

CALIFORNIA FOUNDING ADVISORY COUNCIL



Creating a visionary model for engagement in California—and beyond.

For 75 years, the National Wildlife Federation has inspired Americans to protect wildlife for our children’s future. Continuing its historic vanguard position in conservation and environmental education, the organization is developing a new strategy with the potential to change environmental engagement in California—and ultimately across the country. **The California Founding Advisory Council is a dedicated and innovative group seeking to craft a bold and imaginative vision for our children, our wildlife, and our future.**



Wildlink Director **LAURA BEARDSLEY** works with an amazing network of students, teachers, schools, community partners and staff to give underserved teens a series of wilderness- and home-based experiences that will empower them to better their own lives as well as their communities; and to ensure that the diverse California citizenry is informed, invested and committed to the enduring resource of wilderness. Prior to joining WildLink, Laura spent several years in membership, development and program management with non-profit organizations including the Yosemite Association in Yosemite National Park and Outward Bound in Philadelphia and Baltimore.



MILTON CHEN served for twelve years as the executive director at the George Lucas Educational Foundation, before becoming senior fellow in early 2010. His background includes director of research, Sesame Workshop; assistant professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education; education director, KQED-San Francisco (PBS). He is a member of the National Parks Second Century Commission, San Francisco School Alliance, ConnectEd: California Center for College and Career, and Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning & Children's Media. His new book *Education Nation: Seven Leading Edges of Innovation in Our Schools*, was released in 2010. Milton was also made a Jedi-Master by George Lucas on his 50th birthday.



ARAMY CHO grew up in New Jersey and gained his undergraduate degree in Chemistry from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. He was first immersed in wilderness while instructing and eventually course directing for Outward Bound in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness of Minnesota. While on land, he would migrate to Colorado for the skiing and climbing. He now works as the Program Manager for WildLink in Yosemite, bringing underserved youth to experience the wilderness of the Sierra.





JON CHRISTENSEN has been associated with Stanford's The Bill Lane Center for the American West since its founding in 2002-2003, when he was a Knight Fellow at Stanford and currently serves at its Executive Director. Jon was an environmental journalist and science writer for 20 years before coming to Stanford. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Nature*, *High Country News*, and many other newspapers, magazines, journals, and radio and television shows. Jon was a Steinbeck Fellow at San Jose State University in 2003-2004, before returning to Stanford to work on a Ph.D. in History. He was a Distinguished Departmental Scholar for Academic Year 2008-2009, supported by a Mellon Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, and was honored with a Prize for Excellence in First-Time Teaching in 2005-2006. He teaches a course entitled "Climate Change in the West: A History of the Future" and his broader research and teaching interests include environmental history, natural history and the history of biological and ecological sciences, climate change, conservation, western history, and the history and current changes in media, information technologies, and journalism.



VIRGINIA DELGADO attended San Francisco State University majoring in Environmental Studies with a minor in Urban Studies and has been working for NatureBridge for three years, first working as an environmental education intern and coastal Camp counselor at NatureBridge campus of Marin Headlands, teaching younger generations about local habitat and stewardship. Most recently, she has worked at the NatureBridge National Office as a Summer Scholar, reaching out to more students by conducting countrywide demographic research and diversity projects. She is committed to bringing environmental/outdoor and science education to underserved communities by actively participating in the Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative conference, volunteering at the Mission Science Center in San Francisco, and volunteering time at an inner city green ways. Her hobbies include taking nature walks, traveling, listening to spoken word poetry, dancing, and watching college football.



PETE DEVINE grew up near Boston and with camping and hiking in the New Hampshire mountains. Early exposure to enjoying the outdoors with family initiated his interest in nature and his first professional experience was caring for wildlife at a local nature museum in the Blue Hills. Getting a biology degree in Colorado afforded him field time with birds, flora and geological studies in diverse environments. He has been in Yosemite for 25 years; most of this time overseeing the education program of Yosemite Institute. Pete is currently the Resident Naturalist for the park's non-profit partner, the Yosemite Conservancy where he runs their field seminar program. Among his favorite wildlife species is the American Dipper. Pete lives in El Portal with his wife, NPS archeologist Sonni Montague.



