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Contact: Amanda Stanley

Amanda@wilburforce.org

206-632-2325 x114

www.wilburforce.org

Twenty Scientists named for Prestigious New Wilburforce Fellowship in Conservation Science

[Wilburforce Foundation](#) and [COMPASS](#) are pleased to announce the first group of [twenty scientists awarded](#) the newly established Wilburforce Fellowship in Conservation Science. The Wilburforce Fellowship will build a community of conservation science leaders who excel in using science to help achieve durable conservation solutions in western North America.

This unique fellowship program provides skills development and sustained mentorship to help spark transformative, lasting change in how scientists approach their work. By bringing together scientists across a broad spectrum of career stages, disciplines, geographies, and affiliations, the Wilburforce Fellowship will break down the silos that are often barriers to collaboration and collective action.

“The work of Wilburforce Foundation is science-driven,” says Amanda Stanley, Wilburforce Conservation Science Program Officer and Fellowship co-leader. “We have a strong commitment to making the idea of ‘decisions informed by the best available science’ more than just a catchphrase. This Fellowship will empower scientists with the skills they need to connect with decision makers and engage in ways that shape the policy debate.”

The [twenty Fellows](#) were selected from a large and competitive field of applicants from the United States and Canada. All of the selected Fellows have roots as conservation scientists and ties to the natural world, as well as impressive credentials, leadership qualities, and personal commitment to pursue the most relevant research. Their work spans topics from landscape scale conservation in the face of climate change, to solutions for at-risk species like wolverines, grizzlies, California condors, caribou, and

jaguars. Many work across cultural boundaries, integrating local knowledge and academic science to achieve the most powerful results.

Each Fellow will set a goal for individual or collective engagement on a specific conservation issue, and a team of trainers and mentors will help them use their new skills to work towards their goal over the year.

Fellows will be guided by a team of trainers from COMPASS, who specialize in science communication. They will also engage with science and environmental journalists, including [David Malakoff](#), Deputy News Editor, *Science*; science journalist and National Geographic contributor [Michelle Nijhuis](#); and [Jeff Burnside](#), investigative reporter for the ABC-affiliate KOMO 4 News in Seattle and President of the Society of Environmental Journalists.

“These journalists are professional ‘question askers’ and skeptics,” said Nancy Baron, author of *Escape from the Ivory Tower* and the COMPASS co-leader of the new fellowship. “They provide a reality check for scientists as they figure out how to explain their research to the public, to policy-makers or anyone else outside their scientific disciplines. Strong communication skills are the bedrock for strong leadership.”

Other trainers will include the England-based [Barefoot-Thinking Company](#), who specialize in strategic action planning and leadership training, and other experts to further build networks beyond the scientific community.

Fellows will begin their initial training April 19-24, 2015 at the Greenfire Campus in Seattle and will work with trainers and each other over the course of the following year, and beyond, to contribute to enduring conservation programs and policies in the West.