

NATIONAL CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

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# WHO'S WHO INAUGURAL EDITION

*Celebrating 10 years  
of Conservation Leadership Excellence*

2005 – 2015



## NATIONAL CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

### PURPOSE AND VISION

The NCLI successfully defies the ordinary, executing a premier executive leadership development program that is one of the most far-reaching professional development initiatives ever undertaken within the natural resource conservation community.

The Institute is designed to be a world-class comprehensive learning experience serving diverse conservation organizations throughout the nation. The unique curriculum is intended to challenge assumptions, pique critical thinking, foster high-trust relationships, and strengthen confidence with the objective of preserving the legacy of our natural resources by developing extraordinary conservation leadership.

The NCLI vision states that “Because of the National Conservation Leadership Institute, conservation leadership in the future will be widely regarded as one of America’s greatest strengths. From the smallest government agency to the largest conservation federation, there will be a shared confidence that our legacy is safeguarded by extraordinary leaders with a conservation mission.”

For more information about becoming a NCLI Fellow or supporting the Institute visit:

[www.conservationleadership.org](http://www.conservationleadership.org)

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## **NCLI Who's Who**

The following individuals are a sampling of the fellows that have graduated from the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI). They are representative of the type of professional and dedicated conservation leaders the Institute has produced since 2005. With a ten-year history and a network of more than 300 NCLI fellows in leadership positions within industry, agencies and NGOs, the conservation and proper management of our nation's natural resources and wildlife will be ensured for decades to come.

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# THE STORY BEHIND THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

On the evening of May 17, 2003, John Baughman, Bob Model, Lowell Baier, Steve Mealey, and I were sitting beside the fireplace at Mooncrest Ranch just west of Cody, Wyoming. The Ranch is nestled between Rattlesnake Mountain and Logan Mountain on the doorstep of Yellowstone National Park. Reflecting on the vision and leadership necessary to establish the nation's first National Park in 1872, our discussion shifted to the leadership required to address the conservation challenges of the future.

All of us had years of experience in conservation, and all of us had some gray hair. We realized that the baby boomer generation was quickly reaching retirement age. Along with the retirement of conservation professionals was a loss of institutional memory, the connection to our hunting heritage, and the practical experience that could not be taught in the universities across the nation. With an estimated loss of half of the nation's conservation leaders in the next decade, we decided that something must be done to impart leadership skills to the nation's up and coming fish and wildlife professionals.

Some time later, an expanded group including Jimmy Bullock, Max Peterson and Rick Lemon, met for dinner at the Monocle Restaurant in Washington, DC. There we brainstormed ideas that eventually led to the formation of the National Conservation Leadership Institute.

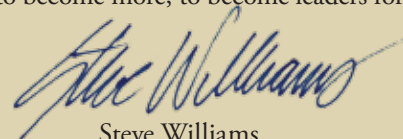
We envisioned a world-class leadership-training program that would bring together individuals from state and federal natural resource agencies, conservation organizations, Native American tribes, and industries that use our natural resources. With the expertise of Sally and Dwight Guynn, who led the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Management Assistance Team, and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, we constructed a curriculum to immerse the Institute's future fellows in the principles and practices of adaptive leadership.

The establishment of the National Conservation Leadership Institute from scratch was no easy task. Generous contributions from the Boone and Crockett Club and Keith Campbell Foundation combined with financial contributions from national hunter-conservation organizations and individuals from across the country provided the seed money to launch our vision. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies provided invaluable in-kind donations to see that vision realized. The Boone and Crockett Club, founded by none other than conservation leader Theodore Roosevelt, has been the major, sustaining contributor throughout the life of the program.

Now 10 years later, the National Conservation Leadership Institute is a resounding success with more than 350 fellows working across the country in conservation leadership positions. A few individuals hatched the idea but the success of the program was assured by hundreds of others—the Institute staff, the Institute's Board of Directors, funders, professional and volunteer instructors, peer coaches, and the Institute's alumni. Collectively, our actions and dreams inspired others to become more, to become leaders for conservation.

*“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”*

— JOHN QUINCY ADAMS



Steve Williams  
National Conservation Leadership Institute  
Chair, Board of Directors

*Theodore Roosevelt making a speech  
Yellowstone National Park, 1903*



Lowell Baier



John Baughman



Jimmy Bullock



Max Peterson



Rick Lemon



Steve Mealey



Bob Model



Steve Williams





**IN MEMORY OF DAVID GOAD**  
National Conservation Leadership Institute  
COHORT I

CONSERVATIONIST, LEADER, FRIEND.

In loving memory of David Goad - July 17, 1958 - October 31, 2014



As an inaugural member of NCLI, David Goad was known for his sound leadership and keen awareness for overcoming adaptive challenges. One of David's strongest traits was his passion for conservation and partnership building. He was relentless working to remove barriers between programs and divisions. David utilized these skills during his career with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission as he worked to transform the agency from a 'hook and bullet' agency to one that focused on conservation of all species. David continued his partnership building with numerous technical committees, efforts on the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and finally during his position as Deputy Assistant Director for the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Program with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. David challenged others to find common ground for the greater good and exemplified this in his own actions.



On a personal note, David always greeted others with a smile and his warm-hearted nature. He never met a stranger and was always willing to lend his expertise and assistance. Most importantly, he was a great listener and never hesitated to listen to what others had to say. As an avid hunter and angler, David loved the outdoors and enjoyed nothing more than sharing these experiences with others, especially his children. He knew that passion for conservation was ignited by a personal connection with the outdoors. Colleague, leader, mentor, conservationist, and friend are just a few of the ways that David will be remembered.





## IN MEMORY OF KEVIN HISEY

National Conservation Leadership Institute  
COHORT I

AN INTROSPECTIVE, POWERFUL FORCE.

In loving memory of Kevin Daniel Hisey - April 3, 1970 - February 15, 2015

Kevin was an inaugural member of the NCLI's Cohort 1, and was awarded a 2006/07 Harvard Fellow. In addition to Kevin's vision for conservation, he brought to Cohort 1, the quiet and unassuming nature that was his trademark. But his steadfast approach to grappling with adaptive challenges benefited everyone within his sphere of influence. He was the person you counted on for sound advice on tough issues when passions and tempers were high.

Kevin was Executive Secretary of the Pope & Young Club. He worked for the Club since 1992 and led the organization for the last 15 years; his tenure in that role being the longest in the Club's history.

He was a passionate bowhunter and conservationist, dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of bowhunting, and promoting the ethics of fair chase. By special invitation, Kevin attended the 2005 White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation and the 2008 White House Conference on Wildlife Policy.

Kevin's love for conservation was equaled only to that of his love for his family. He was a devoted and loving husband and father, commonly saying that his kids were his greatest joys and blessings.





NCLI Cohort 1

## DOUG AUSTEN

American Fisheries Society  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

As the current Executive Director of the American Fisheries Society, Dr. Doug Austen brings to the Society over 30 years of fisheries and conservation experience including holding various offices at the state and regional level of AFS. Prior to AFS, Doug served with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as the first national coordinator for the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, an expansive effort to support conservation planning and science at a regional scale throughout much of North America. From 2004 to 2010, Doug served as executive director of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. During that time he co-chaired the work group that wrote the first National Fish Habitat Action Plan. He later served as vice-chair of the National Fish Habitat Board. Most of his career, though, was spent in Illinois working in various roles with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and as a research biologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey. During those years he helped develop the Illinois Fisheries Analysis System (FAS) and the Multi-state Aquatic Resources Information System, both early, innovative approaches to computerized collection, storage and analysis of fisheries information. Working with Dr. Peter Bayley, their research team also completed extensive research on sampling selectivity, particularly with boat electrofishing, gill nets and trap nets. Doug has also been an adjunct faculty with the University of Illinois. Doug received his Ph.D. from Iowa State University where he worked on lake fish assemblages, M.S. from Virginia Tech working on smallmouth bass in the New River and B.S. degree from South Dakota State University.



### ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

We've long recognized that the challenges of effectively conserving our natural resources need to be addressed at multiple scales. At the local scale we get work accomplished on the ground through acquisitions, easements, habitat improvement or regulations. Moving up in scale, we focus on activities such as watershed restoration, linkages of conservation areas to create corridors, and we consider ecosystem protection and restoration. At the largest scale, we think about the impacts of climate change and large-scale human development impacts upon the long-term integrity of our natural systems. It is at this large scale that the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) are focused. The LCC's are a large

and comprehensive, multi-agency approach to addressing conservation planning and supportive science at a large, regional scale with coverage that includes most of North America including extensive areas of the U.S. Pacific Islands and territories. Twenty-two LCC's were established, each with its own steering committee, science teams and other organizational constructs. Managing this process and building a sense of order out of this seemingly chaotic effort was clearly an adaptive challenge. The entire effort recognized the need to have national coordination but in a manner that supported but not hindered the creativity and ownership of each individual LCC. This resulted in development of a national council and key structures to bring together LCC staff and partners, to develop national standards to ensure an appropriate level of consistency, and coordinate science. We also created a national LCC workshop that has now grown to be a major bi-annual meeting of conservationists working at this important scale.

