The studio will develop research and visitor facilities for the Aprovecho Research Center near Cottage Grove, Oregon. The center has evolved into an internationally recognized developer of low-cost and low-emission cook stoves for the developing world. ARC has worked with the United Nations and other international organizations and recently received the UK’s Ashden Energy Champion Award presented by Prince Charles.

Students will develop a basic site plan on a four-acre wooded site that would include a small visitor center, lab and guest facilities. The focus of the design work will be on the visitor center building and the design potential of green and appropriate technology.

As a research and design exercise, students will develop (perhaps in groups) several experimental kitchens that would replicate wood fuel kitchens from cultures around the world. The labs would be housed in traditional buildings that would serve as a kind of museum of traditional culture.

Ashden Energy Champion Award 2009
Making affordable, efficient stoves for the masses

The Aprovecho Research Centre in the US and Shenghou Stove Manufacturers in China have pooled their rich experience and skills to produce a cheap, robust and efficient stove for mass production to developing countries. The stoves replace dirty and polluting kerosene and open fires saving up to 50 percent of fuel wood and reducing 70 percent of dangerous emissions. SSM has sold over 60,000 stoves since 2007, producing them at a rate of 12,000 stoves a month and selling them to distributors. The main customer is Enviropit International, which markets stoves in India supported by the Shell Foundation. Other customers are in South Africa, Tanzania, Madagascar, Argentina and Chile.

See the December 19, 2009 issue of the New Yorker Magazine for an excellent article on the Aprovecho Center.

Michael Cockram has taught at the University of Oregon periodically for sixteen years and is one of the founders of DesignBridge. He has worked in the profession with AIA Gold Medalsist E. Fay Jones and recently with solar architecture pioneer L.M. Holder III in Austin. He writes about design and green building for Architecture Week magazine and other publications.