

The 84th Annual Gathering of the Thoreau Society
Thoreau's Revolutions
 July 9-13, 2025

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

The Thoreau Society does not exclude anyone because of the inability to pay. Please contact rebecca@thoreausociety.org to request reduced rates.

REGISTRATION

AG Registration includes all in-person except where otherwise noted.

Virtual Registration (Zoom) includes only panels and roundtables at Trinity Episcopal Church.

VENUE

Most of the conference events take place in the Parish Hall at
Trinity Episcopal Church at 81 Elm St, Concord, MA 01742.

Learn more about the Parish History [here](#).

ACCOMMODATIONS

Given the high number of visitors expected in Concord next year, we suggest you book your accommodations early. Group blocks have been arranged at the following hotels:

Concord's Colonial Inn, 48 Monument Square, Concord, MA 01742 (1 mile to Trinity Episcopal Church)

Reservations: 800.370.9200. Mention the Thoreau Society when booking for reduced rates.

www.concordscolonialinn.com

Residence Inn by Marriott, 320 Baker Avenue Extension, Concord, MA 01742 (1.6 miles to Trinity

Episcopal) 978-341-0003 [Book your stay with this link for the group rate](#)

CONCORD 250

Concord250 commemorates the semiquincentennial, or 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, which began here in New England. Two hundred fifty years ago, the men and women of what is now Massachusetts secured their independence from Britain and created a new nation dedicated to the ideals of liberty, equality, natural and civil rights and responsible citizenship. Concord250 honors our first 250 years and inspires Americans to imagine our next 250. To mark this significant anniversary, residents, friends, and neighbors of Concord are invited to commemorate and celebrate this anniversary throughout the entire year. Check visitconcord.org/concord-250/ for up-to-date information on how to commemorate this anniversary during your time in Concord.

SHOP AT WALDEN POND

The Thoreau Society Shop at Walden Pond at 915 Walden Street is open year-round and operates within seasonal park hours. Thoreau Society members get a 10% discount in-person, over the phone at

978-287-5477 and online at: www.shopatwaldenpond.org/

QUESTIONS?

Reach out to rebecca@thoreausociety.org or 978-369-5321 with any questions or concerns.

PRE-CONFERENCE EVENT

Thoreau Prize Honoring Robert Macfarlane

Friday, June 7 at 7pm

TriCon Church, Concord

Learn more and register at: thoreausociety.org/events/macfarlane/

The 2025 Henry David Thoreau Prize for Literary Excellence in Nature Writing, known as the Thoreau Prize, will be awarded to Robert Macfarlane. The Thoreau Prize was established in 2010 by nature writer Dale Peterson. In 2020, the Thoreau Society began administering the award. The Thoreau Prize is a literary award granted annually to an accomplished writer in English who wishes to speak for nature and embodies the spirit of Thoreau as a gifted writer, insightful naturalist, and ethical thinker.



Robert Macfarlane is internationally renowned for his writing on nature, people, and place. His best-selling books include *Underland*, *Landmarks*, *The Old Ways*, *The Wild Places*, and *Mountains of the Mind*; they have been translated into more than thirty languages, won many prizes around the world and been widely adapted for film, music, theatre, radio, and dance. He has also written operas, plays, and films including *River and Mountain*, both narrated by Willem Dafoe. He has collaborated with artists including Olafur Eliasson and Stanley Donwood, and with the artist Jackie Morris he co-created the internationally best-selling books of nature-poetry and art, *The Lost Words* and *The Lost Spells*. In 2017, the American Academy of Arts and Letters awarded him the E. M. Forster Prize for Literature. Macfarlane lives in Cambridge, England, where he is a fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

CONFERENCE KICK-OFF

SATURDAY, JUNE 14

11:00 am - 12:30 pm (Eastern)

Panel: Rethinking Revolution

Zoom Only

Moderator: John Kucich

Carolina Maciel, *Untarnished Successions: Henry David Thoreau's Revolutionary stance towards human perpetuity*

Nikita Pokorvsky, *What it means to lose your motherland. A look at the Thoreau crisis from today's perspective*

Carol Graham, *Thoreau's Affinity for Nurturing Living Things*

FREE. Pre-registration required. [Register to attend on Zoom.](#)

CONFERENCE EXHIBITION



Thoreau's Revolutions

On view at Trinity Episcopal Church

July & August 2025

Spotlight Artist Talks: July 11

An exhibition featuring twenty contemporary artists inspired by Henry David Thoreau's radical vision of life, nature, and justice and presenting visual explorations of the conference theme.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9

10:00am - 12:00pm Volunteering at Gaining Ground

Thoreau Farm, 341 Virginia Rd.

(Free pre-registration required; limited to twelve participants.)

Join us for a two-hour volunteer stint at Gaining Ground, the organic, no-till farm right next to the Thoreau Birthplace. We will help with whatever tasks need attention on the farm this morning, under the guidance of professional farmers. Gaining Ground donates all the food it grows to fight food instability in the region.