As a professor at University of California, Berkeley **CAROLYN FINNEY** explores how difference, identity, representation, and power play a significant role in determining how people negotiate their daily lives in relation to the environment. Although Carolyn pursued an acting career for eleven years, a backpacking trip around the world and living in Nepal changed the course of her life. Motivated by these experiences, she returned to school after a 15-year absence to complete a B.A., and M.A. in international development. She recently completed her Ph.D. in geography at Clark University in Massachusetts and is a Canon National Parks Science Scholarship recipient. Carolyn was particularly honored to serve as a commissioner on the Second Century National Parks Commission this past year along with Sandra Day O'Connor, Sylvia Earle, and other distinguished individuals. She has recently been appointed by Secretary Salazar to continue that work on the National Parks Advisory Board. She has written a number of essays – her most recent will be in the upcoming *Companions in Wonder: Reflections on Children and Adults Exploring Nature Together*. Carolyn's first book manuscript, *Black Faces, White Spaces: African Americans and the Great Outdoors*, is forthcoming (UNC Press).

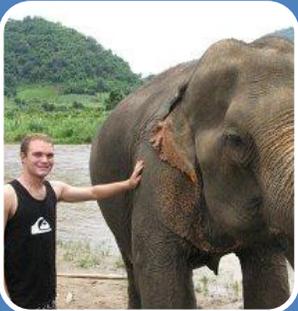




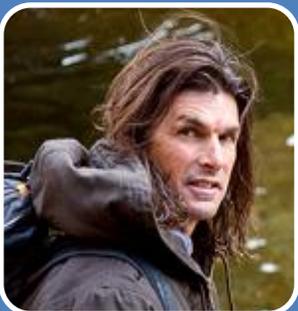
BRIDGET FITHIAN Conservation Director for Sierra Foothill Conservancy (SFC), began her career in conservation by organizing a Step It Up! community event in Mariposa, her home town, inspired by a Bill McKibben lecture in Tuolumne Meadows, YNP. Fithian has served on the BOD of Yosemite Gateway Partners, Mariposa Schools Foundations- Mariposa Scholars Committee, and the Upper Merced River Watershed Council. Eco-entrepreneurship and finding for-profit and non-profit intersections is a passion for Fithian which has come to fruition through Sierra Lands Beef, SFC's new LLC cattle company which generates income for SFC through conservation grazing and grassfed beef. Bridget currently manages Sierra Foothill Conservancy's Land Conservation Program between Sequoia National Park and Yosemite National Park. Current projects will establish Mariposa's first publically accessible preserve- adjacent to local schools, create the largest private nature preserve in the Sierra Foothills, and connect 25,000 acres of conserved lands in the San Joaquin River Corridor. Fithian is a graduate of UC Santa Cruz.



MICHELLE HANSEN has been lucky enough to live and work in three national parks: Yellowstone, Yosemite and Zion. During her 16 years of retail experience she has worked at Walt Disney World where she participated in the EuroDisney task force, Busch Gardens Tampa Bay on a merchandising team responsible for 25 gift shops as well as managing retail and merchandising operations for organizations such as Yellowstone General Stores, DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, Zion Natural History Association and the Yosemite Conservancy. She also works as a retail consultant, currently assisting the Mesa Verde Association. Michelle attended the University of South Florida where she holds a BA in Anthropology with a minor in Geography and didn't quite complete a master's degree in Archaeology. She catalogues her own outdoor adventures on her travel blog, California Junket. She currently resides in Yosemite with her husband, Ted, a California native who introduced her to rockclimbing, skiing, rafting, camping and the great landscape of California in general.



ADAM YANEY-KELLER was born and raised in the hills above Los Angeles, Adam was able to grow up with both natural surroundings and a bird's eye view of the smog filled skies above LA, a contrast he wouldn't soon forget. Through the hard work and generosity of his parents he was afforded opportunities from the earliest age to travel the world, and it would be these experiences that would shape his views of the world around him. In the short 19 years he's been alive, Adam has seen enough of the world to know that something is very wrong with the state of the natural world, and the direction we as humans are heading in how we live in accordance with the wildlife we share the planet with. Adam is currently getting his undergraduate degree in Biological Sciences at California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, concentrating in Ecology. He hopes to pursue a career in Wildlife Conservation, and his favorite wildlife species is Orca whales (or cheetahs or elephants...)



