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**COUNTDOWN TO RALEIGH!**

We're getting close to this year's conference in Raleigh, North Carolina! More than 1000 wildlifers pre-registered. If you haven't registered, yet, there's still time – just click [here!](#) If you arrive on Friday or Saturday, please plan to stop by the Leadership Institute Alumni and Friends Reception at 8pm on Saturday to reconnect with other graduates of the program, visit with members of Council, and meet this year's participants.

The next morning, Sunday, there will be a plenary session on Partnerships Across the Spectrum of Wildlife Governance, featuring Shane Mahoney (President and CEO of Conservation Visions, Inc.) and John Beck (Department of Labor Relations, Michigan State University). Immediately following the Plenary, Jim Nichols, the 2015 Aldo Leopold Award recipient, will deliver a talk titled, On the Evolution of the Wildlife Profession: The Times They Are A-Changin'. This will be followed by an announcement of the winner of the 2016 Aldo Leopold Award!

This year's conference features 12 concurrent sessions (up from 8 just two years ago), a daily plenary or keynote, and three poster sessions for a total of more than 600 educational opportunities. And the concurrent sessions will end at 5 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday so that you can start to wind down for the evening activities with a one-hour networking event in the Members Activity Center. Finally, there are five new events this year:

- Wetlands Working Group meeting
- Biological Diversity Working Group meeting
- University of Montana networking reception
- Virginia Tech networking reception
- Texas A&M networking reception

For more information about this year's conference visit the [conference website](#). Hope to see you there!

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW? AN INTERVIEW WITH VALORIE TITUS

*Read about what a Leadership Institute alum is up to now and what they have achieved since they participated.*



Valorie Titus is a familiar name to alumni of The Wildlife Society (TWS) Leadership Institute (LI). She cheerfully coordinates alumni updates for the LI newsletter multiple times a year, one of many activities she voluntarily manages. Many of us may not know her passions include herpetiles and wildlife students. These pursuits motivated Valorie to achieve several milestones in her career since joining LI in 2012. She instigated and now oversees several ground-breaking research projects.

Following her participation in LI, Valorie completed her PhD at Binghamton University, New York in 2013. Her dissertation was on movement, connectivity, and management of endangered Eastern tiger salamanders. Her research applied landscape genetics to determine the population status of these salamanders in New York and New Jersey. She found that populations of this salamander species had unique genetic groupings. Individuals within populations were closely related and had relatively low genetic variation. However, gene flow existed at regional levels. Valorie's findings demonstrated the importance of conserving quality habitat and corridors to protect Eastern tiger salamanders.

Valorie also served as a post-doctoral contractor for The Wildlife Conservation Society. Her projects included researching herpetofauna of the Bronx River and assessing effects of bison reintroduction on prairie ecosystems. Valorie taught several biological courses at American Public University and State University of New York, Cortland. Currently, Valorie is an Assistant Professor of Natural Resources Management at Green Mountain College in Vermont. She has been selected as the Program Director for the Natural Resources Management major. Valorie is spear-heading critical studies on wildlife health. These projects involve research on numerous taxa including turtles, snakes, amphibians, and coyotes. Valorie is developing an important long-term monitoring program for wood turtles, which are being reviewed by USFWS for listing under the Endangered Species Act.



Her enthusiasm for The Wildlife Society has been contagious to her students. In addition to all her other responsibilities, Valorie will advise the newly forming TWS student chapter. Her students placed third in the Northeast Section quiz bowl at conclave last year. They have competed in two student conclaves and experienced the annual TWS conference. Valorie and her Green Mountain College students plan to attend the conference in Raleigh this October. At the conference, Valorie will become a TWS Fellow. This prestigious award recognizes her outstanding contributions to the wildlife field. The designation is for life. Fewer than 200 people are TWS Fellows, including Aldo Leopold and past Presidents of TWS.

The Leadership Institute was very influential in shaping Valorie's professional career. She became a more effective officer for TWS because of what she learned through LI. Valorie served as President of the New York State Chapter of TWS in 2015-2016. She is involved in several TWS working groups including Urban Wildlife and Wildlife Diseases. Valorie also contributes to the Partners for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Society for the Study of Reptiles and Amphibians, American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, Society for Conservation Biology, and the Herpetologists' League. The Leadership Institute equipped Valorie with skills that improved her teaching and student mentoring abilities. She has been able to share her skills with fellow officers and students. Valorie enjoys passing on what she has learned because she wants to see others excel in the wildlife field.

For her future goals, Valorie wants to continue growing in her wildlife career. She aims to be the Northeast Section representative to TWS Council before long. She wants to become more involved at the Section level of TWS. She desires to improve the Natural Resources Department at Green Mountain College and make the program the best it can be while training her students to be leaders in their field. She plans to secure grant funding to jumpstart her research program. Leadership Institute alumni interested in collaborating with Valorie or learning more about her work are welcome to contact her [valorie.titus@greenmtn.edu](mailto:valorie.titus@greenmtn.edu).

When asked what advice she has for other LI alumni, Valorie stated, "Stay involved with TWS. Not only do you have a group of passionate, like-minded folks with which to work, but you have a group of people that want what's best for wildlife and overall conservation. Without groups like TWS, we wouldn't have the power to change the world for the better."

## **LEADERSHIP TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Emerging Wildlife Conservation Leaders**

The Emerging Wildlife Conservation Leaders (EWCL) training program helps jump-start early career conservation professionals through a combination of skills training, networking opportunities with peers and established practitioners and the completion of a global wildlife conservation initiative. EWCL training addresses a long-standing need for capable leaders in the conservation field who are equipped with a full arsenal of skills to launch well-rounded and

successful conservation campaigns and build successful leadership careers in the wildlife conservation profession.

The two-year training program entails a week of training each year, as well as a final two-day training and graduation ceremony. Throughout the two years, participants will work in teams to develop, implement and evaluate a wildlife conservation project in the United States or globally.

Applications will be posted in October of 2016 and for the 2017-2018 Class. Learn more [here](#).

### **[Leading From Within](#)**

Leading from Within is a five-month ICL intensive program of workshops, coaching, and peer learning. Develop a leadership style that takes advantage of your unique personal traits. Be ready to tackle any situation through greater awareness of your individual strengths and confidence to impact others. Develop life-long leadership skills to create productive teams, address conflicts, and build the trusting relationships we all need to succeed.

The application deadline is September 15, 2016. Learn more [here](#).

### **ALUMNI NEWS**

**Mindy Rice ('09)** left her position with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to be the spatial ecologist for U.S. Fish and Wildlife's inventory and monitoring program of the National Wildlife Refuge System. She'll still be based in Fort Collins, which is the national office for the Refuge System. Congrats, Mindy!

### **CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK!**

Did you know the LI have our own group and our own page to share information and updates with each other? Please find us at <https://www.facebook.com/LITWS/> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TWSLIAIums/>!