

CÔMPASS

Wilburforce Leaders in Conservation Science 2021-2022

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Jocelyn Akins

she/her/hers

Cascades Carnivore Project

Jocelyn Akins is the Conservation Director at Cascades Carnivore Project, which she founded in 2008 as an independent research program to inform management and conservation needs of the wolverine and Cascade red fox in Washington's Cascade Range. She has 22 years of field experience as a wildlife biologist. She earned a Ph.D. in Animal Biology at the Mammalian Conservation and Ecology Unit, University of California Davis, where she focused on the conservation genetics of the Cascade red fox. She employs rigorous field methods and genetic tools to study the impacts of climate change in alpine ecosystems and address conservation issues facing carnivores in the Cascades region. She has led diverse crews on wildlife projects including ecological research of wolverines in Yellowstone National Park, grizzly bears and black bears in Wyoming and Canada, jaguars and ocelots in Belize, and Mediterranean grouper in France. She has volunteered for various non-governmental organizations including the North Shore Black Bear Network and Columbia Riverkeeper. She is passionate about addressing the conservation issues facing wildlife and their ecosystems in the Cascade Mountains.



Mirjam Barrueto

she/her/hers

University of Calgary

I grew up in Switzerland in a Swiss-Peruvian family. After my BSc in biology, internships abroad inspired me to move to Canada in 2007 for a MSc at the University of British Columbia. My intention was to challenge myself personally by moving to a new country with a new culture and language, and intellectually by joining a research group focused on theoretical ecology and evolution. I had always envisioned a career in applied conservation biology. The intersection of politics and science fascinated me, and I wanted to be part of a community driving change. However, I did not find a PhD opportunity that truly excited me and thus took a step away from academia. From 2011 to 2014 I was fortunate to work on road ecology research in Banff National Park. We monitored wildlife use of highway crossing structures and conducted a study to determine if the Trans-Canada Highway presented a barrier to wolverine connectivity. From 2014 to 2017 I worked on a study assessing genetic connectivity and harvest sustainability of wolverines in the Southern Canadian Rockies. In 2016 I initiated the project that now, since 2017 is my PhD research project. Somehow, I managed to inspire a diverse group of people to collaborate on landscape-scale wolverine research, enabling me to develop, fund and complete the data

collection and genetics, and begin the data analysis portion of my PhD. As a balance to my professional life, I run, climb, ski, and volunteer in my community.



Davon Callander

she/her/hers

Yukon Government

Davon is a Yukon-based environmental scientist who works on issues related to roads and their impact to the ecosystem. Originally from Vancouver Island, she holds a PhD in Ecology from the University of Canterbury in Christchurch New Zealand and has worked or studied in Edmonton, Calgary, Oregon and California. She was the Executive Director of a Yukon NGO and

now works with the Yukon Government. Whenever she can, she leaves the roads behind and explores the outdoors in all sorts of ways. She and her partner are proud e-bike riders and despite the dark and cold in Whitehorse happily commute by bike with their toddler year round.



Tony Chang

he/him/his

Conservation Science Partners

My personal story is non-traditional and multidisciplinary. I was born in Taiwan to parents with little education beyond grade school, but had hopes to find opportunity and a better life for their family by immigrating to Los Angeles, CA, USA in 1985. I experienced a first generation immigrant life with all the challenges of lower economic class upbringing and integration

into a foreign society at a time where inclusivity and cultural sensitivity was not in the public lexicon. Despite those economic and cultural challenges, my family was able to provide me with a love of science and nature with our weekly trips at the natural history museum (aka day care) and camping vacations. In college I studied Mechanical Engineering and was considering jobs in the defense sector, but had ethical opposition to the work due to my perspective of the second Iraq war, which I personally opposed. I rebelled from that career path and joined the Northern Arizona Conservation Corps in Flagstaff, and learned about field environmental conservation. This career shift evolved to federal work with various federal agencies ranging from the USFS, NPS, and USGS with work that included wildland firefighting, trail building, and vegetation sampling. These on-the-ground experiences provided me with perspective of how field conservation is implemented. However, there was always a gap for me regarding how science informed the actions I was told to perform. That experience encouraged me to pursue a graduate

degree in environmental science and ecology so I could participate with policy and management, and communicate better to those in the field. My graduate courses brought a new revelation regarding the lack of technical/computation training. After graduating, I realized I was in a unique position having a technical background, field ecology experience, and a formal scientific training, that could provide effective environmental policy change and potentially impact for both urban and rural society. My hope is that I can make some kind of lasting impact on conservation that gives back to others, the opportunities it has given me.