Our mission is to provide free, sustainably grown, fresh organic produce to people experiencing food insecurity. We do this with the helping hands of a diverse community of volunteers who work and learn with us on our farm. Production has risen from 2,500 pounds at the start to 127,000 pounds in 2020, all of which is donated to over fifteen hunger relief organizations.

12:30 pm - 6:00 pm Registration

Trinity Episcopal Church (TEC), Entryway

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

(Pre-registration required for all except the Open Forum. Additional fees and space limits may apply.

Contact the Society office for reduced/waived fees.)

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm Open Forum: Future of Thoreau Society.

Thoreau Farm, 341 Virginia Road.

Free to attend. No pre-registration required. This conversation is one of many Open Forums to discuss the future of the Thoreau Society and a potential merger with Thoreau Farm. More information can be found here: thoreausociety.org/potential-merger/

[Additional conversations will take place before the Gathering via Zoom on [May 4 at 1pm](#) and [June 10 at 7pm](#) and at the Gathering during Saturday lunch and Sunday's picnic at Thoreau Farm. Please feel free to send feedback and ideas to: rebecca@thoreausociety.org.]

1:00 pm - 2:30 pm "A Concord Parade" with Tammy Rose. Meet outside the Colonial Inn.

\$5/person (Or, play a part and attend for free. Email rebecca@thoreausociety.org for information.)

It's a Parade Day in Concord, MA and everyone is invited! Join in this live reading and walk along the parade route with all your favorite spirits of Concordians past. The parade is part of a larger project inspired by and designed for the Concord 250th Anniversary of the Revolution AND the 350th Anniversary of the town's involvement in King Philip's War. Characters and events are based on documented sources. This program is an excerpt from the forthcoming book from Mercer University Press, *A Concord Parade; The Past is Present*.

Following the roughly 45-minute reading and short walk in Monument Square, will be a discussion of revolution past and present and how ideas of freedom, resistance, justice, and hope resonate across history.

1:00 pm - 2:30 pm "Conversations at Walden" with Pete Cormier. Trinity Episcopal Church (TEC)

\$5/person. Pre-registration required.

Conversations at Walden is a short play, written by Pete Cormier, founder of The Awareness Project, which seeks to promote mindfulness by drawing a parallel with Thoreau's time at Walden Pond. The

play follows Mia as she walks the trails around Walden Pond to clear her mind and reflect on the relationship with her boyfriend. Along the way, Mia is joined by two supportive spirit guides and pauses occasionally to quote and share excerpts from Thoreau's *Walden*. Their ensuing conversations, together with Thoreau's wisdom, help Mia envision a resolution to her situation, grounded in mindfulness as the trio arrives at Thoreau's cabin site.

The roughly 25-minute play will be followed by a talk-back between the audience, actors, and crew for a discussion of Thoreau, mindfulness, and walking Walden.

1:00 pm - 2:30 pm **Walking Thoreau's Surveys with Dennis Noson.** Meeting place TBD.

\$5/person. Pre-registration required.

Explore Henry David Thoreau's work as a surveyor and how his precise land surveys connected to his deep appreciation for nature. Join this guided walk to trace Thoreau's footsteps and gain insight into his unique blend of scientific observation and philosophical reflection.

PLENARY SESSIONS

3:45 pm - 4:00 pm	Conference Welcome and Announcements	TEC, Main Hall
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4:00 pm - 5:30 pm **FEATURED OPENING NIGHT SPEAKER** TEC, Main Hall

Peter Wirzbicki

Machines and Men: Technology, Slavery, and Disobedience in Thoreau's New England.



Thoreau frequently described those who collaborated with slavery—the Northerners who returned fugitive slaves or arrested abolitionists—as “tools” or “machines.” In other words, he used a critique of industrialization and technology to attack those who aided slavery. This talk will pull out to examine how Thoreau’s arguments about technology, slavery, and civil disobedience emerged from out of the context of the broader abolitionist movement.

 Peter Wirzbicki is an associate professor of history at Princeton University. He is the author of *Fighting for the Higher Law: Black and White Transcendentalism against Slavery*, which examined the relationship between Transcendentalism and radical abolitionism. It won the 2022 Best Book of the Year award from the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic. He is currently working on an intellectual history of Reconstruction, which aims to unpack some of the ideas about democracy, nationalism, sovereignty, and citizenship that animated the reconstruction of the Union after the Civil War.

5:30 pm - 6:00 pm **Discussion in Response to Wirzbicki talk** TEC, Main Hall

Moderator: John Kucich.

6:00pm - 6:30pm **Musical Interlude from Dr. Donna Coleman** TEC, Main Hall

"Thoreau" movement from Charles Ives's *Second Pianoforte Sonata* (Concord, Mass., 1840–60)

Dinner on Your Own. No Evening Events

THURSDAY, JULY 10

6:30 am - 8:30 am Walk in Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge Meet at Keyes Rd. Parking Lot
Peter Alden, Guide

Meet at the Municipal Parking Lot on Keyes Road for car-pooling.



About Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge:

National wildlife refuges offer us all a chance to unplug from the stresses of daily life and reconnect with our natural surroundings. Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge is roughly 85% composed of valuable freshwater wetlands, alongside the Sudbury and Concord Rivers. The Sudbury unit includes tranquil trails around wetlands and through woodlands and features a non-motorized boat launch on the Sudbury River. The Eastern MA Complex headquarters is located at this unit and you can purchase America the Beautiful Passes here. The Concord unit has excellent birding, and noted ornithologists consider this unit to be one of the best inland birding areas in the state. This site has a wildlife observational tower, observational platform and direct access to the Concord River. <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/great-meadows>

8:30 am - 6:00 pm Conference Registration TEC, Entryway

PLENARY SESSIONS

9:00 am - 9:15 am Conference Welcome, Reprise TEC, Main Hall

9:15 am - 10:30 am Panel: Thoreau's American Revolution TEC, Main Hall

Moderator: Michael Schleifer

Robert Gross, *Thoreau's Loyalist Inheritance*

Don Jewler, *A Tale of September 2, 1824, When Thoreau and General Lafayette Crossed Paths: What Sparked the Spirit of Independence in These Two Revolutionaries?*

Richard Higgins, *Thoreau's Inner Revolution*

Elizabeth Scofield, *Henry David Thoreau, Richard Henry Dana Jr., and Manifest Destiny as an aftereffect of the Revolution*

10:30 am - 10:45 am Break

10:45 am - 12:00 pm Panel: Inspiring Revolution TEC, Main Hall

Moderator: David Gordon

Frank Cronin, *Franklin and Slavery: A Man of his Time, a Man Ahead of his Time*

Geoff Wisner, *Country Mouse and City Mouse at War*

China Mullinax, *More Than a Shared Love of Nature: Thoreau's Counterculture Influence on Gary Snyder*

Gregor MacGregor, *Thoreau's Revolutionary Praxis*

12:00 pm - 1:30 pm OPEN LUNCH DISCUSSIONS TEC, Main Hall

(Boxed lunches from NOSH/Concord Market available for pre-order in registration form.)

Pick up your pre-ordered boxed lunch or bring your own lunch and join one of the discussion tables in the Main Hall. Topics TBD.

1:30 pm - 2:45 pm Panel: Revolutionary Sexualities

TEC, Main Hall

Moderator: John Kucich

Sponsored by The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE)

Brad Parker, *Thoreau's Sexuality Re-examined: From his "era of Revolution" to the Modern Era of the Reconstruction of Sexuality & Queer Theory*

Peter Coviello, *Fishers of Men: Perversity, Carnality, Thoreau*

Cristin Ellis, *Thoreau's Ecoerotics*

Rachael DeWitt, *Reading Thoreau Beyond the Gender Binary*



About ASLE:

The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) seeks to inspire and promote intellectual work in the environmental humanities and arts. Our vision is an inclusive community whose members are committed to environmental research, education, literature, art and service, environmental justice, and ecological sustainability.

ASLE was founded in 1992 by a group of scholars and writers interested in exploring the meanings of the natural environment and the complexities of human relationships with each other, and with the more-than-human world, and to deepening the impact of these explorations both within and beyond the classroom.

[\(https://www.asle.org/discover-asle/vision-history/\)](https://www.asle.org/discover-asle/vision-history/)

2:45 pm - 3:00 pm Break

3:00 pm - 4:30 pm Tour of William Munroe Special Collections at Concord Free Public Library

Free. Pre-registration required to be entered in the lottery for this tour; limited to 15 people.

The CFPL holds the largest and most important collection of primary Thoreau material in New England, and the major archive of materials documenting Concord as Thoreau knew it. The Library's Special Collections include Thoreau's "Walking" in manuscript, close to 200 manuscript land and property surveys by Thoreau, his volume of surveying field notes, and a series of more than 350 letters from early Thoreau scholar Samuel Arthur Jones to Alfred Winslow Hosmer of Concord. The Special Collections are strong in newspaper clippings, periodical articles, reprints and research papers—primarily items of a biographical or critical nature.



If you are not selected for this group tour, Special Collections is happy to welcome folks at another time. Please contact Anke Voss (avoss@minlib.net) to arrange a visit any time during your visit to Concord. There are inexhaustible treasures to explore in Special Collections.

3pm - 4:30pm CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Panel: Landscape Revolutions

Chapel

Moderator: Cristin Ellis

Kathleen Kelly, *Thoreau & the Material Landscapes of War*
Brent Ranalli, *Henry Thoreau, Thomas Paine, and Maldistribution of Land and Wealth*
Bill Youngs, *Thoreau at Mount Katahdin: A Personal Revolution in Understanding Wilderness*
Richard Piccarreto, *"It lives too fast." Henry Thoreau and the Revolution of the Railroad*

Roundtables

Main Hall

Moderator: Catherine Staples

Living the Revolution

Beverly Pittman, *You Say You Want a Revolution? The Revolution WILL Be Televised, and the Revolution Will Be Live!*
Stephen Hahn, *Making Thoreau Safe for Democracy: The U.S. Information Service Presents the Case*
Ken Lizotte, *The 13+ Careers of Henry Thoreau*

