James spent much of his youth exploring the outdoors as an enthusiastic Scout then Outward Bound Instructor (at Aberdovey). He has taught high school in the UK, New Zealand and Canada and now lives in the heart and Jasper National Park. James’ professional qualifications include MA Education Management (Warwick), BSc (Hons), Cert Ed. OCC Instructor Trainer and BCU Coach with 20 years experiential education experience in the UK, New Zealand and Canada. James was the founder and Education Director of the Parks Canada Palisades Stewardship Education Centre, a highly collaborative, national signature targeted youth in nature engagement program. He recently moved to Canadian Wildlife Federation as national Education Director and is a very active practitioner within the North American movement to reconnect youth to nature.

Sarah Bateman lives on Salt Spring Island in British Columbia, Canada. Being the daughter of artist, Robert Bateman, she grew up with a deep appreciation for the environment from her immersion in the beauty of the natural world. She teaches an ecological program for middle years kids in the public school system. Sarah believes that the best way for middle years kids to learn is from time spent with their natural neighbors. This not only develops strong connections to nature but provides students with the opportunity to explore, take risks, develop curiosity and make healthy connections to each other.

Adam is an award-winning designer and builder of natural playgrounds. His partners and clients include Parks Canada, Right to Play, The Canadian Wildlife Federation, The US Army, World Heritage Sites, nature centers, hospitals, childcare centers, and schoolyards across Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the U.S. He is known for his wit and humor as a public speaker and writer, as much as his award-winning designs and successful private/public partnerships for community-built playscapes.

www.naturalplaygrounds.ca

Mike Bingley
Mike is the Experiential Learning Manager for the Canadian Wildlife Federation. He has visited Canada from coast to coast, most of the U.S. states and finds nature everywhere he goes. He has climbed mountains, canoed rivers and advised Canada’s Parliament on the human connection with nature. He is an active Beaver Scout leader. He lives in Calgary with his wife Lindsey and six year old son Ben (who loves climbing trees and going for walks in nature).
Annie Bogenschutz
Annie Bogenschutz is the Director of Training and Development at the Community Learning Center Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio. Before joining CLCI, she worked with Cincinnati Public Schools’ Community Learning Centers for more than a decade and served as the Resource Coordinator at Ethel M. Taylor Academy—a 2011 Coalition for Community Schools National Award of Excellence recipient. Bogenschutz was a featured panelist on MSNBC’s Education Nation Teacher’s Town Hall and in numerous publications, including American Teacher magazine. She speaks nationally and frequently about the impact of community learning centers on academic turnaround and community revitalization.

Ellen Braff-Guajadro
Ellen Braff-Guajadro is a program officer at the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in Battle Creek, Michigan. As part of the Food, Health & Well-Being team, she provides leadership and oversight for on-the-ground execution of programming efforts by evaluating grant proposals, conducting background research, preparation of funding documents, grant monitoring, driving community connections and providing grantee customer service. Previously, Braff-Guajardo was the senior nutrition policy expert at California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA) in Oakland, Calif., where she engaged in legislative and policy work to increase access to healthy, affordable food with an emphasis on child nutrition programs. She has also worked at the California Endowment (TCE) as a program officer on the Building Healthy Community/Elimination of Health Disparities team. Prior to TCE, Braff-Guajardo worked at California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA) as a directing attorney and CRLA’s statewide Agricultural Worker Health Project Director. Braff-Guajardo earned her juris doctorate and master’s in Education from the University of California—Los Angeles and a bachelor’s degree in psychology from UC—Berkeley.

Jennifer Bristol
Jennifer Bristol is the Coordinator for the Texas Children in Nature, which consists of 300 organizations that are committed to connecting children and families to nature. She is the former program director for Camp Fire, where she developed award-winning, hands-on, environmental science and outdoor skills curriculum for afterschool programs and family nature clubs. She is a former natural resource manager and state park ranger, business owner and constant volunteer, with a passion for the outdoors and wildlife.

David P. Buggs
David Buggs is the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), an agency of the State of Texas. His role is developing and managing the execution of TPWD Diversity and Inclusion strategy. He is the former Chief Diversity Officer for FedEx Office and Print Services, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of FedEx Corporation. David has served on numerous boards in the Dallas area and is a registered Corporate Coach.

Katie-Lyn Bunney
Katie-Lyn believes connecting kids to nature will have meaningful impact for them and for the future of our society. She graduated from the University of Minnesota in 2008, and has since worked in informal environmental education at nature centers, zoos, and park systems before joining the Monarch Lab. Katie-Lyn enjoys the opportunities the Monarch Lab has to work with so many people devoted to conservation and education.
Carmen Burks
Carmen Burks, is the Program Director for the Cincinnati Public Schools’ Safe Routes to School Program. In this role she has been able to facilitate the first Large District-Wide School Travel Plan in the country through a partnership with the Ohio Department of Transportation. The success of the CPS SRTS program originates from a “shared use/shared responsibility” philosophy that is supported from the top down and bottom up and across public and private partnerships. Through these collaborative efforts Carmen has been able to create, fund, and sustain the SRTS program with $6M in grant funding to date.