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# JENNIFER BATTSON WARREN

Missouri Division of Conservation

WILDLIFE CHIEF

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jennifer Battson Warren started her career with the Missouri Department of Conservation in 1992 when she began working with the Forestry Division's burgeoning Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program. That led her to a position as an Assistant Resource Forester in 1996. In 2000, she joined the newly formed Private Land Services Division and spent the next five years delivering forest and wildlife technical advice and training to private landowners and USDA field office staff. She was promoted to Wildlife Regional Supervisor in 2007, Wildlife Unit Chief in 2011, and Wildlife Division Chief in 2012. She is currently responsible for long-range planning, policy, and program development for a division of 208 staff, as well as overseeing statewide and regional programs for wildlife and land management.

Jennifer has a diverse background in forestry and wildlife management on public and private land. During her professional career, she has worked with multiple agencies in diverse administrative and field program roles including forester, information technology/GIS technician, private land conservationist, and program specialist. She has always been an outdoor enthusiast and credits her parents and grandparents for her sound conservation values and work ethic. She enjoys turkey hunting, frogging, crappie fishing, and hiking. Jennifer received her BS from the University of Missouri in Forestry in 1995, was named Conservation Federation of Missouri's Professional Conservationist of the Year in 2005, and became an NCLI Fellow in 2012. Jennifer resides in Jefferson City, Missouri with her husband, Robert Warren, and three children, Celia, Claire, and Stewart Battson.



NCLI Cohort 6

## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

When Jennifer joined Wildlife Division as a Wildlife Regional Supervisor she observed the division had difficulty communicating consistent program priorities and goals. The division was missing an updated framework for programs that addressed new priorities. It had difficulty devising or supporting new initiatives that tackled emerging issues and program needs. Measuring budget and program achievements under newly established Department priorities was also difficult. Subsequently, regional staff developed work plans independently, without programmatic alignment, and had difficulty adapting to changing priorities or providing coordinated and strategic leadership. This hindered the division's ability to develop a vision for its role within the Department and how it could contribute to its success.

Jennifer's NCLI adaptive challenge has been to help her leadership team fortify Wildlife Division's sense of identity and

importance; facilitate the creation of relevant programs with clear goals; and reaffirm beneficial relationships that inspire coordination and success within and outside the division and Department. She believes that a well-organized, responsive Wildlife Division places the Department in a better position to deal with resource challenges like declining quantity and quality of wildlife habitats; disease and environmental threats to wildlife and their habitats; and declining citizen interest in wildlife, their habitats, and outdoor pursuits.

Jennifer's NCLI training proved invaluable as she navigated through this challenge and others. NCLI gave her a deeper understanding and appreciation for thinking politically, building alliances, and holding steady on tough issues. With other NCLI fellows, she has a common language for defining and addressing today's conservation challenges.

*NCLI gave [Jennifer] a deeper understanding and appreciation for thinking politically, building alliances, and holding steady on tough issues.*





NCLI Cohort 3

## BOB BROSCHEID

Colorado Parks and Wildlife Division

DIRECTOR

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Bob Broscheid was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and moved to Arizona where he attended Arizona State University and received a Bachelors of Science degree in Wildlife Conservation Biology. He worked for the Arizona Game and Fish Department from 1994-2013 where he served in many field and leadership positions, including Assistant Director for Wildlife Management and Deputy Director. Bob was hired as the Director of Colorado Parks and Wildlife in 2013 and continues to serve in this leadership role today. Bob is an avid hunter and fisherman, and enjoys participating in all forms of outdoor sports and recreation. He is grateful and proud to have been chosen to attend NCLI as a member of Cohort 3 and continues to cherish the close relationships that were formed with his peer group and other cohort members.

### ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Bob's NCLI adaptive challenge is to provide the leadership within Colorado Parks and Wildlife to implement necessary strategic and operational goals of a newly merged agency. In 2011, Colorado Division

of Wildlife and Colorado State Parks was legislatively merged into the Parks and Wildlife Division, bringing together vastly different cultures of employees, constituents, budgets and Commissions.

*In 2011, Colorado Division of Wildlife and Colorado State Parks was legislatively merged into the Parks and Wildlife Division, bringing together vastly different cultures of employees, constituents, budgets and Commissions.*



# JORDAN BURROUGHS

Michigan State University  
WILDLIFE OUTREACH SPECIALIST

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jordan Pusateri Burroughs is the nation's first Boone and Crockett Club academic specialist. Her position is a jointly funded partnership between Michigan State University Extension and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, with operation funding coming from an endowment started by the Boone and Crockett Club. As a wildlife outreach specialist, Jordan strives to bridge the science-policy interface by creating and disseminating knowledge to improve stakeholders' understanding of complex wildlife-related issues. Jordan effectively engages the conservation and environmental communities at the local, state and national level, providing them with reliable, science-based information to facilitate more informed decision-making about wildlife populations, their habitats, and the social and economic vitality of the state, region, and nation. Jordan received her M.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife from Michigan State University and her B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife from University of Missouri-Columbia.



## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

State wildlife commissions were created in the early 20th century by hunter-conservationists as a way to protect wildlife from pervasive market hunting. Today, the policy and management responsibilities of state wildlife commissions vary from setting method and manner of take and bag limits to mapping broader management goals. Controversy often surrounds commissions and their decision-making space and process; they can be perceived as partisan, opaque, or unrepresentative of non-consumptive interests or values.

Many of the major issues commissions tackle require a balance of technical expertise and social values and priorities. Changing American values toward wildlife and urbanization trends have led to a more direct democracy and expanded collaborative efforts where stakeholders work to generate solutions to complex wildlife problems and make proposals and recommendations to state wildlife commissions, agency chiefs or directors.

In recent years, many states have endorsed this collaborative concept through their growing use of citizen (or stakeholder) committees (CCs). CCs often provide recommendations on various programs/policies, identify areas agencies can be more effective and help resolve conflicts.

Challenges arise when the CC's roles,

expectations, or decision-making authorities are not clearly defined at the onset or if they change midstream. Challenges also arise when commissions devalue or fail to appropriately recognize the CC's perspectives, process or outcomes.

Has the role of state wildlife commissions changed since their inception? What role should CCs play in the future of wildlife management relative to a commission-based, decision-making process and authority? Should CC's decisions and recommendations carry more weight?

*Changing American values toward wildlife and urbanization trends have led to a more direct democracy and expanded collaborative efforts....*





NCLI Cohort 8

## DAVE CHANDA

### New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

DIRECTOR

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dave Chanda, an accredited wildlife biologist with a Masters in Public Administration, has been working in the field of wildlife management for more than 35 years. As Director of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife (NJDFW), Dave is responsible for the conservation and management of all of New Jersey's fish and wildlife resources, including the shellfish and marine fisheries resources, freshwater fisheries, upland and endangered species. Together, all of NJDFW's programs share the important responsibility of conserving the Garden State's nearly 800 species of fish and wildlife as well as the lands and waters on which they depend.

Dave's early interest was in wildlife education and communication. An accomplished writer, Dave has written thousands of wildlife-related news releases and public service announcements for the media. He has also published dozens of articles and is co-editor of *New Jersey Wildlife Profiles*, a popular book featuring the artwork of renowned New Jersey wildlife artist Carol Decker. Dave also served as a technical advisor on the Division's two Emmy award-winning television documentaries, "Bear Country - New Jersey" and "Deer Crossing" which have been broadcast on public television stations throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe. Dave currently serves as chair for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Executive Committee, is chair of AFWAs' Education, Outreach and Diversity Committee, and is a board member for the national non-profit Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation. He was also a member of NCLI Cohort 8.



#### ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Since 1961 New Jersey's voting public has demonstrated their commitment to open space through approval of 13 state-wide Open Space ballot initiatives (total \$3.32 billion). The previous 13 public open space ballot initiatives included no money for management of these land acquisitions. In addition, the conservation organizations have been steadfast in their opposition to use these funds for anything other than acquisition.

As a result of these initiatives, the amount of land assigned to the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife (NJDFW) has more than doubled and today the agency manages more than 345,000 acres of land throughout 121 Wildlife Management Areas (45 percent of NJ's state-owned public open space). The management of these

lands is entirely supported by hunting and fishing license fee revenue.

Utilizing adaptive leadership concepts to change how people and environmental organizations perceive land acquisition, NJDFW focused on generating support for changes that would provide resources to manage these lands. As agency director I had several conversations with individual leaders of these conservation groups expressing my concerns and willingness to accept any future land purchases without additional resources to properly manage them. As a result of these efforts, on November 4, 2014, NJ voters supported a constitutional amendment which dedicates 6 percent of Corporation Business Tax revenues annually to finance open space preservation (\$71 million the first year; the amount will grow to \$117 million annually in 3 years). This open space amendment allows these tax monies to be used for stewardship activities, marking the first time in state history that an open space ballot initiative included funding for conservation efforts.

