

## **Food Working Group Speaker Series Session #1 – Fall 2014**

September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 @3:00pm

**Speaker:** Marianne Krasny, Director of the Civic Ecology Lab, Dept of Natural Resources, Cornell

**Topic:** "Reclaiming broken places: Community gardening, civic ecology, and subnatures"

Boundary object: subnature as Boundary Object

-how do we talk about things that are gross and goey?

Googling subnature you find: landfill, vacant lot, trash/plastic

Definition of Boundary object: [see slide]

"Trading zones" – an interdisciplinary partnership in which two or more perspectives are combined and a new, shared language develops

A lot of current problems are highly complex (global climate change, food security), require trans-disciplinary approaches to solve them

1<sup>st</sup> photo: Empty lot in Chicago as a broken place that has lost a purpose and lives in an impoverished community

2<sup>nd</sup> photo: Detroit photo w abandoned lots. See footprints of houses that came before.

We often think of community gardens as growing food, comes w the term "civic agriculture". This was supposed to be an alternative to industrial farming in the 90s.

August 7<sup>th</sup> has even marked this occasion with issuing a farmers market stamp in Aug 2014.

Picture w watercolor: Suetto (or "Somoho"), South Africa; dangerous site previously, has been reclaimed by community garden w plants but also some art statements

"Defiant gardens" – people gardening in unspeakable conditions (symbol of hope, also for food)

And community gardening as grounds for "reconciliation"

\*Marianne will be teaching a large online course in Spring 2015 that anyone can take

"Nature Cleaners" – Pakistani civic-sponsored group that cleans the medians of streets and puts in vegetation to clean up the area. Got some traction on Facebook – had 400 events in a short amount of time.

Other examples: helping plant new oysters to filter river, cutting down invasive species

### **Group Q & A/ Discussion:**

Q: Saskia Cornes, Duke Farm: Do gardens/food spaces inherently play a role in binding people together somehow?

Marianne: Several studies have shown that people feel safer in green spaces, it greets more positive interactions

Christine (Duke Diet and Fitness): what else do you do at the Civic Ecology Center at Cornell?

Marianne: Looking at: "How is greening part of a response to disaster resilience?" How to reintegrate vets? Marianne runs EPA's environmental education capacity building program – focuses a lot on urban areas. Does some work on prison re-entry : communities don't know how to reintegrate them. Also working w a senior center, trying to revitalize a park across the street from this center.

(Heather) Fuqua Student Q: how do you integrate kids and env. Education in the beginning stages of a project when it requires heavy lifting (and it's not very beautiful yet)

Marianne: one of her partners said that the goal of a community garden is to be temp. they know that eventually it will get built upon. They then move the beds elsewhere.

Saskia (Duke Farm): having kid-sized tools helpful. Speaks to 'collective efficacy' – the kids may not be as effective, but the site will serve a more effective purpose

(Eric)Fuqua Student Q: how do civic projects come about? Who starts them?

Marianne: variety of reasons, but often bc people are really sick of something

Q: are there obstacles to getting ownership of the land to work?

Marianne: often private owners who want to develop but haven't yet, but are happy to have some beautification on the plot temporarily. But in Lower Manhattan in NYC, the community gardens are now more middle class "nice" spaces. The gardens have repurposed themselves as gentrification has occurred (but it is reciprocal, the gardens makes the space nicer, higher-income folks move in)

(Eric) Fuqua Student: How do you find grant information or resource info on how to get one started?

Marianne: Kellogg....or there are people that are good resources to ask about these things

Faith-based orgs emerging as major supporters of community gardening for hunger relief