At age 14, legendary Yosemite climber **RON KAUK** went on a backcountry experience organized by his school. One of the adults bet a milkshake for anyone who could complete a difficult climb, which Ron successfully won. Transfixed by the beauty of climbing, and encouraged by role models in the rock climbing community, Ron was faced with the choice of continuing with his formal education, or moving his education to a different venue. He chose the path of nature and moved to Yosemite at age 17. Ron in more recent years has been working to express his appreciation for Yosemite. He has actively engaged with the Native American community which rightfully has a spiritual and historical connection to Yosemite, worked on a project to restore Fern Spring, has spent the summers as a volunteer in the Tuolumne Meadows campground, and has founded the non-profit Sacred Rok. Ron believes that life and nature are great teachers and offer many paths to insight, inspiration and appreciation. For Ron, it is a simple summary: "Take care of nature, and nature will take care of you."





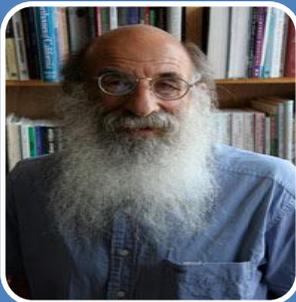
DR. KERRY KRIEGER is the Founder & Executive Director of SAVE THE FROGS!, America's first and only public charity dedicated to protecting amphibians. He conceived and coordinates Save The Frogs Day, the world's largest day of amphibian education and conservation action. Dr. Krieger holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Science from Griffith University in Gold Coast, Australia, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA, and is fluent in Spanish. He is a recognized expert on the amphibian disease chytridiomycosis, a topic on which he has published 15 articles in peer-reviewed international scientific journals. Dr. Krieger's research into amphibian declines has been supported by the National Geographic Society and various philanthropic organizations throughout the world, and he has presented the results of his research at scientific conferences in several countries. He has climbed mountains in the Himalayas, Alps, Alaska Range, Southern Alps and the Andes, and is an avid photographer whose photographs have been featured on CNN and in airports and magazines worldwide.



Naturalist, educator and artist **JOHN (JACK) MUIR LAWS** delights in exploring the natural world and sharing this love with others. Laws has worked as an environmental educator for over 25 years in California, Wyoming, and Alaska. He teaches classes on natural history, conservation biology, scientific illustration, and field sketching. He is trained as a wildlife biologist and is an associate of the California Academy of Sciences. In 2009, he received the Terwilliger Environmental Award for outstanding service in Environmental Education. He is a 2010 TogetherGreen Conservation Leadership Fellow with the National Audubon Society and is the 2011 artist for International Migratory Bird Day. Laws has written and illustrated books about the natural history of California including *Sierra Birds: a Hiker's Guide* (2004), *The Laws Guide to the Sierra Nevada* (2007), and *The Laws Pocket Guide Set to the San Francisco Bay Area* (2009). He is a regular contributor to *Bay Nature* magazine with his "Naturalists Notebook" column.



RUE MAPP, founder of Outdoor Afro, participated in both President Obama's conference on America's Great Outdoors as well as the First Lady's Let's Move campaign. In 2010, she was appointed Youth Investment Program Officer at the Stewardship Council, where she manages its grantmaking program to connect underserved California youth to the outdoors. She serves on the Board of Advisors for the Children and Nature Network, and is a fellow with the Center for Whole Communities. She was also distinguished as one of the Wilderness Society's five "Faces of Conservation.", and recently named the National Wildlife Federation's "Wildlife Champion of the Month." Outdoor Afro won a 2011 Black Weblog Award for Best Green/Nature Blog, and is now an official partner of the American Camp Association. She is a graduate of UC Berkeley and proud mother of three children.