Tara Chestnut

she/her/hers

National Park Service, Mount Rainier National Park

Tara is an ecologist at Mount Rainier National Park where she leads the wildlife program. Current projects include monitoring and research on Northern Spotted Owls, rare carnivores, bats, small mammals, and leading disease surveillance efforts. She is also an affiliate faculty member in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at Oregon State University, and a member of the Partners for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation federal agencies steering committee. Tara earned a PhD from Oregon State University in Environmental Sciences with a focus in disease ecology, Master of Environmental Management from Portland State University in aquatic sciences, Master of Environmental Studies from The Evergreen State College with a focus in environmental policy, and Bachelor of Science in wildlife biology & natural history from The Evergreen State College. Prior to her current position, Tara worked in the USGS Amphibian Research and Monitoring Initiative program where she conducted research on amphibian chytrid fungus disease dynamics in North America, Russia and Cuba. Earlier in her career, Tara worked as a wildlife biologist for the Washington State Department of Transportation, where she conducted environmental assessments of transportation infrastructure. Tara is a first-generation college student who comes from a long line of proud union electricians, plumbers, and homecare workers. She enjoys making soap, fishing, razor clamming, and cooking for people.



Lana Ciarniello

she/her/hers

Aklak Wildlife Consulting

I am a Registered Professional Biologist, an Independent Research Scientist, Co-Chair of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Bear Specialist's Group's Human-Bear Conflict Expert Team, and a member of the North

American Bear Expert Team. I began field work with bears in the early 1990's. My previous projects have included radio-collaring bears to track their use of habitats, survival, and reproduction and using non-invasive data gathering methods to monitor the effects of bear viewing tourism on bears. I believe in science-based management of bears and use temporal and spatial modeling to seek to explain urban encroachment into bear habitat, natural food shortages, and human-bear conflicts in relation to grizzly and black bear biological requirements. I seek realistic, site-specific solutions to reduce human-bear conflict. I am dedicated to maintaining and managing bear habitat for human-bear coexistence.



Christian Hagen

he/him/his

Oregon State University, Dept of Fisheries & Wildlife

I have been involved in the research, monitoring and management of prairie grouse and prairie and sagebrush ecosystems since 1996. My expertise focuses on how these species respond to landscape-scale conservation and specifically demography and habitat use of prairie-grouse. As umbrella species, these birds serve as barometers to their ecosystems. I served as Science Advisor to USDA-NRCS Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative (2011-2020), where I focused on delivering scientifically based conservation efforts that provide mutual benefit for agricultural producers and prairie dependent species. Previously, I served as Sage Grouse Coordinator to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (2004-2011). Currently, as research faculty I continue to evaluate outcomes of conservation and disturbance as it relates to greater sage-grouse in the Great Basin. However, I have begun to expand my portfolio examining issues of water availability on the ecology of overwater nesting birds, and the (extremely rare) yellow rail in the Klamath Basin.



Keala Hagmann

she/her/hers

Applegate Forestry LLC and University of Washington, School of Environmental and Forest Sciences

All around us, we see radical changes in familiar and beloved places, changes that reflect rapid widespread increases in human population and technological development. Through research into the history of seasonally dry forested landscapes, I've marveled at both the remnant legacies and the magnitude of change. After more than a century of fire exclusion, those remnant legacies, e.g., mature and old fire- and drought-tolerant trees and communities, are increasingly

vulnerable to seasonal and episodic increases in drought stress and fire, especially as the climate warms. Even under ideal conditions, only time (measured in centuries) can restore mature and old trees. Additionally, on-going departures in the hydrological regimes that historically maintained biodiversity hot spots in these landscapes may continue as spatial patterns of vegetation continue to depart from those maintained by active fire regimes. My research evaluates the extent and magnitude of departure from reference conditions to inform proactive management focused on re-aligning seasonally dry forested landscapes of the Pacific Northwest with current and projected climate. Proactive management may moderate ecosystem transitions as forests and human communities adapt to changing climatic regimes.