*As a result of these efforts... NJ voters supported a constitutional amendment which dedicates 6 percent of Corporation Business Tax revenues annually to finance open space preservation.*

# EMILY COPE

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Emily Cope is the Deputy Director of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division. In addition to managing wildlife and freshwater fish species across the state, this division is also responsible for management of endangered species programs, wildlife management areas, heritage preserves, fish hatcheries, and state lakes. Prior to this, Emily served as Assistant Director for DNR and worked on special projects and national affairs where she negotiated real property acquisitions and secured funding for such activities. She also was responsible for identifying potential issues within DNR and working with senior staff to resolve and address such concerns. Emily's other prior positions include serving as a habitat protection coordinator, an assistant regional wildlife biologist and as the Forest Stewardship program supervisor.

Emily earned her M.S. in Wildlife Biology in 1999 from Clemson University after earning her B.S. in Wildlife Biology in 1997 also from Clemson University. She began her career with DNR in 1999 and has held numerous positions within the agency. The primary activities of her career have involved providing technical assistance to landowners, supervising habitat protection efforts across South Carolina and building partnerships to support the mission of DNR.



NCLI Cohort 1

## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

My current adaptive challenge appears to be the largest one yet. Simply put, I am working to create relevance of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division and our professional biological staff. Whether we are interacting with members of the legislature or our constituents, we have come to realize that everyone considers himself to be an expert. Between the vast array of information on the internet and the plethora of hunting and fishing shows on television, people can access fish and wildlife management information 24 hours a day. While I am an avid supporter of independent thinking, unfortunately, this readily available information is not always accurate and often leads to people without formal biological training discounting the opinions of agency biological staff. My goal

is to improve the relationships of our fish and wildlife biologists with these groups and re-establish our reputation as the best source of unbiased information available. If we are going to be effective at properly managing natural resources, we must increase our relevance with the public and become the first and most trusted source of information.

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# MICHELLE ZEUG (DOERR)

Archery Trade Association

DIRECTOR OF ARCHERY AND BOWHUNTING PROGRAMS



NCLI Cohort 2

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Michelle is the Director of Archery and Bowhunting Programs for the Archery Trade Association (ATA). Her current focus is working with retailers to help grow their recreational archery side of their business. In her role at ATA Michelle has developed and implemented many recruitment programs as well as created a strategy for communities to incorporate archery parks and programs into their recreational activities. Michelle is a USA Archery Level III instructor as well as an experienced training workshop leader. She has been recognized nationally as a leader in developing recruitment methods and programs since she came to ATA in 2003 and currently represents ATA on the Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation National Plan team. This team has developed a national plan for growing participation in shooting and hunting and has incorporated the support of the state wildlife agencies, the archery and firearms industries and all the nongovernmental organizations involved in shooting, hunting and conservation. Prior to coming to ATA Michelle was with the Minnesota DNR where her expertise was in urban deer management, deer damage control and in methods for controlling locally abundant deer populations.



*Michelle is helping retailers learn to adapt to service that is delivered by digital and social media channels which is a new business operating model for this industry.*

## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Michelle's current adaptive challenge is helping retailers take advantage of the growing interest in recreational archery. The archery industry has historically been one focused on bowhunting and retail stores have primarily offered archery and bowhunting products delivered with high levels of customer service and support. In this new role, Michelle is helping retailers learn to adapt to service that is delivered by digital and social media channels which is a new business operating model for this industry.

ATA has tested concepts and began developing a program to help retailers establish this second dimension to their existing bowhunting business. Changing the mode of business operation of an entire industry does not happen quickly and results

are not easily measured. Showing success, especially to a board of long-term industry heads, is difficult and often tied to individual success stories. Significant staff time is needed to teach individual retailers since, as independent stores, no two are alike. Tactics that each might implement immediately are rarely the same. Helping set long-term business goals is even more difficult. Some of the best work and ideas are developed by retailers for other retailers so Michelle and her ATA team involve some of the best retailers in evaluating new tools. In the end, the program's success is being built on retailers achieving success one at a time and then those retailers helping the peers.

The means for people to conduct their business, especially retail customers, is changing and the archery industry has to change with it to survive. Change will happen slowly but, as long as we create the tools that retailers will understand and as long as Michelle and her team help retailers through this transition, the industry will not only advance in the 21st century but will successfully bring archery into the mainstream of recreational activities.

# CYNTHIA DOHNER

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Cynthia (Cindy) Dohner was named Southeast Regional Director in October 2009. She provides vision and leadership for the southeastern United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. As the Regional Director she oversees the management of 130 national wildlife refuges covering five million acres, fourteen national fish hatcheries, five fishery assistance offices, six migratory bird field offices, and sixteen ecological services field offices. She also serves as the Department of Interior's Authorized Official for the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration and oversees the restoration of the Everglades and the Gulf of Mexico. Before becoming the Regional Director, she served as Deputy Regional Director for the Southeast Region. Throughout her 23 year career with the USFWS, she has held positions that include serving as Assistant Regional Director for Ecological Services in Atlanta, and the Branch Chief for Recovery and Consultation in the Washington Office. She has also worked for three State Agencies, two other Federal agencies and in the private sector. She has a B.S. in Marine Biology and a Masters degree in Fisheries and Aquaculture.



NCLI Cohort 2

## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is one of the agencies responsible for implementing the Endangered Species Act. Recently, we faced a conservation tsunami in the southeast region. The challenge was clear when legal settlements and petitions required the ESA review of over 450 imperiled species. We needed a new path for conservation that resulted in less regulatory burden on the landscape and more conservation for fish and wildlife. This workload would subsume our people and challenge the way we work with states, federal agencies, conservation groups, utilities, highway departments and private landowners as we conserve species. The Service works closely with states and others to conserve imperiled species and relies on them to assist with implementing conservation actions. We needed a more creative approach to conservation fortified by high trust and the use of ESA's flexibilities. That reality led the USFWS to develop an At-Risk species

initiative with the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

We wanted to change the game and solidify the credibility of our conservation work with partners. In just a few years, this new way of working together has helped us preclude the need to list more than 40 species like the Georgia Aster and five Alabama crayfish.

SEAFWA now leads the effort and the partnerships are flourishing. Conservation is being delivered where it has the greatest impact to conserve fish and wildlife for future generations. We are changing how we work together and how legislators, landowners, and business leaders see the USFWS's work to conserve imperiled fish and wildlife. The result: greater conservation success, less regulatory burden, more trust and stronger relationships, more partners working on fish and wildlife stewardship, and increased voluntary conservation.

*Recently, we faced a conservation tsunami. The challenge was clear when legal settlements and petitions required the ESA review of over 450 imperiled species.*



# CRAIG FLEENER

State of Alaska

GOVERNOR'S ARCTIC POLICY ADVISOR



NCLI Cohort 5

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Craig is Gwich'in from Fort Yukon, Alaska. He currently serves as the Arctic Policy Advisor to the Governor of Alaska. His varied career includes providing policy oversight on wildlife and subsistence management, developing hunting regulations on the Alaska Board of Game, participating in Arctic Policy forums, presenting legislative briefings, and conducting outreach. Additionally, he served from 2008-2010 as the Director of the Division of Subsistence. And served as the first Director of Natural Resources for the Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments in Fort Yukon; he served as the regional biologist for several years and as the Chief Administrative Officer until 2007 managing health care, education, and natural resources.

In the past he's served as Deputy Commissioner - Alaska Department of Fish & Game; Director of Division of Subsistence - Alaska Department of Fish & Game; Deputy Mayor - City of Fort Yukon; Tribal Council Member - Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich'in Tribal Government; Committee Member - National Academy of Sciences, assist in the development of a long-range Western Alaska Salmon Research and Restoration Plan; Co-chair - Yukon River Panel; Board Member - International Porcupine Caribou Board; Chairman - Eastern Interior Regional Federal Subsistence Advisory Council; Board Member - Alaska Board of Game; Director and Chairman - Gwich'in Council International which is a permanent participant to the Arctic Council; and, as a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Bison Specialty Group.

He has a Master of Arts, graduating with honors, in Intelligence Studies from American Military University. He graduated from the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 1999 with a B.Sc. in Natural Resources Management and completed substantial work towards an M.Sc. in Wildlife Biology through the Resources and the Environment Program at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada.

Lastly, he has spent more than 28 years in the military with four years in the U.S. Marine Corps and 24 years in the Alaska National Guard. He is a Major and the Senior Intelligence Officer with the 176th Wing at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

My adaptive challenge continues to be increasing the involvement of Alaska Native people's into state government, including increased involvement in cooperatively managing Alaska's wildlife and fisheries. Currently, as a

member of Governor Bill Walker's leadership team, I am very well positioned to assist in developing the processes necessary to improve the state/tribal relationships in Alaska. I look forward to providing updates as we continue down this adaptive and challenging path.



