EVENT TITLE: Defining Environmental Fiction: Writers and Editors Discuss  
EVENT CATEGORY: Fiction Craft and Criticism

**Event Description:** Many have a narrow view of environmental fiction; they imagine lyrical encounters with nature or speculative, apocalyptic tales. However, this genre can and should be a capacious, varied genre where writers and readers reimagine place, reflect on our climate crisis, and imagine possibilities for sustainable living. In this panel, editors and writers discuss their definitions of this genre, how all fiction might be environmental, and craft strategies for engaging with the more-than-human world.

**Event Organizer & Moderator:**  
**Michelle Donahue** is an assistant professor at UNC Wilmington, where she teaches publishing and is associate editor of *Ecotone*. She has also been a prose editor at *Quarterly West* and the *Adroit Journal*, and was managing editor of *Flyway: Journal of Writing & Environment*. She holds a PhD in creative writing from the University of Utah.  
Contact: donahueml@uncw.edu

**Event Participants:**  
**Megan Giddings:** is an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota. Her first novel, *Lakewood*, was a finalist for two NAACP Image Awards and an LA Times Book Prize. Her second novel, *The Women Could Fly*, was a New York Times’ Editors Choice and feature on Late Night with Seth Meyers.

**Allegra Hyde** is the author of the novel *ELEUTHERIA* and the story collections *OF THIS NEW WORLD* and *THE LAST CATASTROPHE*. She currently teaches at Oberlin College.

**Michael Mejia** is the author of the novels *TOKYO* and *Forgetfulness*. A recipient of grants from the NEA and the Ludwig Vogelstein Foundation, he is editor-in-chief of *Western Humanities Review*, a co-founding editor of Ninebark Press, and he teaches creative writing at the University of Utah.

**Erin Swan** is the author of *WALK THE VANISHED EARTH*, a work of speculative fiction focusing on intergenerational trauma and environmental upheaval. A graduate of Teachers College at Columbia University and the MFA program at the New School, she teaches English at a public high school in Manhattan.

**Brief overview of how the panel will work:** We wish to generate more of an organic conversation among panelists and audience members than a static presentation. The panel will begin with a brief overview of environmental fiction, followed by a few
moderator-lead questions, to which all or some panelists can respond. We hope these questions will generate more inquiries from the panelists and the audience, so this outline leaves room for this organic discussion.

**Moderator Questions:**

1.) To begin, how do you personally define or understand the genre of environmental fiction? Do you think being “environmental” is different from being place-based?

2.) How do you understand your own writing as environmental and would you consider all of your writing to be environmental?

3.) What are some of your favorite pieces of environmental fiction published by other writers? What literary magazines and presses do you think are publishing the best environmental fiction?

4.) When writing environmental fiction, are there any specific approaches or craft strategies you find particularly useful?

5.) Having read work by all the writers here, I’d say all the panelists have written environmental fiction that is either slightly or very experimental in some way. How did deviating from traditional forms or otherwise disrupting the conventions of fiction help you tackle these projects?

6.) For the editors in the room, I was wondering if you could briefly talk about how you evaluate, acquire, and/or edit environmental fiction. Are there any additional considerations you take when assessing and working on works in this genre?