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Visualizing landscape

My work with visualizations has two foci. From a research and collection point of view, I have dealt with historic and modern images of landscape change in Vermont. I use these images to examine how and where human and geologic forces have interacted over time and with what results. For teaching, I use whatever visualizations I can find from friends and on the web to illustrate my classes. I am almost exclusively a user of others' work in this regard although I have created a few powerpoint-based animations.

My research, gathering and interpreting images of landscape change, has helped me and others to understand the impact of humans on the New England landscape. We knew that clear cutting was widespread in postcolonial times; what we didn't know is how dramatic the landscape response was in terms of landsliding, erosion, and changing stream and river behavior. By collecting images of the past we help countless students and citizens understand more deeply the place they live, what it was, and what it can be.

My interest in visualizations is as a tool for communicating ideas. I am fascinated by the image as an object as well as the image as a conveyor of information. As a scientist studying Earth's surface, images are at the center of what I do; they are representations of the landscapes I study day in and day out. My work is founded on bringing landscape history, the thought that landscapes are dynamic, not static, to the widest audience possible.

Our work is featured on several web sites. Lots of abstracts but no publications so far...soon enough!

<http://www.uvm.edu/oakledge/> - a visual tour of a simple city park that was once the estate of Vermont's richest family; none of that history remains except in images - the buildings and grandeur are gone.

<http://www.uvm.edu/perkins/landscape/> -- a community archive of historic landscape images some of which are paired with modern images of the same scenes. Currently the archive holds over 2000 images from over 200 Vermont towns. Anyone can browse and anyone can submit images via the web.