*My adaptive challenge continues to be increasing the involvement of Alaska Native people's into state government, including increased involvement in cooperatively managing Alaska's wildlife and fisheries.*

# JONATHAN GASSETT

## Wildlife Management Institute

SOUTHEASTERN FIELD REPRESENTATIVE AND  
INDUSTRY/AGENCY LIAISON

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dr. Jonathan Gasset is the Southeastern Regional Field Representative with the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI), where he assists state and federal fish and wildlife agencies and other partners in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of large-scale conservation initiatives and programs. He also serves as the national liaison between state and federal fish and wildlife agencies and the sporting manufacturing industries that provide conservation funding through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) Program. Gasset comes to WMI recently from the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR), where he served as Commissioner for eight years. As Commissioner, he provided general supervision and control of all activities, functions, appointments, and employees of the KDFWR. Prior to his appointment as Commissioner, Dr. Gasset served as Wildlife Division Director and Big Game Coordinator with the KDFWR. Gasset also owns and operates a private consulting business, Southern Wildlife Resources, LLC, which provides wildlife management expertise to private, corporate, and governmental partners. Gasset served as President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, as well as President of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. He has chaired numerous committees in all three Associations. Gasset also served on the North American Wetlands Conservation Council and the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council (both by appointment of the Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar). He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the National Conservation Leadership Institute. Gasset is a graduate of the inaugural class of the National Conservation Leadership Institute and holds a Ph.D. and M.S. in Forest Resources from the University of Georgia and a B.S. in Biology from Kennesaw State University.



NCLI Cohort 1

### ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

As the newly appointed Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, I quickly realized that longevity in that position, as well as the long term security of the Agency required a tremendous amount of organized grassroots support. While the hunters, anglers, boaters, and sport shooters of Kentucky appeared satisfied with their mission and direction of the Agency, they were not organized. I knew that this put us one bad legislative session away from catastrophe. My adaptive challenge as an inaugural member of the National Conservation Leadership Institute was to develop a mechanism to organize and coordinate the collective will of our customers in order to allow their voices to be heard.

Together, my staff and I developed the Kentucky Conservation Coalition—an email based web application that allowed sportsmen and women to receive timely information about the Agency and

to also easily and collectively weigh in on important conservation issues at both the state and federal level. The Kentucky Conservation Coalition is housed under an independent non-profit (Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation) in order to maintain arms-length separation from the Agency. It now contains more than 75,000 members that regularly weigh in on conservation issues that are important to them. The coalition can, within a 24 hour period, initiate thousands of letters to state and federal lawmakers, often making the difference between a good piece of legislation and a catastrophe.

*...my staff and I developed the Kentucky Conservation Coalition—an email based web application that allowed sportsmen and women to collectively weigh in on important conservation issues...*



# ELSA HAUBOLD

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

NATIONAL COORDINATOR, LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION  
COOPERATIVES



NCLI Cohort 4

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Elsa Haubold is currently the National Landscape Conservation Cooperative Network coordinator, working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service since August 2013. This program is about bringing partners together working towards a collective vision of “Landscapes and seascapes capable of sustaining natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.” Prior to her promotion to the LCC Network, Elsa worked for twelve years with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, first overseeing the marine endangered species research program for five years and handling highly controversial manatee issues. She then oversaw wildlife diversity and endangered species management issues at the state, regional, and national levels. In this position she also took on numerous special projects such as serving as a Wildlife Deputy Incident Commander for Florida’s Emergency Management Team during the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and subsequently staffing the Natural Resources Damage Assessment Early Restoration team for Florida, staffing the Endangered Species Act Joint Task Force, and chairing SEAFWA’s Wildlife Diversity Committee. In Texas, Elsa spent much time in graduate school, coordinated the Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network, and served two tours of research duty in the Antarctic and one in the Arctic. She has a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science and a M.S. in Veterinary Anatomy from Texas A&M University, a Ph.D. in Pathology from UT Medical Branch and a MBA from University of Houston Clear Lake. Elsa is passionate about working with partners and stakeholders to find common ground and solutions to seemingly insurmountable conservation challenges.

*A lightning rod which distracted everyone from the true adaptive challenge was how species were classified on Florida’s list, magnified when reclassification of the manatee from endangered to threatened was proposed.*

## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

I was in the middle of one of my most significant adaptive challenges when I was accepted as an NCLI fellow. There was a decades-long raucous controversy that alternated between simmering and boiling over—how Florida should manage endangered species. A lightning rod which distracted everyone from the true adaptive challenge was how species were classified on Florida’s list, magnified when reclassification of the manatee from endangered to threatened was proposed (and scientifically supported). Two prior approaches to ameliorate the controversy were unsuccessful and I was tasked with head-

ing an agency leadership team to try again. We started by reframing the issue following adaptive leadership principles which explicitly considered stakeholder impacts. By getting on and off the balcony with our stakeholders and collectively identifying our desired future condition for endangered and threatened species in Florida we developed common understandings and ownership of the issue and ultimately built some trust among the stakeholders. We also involved them in review and revision of the new rules (gave the work to them). Two and half years into the process we had draft rules but it was apparent stakeholders were not ready for them to be finalized. We delayed (let the issue ripen) and sixth months later, the rules were approved with either moderate or full support of the stakeholders. Five years later, Florida’s imperiled species management system continues to be implemented with only relatively minor controversy.



# JOHN KENNEDY

## Wyoming Game and Fish Department

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Kennedy is a proud member of the NCLI's Cohort 1, which completed the inaugural NCLI Program in 2006-07. At that time, John was the Services Division Chief for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD). He started with WGFD in 2004. As Division Chief, John was responsible for overseeing the agency's information technology, lands administration and acquisition, habitat and access maintenance, conservation education and hunter education programs. He moved into his current position with WGFD—Deputy Director—in April 2010. As Deputy Director, John is responsible for the administration of most internal programs in the agency, including development and management of the agency's budget; final approval of all grants, contracts and agreements; coordination with the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission; and oversight of the fish, wildlife, services and fiscal divisions. Prior to coming to Wyoming, John spent 12 years in various positions with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Those positions included Habitat Branch Chief, State-wide Project Evaluation Program Supervisor, Regional Habitat Program Manager, and Regional Habitat Specialist. John currently serves on several committees of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. He currently chairs the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Federal & Tribal Relations Committee. He also currently chairs the Steering Committee of the National Cooperators' Coalition, which provides strategic guidance and support of the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit program. John holds a B.S. degree in Wildlife Management from the University of Idaho and an M.S. degree in Wildlife Management from South Dakota State University.



NCLI Cohort 1

### ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

John's adaptive leadership challenge was focused on improving internal communications and inter-divisional teamwork in the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. As an adaptive leadership action after the 2006-07 NCLI Program, John gave this adaptive challenge to one of our agencies Leadership Development Program Action Teams. He worked with that team to further define the adaptive challenges. The team engaged employees throughout the agency and proposed new structure and teams within the agency to address siloing and

communications and relationships among upper and middle management in the agency. Several adaptive leadership actions were implemented, including: 1) Holding an all-Department employee meeting; 2) establishing an Agency Coordination Team (upper and middle management positions in the agency); 3) establishing Regional Coordination Teams; and 4) holding all-regional employee meetings. These teams and coordination meetings continue to facilitate effective internal communications and leadership at all levels in the agency.



*My adaptive leadership challenge was focused on improving internal communications and inter-divisional teamwork in the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.*



NCLI Cohort 3

# FREDERICK MAULSON

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Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission  
CHIEF OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Baaswewe Frederick D. Maulson is an enrolled member of the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians. He's lived in Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin, almost all his life other than college. Since 1999 Maulson has been in law enforcement starting his career with the Lac du Flambeau Tribal Police and Tribal Conservation Department. In 2004 Maulson took the position as the Chief of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. As Chief he has 23 officers that serve 11 tribal nations. Other duties range from managing a \$1.6 million budget, establishing new regulations and supplying officers with equipment that meet the needs as conservation officers. Maulson also holds an appointed seat on a national advisory committee for the Secretary of Interior with the Hunting and Heritage Conservation Council.

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## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Maulson was accepted in 2008 to attend National Conservation Leadership Institute. His adaptive challenge was to educate and inform other law enforcements about treaty rights in northern Great Lakes area.



# JOEL PEDERSEN

## National Wild Turkey Federation

DIRECTOR OF LANDS AND POLICY

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

My passion for wildlife started in Nebraska hunting pheasants and fishing with my father. I received a wildlife degree from the University of Nebraska - Kearney and earned my M.S. from University of Tennessee in 1995 while doing research on black bears. I worked for Florida FWCC in central Florida before starting with the National Wild Turkey Federation in 1999. I am currently the NWTF's Director of Lands and Policy. In this role, I work to create diverse partnerships between the NWTF, state and federal agencies, and other NGOs to find creative solutions for the threats to conservation, hunter access, and our hunting heritage.

In addition to working for conservation through the NWTF, I also serve on the National Board of Directors for Tread Lightly! and have been an active participant in the American Wildlife Conservation Partners, serving on the steering committee since 2011 and elected as Chair for 2015.

I live in Edgefield, South Carolina, with my wife, Lisa and two daughters, Bailey and Emma. I spend my non-working hours introducing my daughters to the outdoor world through hunting, fishing, backpacking, and camping; volunteering my time to community activities; and of course, turkey hunting. I am an alumnus of NCLI Cohort 4, and had the honor of serving as a peer coach for Cohorts 5-8.