Marcy Mahr

she/her/hers

Kootenay Conservation Program

I am a conservation ecologist who is currently Kootenay Connect Project Manager with the Kootenay Conservation Program and Senior Research Biologist with the Valhalla Wilderness Society. Thirteen years ago, my family and I followed the path of many transborder grizzly bears and wolves and immigrated from Montana to Canada. I hold a B.A. in Sociology/Anthropology & Northern Environments from Middlebury College where I became fascinated by cultural ecology and glaciology on field courses in Newfoundland-Labrador and Alaska, and a M.S. in Plant Biology from the University of Vermont where I immersed in plant taxonomy and landscape ecology in wild places in North and South America. I enjoy mucking around in wetlands and tracking toads by headlamp as much as strategizing about large landscape conservation. My passion for conserving biodiversity on both private working lands and public wildlands has led me to work on over 100 projects for non-profits, government, research institutes, and land trusts to improve endangered species conservation, ecosystem management, corridor ecology, and landscape-level conservation. During my 30-year career, I have contributed to conserving over 600,000 acres of private land in western North America as staff or in partnerships with land trusts. My early work in corridor conservation in Montana's Centennial Valley, ecosystem science with the US Forest Service, and grizzly bear conservation with the Craighead Wildlife-Wildlands Institute strengthened my scientific skills and strategic abilities to conserve biodiversity at multiple landscape scales. Most notably, I was a founding staff member of the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative in which I helped build the scientific foundation of the Y2Y region as a globally significant wildlife corridor. My ability to move fluidly between analytical research, conservation strategy, and on-the-ground stewardship projects has helped protect exceptional places of high biodiversity in the Y2Y region such as, the High Divide Ecosystem, US Flathead Valley, Slocan Lake Watershed, and Columbia Wetlands RAMSAR Site, among others. My current initiative, Kootenay Connect, is producing the

science and inspiration necessary to identify, protect, and improve management within 12 important wildlife/biodiversity corridors across the Kootenay region of southeastern BC.



Mirna Manteca

she/her/hers
Wildlands Network

Mirna holds a Bachelor's degree in Biology from the University of Sonora. She has been working in transboundary conservation for the past six years in wildlife monitoring, road ecology, springs assessments, community engagement, and citizen science, all under the lens of wildlife connectivity. She currently works as Mexico Program Road Ecology Coordinator for Wildlands Network. She is a member of the Latin America and Caribbean Transport Working Group, as part of the IUCN's Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group, and co-founder of Asociación Mujeres y Conservación.



Chrystal Mantyka-Pringle

she/her/hers
Wildlife Conservation Society Canada & University of Saskatchewan

I work as a Conservation Planning Biologist for Wildlife Conservation Society Canada's Northern Boreal Mountain program, which is focused on wild regions in Yukon and northern BC. My passion for conservation science stems from my early childhood catching frogs in local wetlands and chasing prairie dogs on my families' farm in Saskatchewan. It was in these early years, that I learnt about the importance of curiosity and formed a deep connection with our natural world.

Today, I am privileged to work meaningfully with First Nations, governments and other NGOs to conserve biodiversity and wild spaces in the northwest for our future and my children's future. In this work, I rely on my background in studying the impacts (and interaction) of climate change and land-use change (particularly human development) on biodiversity, and my commitment to reconciliation, to bring forward new ways of thinking and working together to better protect wildlife and wild places.

My work started in a much different environment: Australia. My PhD is from the University of Queensland's Centre of Excellence for Environmental Decisions and I later worked for the Australian Government. After returning to Canada, my work has focused more on

developing landscape planning approaches for conserving biodiversity, including working with Indigenous knowledge systems and combining this with scientific research data to try to drive better evidence-based decision making processes. I worked with the University of Saskatchewan's (U of S) Indigenous-community led research programs, focusing on the impacts of multiple stressors on river deltas. I also worked on planning processes for species at risk and climate change mitigation. I remain an Adjunct Professor with the School of Environment and Sustainability at the U of S, supervising a mix of graduate students and post docs.

I hope to share the curiosity and passion for nature and wildlife that I developed as a farm kid with the next generation and I am fortunate to work with a group of colleagues who share my passion for wildlife and conserving wild places.



Julia Michalak

she/her/hers
University of Washington

Julia is a research scientist in the School of Environment and Forest Sciences at the University of Washington. She has a PhD in urban ecology and an M.S. in conservation biology. Her research focuses on evaluating climate-change vulnerability and resilience of species, ecosystems, and protected areas to inform climate-change adaptation planning. She works with species and protected areas managers to evaluate potential climate impacts and develop adaptation strategies with a special focus on mapping and managing climate-change refugia and climate connectivity.



