Wyman Visiting Professor in History Presents Inaugural Event at UW-River Falls

Feb. 16, 2015--An internationally renowned scholar of environmental history, Professor Donald Worster, Hall Distinguished Professor of American History Emeritus at the University of Kansas, will visit the University of Wisconsin-River Falls March 4-6 to present two public lectures as part of the inaugural Wyman Visiting Professorship in History event.

On Wednesday, March 4, Worster will present, "Wilderness: The Higher Altruism in American Environmental Values," at 4 p.m. in the Kinnickinnic River Theater in the University Center at UW-River Falls. A public reception begins at 3 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

Worster's talk will offer reflections on the significance of the 1964 Wilderness Act and of nature conservation in general in the U.S. and the rest of the world. Once a consensus in American culture, nature reservation recently seems to have been shattered by increasing ideological and moral differences. Worster will examine that early consensus, explain how and why it broke down, and suggest that this commitment to saving wildness in the landscape is not likely to disappear. His talk will suggest that an older pragmatism toward moral values needs to be renewed in order to overcome our present impasse.

On Friday, March 6, Worster will present "Shrinking the Earth: From an Age of Abundance to an Age of Limits" at the River Falls Public Library, 140 Union St., River Falls, from 7-8:30 p.m. with a public reception at 6 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

This lecture will show, through maps and photographs, how dramatically our perspective on the earth has changed over the past 500 years, and how our humankind as a species on the planet has also changed dramatically. For many centuries, beginning in the West and now sweeping over the whole globe, the common view has been that we live on a planet of abundance that we must conquer and make use of it. Now, all nations are facing natural limits of resources and ecology. The old and vanishing era has left us with many important institutions and ideas to be questioned and ultimately revised or replaced.

In addition to the two public lectures, Worster will meet with students in History 360: U.S. Environmental History and in History 216: U.S. History Since 1865 on March 5.
In 2012, Dr. Bry Wyman, son of the late UW-River Falls history Professor Walker D. Wyman, made the first living million-dollar donation to the university to establish the Walker D. and Helen Bryant Wyman Endowed Visiting Professorship in History and Art.

To learn more about this inaugural Wyman Visiting Professor in History event and the Wyman legacy on campus, visit http://www.uwrf.edu/HIST/About/FacultyStaff/EmeritiWalkerWyman.cfm

For more information, call the UWRF History and Philosophy Department at 715-425-3164.