Revolutionary Media

Eric Lehman, *Walden: A Game and the Paradox of the Digital Revolution*
Jym St. Pierre, *Thoreau: Revolutionary Art Muse*
Jeffrey Ryan, *Building Thoreau's Cabin*

4:30 pm - 4:45 pm Break

4:45 pm - 6:00 pm CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Panel: Astronomical & Geological Revolution

Chapel

Moderator: Rich Higgins

Eric Miller, *Thoreau, Revolution, & Lincoln Connected through Space*
Lynn Wardley, *Thoreau's Evolution(s): Walden's Pre-Darwinian Biology*
Matt Schumacher, *The Thoreauvian Sun: Muse, Mythos, and Revolutionary Prime Mover*
Robert Thorson, *"The Most Sudden and Greatest Revolution"*

Roundtables

Main Hall

Moderator: Dennis Noson

Resistance

Karla Hailer, *Just One Victory: How Thoreau's Quiet Revolution Changed the World*
Hans Bakker, *Civil Disobedience versus Revolution: Thoreau's Personal Actions*
Catherine Magi, *Fire-Eaters, Puritans, & John Brown: Thoreau's Revolutionary Wordplay on the Eve of Civil War*
Jack Truman, *Thoreau's Role in Later Revolutions*

Land and Property

Jeffrey Boutwell, *Thoreau, the Propagation of Seeds, and Slavery*
Gary Ricketts, *Revolutionizing the American Romantic Hero: Thoreau's "Bean-field" as an Exemplum Virtutis*
Steven Phillips, *The Producer in the Garden and the Anarchist in the Beanfield*

6:00 pm - 6:30 pm Conference Social (No-host)

Colonial Inn, Heritage Room

6:30 pm - 8:00 pm Conference Dinner (Pre-registration required.)

Colonial Inn, Heritage Room

You are welcome to continue the evening's festivities at the Forge Tavern at the Colonial Inn after dinner.

FRIDAY, JULY 11

6:30 am - 8:30 am Walking Tour of Walden Woods with *Peter Alden* Meet at Keyes Rd. Parking Lot
Explore Fairhaven Bay to the far side of Walden Pond State Reservation. Meet at Keyes Road for car-pooling.

8:30 am - 11:00 am Registration TEC, Entryway

EXCURSIONS IN THOREAU COUNTRY

By popular demand, we are providing time to explore places and ideas.

8:30 am - 11:00 am Canoe the Concord River Meet at the South Bridge Boathouse
~~\$25/person. Pre-registration required. Limited to 20 people.~~ **SOLD OUT**

A favorite for many Thoreauvians and a great way to explore the Concord River. Launching from South Bridge Boathouse, close to Trinity Episcopal Church, it takes about 45 minutes to reach the North Bridge, where the “shot heard round the world” was fired, April 19, 1775.

9:30 am - 11:00 am Visit to the Collections with Jeffrey S. Cramer. Walden Woods Project Library
FREE. Pre-registration required. Limited to 20 people.

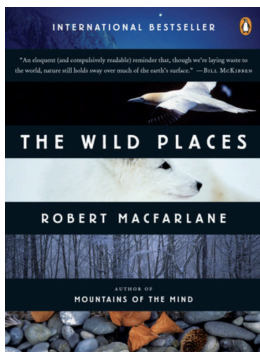
The Walden Woods Project Library serves as a center for research and education focused on Henry David Thoreau, his literary achievements and philosophy, as well as his contemporaries, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Amos Bronson Alcott. The Library maintains the research collection of The Thoreau Society and our organizational archives.



The Walden Woods Project Library holds more than 60,000 items that include books, manuscripts, periodicals, art, music, maps, pamphlets, correspondence, and personal histories about the lives and writings of the Transcendentalists. In particular, it provides the most comprehensive body of Thoreau-related material available in one place.

<https://www.walden.org/what-we-do/library/>

9:30am - 10:30am “Thoreau Society Reads” Robert Macfarlane’s *The Wild Places* Thoreau Farm
Free. Pre-registration required. Limited to 15 people. Moderator: Rochelle Johnson
Join in our first-ever “Thoreau Society Reads” event, a discussion of 2025 Thoreau Prize Winner Robert MacFarlane’s book *The Wild Places*. Bring your copy to Thoreau Farmhouse for this book group experience.



Are there any genuinely wild places left in Britain and Ireland? That is the question that Robert Macfarlane poses to himself as he embarks on a series of breathtaking journeys through some of the archipelago’s most remarkable landscapes. He climbs, walks, and swims by day and spends his nights sleeping on cliff-tops and in ancient meadows and wildwoods. With elegance and passion he entwines history, memory, and landscape in a bewitching evocation of wildness and its vital importance.

The Wild Places is available for purchase through the [Shop at Walden Pond online](#) or in person when Robert Macfarlane receives the Thoreau Prize on June 7 in Concord. More details [here](#).

Please note that the Political Revolutions of Brister's Hill excursion has been canceled

9:30 am - 10:30 am "Thoreau's Revolutions" Exhibition Spotlight Artist Talks TEC, Main Hall

Free. Pre-registration is encouraged but not required.