L. Monika Moskal

she/her/hers
University of Washington, College of the Environment

I am a geographer by training, specializing in using earth observation and geo-informatics to explore and understand spatiotemporal landscape change. For example, I am broadly interested in how forests and wetlands are connected and structured on the landscape, how that structure and connectivity can change, whether through fire or other disturbances, and how we in turn can detect those changes. My research team looks for indicators that will help guide sustainable stewardship and conservation policies. I have worked throughout the western U.S. and Canada, and my research has received substantial funding from the NSF, as well as NASA. I am an instructor of a two large undergraduate geo-informatics/earth observation courses. I live with my partner, a fellow

geographer who studies demographics and is now a lead data scientist on a NIH funded dog aging projects, and our 8-year-old daughter who wants to grow up to be an artist. We have an 8 lbs dog that ran into our life on a rainy Seattle evening, prior to that evening I called myself a cat person. In my free time I enjoy making art, roller skating, kayaking, hiking and now that I am a parent, car camping (although we are slowly getting back to regular backpack camping as well). I call Seattle my adopted home, prior to moving here I have lived in 4 countries, have gone to 5 elementary schools, two high schools, three universities. I am fluent in four languages, two of them badly. I love to travel to obscure places.



Karine Pigeon

she/her/hers
BC Government

I grew up with deaf parents, and even though the hearing world perceives deafness as a disability, the deaf community considers themselves a cultural and linguistic minority. My unique upbringing at the intersection of two worlds and cultures (deaf and hearing) strongly shaped my personality, leadership style, and the way I connect with others.

As a young adult, I moved to western Canada in search of steep slopes and deep snow. After working full time in the ski industry, I returned to school to pursue a degree in environmental science. For the past decade, I have worked in academia and in the not-for-profit sector as a wildlife biologist and landscape ecologist. I am now the Habitat Team Lead for the Together for Wildlife Strategy for the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operation and Rural Development for the Skeena region. I am also a councillor for the International Association on Bear Research and Management (IBA), an active member of three International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission Bear Specialist Groups, and the IUCN Deputy Red List Focal Point for bears. I definitely have a soft spot for bears.

I am a conservation scientist and landscape ecologist focused on human-wildlife coexistence. I have a diverse background in conservation and management, including applied research on grizzly bears, caribou, moose, wolves, sloth bears, and Asiatic black bears.

I am especially passionate about encouraging people to connect with nature while strengthening and preserving biodiversity and ecological integrity, and about bridging the gender gap in STEM and reducing inequities for minoritized groups. Being outdoors has always been an important part of my life. Sharing adventures on steep slopes with skis and bikes or tied to ropes on cliffs/frozen waterfalls are my preferred ways to connect with nature and people.



Paulo Quadri

he/him/his
Sky Island Alliance

I was born in Mexico City in 1982. My parents were both early environmentalist but it wasn't until high school, when a friend invited me to hike the incredible volcanoes of central Mexico that I understood the importance and fragility of our remaining natural wonders. After majoring in communication science at Universidad de las Américas Puebla, I joined the National Commission of Protected Areas of Mexico (CONANP), where I worked for almost four years in different projects including developing the first strategy of protected areas and climate adaptation in Mexico. In 2012, I received my masters from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and in 2018 my PhD in Environmental Studies from the University of California Santa Cruz. I am currently the Conservation Director of Sky Island Alliance in Tucson, Arizona.



Christopher Sergeant

he/him/his
Flathead Lake Biological Station, University of Montana

I was born and raised in the suburbs of South King County, Washington—home of the Duwamish, the first people of Seattle. At the end of November 2020, I returned to Seattle after spending almost ten years in Juneau, Alaska—Lingít Aaní, home of the Tlingit. Parenting brings my partner and me great joy. We love re-exploring old Washington haunts with our young son, but we miss the bountiful backyard nature and slower pace of Alaska. I miss scanning for bears before walking out our front door. Our time living in Juneau is indelibly marked on my heart, and I am lucky to still work in that area.

My research asks two questions:
How do lake and river ecosystems respond to climate change and human activities?
What can we do to better care for our freshwaters?

In 2018, after seven years working for the National Park Service, I became a research scientist with the Flathead Lake Biological Station to work across boundaries and study large international watersheds. I have a B.S. and M.S. in Aquatic and Fishery Sciences from the University of Washington. I also plan to finish a PhD with Jeff Falke at the University of Alaska Fairbanks by the end of 2021.