NCLI Cohort 4

### ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

The National Wild Turkey Federation built its reputation and success through its efforts to help restore the wild turkey to North America. Having achieved “mission accomplished” the NWTF was in danger of losing support unless we were able to remain relevant by adapting to the new challenges facing wild turkey conservation and our hunting heritage. In 2012 I was selected to lead a small, diverse group of staff to develop an initiative that would chart the future of the NWTF and inspire volunteers, partners, and staff to take the organization to the next level.

We achieved this by educating staff and key volunteers that our future success would hinge on delivering habitat conservation and growing hunter numbers—not through the continued release of wild turkeys into new areas. Ultimately this led to the creation of NWTF's Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. initiative. The launch of this initiative in 2013 focused on “why” the initiative was important, not “how” it would

be achieved. Success depends upon the creativity of staff and volunteers, which is resulting in tremendous ownership of the initiative and excitement to see it succeed.

The adaptive work continues as we now are guiding our chapters and local volunteers through developing and implementing state strategic plans for the first time. This has challenged them to think beyond their role as fundraisers and determine how their collective efforts can help the NWTF directly deliver the initiative objectives. Employing an adaptive leadership approach throughout this effort has resulted in a level of excitement and commitment within the NWTF that has not been seen since the height of wild turkey restoration.



*In 2012 I was selected to lead a small, diverse group of staff to develop an initiative that would chart the future of the NWTF and inspire volunteers, partners, and staff to take the organization to the next level.*

# TIM RIPPERGER

Missouri Department of Conservation

DEPUTY DIRECTOR



NCLI Cohort 4

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Tim Ripperger, Deputy Director of Administration and Communication, is responsible for the Administrative Services Division, Design and Development Division, Outreach & Education Division, Policy Coordination Unit, Information Technology Unit, and the Federal Aid Unit. Additionally, he serves the Director's Office as federal liaison for legislative matters and assists in state legislative matters. He serves as the chair of the Capital Improvements and Information Technology Committee and the chair of the Realty Committee.

Tim has been with the Department serving Missouri citizens for 38 plus years. He has worked as a Conservation Agent in Holt County, a Regional Staff Specialist in Osceola, an Assistant Regional Supervisor in Clinton, a Regional Supervisor in St. Joseph and a Protection Field Chief in Jefferson City.

Tim volunteers on a number of fronts. Serving with his local church, participating for years in Optimist International and serving as Lt. Governor for Northwest Missouri, serving as Scout Master for his local Boy Scout Troop and working with the United Way are just a few of his volunteer opportunities. As a lifetime hunter and fisherman, his passions include hunting ruffed grouse and fly fishing for bluegill. He also raises, trains and competes with hunting dogs in Hunt Tests.

He has two children, Kyle, a Doctor of Veterinarian Medicine and Kristin, a Doctor of Pharmacy Medicine. He and his wife Sherry have been married 34 years and have backpacked over much of the United States, including parts of the Pacific Crest and Appalachian Trails. Two of his favorite trips were walking over the Grand Tetons and hiking the Zion Narrows.

## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

The Missouri Department of Conservation leadership embarked on a strategic planning initiative in January 2009 to reduce the agency's permanent positions and restructure the Department budget to reflect the continuing economic downturn. This adaptive challenge continues today as the agency downsized 174 positions and is still adjusting to the change in workforce.

This adaptive challenge has included many courageous conversations, often controlling the temperature at the moment, giving work back, thinking politically and measuring success in some areas and identifying what hasn't worked in other areas.

One of the lessons learned was that the Department leadership simply didn't know ourselves or the agency well enough as some decisions were implemented.

The Department overcut positions in some specific areas. This particular issue is one of the valuable leadership lessons learned and is an area that the agency would pursue differently the next time an economic downturn impacts the department budget.

One of the areas of improvement from this challenge has been to change the way the Department plans, sets goals and develops the internal budget. By challenging leadership to more closely align goals, budgets and accomplishments with department priorities we have improved our overall knowledge and understanding of key budget issues. Having identified successes, what didn't work and what the agency would do differently next time has allowed staff to focus on new key initiatives such as infrastructure asset management to better serve Missouri citizens and to better protect the natural resources of the state.

*By challenging leadership to more closely align goals, budgets and accomplishments with department priorities we have improved our overall knowledge and understanding of key budget issues.*

# ALEXA SANDOVAL

New Mexico Department of Game & Fish  
DIRECTOR

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Alexa Sandoval was appointed as the Director of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish in May 2014. At the time of her appointment, she was serving as the Chief Financial Officer and Administrative Services Division Chief for the Department. Director Sandoval has been with the NMDGF for 20 years, starting her career as a Game Warden in the Clayton district. She has held a number of positions within the Department, including wildlife specialist in the southern portion of New Mexico and Federal Assistance Coordinator. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Wildlife Biology and a Minor in Criminal Justice from Colorado State University. She also holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration from New Mexico Highlands University.

Alexa is a graduate of the National Conservation Leadership Institute, Cohort 5, and served as a peer coach for Cohorts 6-8. Her experience at NCLI was life-changing; providing her the necessary skills and ability to successfully navigate not only the world of wildlife conservation but life in general.

She is married to Ernie Sandoval, a retired New Mexico Game Warden and the proud mother of three great children. She feels honored to be able to work with all partners to promote the conservation of New Mexico's wildlife populations.



*The current challenge facing the Department is changing the authority structure from a “top-down” authoritarian one to a structure that allows for dialogue and ideas to flow between staff, divisions, and the directorate that can be successfully implemented.*

## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has operated for years using the “top-down” authority model; basing its structure on para-military operations. This structure is due in large part to the law enforcement personnel that had a strong presence throughout all Department divisions, including resource management.

Approximately ten years ago, the Department moved away from requiring that individuals working in the resource divisions to also be law enforcement officers. This shift away from hiring biologists with a law enforcement background has changed the underlying presence of a paramilitary structure in the resource divisions. It is also apparent that the expectations and operating norms for individuals who do not share in law enforcement culture has created a conflict for division authority figures. Many current division chiefs were raised in the para-military culture but have staff who were not; the expectations of staff to share strategies and have ownership in them versus being “handed” a management strategy to then implement are worlds apart.

The current challenge facing the Department is changing the authority structure from a “top-down” authoritarian one to a structure that allows for dialogue and ideas to flow between staff, divisions, and the directorate that can be successfully implemented.





NCLI Cohort 3

# TONY SCHOONEN

## Boone and Crockett Club

CHIEF OF STAFF

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Tony was born and raised in Butte, Montana. After graduating high school he attended two years of college at the Montana School of Mines and then in 1982 moved to the University of Montana. In his senior year he started a film production company, Stoney-Wolf Productions. Stoney-Wolf rapidly expanded and became known for outdoor productions for home entertainment and commercial theatres. The company was also often hired to film under severe and dangerous conditions. After selling the company in 1997, Tony chose a second career in the NGO world of conservation, working first for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation as their Vice President of Marketing and Communications, then for Wonders of Wildlife, now called America's Wildlife Museum and Aquarium, as their executive director, and finally for the Boone and Crockett Club as their Chief of Staff, a position he currently serves.

Tony married his wife Jennifer in 2004 and is the proud father of two girls. He hunts and fishes as much as time allows and includes his family whenever possible. All enjoy the great outdoors and share the same passion for wildlife and wild places.

He regularly uses his adaptive challenge training as a part of his job and as a volunteer board member. Tony currently serves on three boards: America's Wildlife Museum and Aquarium, National Museum of Forest Service History, and the Boy Scouts of America, Montana Council. Besides raising his family, Tony's goal is to continue to play a role in the conservation movement and apply his experience to ensure a wildlife legacy for future generations.

*With the passage of a new Strategic Plan in 2007, management of the establishment and implementation of the Tactical Business Plan reflects the emerging management protocol and culture of the organization.*

### ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

The leadership challenge I face currently is the implementation of a Tactical Business plan for my organization. Over the past 25-30 years, as my organization entered a renaissance period reclaiming its historic leadership role in the national conservation community. Management of the organization has reflected the style of the elected President or at times the Executive Director, now called Chief of Staff, and was frequently a reaction to the issues, growth challenges and/or emerging programs and activities of the organization.

The first Strategic Plan was developed in 1992 to bring focus to organizational direction. In 2004, the bylaws were amended eliminating an executive committee and replacing it with a Board of Directors. In addition, four operating divisions were established to effectively manage the growing scope of programs and activities. With these changes, oversight management and direction by necessity has become the role of the Board, with the President's role and scope defined. The paradigm of a member-directed, staff-run organization has replaced the old model that didn't regard the definition or

role of professional staff. To be effective, our professional staff has parity with the organization's volunteer leadership and they function together as a team.

