude empirically-oriented activities or those of a pedagogical nature. Cultural Ecology is recognized as an interdisciplinary field that is broad in scope with Cultural Ecologists being a rather eclectic group. Accordingly, all types of activities concerned with the study of human-environment relations will be facilitated and endorsed by the Group.

##### Article IV    Membership

Any member of the Association of American Geographers may elect membership in Cultural Ecology Specialty Group upon joining the Association or renewing membership. The AAG central office will certify membership in the CESG each year after payment of AAG dues.

##### Article V     Board of Officers

The Board shall consist of a Chairperson, a Secretary-Treasurer, and three Directors, one each from the Western, the Central, and the Eastern States.

##### Article VI    Duties of the Officers

Chairperson. The Chairperson shall (1) preside at the annual business meeting of the Group; (2) provide liaison between the Group and the AAG and other organizations interested in cultural ecology; (3) make final decisions pertaining to Group activities and affairs in those cases where it is infeasible to acquire approval of the entire Board.

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Secretary-Treasurer. The Secretary-Treasurer shall (1) record the Minutes of the business meetings; (2) maintain files of Minutes, program and other materials of interest to the membership of the Group; (3) maintain and account for all monies belonging to the Group.

Directors. The Directors shall (1) meet as a part of the Board and act as a voting body in the management of Group affairs and activities; and, (2) aid the Chairperson and Secretary-Treasurer in the conduct of their offices as requested.

#### Article VII Terms of Office

Each member of the Board shall serve a term of two years. Tenure in office shall begin at the end of the business meeting at which they were elected, and shall terminate at the end of the next meeting at which elections are held. No member of the Board shall serve more than two consecutive terms of office.

#### Article VIII Nominations and Elections

Nominations will be made from the floor at the annual business meeting, with elections to be held at the same meeting. Members need not be present to be either nominated or elected. A member may submit a nomination by mail thirty (30) days prior to the meeting if attendance is not possible. Persons nominated for office must agree to serve if elected. Prior written agreement is required of those not present at the time of nomination.

#### Article IX Vacancies.

In the event that either the Chairperson, or the Secretary-Treasurer is unable to complete a term of office, the Board of Officers will choose one of its members to fill the vacancy until the next business meeting is held and a replacement is elected.

#### Article X Activities.

The exact nature of Group activities is intentionally not specified so that a variety of ideas can be entertained. Activities such as, but not limited to, symposia, workshops, field trips, research projects, and publications, may receive Group sanction. Any member may organize a Group activity. The organization of any activity under the auspices of the Group requires prior written approval by the Board of Officers, and submission of a detailed report to the Group Chairperson upon completion of the activity. Procedures for organizing Group activities will be determined by the Board of Officers. The Board will insure that at least one Group activity is included as part of the AAG annual meeting program each year.

#### Article XI Amendments

Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed by presentation of a written petition to the Group Chairperson at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual business meeting. A 2/3 vote of the members present at the business meeting is required to amend the Constitution.

This Constitution will become effective when approved by a 2/3 vote of members present at the 1981 annual business meeting.