

# CLJ Special Issue Proposal

Special Issue: Reconceptualizing Sustainability Literacies

*Action on behalf of life transforms...as we work to heal the earth, the earth heals us.*

Robin Wall Kimmerer

Sustainability, in the context of environmental concerns, has long been central to the work of community literacy practitioners (Mareck, [CLJ Special Issue, 2009](#); House, Lasswell, and Dickson, [Reflections Special Issue, 2016](#)). Indeed, such work encompasses grassroots struggles with sustainability (Meyers, 2009), rural, place-based, and eco-pedagogies (Cushman, 2018; Donehower, Hogg, and Schell, 2007; Davis, 2013), food security (Martinez, 2022), local public environmental discourse (Goggin and Long, 2009), and durable futures (McKibben, 2007). Yet, in recent decades, ecological crises have intensified, environmental protections have been rolled back, and “sustainable futures” have been co-opted by a politics of economic security that sacrifices the wellness of all life – human and *more than human* (Abram, 1997) – for political and monetary goals. Rhetorical work on/in sustainable communities now grapples with questions of trespass and belonging in multispecies contexts (Sackey, 2024), living in the Anthropocene (Proppen, 2022), and the meaning and practice of ecological care (Clary-Lemon, 2023). Bridging biological and sociocultural realms in rhetorical inquiry, questions that center sustainability, community interests, and collective eco-consciousness in response to heightened environmental exigencies carry paradigmatic shifts in knowledge production and a “sense of urgency” (Hawhee, 2023). Now, more than ever, scientists, community leaders, scholars, artists, and activists must work across their various contexts and disciplines to cultivate and evolve concepts and practices of community literacy in climate justice work.

Our special issue asks community literacy practitioners to consider how we might reconceptualize sustainability collaboratively and across disciplines via frameworks committed to powerful intersections, reciprocity, reclamation, healing, and community connections. We invite essays and other genres from climate justice collaborators who re-imagine sustainability through community literacy. What might community literacy-oriented sustainability frameworks contribute to ongoing climate justice efforts? How are these new frameworks being described and implemented by collaborators on the front lines of climate justice activism? How might their re-conceptualizations of sustainability support communal action, reclamation, healing, and creating more socially just futures?

Our vision for reconceptualizing sustainability literacies is informed by the intersectional, “emergent strategy” of social justice thought leaders like [adrienne maree brown](#) and the collaborative work of transdisciplinary eco-critics like Anna Tsing et al. in [Feral Atlas](#). Indigenous climate activists like [Dallas Goldtooth](#) and [Winona LaDuke](#), who blend “traditional” activism with intergenerational, community-centered, and arts-based

knowledge-making, also inform our project. Open and attentive to a variety of collaborations, genres, and research projects exploring intersectional community-based sustainability frameworks, we will consider proposals that engage in, but are not limited to, the following:

- projects in decolonizing conceptual or practice-based understandings of sustainability *and* literacy (see Whyte et al., 2017; Hayman et al., 2018; Clary-Lemon and Grant, 2022) and in rethinking our relationship to community and belonging in the context of environmental crisis, trespass, and new forms of relating to the more than human (see Jones, 2019; Osorio, 2021; Barnett, 2022; Hawhee, 2023; Sackey, 2024)
- community-facing essayistic or artistic explorations of sustainable futures (of what can flourish) in contexts of waste, environmental ruin, and decay or what it means to “wonder in the midst of dread” (see Banerjee, 2012; Peters, 2019; Tsing, 2015, 2017, 2021; Dambo);
- community-based eco-criticism or climate justice activism worked through the lens of interdisciplinary cross-genre platforms, blended scholarship, critical storytelling methodologies, and co-authorship (see Lam et al., 2019; Goldtooth; LaDuke);
- college reading and writing practices, place-based writing, eco-pedagogies, or “emergent strategies” centered on sustainability literacies attentive to power and difference and nonequivalent relationships to the more than human, including our relationship to land and the “land in our bones” (Davis, 2013; brown, 2017; Brownlee, 2020, Feghali, 2024);
- reconceptualization and critique of “durable futures” via sustainability frameworks informed by “materialist spiritualities,” interdependence, “network,” and living “at home in the Anthropocene” (McKibben, 2007; brown, 2017; Proppen, 2022; Clary-Lemon, 2023);
- dialogue and analysis of sustainability literacies related to healing modalities, including folk herbalism, ethnobotany, ancestral stewardship, and other earth-based pathways to belonging (Kimmerer, 2013; Feghali, 2024).

We encourage proposals of 250-500 words, not including Works Cited, for various genres, from feature-length research articles to poetry, images, essays, and more, to be submitted to the editors by Oct. 23, 2024. Final article and essay drafts should be 2500-6000 words, due by February 22, 2025. Don’t hesitate to contact the guest editors with your ideas and questions regarding possible projects.

Special issue editors Kaylie Fougrousse ([kefouer@iu.edu](mailto:kefouer@iu.edu)), Joanna Gordon ([jorgordo@iu.edu](mailto:jorgordo@iu.edu)), Lydia Nixon ([lydnixon@iu.edu](mailto:lydnixon@iu.edu)), and Katie Silvester ([klsilves@iu.edu](mailto:klsilves@iu.edu))

## **Project Timeline**

Proposals due: Oct. 23, 2024

Invitations to Authors: November 22, 2024  
Article drafts due: February 22, 2025  
Final drafts due: July 1, 2025

### Works Cited and Consulted

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