With the passage of a new Strategic Plan in 2007, management of the establishment and implementation of the Tactical Business Plan reflects the emerging management protocol and culture of the organization. As a small volunteer organization function through four divisional Vice Presidents, some 30 volunteer committees and a paid professional staff of 19 supporting this organizational structure, collaboration, mutual respect and good interpersonal relationships are the foundation cornerstones underlying the management of the volunteers and staff in the implementation of the Tactical Business Plan. As a part of this plan, policies will be reviewed, updated or created. Best business practices, processes and procedures and governance will be applied. Once implemented the plan will be a working document designed to carry out the vision and direction of the Strategic Plan. Collectively this effort will maximize mission accomplishment.



# DAVE SCOTT

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

ASSISTANT REGIONAL DIRECTOR

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I am the Assistant Regional Director for Migratory Birds & State Programs in the Midwest Regional Office for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). My program responsibilities include many migratory bird issues that rely on science, monitoring, permitting, and habitat conservation in collaboration with the Midwest's conservation community to be successful. My staff also administers Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration grants to eight State Wildlife Agencies that facilitate on-the-ground conservation across our landscape. We partner closely with our State counterparts on State Wildlife Action Plans, actively seeking ways to integrate State and USFWS conservation priorities. A collaborative approach is essential to success as I co-chair the Upper Midwest & Great Lakes LCC Steering Committee and serve as the US Co-chair of the Black Duck Joint Venture Management Board. I was privileged to lead a diverse team of Service, State and NGO staff to plan and host the 2013 Federal Duck Stamp Contest in Ohio. The partnership worked extremely well together, the event was a great success and the team was awarded a Regional Director's Excellence Award.

My professional training includes degrees in Wildlife Management from The Ohio State University (B.S.) and Penn State University (M.S.). I have been active in The Wildlife Society and served as President of the Ohio Chapter. My professional experience includes working for the USFWS (Ecological Services, Endangered Species Research, and Chesapeake Bay Estuary Program) in the late 1980s, working for the Ohio Division of Wildlife for 24 years where my career culminated as the State's Wildlife Section Chief, and returning to the USFWS in my current position in 2012. I have had the opportunity to serve in leadership roles within AFWA and the Flyway system. I am currently serving as a leadership coach for Cohort 14 of the USFWS's Advanced Leadership Development Program. My experience in Cohort 4 (2009-2010) of the National Conservation Leadership Institute has been invaluable in addressing numerous leadership challenges in my State and federal wildlife agency positions.



## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

The adaptive challenge that consumed my time and attention while I was in Cohort 4 of NCLI centered on reorganization of the Wildlife Research program within the Ohio Division of Wildlife. While that reorganization and relocation of key staff continued after I accepted my present position with the USFWS, I believe it yielded positive results for the agency while reinforcing many of the adaptive leadership concepts I had learned with real life lessons. I continue to use my leadership training and

understanding of adaptive challenges in my current role as a coach in the USFWS's Advanced Leadership Development Program as well as in evaluating my new areas of responsibility within the USFWS and reshaping my programs to better address migratory bird conservation challenges in the future.

*I continue to use my leadership training and understanding of adaptive challenges in my current role as a coach in the USFWS's Advanced Leadership Development Program as well as in evaluating my new areas of responsibility within the USFWS and reshaping my programs to better address migratory bird conservation challenges in the future.*





# RANDY STARK

National Association of Conservation  
Law Enforcement Chiefs  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Randy Stark is currently the Executive Director for the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs (NACLEC), where he coordinates the National Conservation Law Enforcement Leadership Academy and other NACLEC activities. He is also an instructor at NCLI and an adjunct instructor with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Management Assistance Team.

Randy grew up in Superior, Wisconsin, located in far northwestern Wisconsin. He pursued a biology degree at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, and obtained a B.S. from Concordia University in Management of Criminal Justice. In 2003, he graduated from the FBI National Academy (214th Session). However, attending the inaugural class of NCLI in 2006 was the most influential educational experience in the course of his 31-year career.

Over the course of his career with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, which began in 1984, Randy served as a Field Warden, Warden Supervisor, Regional Warden, and Training Director. In November 2002, he was appointed the 18th Chief Warden in Wisconsin history. He served in this capacity until his retirement in December 2013, placing him among the longest serving Chief Warden's in state history, having served under four DNR Secretaries and three Governors in eleven years.

He resides in Oregon, Wisconsin, with his wife Sandy and son Ryan. Sandy manages a veterinary clinic and Ryan is a professional horse trainer. Randy enjoys hunting, fishing, hiking, canoe camping and history.

*Currently, Randy is working with the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create the next generation of conservation law enforcement leadership in North America.*

## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

In terms of past adaptive challenges, he received the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Special Recognition Award for his work on two high profile adaptive challenges. The first was in the wake the tragic homicides of six deer hunters by a Hmong hunter in northern Wisconsin. Randy convened a team that initiated the Harmony in the Woods initiative. He worked closely with statewide conservation organizations, local hunting clubs, the Hmong community in Wisconsin and Minnesota, as well as the media to ease tensions, enhance cross-cultural understanding, change attitudes, build relationships, and establish multi-cultural partnerships on hunter education, hunter safety and hunter recruitment efforts.

The second involved his leadership as one of the Incident Commanders in the State Capitol during largest protest in state history that took place in 2011 for 27 consecutive days. In this capacity, he oversaw the policing efforts of up to 500 state, county, and local law enforcement officers on a daily basis during a highly contentious

period in Wisconsin, with crowds reaching up to 100,000 people in and around the State Capitol in Madison. He worked closely with protest organizers, political authorities, and state law enforcement to protect public safety and property, maintain government capacity to operate, and provided for people to exercise their First Amendment rights.

His experiences at NCLI were key to the success of both of these efforts. Currently, in his capacity as NACLEC Executive Director, Randy is working with the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create the next generation of conservation law enforcement leadership in North America. This is being accomplished thorough the National Conservation Law Enforcement Leadership Academy held at the National Conservation Training Center. The program focuses on providing the adaptive leadership and management skills to law enforcement executives across the United State and Canada required to be successful in a rapidly changing world.



# SCOTT TALBOTT

## Wyoming Game and Fish Department

DIRECTOR

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Scott Talbott was appointed the Director of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in 2011. He has served the wildlife and people of the State of Wyoming for over 30 years. Scott was raised on the family ranch near Laramie, Wyoming. Upon graduation from college he pursued his lifelong dream of becoming a Wyoming game warden. He served in various positions with the Department until his promotion to Director.

Completion of the National Conservation Leadership Institute and Leadership Wyoming have been two personal and professional highlights. Engaging the public in a collaborative manner has provided many additional opportunities to engage various aspects of the public and other agencies regarding Wyoming's perspective on wildlife management issues.

Scott spends his spare time hunting and fishing with his two sons Payden and Luke. He enjoys training horses and going on backcountry pack trips in the remote mountains of Wyoming.



### ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

I was promoted to Director of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department during my internship at NCLI. Almost immediately after graduation, the Chief Fiscal Officer advised the agency needed to increase license fees to generate \$8–10 million, or significantly reduce our budget in the amount of \$7 million per year. I had no choice but to immediately implement adaptive leadership actions to generate public and political support to increase license fees accordingly. If additional revenue could not be secured, I would need to prepare agency personnel for significant cuts in programs, services and personnel.

The legislative request for increasing license fees was denied, requiring cuts in programs, services and personnel. Department priorities were identified by personnel and the public in an open, transparent process and reductions were proposed. Establishing priorities in a transparent and engaging process allowed positions to be evaluated, reclassified or restructured to realize additional budgetary efficiencies. Medium priority programs were either reduced or funded accordingly and high priority programs (e.g., statutorily-mandated programs, public service programs and animal

husbandry programs) were funded in full. Budget cuts were strategic and purposeful, not simple across the board cuts.

During this process employees and the public were continually updated and engaged in all budget and personnel reduction. The agency eliminated 19 permanent positions through attrition and restructuring; no employees were terminated to accomplish these efficiencies. Past exercises to prioritize and reduce budgets resulted in morale issues and significant employee resentment. By engaging employees and the public in the process, articulating the needs of the wildlife resource and the Department, employee morale was maintained or improved and public support and accountability increased. Significant additional funding was obtained in the next legislative session allowing the agency to begin some program restoration or augmentation.

*I had no choice but to immediately implement adaptive leadership actions to generate public and political support to increase license fees accordingly.*



# BILL THOMPSON

Penobscot Nation

VICE-CHIEF

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Bill Thompson was recently re-elected into his third four-year term as Vice Chief (Lieutenant Governor) for his Tribe, the Penobscot Nation. After his Fellowship with the National Conservation Leadership Institute, he took on the role of Chairman for the Tribal Air Monitoring Support Center based in Las Vegas, Nevada. Consequently, he was made Chair of the National Tribal Air Association and served both committees concurrently with his role as Vice Chief. As of this past November, he is now also the Chairman of the National Tribal Science Council. The most important things to him are his wife of 25 years and his two grown children, and his Tribe.



