

**Editor:** Laura Bies

**LI Newsletter Subcommittee Chair:** Valorie Titus

**Reporter:** Stephanie Steinhoff

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**CLASS OF 2016 SELECTED**

Congratulations to the participants who have been chosen to attend the 2016 TWS Leadership Institute! These promising early-career wildlife professionals, selected from a competitive pool of applicants, will participate in a variety of distance learning projects over the coming summer. The program culminates in October, with intensive hands-on mentoring activities and leadership workshops during the 2016 TWS Annual Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina.

“The Wildlife Society established the Leadership Institute in 2006 to enrich the future of our membership and our profession,” says TWS Executive Director Ken Williams. “The program has garnered widespread support because it has been very successful in preparing our early-career members to adopt active professional leadership roles both within and outside TWS.”

A committee of TWS members and staff selected participants based on the applicants’ academic record, demonstrated leadership capability, and demonstrated level of excellence either in their current position or in their position as a leader of a Chapter or Section of The Wildlife Society.

This year’s participants are:

- Adam Ahlers, Kansas State University
- Krisha Faw, F&W Forestry, Georgia
- Shelby Hiestand, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Jennifer Kanine, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, Michigan
- Brian Kiss, Wildlife and Fisheries Branch, Manitoba Sustainable Development
- Andrew Little, University of Georgia

- Rebecca Mowry, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
- Anthony Roberts, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Maryland
- Anthony Sipes, Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Julia Smith, Arizona Game and Fish Department

“Many young wildlife professionals entering leadership positions have not necessarily been trained in the skills needed for successful management of large groups or complicated programs”, says Laura Bies, coordinator of the Leadership Institute. “The Leadership Institute introduces these exceptional young people to the management, mentoring, and organizational skills they need to become exceptional leaders.”

From May through October, participants will complete a wide variety of exercises, which include reading and reflection on leadership topics, presenting to peer groups, leading seminars, and developing summary documents regarding their professional leadership goals. During TWS’ Annual Conference in Raleigh, the participants will meet for focused analytical discussions, serve as mentors for students, be mentored by Institute alumni and Council members, and attend Council meetings.

### LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE: 10 YEARS LATER

In 2006, with the help of a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, TWS launched the Leadership Institute. Developed out of a concern that the leaders within our profession were retiring at a greater rate than they were being produced, and powered by a small committee of TWS members interested in leadership development, LI has grown to count more than 100 wildlife professionals as alumni of the programs, including many that have gone on to leadership positions within TWS chapters and sections, as well as wildlife agencies and organizations around the U.S. and Canada. Here’s a look at the last 10 years, by the numbers:

- **Alumni** – Through the 10 classes of the Leadership Institute, we’ve provided early career leadership training to a total of 110 wildlife professionals! Seventy-seven have been women. And while most have been from the U.S., four have been from the Canadian Section.
- **Committee** – When LI started, the committee that developed the curriculum consisted of 9 members. Today, a committee of 55 TWS members, many of whom are alumni of the program, are integral to it’s success, helping to continually improve the curriculum, review applications and choose participants each year, and lead discussions at the Annual Conference.
- **Applications** – Competition is tight every year, but the most applications received for a single class was in 2011, when nearly 60 applications came in - it probably didn’t hurt that the conference was in Hawaii that year!
- **Assignments** – the first year, participants completed three assignments. Today, participants do five assignments (plus an optional, post-conference assignment) and present the results of one of those in person during the Council meeting.

Thanks to all of those who have supported the LI during the last 10 years. Here's to the next 10 years!

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW? AN INTERVIEW WITH RAQUEL WERTSBAUGH

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

Raquel Wertsbaugh (Class of 2006) served as the wildlife conservation biologist for Colorado Parks and Wildlife for 8 years, based in Salida, CO. In that position, she made a positive difference for numerous at-risk species and coordinated community involvement in wildlife conservation efforts. She documented expanded geographical range of several species such as white-tailed ptarmigan, which may be shifting habitat use in relation to climate change. Raquel also discovered new populations of boreal toads. Knowledge of these remote, isolated



populations is vital for promoting species viability across the landscape through preservation of chytrid free sites. In addition, Raquel collected important baseline information on bats in the wake of white-nose syndrome. The data she was able to capture provided a better understanding of bat distribution prior to potential white-nose syndrome outbreaks. To raise public awareness about at-risk wildlife species, Raquel spear-headed integrated partner efforts to improve wildlife habitat and implement conservation actions. Raquel resourcefully created wildlife volunteer programs for successful implementation of cost-effective conservation efforts.