Learn from some of the artists on view in the Annual Gathering exhibition, "Thoreau's Revolutions," presented at Trinity Episcopal Church (TEC). Artworks explore themes of revolution, change, and transformation, inspired by Thoreau's life, writings, and philosophy. Featured Artists: Jill Goldman-Callahan, Michael Mazenko, Suzanne Revy, Kara Snyder.



The Thoreau Society is grateful to the Art Committee of Trinity Episcopal Church for their collaboration on this exhibition and for providing the space for these artworks to be shown during the conference. Selections were made by a committee of Thoreau Society members and Jennifer Tafe, Director of Mass Audubon's Museum of American Bird Art. The exhibition of twenty works exploring "Thoreau's Revolutions" will be on view from July 1 to August 31.



11 am - 12:30 pm Picnic & Reading of Thoreau's 1849 Essay "Civil Disobedience" Robbins House

Free and open to all (no pre-registration required for reading.) Pick up your pre-ordered boxed lunch (available for conference registrants until online registration closes) or bring your own picnic lunch to Robbins House lawn for public reading of one of Thoreau's most famous essays.



The Robbins House is a Concord-based nonprofit organization focused on raising awareness of Concord's African, African American, and antislavery history from the 17th through the 19th centuries. Our mission is to reveal the little known African American history of Concord and its regional and national importance. Our vision is to inspire conversation, expand understanding and contribute to a better society. <https://robbinshouse.org/>

At the end of this program Elise Lemire will be presented the Walter Harding Distinguished Achievement Award, in recognition of significant scholarly achievement or other exceptional accomplishment that furthers the mission of the Thoreau Society.

1:00 pm - 4:30 pm Registration

TEC, Entryway

1:15 pm - 2:30 pm CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Panel: Revolutionary Rhetoric

Chapel

Moderator: Don Jewler

Michael Stoneham, *Using a Spike Maul to Inspire
Revolution: Contemplating a few Strident
Provocations in Walden*

Henrik Otterberg, *The Contrarian: Antithesis and
Antithesis in Thoreau's Style*

Marc Jolley, *Walden as a Declaration of
Independence*

Catherine Staples, *Internal & External
Revolutions: A Poetry Reading*

2:30 pm - 2:45 pm Break

2:45 pm - 4:00 pm CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Panel: Global Revolutions

Chapel

Moderator: Michael Schleifer

Sandra Haupt, *Thoreau and Indian Independence*

Albena Bakratcheva, *Thoreau's "Peaceable
Revolution" and the Eastern European "Velvet
Revolutions" of the Late Twentieth Century*

Alireza Taghderrah, *Thankful in Gulag, Critical
at Walden Pond*

Panel: Margaret Fuller, Women of the Nineteenth Century, & Revolution

Moderator: Phyllis Cole

Sponsored by the Margaret Fuller Society.

Alice de Galzain, *Revolutionary Women: Harriot
Kezia Hunt and Caroline Healey Dall on
Self-Culture and Women's Health*

Marlas Whitley, *The "Naturalists" and
"Meadowish" (pt.2): Intersectional Transcendence*

Lynn Hyde, *The Sisters of West Street: Nexus of
Boston Reform*

4:00 pm - 4:15 pm Break

Roundtables

Main Hall

Moderator: Beverly Pittman

Revolutionizing Community

Richard Smith, *Every Humane And Intelligent
Inhabitant of Concord; Thoreau's Two Revolutions.*

Alissa O'Brien, *Fronting Essential Facts, is in Fact,
Essential!*

Sarah Gothe, *Thoreau's Childfree Life as Revolution*

Amity Wilczek, *"Where the washing is not put out,
nor the fire, nor the mistress": Thoreau's Dreams
and Experiences of Domesticity*

Revolution & Education

Donna Marie Pryzbojewski, *How Thoreau
Revolutionized Education at St. Benedict Catholic
School*

Amelia Lafont, *Revolutionary Transcendentalist
Schools for America: Let's Simplify Our Practices
and Elevate Our Purposes*

Jared D. Kass, *Taming the Machine in the Garden:
Roots of Humanistic Approaches in Education
and Psychology—as Articulated by Leo Marx
and Carl Rogers—in Thoreau's Investigations of
Nature, Society, and Self.*

Roundtables

Main Hall

Moderator: Rich Higgins

Revolutionary Environmentalism

Robin Bonner, *Henry David Thoreau as
Revolutionary Torch Bearer for the Humans as
Nature Movement*

Richard Harris, *The Environmental Ethos of Abbey's
Aravaipa Canyon Allusion to Thoreau*

Scott Holland, *Thoreau's Theopoetics as Ecopoetics:
A Revolutionary Rhetoric of Worldly Holiness*

Eco-spiritual Revolutions

Suzanne Smith, *Thoreau & The Rhythm of Moral
Revolution*

Michael Berger, *Thoreau's Earth Through A Sufi
Prism*

Ryan Smedberg, *Mind and Soul in the Delaware
River Valley: A Reading of Thoreau*

4:15 pm - 5:00 pm Roundtable: Spiritual Revolutions

Main Hall

Ted David, *Marcus Aurelius and Henry David Thoreau; revolutionary thoughts, 2000 years old*