NCLI Cohort 1

## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

The decision to whistle-blow halted federal funding streams into the organization that acted as fiduciary for a certain national tribal air association, and incurred a federal investigation upon them. The adaptive challenge was how to keep the association not only alive, but productive, with no funding. This would not have been considered without the network and skill

sets acquired from the National Conservation Leadership Institute. It was the right thing to do, even though people lost their employment and enemies were made. Through the following eighteen months of hardship, the association discovered the hard way which parts were superfluous and which were essential. Tighter accounting of very limited resources created clearer oversight, and by the time that funding was restored after the competitive RFA process was completed, the organization emerged lean and robust. It is now a rising star in its field.



*The adaptive challenge was how to keep the association not only alive, but productive, with no funding. This would not have been considered without the network and skill sets acquired from the National Conservation Leadership Institute.*

# SCOTT VANCE

## National Wild Turkey Federation

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR HUNTING HERITAGE AND  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NWTF'S HUNTING HERITAGE CENTER

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Scott grew up in the mountains of western North Carolina where he developed a strong tie to the land and its natural resources. He spent his early childhood chasing squirrels and rabbits and helping his grandparents on their small farms. He remembers hunting rabbits with his grandpa's beagles long before he was old enough to carry a gun. His grandpa said that Scott was the best jump dog he ever owned!

Scott received a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science from East Carolina University and a Master's degree in Wildlife and Environmental Toxicology from Clemson University. His Master's research was completed in southern Iowa investigating the effects of herbicides on bobwhite quail populations and other wildlife.

Scott has worked for the last 20 years in the wildlife profession working for several state wildlife agencies and for the last 15 years the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF). Scott has held numerous positions with the NWTF including National Wildlife Programs Biologist, Director of Partnership Programs, Director of Conservation Field Operations, Assistant Vice President for Conservation and currently the Assistant Vice President for Hunting Heritage Programs and the Executive Director for NWTF Hunting Heritage Centers.

Scott is an avid (maybe even somewhat fanatical) hunter and fisherman. If you can identify the 40 gamebirds and skulls mounted in his office to genus and species he'll buy you lunch. He now spends every possible moment with his 8-year-old son taking him into the outdoors, coaching baseball and teaching him to be a responsible, ethical and respectful young man and conservationist.

Since his NCLI experience Scott has been promoted into a very integral and important role for the NWTF. The guidance and direction he will provide to the NWTF's hunting heritage programs will change the future of recruitment, retention and reactivation a national level. There is no doubt the NCLI experience is helping him do this job and create collaborative ownership across many boundaries and stakeholders.

### ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

The biggest adaptive challenge has been getting the NWTF to move from a reactive, opportunistic business model to more strategic and focused mission-based activities. The NWTF completed a significant portion of its mission by helping restore wild turkeys to all suitable habitats in the United States. At that point, the organization spent a considerable amount of time experimenting and trying new things to remain relevant. Through a very adaptive process the NWTF looked back at their mission, vision and set forth on a new goal based campaign called Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. There were eight individuals with the NWTF, including Scott, that were NCLI graduates and their adaptive leadership skills were invaluable in keeping

the strategic process moving and creating broad ownership and buy in. There is no doubt that the experience, knowledge and training gained through NCLI helped the NWTF create Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt, and move the NWTF toward our next success story.

Scott's next big adaptive challenge is getting state agencies, other NGOs and the hunting community as a whole to embrace new ways to recruit, retain and reactivate hunters. It is clear we need new models for creating the next generation of hunters and conservationist. Getting stakeholders to leave old ways of thinking and move into new innovative, somewhat uncomfortable areas of training and social support networks will truly require an adaptive approach!



*The biggest adaptive challenge has been getting the NWTF to move from a reactive, opportunistic business model to more strategic and focused mission based activities.*



NCLI Cohort 3

# KAREN WALDROP

Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources  
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Karen Waldrop began her association with KDFWR in 1999 when she worked on the elk restoration program in southeastern Kentucky as a graduate student and lead researcher. That grew into a 2004 post-doctoral study with the University of Kentucky that continued her elk research and management work. She then joined the department as the Research Program Coordinator in March 2005. In 2007, Karen became the Wildlife Division Director. As Director, she was responsible for long-range planning and policy development, as well as overseeing statewide and regional programs for wildlife, including game species, migratory birds, furbearers, endangered species and land management. She served in that role for almost eight years before accepting the position as Deputy Commissioner in 2014.

She received her BS from the University of Georgia in Wildlife Biology and Forestry and received her MS from UGA in 1999 in Wildlife Biology. She earned her doctorate from Clemson University in 2004, where she studied parasite and disease issues associated with elk restoration in Kentucky.

*By forming a “team” we assimilated target staff to help the various divisions focus on current concerns and programs, and used the program to promote the agency to the general public about our mission, how we are funded, and to build relationships with legislators, sportsmen groups, landowners, and others.*

## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

As the Wildlife Division Director for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, much of my time was spent dealing with issues or concerns that resulted in both adaptive challenges and technical problems. Examples included working with hunters to establish a bear hunting season, needing to manage the elk population by increasing the number of tags issued but not having enough public hunting land or access to accommodate the increase in hunters, managing the increased pressure to open our Wildlife Management Areas to alternative users, and trying to manage for small game and non-game populations given current land use and habitat fragmentation issues. It became apparent that regardless of how the Wildlife Division tried to focus on solving these problems, we were hindered by the underlying challenges facing our agency. Similar to many resource agencies throughout the country, we are suffering from a decreasing participation in hunting and fishing, increasing habitat loss and fragmentation, and inadequate communication with our customer base, legislators, and the general public.

whereas others were because of non-existent or inadequate relationships with key legislators, landowners, or the non-hunting public. Additionally, our agency faces issues with decreasing license sales and funding with decreasing participation in hunting and fishing. Our agency needed to do a better job of promoting itself to help with these obstacles and increase participation in the outdoors.

Therefore, my adaptive challenge was to develop an “Outreach Program” to address the agency’s disconnect with landowners, sportsmen and women, the general public, kids, and legislators. The Outreach Program was designed to communicate important missions, specific programs of the agency, and ultimately increase participation in hunting and fishing. By forming a “team” we assimilated target staff to help the various divisions focus on current concerns and programs, and used the program to promote the agency to the general public about our mission, how we are funded, and to build relationships with legislators, sportsmen groups, landowners, and others. The agency already had much of the expertise needed to create this team; however, these staff members were either housed in different divisions or branches, needed redirection, or were working alone and isolated from resources necessary to “move the needle”.



# WENDI WEBER

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Wendi Weber was appointed as Northeast Regional Director in 2011. As regional director, Weber oversees USFWS activities in 13 states from Maine to Virginia, and the District of Columbia, leading more than 1,000 USFWS employees working in more than 130 field offices, and 72 refuges that encompass more than 500,000 acres.

Weber's region has a wide array of habitats including the Northern Forest, Appalachian Mountains, big rivers, freshwater and salt marshes, coastal plains, estuaries, barrier beaches, coastal inlands, Great Lakes and the Chesapeake Bay.

Weber joined the USFWS in 1998, beginning her career in Washington, D.C. and serving as chief of endangered species in the Northwest Region and assistant regional director for ecological services in the Midwest Region, coming to the Northeast Region as deputy regional director in 2007.

Prior to working for the USFWS, Weber worked for the states of Florida and Georgia as a field biologist. Originally from Rochester, New York, Weber has a bachelor's degree in zoology from the University of Rhode Island and a master's degree in fisheries from the University of Georgia.



## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is one of two federal agencies primarily responsible for implementing the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The USFWS appreciates the special relationship it has with the States to conserve imperiled species and relies on the States and many other partners in implementing conservation actions that benefit federally listed threatened and endangered species or those species that are candidates for listing. The New England cottontail (*Sylvilagus transitionalis*) is one of those candidate species and, under a court approved settlement agreement, the USFWS must make a listing determination for the cottontail by September 2015. In a formalized partnership between six state wildlife agencies, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the USFWS we have developed and are implementing conservation actions designed under a Conservation Strategy to ameliorate the threats currently affecting the New England cottontail. Along with the formal members, significant contributions to

the conservation effort comes from involvement by the Wildlife Management Institute, as well as partners representing other non-governmental organizations, private landowners, universities, tribes, local governments, and other federal agencies. This conservation partnership is already successful, regardless of the outcome of the ESA listing decision. Attributes that have contributed to this successful partnership include having clear goals, willing partners, proactive planning, prior and ongoing commitment to implementation, and the use of a business model approach for achieving established goals.

*Attributes that have contributed to this successful partnership include having clear goals, willing partners, proactive planning, prior and ongoing commitment to implementation, and the use of a business model approach for achieving established goals.*





NCLI Cohort 3

# NICK WILEY

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nick Wiley is a Certified Wildlife Biologist employed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as Executive Director. He has over 28 years of professional experience in fish and wildlife conservation.

Nick grew up in rural south Georgia and earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from Georgia Southern University and a Master of Science Degree in Wildlife Science from Auburn University. Nick has worked in various FWC programs including alligator management, small game management, private lands technical assistance, and public conservation lands management. Since 2004, he has served in senior leadership positions working with fellow staff, stakeholders and FWC Commissioners to address a broad diversity of fish and wildlife conservation challenges including management of harvested, imperiled, conflict and non-game wildlife species, marine and freshwater fisheries, conservation law enforcement, landscape level habitat conservation, agency finance and budgets, and legislative and policy coordination.

