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For Immediate Release

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**Beacon Institute presents respected theologians in two
“Spirituality and the Environment” talks starting July 21**

***Christian and Jewish perspective on July 21; Buddhist and Islamic perspective
on Sept. 15***

BEACON, NY— Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries, as part of its environmental lecture series, is presenting two panel discussions with respected spiritual leaders to examine the role of spirituality in protecting the environment at the Institute’s Center for Environmental Innovation and Education at Denning’s Point in Beacon, NY. The talks, which will encourage lively and engaging discussion amongst Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and Islamic theologians, are designed to transcend differences amongst belief systems to find common points of intersection and hope.

The first discussion will take place on [Thursday, July 21, 2011 at 7 pm](#) with [Brigid Driscoll, Ph.D., RSHM](#), former President of Marymount College, now actively involved at the U.N., and [Rabbi Lawrence Troster](#), Rabbinic Scholar-in-Residence for [Greenfaith](#). They will explore the similarities and differences between Christian and Jewish sacred texts and traditions as they relate to environmental challenges within the context of today’s world, as well as examine the role of humans as stewards of the earth. Beacon Institute’s [John Cronin](#), an internationally renowned environmentalist and a former Thomas Merton Fellow, will moderate the discussion. [Online registration](#) for this free event is encouraged at www.bire.org/events.

“In recent history, we have looked to scientists for an understanding of the emergence of the universe,” states Sr. Driscoll. “As we consider our human responsibility toward the earth with regard to faith and an evolving understanding of theology, we can add new environmental and ecological consciousness into our thoughts and beliefs.”

“There are serious, creative challenges to our theology when considered in the context of our contemporary world,” states Rabbi Troster. “Given that religion is an interpretive tradition, a tremendous opportunity exists for a genuine shift in thinking about caring for the universe.”

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The second event in this series is scheduled for September 15, 2011, and will feature a similar discussion exploring Buddhist and Islamic viewpoints with Bonnie Myotai Treace, founder and head Sensei of [Hermitage Heart](#) and the Bodies of Water Society in Garrison, NY, and Faraz Khan, a Senior Environmentalist with the New Jersey DEP and Muslim Chaplain at Rutgers University.

For more information about these and upcoming Beacon Institute events, visit <http://www.bire.org/events>.

About the presenters:

Brigid Driscoll, Ph.D. is a consultant to Beacon Institute, having been appointed to the position by Governor George Pataki in 2000. She chaired the advisory committee that developed the initial strategic plan for the Institute and subsequently served on the site selection task force that identified Beacon, NY, as home to its main office and campus. Sr. Driscoll is currently the U.N. Representative for the [Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary](#) (RSHM).

Sr. Driscoll holds a master's degree in mathematics from Catholic University of America and a doctoral degree from The City University of New York. She has been awarded five honorary doctorates. In 1999, Sr. Driscoll retired from the post of President of Marymount College at Tarrytown after serving in that position for 20 years; prior to that she was a member of the College's mathematics faculty.

Rabbi Lawrence Troster is the Rabbinic Scholar-in-Residence for [GreenFaith](#), the interfaith environmental coalition in New Jersey. Rabbi Troster is one of this country's leading Jewish eco-theologians and religious environmental leaders. He is the creator and former director of GreenFaith's Fellowship program, the only interfaith environment training program for religious leaders in the world. He has published numerous articles and has lectured widely on eco-theology, bio-ethics and Judaism and modern cosmology.

Rabbi Troster earned his B.A. from the University of Toronto and his M.A. and rabbinic ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) of America in New York City. He recently received an honorary Doctor of Divinity by JTS for more than 25 years of rabbinic service and is pursuing a D. Min. in Ecological Ministries at Drew Theological School. Rabbi Troster was recently honored by the Temple of Understanding, one of the oldest worldwide interfaith organizations, as an Interfaith Visionary.

About Beacon Institute:

Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries, with offices in Beacon and Troy, New York, is a not-for-profit environmental research organization engaging scientists, engineers, educators and policy experts in collaborative work focusing on real-time monitoring of river ecosystems. It aims to make the Hudson Valley a global center for scientific and technological innovation that advances research, education and public policy regarding rivers and estuaries. <http://www.bire.org>

Editor's Note: High resolution color images are available for publication upon request. Please contact Kathleen Hickey at (845) 838-1600 ext. 15.

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