



Meet the 2013 USFWS Wilderness Fellows

The Wilderness Fellows Initiative was established to advance wilderness stewardship in our federally protected areas while providing young professionals an opportunity to gain valuable career experience. Wilderness Fellows provide on-the-ground support to help staff integrate wilderness character into monitoring, planning, and management. For each wilderness, Fellows collect and compile data to produce baseline assessments for local wilderness character that address the special and unique qualities of each wilderness, and assist staff in many ways to improve wilderness stewardship. This year, Fellows will work on wilderness character assessments for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands spanning the country, from Alaska to Georgia. These assessments will be produced for wilderness areas at 14 National Wildlife Refuges and one National Fish Hatchery.

Franklin received his Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science from Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA, in May 2010, and completed his Master's in Geoscience from the University of Montana in August 2012. His Master's thesis research focused on sediment supply and dynamics in the Bill Williams River in western Arizona to aid in the development of an environmental flow plan for the dammed river. After receiving his Master's, he conducted a hydrology and hydrogeology study for the National Park Service in the Mojave National Preserve, CA, collecting biologic and geologic data for springs and seeps in the preserve to determine why many water features have variable persistence. He is fascinated by interdisciplinary research in the environmental sciences, and in his spare time he enjoys backcountry camping, rock climbing, skiing, and running. Franklin will serve as the Wilderness Fellow for the Selawik and Arctic National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska.



Franklin Dekker



Paul Haverkamp

Paul recently finished his Ph.D. in Geography from the University of California, Davis, studying vegetation and animal distributions in the Somuncura Plateau of Argentina. He has a Bachelor's of Mechanical Engineering from Georgia Tech, which has helped him with some of the technical work he's done with remote sensing and GIS technologies. Paul is interested in wildlife and land conservation, and has done projects in Kenya, Nebraska, China, and California looking at wildlife distribution, animal behavior and communication, and invasive plant species. He also enjoys working with camera trapping and GPS collars. His interests include hiking, camping, movies, and traveling. Paul will be serving as the Wilderness Fellow at Koyukuk and Innoko National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska.

Tom graduated from Ursinus College in May of 2012 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Studies with a minor in Biology. Tom also studied ecology, biodiversity, and coastal management at James Cook University in Queensland, Australia. He interned as an assistant keeper with the Live Animal Center at the Academy of Natural Sciences. He worked on developing an interdisciplinary restoration/management plan for Hunsberger Woods. He also started a long-term ecological study of avian biodiversity and abundance through the Ursinus College Biology Department. In his spare time, Tom enjoys rock climbing, biking, bird watching, tennis, scuba diving, and cars. Tom served as a 2012 USFWS Wilderness Fellow at Bitter Lake NWR and Wichita Mountains NWR, and will be serving as the Wilderness Fellow at Swanquarter, Blackbeard Island, and Wolf Island National Wildlife Refuges.



Tom Jablonowski



Nyssa Landres

Nyssa graduated from Westminster College with a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and Land Use in May 2013. While earning her degree, Nyssa worked as a wilderness ranger for the National Park Service in Utah and the Forest Service in Alaska. She currently has an article in press in the International Journal of Wilderness on commonality in wilderness character. Nyssa has also spent time in Indonesia, where she researched secular and sacred forestry practices in Bali. She enjoys hiking, backpacking, telemark skiing, reading, and crossword puzzles. She plans to return to school for a graduate degree in the near future and hopes to continue working with wilderness and public land management. Nyssa will be serving as the Wilderness Fellow at the Oregon Islands and Farallon National Wildlife Refuges in Oregon and California

Anna received her master's degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Colorado, Boulder in 2013, and her undergraduate degree from the same department in 2008. Her graduate research focused on clarifying the role that invasive North American bullfrogs play in acting as a disease reservoir for an amphibian pathogen in Colorado. The ultimate goal of her master's research was to provide information that may facilitate the management of invasive bullfrog populations and mitigate the impact of disease on native amphibian populations. Before beginning graduate school she worked on a project studying declining amphibian populations in Colorado, trapped mosquitos for a West Nile Virus project in Washington D.C., and also spent a year living in China. When she's not busy catching frogs, she enjoys hiking, running, biking, cross country skiing and attempting to learn to fly fish. Anna will be the Wilderness Fellow for the Togiak and Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska.



Anna Peterson



Sarah Shpak

Sarah is a recent graduate from the University of Delaware with a Bachelor's of Science in Wildlife Conservation. As a student, she travelled to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands to study insect and plant biodiversity. After graduation, she spent a year in northern California, exploring public land in her free time while working at Point Reyes National Seashore monitoring a wide variety of wildlife species, including Tule elk, northern elephant seals, northern spotted owls, and the snowy plover. Sarah has most recently worked at Patuxent Research Refuge in Maryland, where she assisted USFWS and USGS staff with extensive waterfowl and song bird monitoring, implementing new survey initiatives associated with song bird and lepidopteron biodiversity, and capturing sea birds for wind farm studies throughout the Chesapeake bay region. Sarah hopes to pursue further education in biodiversity and conservation efforts. When she's not migrating with flocks, Sarah enjoys birding, hiking, and throwing a Frisbee around in the great outdoors. She will be serving as the Wilderness Fellow at Lostwood and Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuges.

Molly graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies and minor in Geography with a focus on environmental law and decision-making. While at UNC, Molly attended the Albemarle Ecological Field Site in the Outer Banks of North Carolina where she studied ecology, law and policy, human-environment interactions, and renewable energy options for coastal communities. In Manteo, she proposed environmentally conscious amendments to several town ordinances, developed a storm-water mitigation plan for the town, and proposed a cost-effective curbside recycling program. Molly has been with the Wilderness Fellows program since 2011, serving at national wildlife refuges in Florida and southwest Arizona and gaining extensive experience with endangered species monitoring and recovery programs and environmental education and outreach. She enjoys hiking, fishing, kayaking, traveling, nature photography, and live music. Molly will be the Wilderness Fellow at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico and the Leadville Fish Hatchery in Colorado.



Molly McCarter

*For more information about the Interagency Wilderness Fellows Initiative for 2013, contact:
Peter Landres, USFS Ecologist, Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute, plandres@fs.fed.us, 406.542.4189
Nancy Roeper, USFWS National Wilderness Coordinator, nancy_roeper@fws.gov, 703.358.2389*