Nick is a Fellow of the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) and a professional member of the Boone and Crockett Club. He and his wife Evelyn enjoy family time with their two sons, Duncan and Brooks, especially when they are participating in outdoor activities like hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, boating, hiking and camping.

*Nick's most important adaptive challenge has involved filling numerous leadership positions in the agency, mostly in response to retirements.*

## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Nick completed his NCLI Fellowship in 2008 as a member of Cohort 3. Within one year he was appointed by his Commissioners to serve as Executive Director for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). During his tenure as Executive Director he has worked actively and collaboratively with other state fish and wildlife agencies and conservation organizations on key conservation issues. He currently serves as the Vice-Chair for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Executive Committee and as past President for the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. He serves as co-chair for the State-Federal Joint Task Force for Endangered Species. In 2013, he received the Defenders of Wildlife "Spirit of Defenders Public Service Award".

Nick's adaptive challenge for NCLI involved working with fellow staff and stakeholders to overhaul Florida's public quota hunt system. After two years of adaptive work, major changes were adopted and implemented resulting in highly

successful improvements including a guest hunt permit option that has increased hunting opportunities and helped recruit new hunters.

During the past five years as Executive Director, Nick's most important adaptive challenge has involved filling numerous leadership positions in the agency, mostly in response to retirements. This is highly adaptive work involving a major investment of time and energy coordinating, negotiating and communicating each stage in the hiring process including the search, interview, selection, hiring and mentoring support for the selected candidate. To help with the process, Nick utilized interview panels made up of agency colleagues offering a diversity of views and perspectives for evaluating potential candidates. Once a preferred candidate was selected, Nick coordinated critical steps to finalize the process by communicating with key staff, Commissioners and key elected officials. During this time Nick lead the adaptive process for hiring more than 20 agency director level positions.



# E.J. WILLIAMS

## American Bird Conservancy

VICE PRESIDENT OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS AND HABITATS

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Emily Jo Williams (EJ) contributes to wildlife conservation as the Director of Migratory Birds and Habitats for American Bird Conservancy where she is guiding efforts to develop initiatives to stop the decline of migratory birds and build constituencies and capacity to enable conservation throughout the full life cycle of migratory birds. She is also providing leadership and guidance on key bird conservation issues in the U.S. and for Migratory Bird Habitat Joint Ventures. Prior to joining American Bird Conservancy, she served as the Assistant Regional Director for Migratory Birds and State Programs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Southeast and Mountain Prairie Regions and was responsible for programs including migratory bird Habitat Joint Ventures; permits; implementing national and international bird conservation plans including Partners in Flight and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan; harvest regulations; and administering numerous grant programs to state wildlife agencies. EJ's career also includes serving as Executive Director of The Longleaf Alliance and 14 years with the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division, as a Regional Biologist and as state Partners in Flight Coordinator. EJ earned Bachelor's and Master's of Science degrees in Wildlife Biology from the University of Georgia, is a Certified Wildlife Biologist and graduate and coach of the National Conservation Leadership Institute.

EJ is married to John Murphy, a detective with the Madison Police Department, and they share their home and lives with Labrador retriever and hunting companion, Brac, German shepherd search and rescue dog, Panzer, and ever fun and entertaining Norwich terriers, Max and Izzy. In addition to family and friends, birding, hunting, happiness and leadership development are her passions.



NCLI Cohort 1

### ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

I rarely go a day—personally or professionally—without relying on the lessons learned from NCLI. While working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), I specifically used adaptive leadership to encourage a new way of doing business within the USFWS – Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC). Although a guide to as developed, the process of moving from an activity-based approach to an outcome-driven approach was by no means appropriate for a stepwise shift or a cookbook application. Strategic Habitat Conservation, although reasonable from a common sense standpoint, faced many obstacles ranging from history, ingrained ways of working, budget and performance metrics and systems, and making choices among a huge array of priorities. Principles from NCLI such as turning up the heat, instilling a sense of urgency, and having all the voices at the table were critical in making progress. I learned a few

hard lessons along the way in the areas of crucial conversations, the process of change and where it can stall, and remaining ever politically aware. Currently, I am deeply involved in two adaptive challenges—saving the phenomenon of the migration of hundreds of species of migratory birds that travel twice annually between the U.S. and Canada and Latin America and integrating bird conservation across groups of birds including waterfowl, landbirds, shorebirds and waterbirds as well as across geographies and political boundaries.

*I rarely go a day—  
personally or  
professionally—without  
relying on the lessons  
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# THE NATIONAL CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE - MOVING FORWARD

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Gina Main

NCLI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Strong leadership built our conservation legacy, and it will take strong leadership to safeguard its survival.*

When the seeds for the National Conservation Leadership Institute were sown in 2004, the program had a clear vision—“to prepare the next generation to lead conservation” and to make it “one of America’s greatest strengths.” The program’s dedicated and inspired founders recognized the impending leadership void and saw the opportunity to create a world-class leadership development opportunity that crossed organizational boundaries and would equip future leadership with the skills and training needed to address tomorrow’s challenges.

The potential for a remarkable shift in thinking about leadership in conservation—and the opportunity to impact natural resource champions from the smallest tribe to the largest conservation agency—began to grow.

Today, the number of conservation professionals impacted by the NCLI is impressive—216 Fellows from 40 state fish and wildlife agencies, 48 Fellows from eight federal organizations, 44 Fellows from 21 non-governmental organizations, 6 Fellows from 5 industry organizations, and 4 fellows from 4 Native American tribal agencies, resulting in 318 Fellows within 78 different conservation related organizations. The breadth of the diversity doesn’t end there, of the 318 Fellows, 102 are female and 216 are male, and with each successive cohort a few new organizations or agencies are added to the NCLI family.

Their numbers are strong and growing each year, and their impact on conservation in the country is expanding with them. The power and potential of such a collective cannot be underestimated, and the Fellows’ increased capacity to practice leadership could not come at a more critical time. Today’s world is rapidly evolving, and organizations face unprecedented social, economic, political, and environmental challenges. Strong leadership built our conservation legacy, and it will take strong leadership to safeguard its survival.

By all accounts the NCLI has been

successful. But what does the future look like moving forward?

First, the NCLI will continue to address the need to fill the leadership gap, but it will also focus on current leadership and real world challenges facing us today. It will continue to redefine leadership and what leadership behaviors look like. It will challenge the deeply held assumptions that potentially hold us back. It will encourage the art of surfacing conflict rather than managing it, and it will champion the concept of adapting over executing.

Adapting involves letting go of that 8 to 10 percent of our DNA (our organizational DNA) that isn’t effectively meeting future needs and replacing it with something yet to be revealed. Ascertaining what the 8 to 10 percent is, managing the perceived loss, and collaborating with all stakeholders to discover what the new path will be—is the adaptive work. It may sound easy—“out with the old, in with the new”—but it is far from easy—it’s risky business.

The NCLI aspires to expose current and future leadership to these concepts and to provide them with not only tools and experiences to draw from, but to foster a broad, high-trust network of conservation professionals connected by purpose. Bound by purpose—with a focus on WHY we do what we do—and equipped with an adaptive mindset, it is our belief that our conservation legacy will flourish.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Throughout my NCLI immersion, I've learned just how much the practice of adaptive leadership is about connecting with people and illuminating the links between our beliefs. And, that behind every connection is PURPOSE."

NCLI Alumnus, Laura MacLean, Cohort 7

"Attending NCLI is a life altering experience. Anyone who is interested in working with their organization to adapt to new realities they face should consider this experience. The journey provides skills, knowledge and abilities needed to bring into awareness group processes, enhance self awareness, and manage the predictable dynamics associated with effectively introducing and managing organizational change."

NCLI Alumnus Randy Stark, Cohort 1

"If you want to influence and support a bright future for conservation in this country, for fish and wildlife, you should invest in NCLI."

Nick Wiley, Cohort 3 / NCLI Board

"Attending NCLI as a State fish and wildlife director was an incredible experience and will become a prerequisite for all of my emerging leaders. This innovative program provided me with a fundamentally different, more effective approach to addressing New Jersey's challenging conservation issues. I strongly encourage other directors or agency principals to invest in the future of their agencies by supporting the NCLI."

Dave Chanda, Cohort 8

"Over the past 10 years I have watched as amazing conservation professionals from across the natural resources community have entered into the NCLI program with an eagerness and passion to make a difference in conservation. The pinnacle of my career has been witnessing these alumni emerge from the experience empowered with new skills, enabled with a renewed sense of purpose, and fortified with a powerful, high-trust network to positively impact and preserve our conservation legacy."

Gina Main, NCLI Executive Director



*We are in a new era. A time in which the organizational guardians of our natural resource legacy find themselves facing unprecedented challenges in a rapidly changing landscape. Their challenges are exacerbated by the immense leadership void created from astounding turnover and retirements of senior leadership. An unparalleled solution is offered...the National Conservation Leadership Institute.*

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