Richard Cunningham, *Thoreau's Revolutionary Approach to "Idiot's Glee"*

David Gordon, *A Walking Revolution: Thoreau's Mountain Excursion*

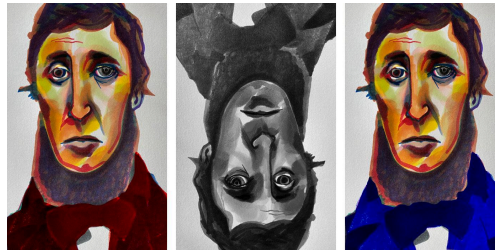
5:00 pm - 5:15 pm Break

5:15 pm - 6:00 pm SNEAK PREVIEW of Thoreau Documentary

Main Hall

Henry David Thoreau

Ken Burns Presents — A film by Erik Ewers and Christopher Loren Ewers



Join us for a teaser reel from the forthcoming documentary, followed by a moderated discussion with the directors Erik Ewers and Christopher Loren Ewers.

In this modern take on the historical documentary, the mythical Thoreau – the hermit of Walden Pond, the imitator of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the nag, the saint – will give way to the human Thoreau: social; genial; an exacting scientist and charismatic speaker; an individual with flaws, self-contradictions, and misjudgments that prove his humanity and hold a mirror to our own.

Executive produced by Ken Burns and Don Henley, directed by Erik Ewers and Christopher Loren Ewers, produced by Julie Coffman, Susan Shumaker, and Cauley Powell, and written by David Blistein, Henry David Thoreau has an anticipated PBS broadcast date of 2026. (3 hours).

Dinner on Your Own. No Evening Events

SATURDAY, JULY 12

*All Saturday events take place in the Main Hall at Trinity Episcopal Church unless otherwise noted.
All Saturday events are free and open to the public.*

7am - 8:30am Memorial Walk at Walden Pond with Corinne Smith

Walden Pond

Meet at the Thoreau Cabin replica at Walden Pond State Reservation, 915 Walden Street

Begun in 1996 as a tribute to both Henry Thoreau and Walter Harding, this silent early morning saunter along the pond's shoreline offers a chance for individual contemplation. Witness the special atmosphere that the hour brings as we practice Pradakshina, an Eastern routine of honoring our mentors. We'll meet at the Thoreau house replica next to the Walden Pond parking lot.

8:30 am - 4pm Registration

9am - 10:15 am

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Please plan to attend this annual business meeting, during which we discuss current and future initiatives, hear from partner organizations, hear election & ballot results, and honor individuals with awards.

At the end of the meeting, Jacqui Kluft will be presented the Thoreau Society Distinguished Service Award, in recognition of substantial dedication to the Thoreau Society and its mission. Jeffrey S. Cramer and Bill McKibben will be presented the Thoreau Society Medal, the Thoreau Society's highest honor, in recognition of sustained, essential contributions to the legacy and vitality of Thoreauvian studies and ideals through extraordinary scholarship or service.

[Other awards will be presented at other points in the program.]

10:15 am - 10:30 am Break

10:30 am - 11:30 am DANA S. BRIGHAM MEMORIAL KEYNOTE LECTURE



Camille T. Dungy

“Against Solitude: Rethinking Thoreau”

Camille T. Dungy is the author of *Soil: The Story of a Black Mother's Garden*. *Soil* was named book of the month by Hudsons Booksellers, received the 2024 Award of Excellence in Garden and Nature Writing from The Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries, and was on the short list for the PEN/Jean Stein Award. Dungy has also written four collections of poetry, including *Trophic Cascade*, winner of the Colorado Book Award, and the essay collection *Guidebook to Relative Strangers: Journeys into Race, Motherhood, and History*, a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. She edited *Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry*, the first anthology to bring African American environmental poetry to national attention. She also co-edited the *From the Fishhouse* poetry anthology and served as assistant editor for *Gathering*

Ground: Celebrating Cave Canem's First Decade. Her work has appeared in *Best American Poetry*, *100 Best African American Poems*, *Best American Essays*, *The 1619 Project*, *All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis*, over 40 other anthologies, plus dozens of venues including *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, *Literary Hub*,

The Paris Review, and Poets.org. You may know her as the host of *Immaterial*, a podcast from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Magnificent Noise. A University Distinguished Professor at Colorado State University, Dungy's honors include the Academy of American Poets Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, an American Book Award, an Honorary Doctorate from SUNY ESF, and fellowships from the NEA in both prose and poetry.

11:30 am - 12:00 pm Discussion in Response to Dungy Keynote (Moderator TBD)

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm STEWARDSHIP LUNCH DISCUSSIONS

(Boxed lunches from NOSH/Concord Market available for pre-order in registration form.)

Pick up your pre-ordered boxed lunch or bring your own lunch and join one of the discussion tables in the Main Hall. Topics TBD.