MALCOLM MARGOLIN is executive director of Heyday, an independent nonprofit publisher and unique cultural institution, which he founded in 1974. Margolin is author of several books, including *The Ohlone Way: Indian Life in the San Francisco–Monterey Bay Area*, named by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as one of the hundred most important books of the twentieth century by a western writer. He has received dozens of prestigious awards among which are the Fred Cody Award Lifetime Achievement from the San Francisco Bay Area Book Reviewers Association, the Helen Crocker Russell Award for Community Leadership from the San Francisco Foundation, the Carey McWilliams Award for Lifetime Achievement from the California Studies Association, an Oscar Lewis Award for Western History from the Book Club of California, a Hubert Bancroft Award from Friends of the Bancroft Library, a Cultural Freedom Award from the Lannan Foundation, and a Distinguished Service Award from the Society of Professional Journalists. He serves on the boards of two organizations he helped found, Bay Nature Institute and Alliance for California Traditional Artists.





As Executive Vice President, **JASON MORRIS** heads NatureBridge’s work to increase awareness of the importance of environmental literacy and to build acceptance of environmental education as the best path toward a more sustainable future. Growing up on a 200-acre farm in Colorado, Jason was born into an awareness of nature that would flourish as time passed. Throughout college, Jason led wilderness expeditions while studying the relationship between person and place and the intersection between culture and the environment, and shortly after graduating he became a field educator with NatureBridge’s Yosemite Institute. Between 2001 and 2005, Jason left Yosemite to serve as the education director and deputy director for Oakland-based Save The Bay, where he led fundraising and community engagement efforts that quadrupled the number of students served by Save The Bay’s educational programs before returning to NatureBridge in 2005. Jason holds a Master of Nonprofit Administration from the University of San Francisco. He lives in Berkeley with his wife, always grateful for the natural world that inspires his continued achievements.



After serving 36 years with California State Parks (CSP) **JOHN MOTT** retired in 2010. His career included 18 years as a field ranger, 2 years as the Volunteers in Parks Program Manager and 16 years the Cooperating Associations Program Manager. John has recently gone back to work part-time for State Parks in the new section dedicated to keeping State Parks open. His focus is working with nonprofit partners who are interested in partnering with CSP to keep one or more of the 70 closed parks open. He is actively developing long term agreements for operating or funding all or part of a closed park. He enjoys organic gardening, fly fishing, hiking, skiing, mountain biking and river boarding. Volunteer work includes coordinating the “Fish in the Classroom” program for the California Fly Fishers Unlimited which helps more than 180 teachers in the greater Sacramento area raise salmon and steelhead from eggs to fingerlings in a classroom. His favorite wildlife species is whichever one he is lucky enough to encounter.



KATE MCCURDY, UCSB Sedwick's Reserve's Director, likes to get her hands dirty. At UC Davis, the Santa Barbara native preferred the raptor center to university classrooms. At Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, she spent most of her time working on the university farm. She got her start with the National Park Service in an internship at Glacier National Park, working with grizzly bear researchers. She has since been a National Park biologist tracking coyotes and mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains, on Island Fox recovery on the Channel Islands, and she completed a master's thesis on bear/backpacker interactions in Yosemite National Park. Prior to accepting the position at Sedwick, she headed the bear management program in Yosemite for eleven years: "Working with bears is a great challenge because they are smarter than park visitors."



ED MCFIELD brings a passion for service in favor of vulnerable communities. His professional expertise includes leading a variety of housing, educational, and health programs throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. While pursuing doctoral training, Ed served as the Executive Director of the Latino Health Collaborative (2007-2010) in San Bernardino, California. In this role he developed the *Community Academy for Health Advocacy and Leadership* and secured funding to launch the Healthy San Bernardino initiative. Ed is currently the *Director for Planning, Development, and Research* and founder-convener of the San Bernardino Green Alliance. He recently designed a family-focused environmental literacy program addressing conservation, environmental justice, and energy efficiency. He is also the lead for community outreach in a project funded by the California Strategic Growth Council to develop the San Bernardino Integrated Sustainability Community Plan. Ed McField is bicultural and multi-lingual. He holds a Masters in Community Development and a PhD in Social Policy and Social Research from Loma Linda University.