Gillian Staveley

she/her/hers

Kaska Dena Council/Dena Kayeh Institute

Gillian Staveley is a Kaska Dena member whose heritage lies in the Muncho Lake region of Dena Kēyeh in Northern British Columbia. Graduating from UBC in 2014 with a Masters in Anthropology, Gillian's research explored the importance of multi-generational environmental knowledge and addressed issues of residential schooling, colonialism, and political ecology—all topics that are relevant to Indigenous Nations across the globe. Through the connection that Gillian has with her heritage and culture, she has actively promoted the conversation of what Indigenous Identity means in the 21st century. Gillian has worked predominantly in the resource development sector as a traditional land use practitioner, consultant, and archaeologist.

Currently, in her work as a Regional Coordinator for the Kaska Dena, her goal is to ensure that through the Government to Government relationship that exists with her Nation and the Province, that the respect for Kaska Laws (Dene K'éh Gū's'ān) and the commitment under the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples are upheld in all consultations and engagements with her Nation. Gillian also serves as a Director of the Dena Kēyeh Institute, a not-for-profit society created by the Kaska Nation to empower, preserve, and protect the Kaska Dena language, oral traditions, history, culture, and traditional knowledge.

The primary work that Gillian has been a part of with DKI over the past year is to work with the Kaska communities on designing Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas within the Kaska Ancestral Territory. As a mother of two strong and energetic Kaska boys, her livelihood is encompassed around watching them grow, live, and experience the world around them.



Erin Steinkruger

she/her/hers

Tatoosh School

Erin Steinkruger was born and raised in the foothills of the Chugach Mountains in Anchorage, Alaska. She studied Political Science at Lewis & Clark College in Portland and is currently pursuing a PhD in Public Affairs and Policy at Portland State University with research in environmental governance and public service leadership development. Erin has paddled thousands of miles in southeastern Alaska, Baja California and southern Chile and her work in the communities

and wild lands of the American West has made her a strong advocate for boots-on-the-ground understanding of rural landscapes and livelihoods. She is a co-founder of the Tatoosh School and serves as the school's Programs Director. Erin is also the academic lead for the Executive Seminar Program in Natural Resources Leadership at Portland State.



Conrad Thiessen

he/him/his
BC Government

My connection to nature and animals started at an early age growing up on a farm in rural Alberta. With the closest kids my age living a couple of miles away I found myself alone spending many hours exploring the forests and creeks of the family farm. This lifestyle led me to want to pursue a career working outside, but it wasn't until my 2nd year of university that I realized that the job of a wildlife biologist was even a thing. From that point on I threw myself into field work and took almost 5 years between my B.Sc. and M.Sc as a vagabond biologist studying nesting habits of marbled murrelets on Vancouver Island, banding penguins in Antarctica, snow tracking mammals in northern Alberta, conducting songbird surveys in Florida, tracking wolves in Banff, and more. It was the work in Banff that led me to M.Sc studying the genetic relationships within and between wolf packs from the US border up the spine of the Rockies to Willmore Wilderness Park. Following my masters I landed a job with the BC government as a wildlife biologist in Fort St John and spent 6 years immersed in the contradictions of northeastern BC, alternating between time in the wild Muskwa Kechika and the boreal forests fractured by oil and gas development. A desire to live closer to mountains led me to northwest BC where I've been the senior wildlife biologist for the Skeena Region of the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (apologies for the long title!) for the last 9 years. In Smithers I've focused much of my efforts in the biological realm working on caribou, but most of my time is spent developing relationships with First Nations and stakeholders on wildlife issues.



Kaitlin Wilson

she/her/hers
Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)

I grew up in the woods, rivers, and city streets of Ontario, Canada, eventually pursuing a degree in Physical Geography and Biology and then an MSc in Environmental and Life Sciences. While wrapping up my thesis on caribou ecology

concluded my formal education, my learning journey was actually just getting started as I moved to Nunatsiavut. Living in this special place, I had the opportunity to work and learn with Inuit youth and caribou knowledge holders. Now, I call the Yukon home. I have the privilege of working with several First Nation governments at the southern edge of the territory and with Inuvialuit on the northern coast on all kinds of conservation, Indigenous rights, and wildlife issues.

As a geographer, I am most curious about the stories that tie each of us to the land in which we live: how we tell these stories, how they affect our movement on the land, what they mean for our non-human neighbours, and how they can contribute to our shared endeavors. These stories are foundational to how we as individuals and communities approach conservation...and each other. They are both deeply personal and inherently universal. I might have started off as a scientist, but as my career develops, I find these stories increasingly important in the conservation conversation.