1:00 pm - 2:15 pm Panel: Anti-Slavery & Resistance

Moderator: Beverly Pittman

Lewis Hyde, *Resistance or Disobedience? -- on the Massachusetts Personal Liberty Act of 1855*

François Specq, *Thoreau's Historical Consciousness and the Work of Active Citizenship*

Lois Brown, *White Hot Rage: Thoreau, John Brown and Revelatory Resistance*

Jake McGinnis, *Excursions in the Anthropocene: Henry David Thoreau, Greta Thunberg, and the Revolutionary Potential of Travel Writing*

2:15 pm - 2:30 pm Break

2:30 pm - 4:00 pm Panel: Common Lands & Indigenous Landscapes Moderator: Robert Thorson

Yafang Luo, *(Re)inventing a Language of Wilderness: Thoreau's Writing as/for the Natives in The Maine Woods*

Mark Sturges, *A Road Not Taken: Thoreau's Harvard Classmate Horatio Hale and the Anthropological Revolution*

John Kucich, *Thoreau and the Revolutionary Indigenous Landscape*

John Hanson Mitchell, *Robin Hood and Henry Thoreau Take a Walk in the Wood: The historic struggle to preserve common lands*

4:00 pm - 6:30 pm HAPPY HOUR BOOK SALE AND CELEBRATION

4:00pm Happy Hour Begins in the Courtyard

Enjoy hors d'oeuvres from NOSH/Concord Market and a cash bar while socializing and reflecting on the day's presentations.

4:45pm Book Sale Opens in the Main Hall

Members and friends sell and sign their books while socializing and circulating. This is a great way to meet fellow conference attendees and catch up on recent titles relevant to Thoreau studies.

6:30pm Musical Gathering Commences in the Courtyard

Bring your guitars, ukuleles, and penny whistles! Banjos, harmonicas, voices!

SUNDAY, JULY 13

6:30 am - 8:30 am Interpretive Walk of Heywood's Meadow & Emerson's Cliff

Richard Smith and Amity Wilczek, Guides

Meet at the Parking Lot by the Shop at Walden Pond.

Join us on this early morning interpretive walk as we explore Heywood's Meadow and Emerson's Cliff with historian Richard Smith and biologist Amity Wilczek. On the walk we will discuss the history of Walden Woods, what it was like when Thoreau was there, and how it's changed. We'll explore the plants and animals that Thoreau would and would not be familiar with, including invasives. Meet at the Parking Lot by the Shop at Walden Pond.

8:30 am - 9:45 am Panel: Emersonian Revolutions Today Orchard House

Moderator: Austin Bailey

Sponsored by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society

Shan Gao, *Emerson's Aesthetic Revolution*

Atsuko Oda, *Erasmus Darwin's Vestiges in Emerson's "Compensation"*

Ross Martin, *On Emerson's Revolutionary Ecstasies: Hematological Exuberance and Anti-Slavery Thinking*

Scott Ennis, *Emerson and AI*



The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, Inc. is dedicated to fostering scholarship on and appreciation of the life and writings of one of America's greatest authors. The Society, which has about 200 members in eleven countries, publishes the biannual [Emerson Society Papers \(ESP\)](#), featuring original scholarly articles, current book reviews, notes and queries, an annual Emerson bibliography, abstracts of conference papers, reflections on "My Emerson," and announcements of interest to Emersonians.

10:00 am - 11:00 am CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Coffee & Donuts for Educators at Thoreau Farm

Gather with friends and colleagues to learn more about teaching training and other opportunities with the Walden Woods Project.

Join us for community and conversation.

Sermon: Living Deliberately First Parish Church

Rev. Dr. Jim Sherblom, Preacher

Presented by the Transcendentalism Council of First Parish in Concord

Thoreau's attempt to simplify his life and to live deliberately builds upon what he knew of indigenous ways of being at Musketaquid, Rve. Dr. Jim Sherblom, a twenty-first century transcendentalist, will explore what we now know about indigenous ways of being and knowing in what became Concord.. This service is sponsored by the First Parish Transcendentalism Council and encourages any participants at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering to attend.

First Parish, a Unitarian Universalist congregation, welcomes AG attendees each year.

PLENARY SESSIONS

11:00am - 12:00pm **Panel: The Alcotts: A Revolutionary Family**

Thoreau Farm

Moderator: Krissie West

Sponsored by the Alcott Society.

Kate Culkin, *"The Revolutionary Spirit of '75 Blazed up in the Bosoms of these Long-Suffering Women": Louisa May Alcott and Ellen Tucker Emerson on the Centennial of the Battle of Concord and the Suffrage Movement*

Roberta Pardi-Oláh, *Bronson Alcott's Pedagogy and its Representation in Louisa May Alcott's "Little Men"*

Barbara Mossberg, *"Tell Them About Hope:" A Teacher's Account of Revolutionary Learning Inspired by Thoreau and the Alcotts*

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm **Thoreau Farm Picnic (BYO)**

Thoreau Farm

Bring your lunch and enjoy conversation among conference attendees while exploring the grounds of Thoreau Farm, Gaining Ground, and the home of the Thoreau Society.

At the picnic, Rebecca Kneale Gould will be presented the Thoreau Society Distinguished Service Award, in recognition of substantial dedication to the Thoreau Society and its mission, and Ron Hoag will be presented the Walter Harding Distinguished Achievement Award, in recognition of significant scholarly achievement that furthers the mission of the Thoreau Society.