MARY NICKERSON is national manager for advanced technology vehicle marketing for Toyota Motor Sales (TMS), U.S.A. Inc. She is responsible for leading marketing strategy, development, and implementation for Toyota’s advanced technology vehicles including the Prius gas-electric hybrid vehicle, the RAV4 Electric Vehicle, and the overall Hybrid Synergy Drive technology brand strategy. Nickerson earned her Master’s of Science degree in business administration from Claremont Graduate School, Peter F. Drucker School of Business in International Business. She earned her Bachelor’s of Science degree in finance at California State University Long Beach. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Yellowstone Park Foundation and is a member of the Corporate Board for the Environmental Media Association. Mary lives on a ranch in southern California, with her husband and two sons. Nickerson enjoys growing organic wine grapes and avocados on her ranch, and coaches swimming for the Special Olympics.



BETH PRATT is NWF's California Director and loves frogs, pika and wandering in Yosemite's backcountry. She has worked in environmental leadership roles for almost twenty years, and in two of the country’s largest national parks: Yosemite and Yellowstone. Before joining NWF in 2011, she worked on sustainability and climate change programs for Xanterra Parks & Resorts in Yellowstone as its Director of Environmental Affairs. Prior to her role in Yellowstone, for nine years she served as Vice President/CFO for the non-profit Yosemite Association. In 2007, she traveled to Japan as part of a Rotary exchange to study business, sustainability, and national parks. Her work has been featured in *Sustainable Industries*, *Fast Company*, and *Sierra Magazine*. Beth earned degrees from the University of Massachusetts at Boston in management and biological anthropology, obtained an MBA from Regis University, and is a LEED AP. Beth lives outside of Yosemite with her dogs Tioga and Dante, two cats, five fish, and the many frogs who frequent her backyard frog pond.



ELIZABETH SARMIENTO currently works at Acterra, a Palo Alto-based non-profit environmental organization. She is the Outreach Coordinator for Acterra’s home energy conservation program Green@Home. A native of Honduras, Elizabeth grew up with a love and appreciation of nature. She graduated with a B.S. in Environmental Studies from San José State University (SJSU). Her diverse experience includes: Director of SJSU’s Environmental Resource Center, working as an immigrants rights advocate, environmental youth education, water conservation education in Santa Clara and San Benito counties, and served on the City of Mountain View’s Sustainability Task Force.



EMILYN SHEFFIELD is a Professor of Recreation and Parks Management at California State University, Chico where more than 500 students are preparing for careers in hospitality, parks, recreation and tourism. Since 1986 she has worked with partners to connect people to the parks and special places that enhance their lives. Her applied research projects and high-energy presentations help natural resource leaders and their partners respond more effectively to changing demographic and lifestyle trends. She is currently investigating community engagement, volunteerism, and conservation stewardship with university service learning throughout California.





MANAV THAPAR is the project manager for special Initiatives with the Foundation for Youth Investment and has 15 years of experience working with youth in the wilderness. Manav developed his interest and expertise in youth development through his work as an instructor for Outward Bound, as a residential counselor for Seneca Center, and as an outdoor program developer for the San Francisco Police Department. He has devoted thousands of hours volunteering in mentoring and tutoring Native American Youth, raising funds and building schools for Mayan children in Guatemala and for children living without electricity El Salvador. He is an enthusiastic rock climber, surfer, snowboarder, and most importantly a steward of our wilderness. Manav holds a Master of Arts degree in Psychology from the John F. Kennedy University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology, with a minor in African American studies, from the University of California, Davis. Manav speaks Hindi and Norwegian, and he spent his childhood exploring the outdoors in India, Norway, and California. He strongly believes in building communities and preserving our wilderness through investing in our youth.



CHRISTINE VOLKER currently is a SVP of a major financial institution. Her career has brought her foreign assignments and travel on four continents. She formed and managed start-up units, worked in Investor Relations, and led a global staff of 70 through three mergers. Christine is an unpublished writer and inveterate traveler. Her love of nature began during childhood vacations in rural New Hampshire. She loves all animals, but birds (Christine is a beginner bird watcher) and big cats occupy first place. With a new half-time work schedule Christine will be investing energy in environmental pursuits and has writing projects planned with environmental themes. She obtained her B.A. in Spanish and MLS from University at Albany – SUNY and her M.B.A. from U.C. Berkeley. She speaks Spanish, Italian and rusty German. Christine resides in Richmond, California with her husband, an environmental attorney. She has two stepsons.