Alongside all her wildlife biologist responsibilities, Raquel served on the board of the Colorado Chapter of The Wildlife Society (CCTWS) for 4 years, both as an at-large representative and chapter secretary. She even stepped up as student chapter liaison for Western State College at the time. Raquel went above and beyond every year in planning the annual chapter meeting. Her experience organizing top-notch plenaries and technical sessions was a skill she taught other board members. Raquel had a knack for recruiting new board members through mentoring relationships. Recruitment to the CCTWS board was a pivotal need because of biennial turnover. CCTWS acknowledged Raquel's hard work and dedication by making her a co-recipient of the Chapter service award in 2014.

Raquel's thriving leadership as a wildlife biologist and CCTWS board member demonstrated her ability to benefit wildlife programs at wide-reaching scales. Colorado Parks and Wildlife recognized her talent by designating her as the statewide Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP) Manager in 2014. Colorado Natural Areas Program has the mission to identify, monitor, and support the conservation of Colorado's most significant natural features, which include rare

plants, wildlife, plant communities, geology, and fossils. Raquel is the primary leader of this legislatively mandated program. In her position, Raquel manages a registry of 93 designated state natural areas, performs regular monitoring on state natural areas, works on new designations, manages a small staff and a large cadre of volunteer stewards, coordinates with innumerable landowners and partners, and facilitates a 7 member Governor appointed board. CNAP is the only program within Colorado state government with an emphasis on rare plants. Much of Raquel's time is spent working with USFWS and other partners as the state's representative on rare and endangered plant conservation. Raquel applied what she learned through the Leadership Institute and expanded her sphere of influence in the wildlife field into the realm of ecosystem management.

Raquel's greatest goal within her wildlife career is to make significant and successful contributions towards wildlife conservation in Colorado while being a positive role model and leader. Her current goals include:

- 1) Achieving better work-life balance
- 2) Increasing her understanding and knowledge of managing land more holistically and helping pass on that knowledge on to others
- 3) Contributing towards collaborative efforts that help increase wildlife professionals' understanding and connection with agriculture and private landowners.



Raquel explains how she plans to reach her goals: "My current position is not a traditional wildlife job and encompasses many other natural resource fields; ecology, botany, geology, etc. It's a great opportunity to immerse myself in new challenges and learn new things. I hope to use the experience to think bigger and have the ability to look at and manage landscapes as a whole, integrating my knowledge and background in wildlife conservation."

Raquel offers advice for other Leadership Institute Alumni: "Continue to build upon and refresh your leadership skills. Set goals, frequently refine your goals, and don't forget to celebrate your successes. Even if you think you're too busy, don't forget to 'sharpen the saw.' I personally like to review Steven Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* at least every 6 months."

## ALUMNI NEWS

**Megan Clayton** ('12) and her husband Brent welcomed a baby boy, Carter James, on January 16th.

## EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS FOR THE EARLY CAREER PROFESSIONAL WORKING GROUP

The Early Career Professional Working Group has made great strides in supporting early career wildlifera since its inception through the Leadership Institute in 2010. We have helped create several successful workshops, symposiums, and associated meetings at TWS annual conferences over the past 5 years, and will host a workshop this year on the essentials of managing conflict in environmental disputes. The first ten ECPWG members to register for this upcoming workshop will receive a \$20 subsidy to attend, so join our group and [register today](#). We are also working with TWS staff to launch a special edition of the eWildlifer that will go exclusively to early career TWS members and ECPWG members. This edition will include short articles and online resources specifically geared toward early career issues such as work-family balance, field and job application tips, and leadership development. This special edition will begin its weekly distribution this July. And that's not all! We are also working with TWS staff and the Certification Review Board to offer a scholarship to ECP members who are just short on credits to attain their Associate or Certified Wildlife Biologist certificate. This scholarship has been on our bucket list since our formation, and we are excited about its development.

These projects are just the beginning. If you want to keep posted about their progress, have a desire as an experienced wildlifer to inform our projects, or a desire as a new wildlifer to benefit from them, please join our working group! We have many opportunities to elevate your career and profession. In fact, we are currently recruiting for our next round of elections! Help us create a better wildlife profession from the ground up by leading the way - contact Maggi Sliwinski, ECPWG Chair, at [maggi.sliwinski@gmail.com](mailto:maggi.sliwinski@gmail.com) for more details.

## 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/TWSLIAIAlums/>!