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm **Open Forum: Future of Thoreau Society**

Thoreau Farm

Free to attend. No pre-registration required. This conversation is one of many Open Forums to discuss the future of the Thoreau Society and a potential merger with Thoreau Farm. More information can be found here: thoreausociety.org/potential-merger/

[Additional conversations will take place before the Gathering via zoom on [May 4 at 1pm](#) and on [June 10 at 7pm](#) and as part of the Gathering on Wednesday before the opening sessions and Saturday during lunch. Please feel free also to always send your comments and questions to Rebecca at rebecca@thoreausociety.org.]

2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

School of Philosophy at Orchard House

Sponsored by Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House

Krissie West

"Our Fatal Shadows": The Transcendental Child in the works of Bronson Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau

While Darwin and the Romantics are often credited with reshaping ideas of childhood, the Transcendentalists' contributions remain underexplored. This paper examines how Bronson Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau engaged with childhood in their writings and educational practices. Through texts like Alcott's various "Observations," Emerson's Threnody, and recollections of Thoreau, it considers what a "Transcendentalist childhood" might be and evaluates the movement's impact on 19th-century American and Western conceptions of childhood.

End of Conference Events



The Thoreau Society received a Mass Humanities Staffing Recovery Grant (2023-25) in support of our Membership and Program Coordinator. Funding from Mass Humanities has been provided through the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

POST-CONFERENCE EVENTS



Mount Greylock State Reservation **INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM**

PO Box 138, 30 Rockwell Road, Lanesborough, MA 01237
413-499-4262

Thoreau Hike **On The Bellows Pipe Trail** **Saturday, July 19th, 10:00am start time**

Join us for a one-way 5.5-mile, or round-trip 11-mile, hike along the historic 1844 route of American naturalist and writer Henry David Thoreau's ascent to the summit of Mt. Greylock. This hike with a Park Interpreter features selected readings and visits to actual sites from Henry's account; a prelude to Thoreau's experience at Walden Pond.

FREE and recommended for ages 12 and older. Children under age 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

Pre-registration is requested.

Dress for the weather; wear sturdy shoes, bring water, lunch, bug spray, sunscreen and trekking poles.

Meet at Notch Road Gate parking lot, near intersections of Reservoir and Notch Road, off Route 2 in North Adams.



Carpooling for a one-way hike? Meet at starting location at 9:00am.

For more information, registration or directions call (413) 499-4262.

Special Event!

Department of Conservation and Recreation, Massachusetts State Parks

Thoreau-Wabanaki Trail Festival
July 23-28, 2025
Greenville, ME
www.thoreauwabanaki.org



The annual Thoreau-Wabanaki Trail Festival commemorates the ways the Wabanaki people and naturalist philosopher Henry David Thoreau's three trips into the Maine Woods, two of which were launched with Penobscot guides here on Moosehead Lake.

The 19th Annual Thoreau-Wabanaki Trail Festival opens with a Birch Bark Canoe Exhibition and Flotilla on Moosehead Lake. Friday closes the Greenville portion of the celebration with a naturalist walk with Dr. Amity Wilczek, a presentation on Thoreau's life by historian Richard Smith, and a discussion about Thoreau's relationship with Native Americans by Dr. John Kucich and Dr. Darren Ranco.

The last three days of programs, July 26-28, are spent with Penobscot Nation guides and cultural keepers, in an exploration of traditional "Penobscot Ways in the Woods & Waters," a cultural immersion canoe-camping trip. *Advance registration is required for this Penobscot trip.*

SCHEDULE

For details about the Thoreau-Wabanaki Festival schedule, [visit www.thoreauwabanaki.org](http://www.thoreauwabanaki.org), email: info@thoreauwabanaki.org, or contact 207-534-7715.

CANOE TRIP

Penobscot Ways in the Woods & Waters, Saturday – Monday, July 26-28, 2025

Like Thoreau, participants learn under the wing of Penobscot guides about Wabanaki ways and the Penobscot life connection to Maine woods and waters. Trip features easy canoe/camping. Days feature guided activities, and may include learning plant identification & traditional medicinal uses; history, archeology, flintknapping, Native ways of being in the natural world, the importance of the ash tree to Wabanaki culture, and sweetgrass weaving; visit to a wigwam, exploratory walks. Cultural immersion includes traditional drumming & singing demonstrations; campfire circle talk; learning about birch bark canoes. Monday after breakfast, paddlers move downstream to Indian Island, load out, have lunch, and gather into a closing circle before saying goodbyes.

Advance registration is required. For details email: info@thoreauwabanaki.org.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are planning to come to Moosehead Lake, advanced reservations are *highly recommended*.

There are (2) campsites at Lily Bay State Park. Each site holds up to 6 people. TWF has booked these two sites.

Anyone interested should call 207-534-7715 or email: info@thoreauwabanaki.org to book them.

Cost is \$30 per campsite, check payable to Thoreau-Wabanaki Trail Festival. These are first come, first served.