Cheryl Charles, Ph.D.
Dr. Cheryl Charles is Co-Founder, President and CEO Emerita of the Children & Nature Network (C&NN) and currently coordinates the organization’s international activities to develop the worldwide movement to reconnect children and nature. She is a member of the Paul F-Brandwein Institute Board of Directors, helping to plan and convene a North American Summit, “Inspiring a New Generation,” to be held in November 2015. She served for eight years as a member of the Steering Committee of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature’s (www.iucn.org) Commission on Education and Communication and remains an active member of the Commission.

Steven M. Chase
A native of Connecticut, Steve holds a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication with an Earth Science Minor from the University of Hartford, and a Master of Public Administration from the Barney School of Business and Public Administration. He presently serves as the Chief, Division of Education Outreach at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, WV. Steve joined the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1990, working on National Wildlife Refuge System, Migratory Bird, and Law Enforcement issues. In 1993 he joined the staff of the NCTC where he worked on the design and development of the NCTC campus and its operations, and later becoming Chief of Facility and Administrative operations. Steve was instrumental in the establishment of the Fish and Wildlife Service’s national history/heritage programs, including development of the NCTC museum, exhibits, and archives. He has also served as the Chief Financial Officer and Special Assistant to the Director at the NCTC. He now leads efforts to engage, educate, and employ the next generation of conservation professionals.

Angie Chen
Angie Chen is director of the Blue Sky Funders Forum, a collaborative of funders who support environmental education to advance conservation, education, civic engagement, and healthy communities. Prior to this role, she was an advisor to the Pisces Foundation. Angie managed a cross-cutting Environmental Literacy program at the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, and she was the first program officer at the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council, where she oversaw grantmaking to connect California’s youth with the outdoors. She also worked at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, where she developed strategic initiatives to advance summer learning and children’s health coverage. Angie has served on the board of Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy, and she was selected as a 2011 American Express NGen Fellow. In 2012, she was appointed to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s National Environmental Education Advisory Council. She serves on the board of Pie Ranch and the program committee of the Foundation for Youth Investment. Angie is a graduate of Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley.
**Nicholas Clemons, MS**

Nick Clemons grew up in Bronx, NY. The past seven years Nick has been an interpretive park ranger at Assateague Island National Seashore where he assists in designing, implementing and evaluating all educational and interpretive programming. Nick is also a member of the NPS Centennial National Youth Leadership Team. He is a Natural Leader with the Children & Nature Network and a founding partner of the award winning summer youth employment program Coastal Stewards.

**Allen Cooper**

Allen Cooper is Director of State Education Advocacy at the National Wildlife Federation where he develops state and municipal policy to connect people with nature. He is coauthor with Robin Moore of Nature Play and Learning Places: creating places where children engage with nature and a leading authority on risk in children’s play. Allen Cooper grew up in southern West Virginia and holds degrees in public policy (Princeton University) and law (University of Texas at Austin).

**Nilda Cosco, Ph.D.**

Dr. Nilda Cosco holds a degree in Educational Psychology, Universidad del Salvador, Buenos Aires, Argentina and a Ph.D. in Landscape Architecture, School of Landscape Architecture, Heriot Watt University/Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland. She lectures and conducts projects on design programming of outdoor environments for children with and without disabilities; research on the impact of the physical environment on children’s health and well-being; creation of educational materials and awareness campaigns on healthy child development and the environment. In January 2000, Dr. Cosco co-founded with Professor Robin Moore the Natural Learning Initiative (NLI) at the College of Design, North Carolina State University, USA (www.naturalearning.org). As an Associate Research Professor and Director of Programs she is involved in direct intervention and pre/post evaluation of outdoor intervention programs in early childhood institutions.

**Heather Cowie**

Heather Cowie has dedicated her career to leading, facilitating and enabling children and youth development opportunities. Heather is the East Regional manager for the City of Calgary Recreation Department. She has a degree in Recreation Administration from the University of Alberta and has presented at many conferences and symposiums locally, nationally and internationally. She was instrumental in bringing HIGH FIVE, Youth Development through Recreation Services Symposium to Alberta and the City of Calgary and now the International Play Association Conference. She is a long-standing volunteer with the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association and was recently honored with the prestigious Merit award recognizing significant contributions to the industry.

**Caitlin Cox**

After earning her bachelor’s degree in Agriscience Communications from the University of New Hampshire, Caitlin became a member of the Walt Disney Parks and Resorts Environmental Integration team. She works to conserve resources and protect the planet while Disney guests create lifelong memories. She believes Disney Parks around the world can serve as engaging arenas for connecting kids & families to nature, and spark a lifelong commitment to conservation. Caitlin joined the C&NN’s Natural Leaders Network in 2013, and is currently a part of their Green Play to Green Pay leadership team.
Bronwyn Cumbo
Bronwyn is an environmental scientist, interaction designer and composer/sound artist who designs innovative, creative experiences to connect children in cities to the natural world. She is currently undertaking a PhD at the University of Technology Sydney, exploring how digital tools may be co-designed to inspire children to play independently in their local natural places. She is working collaboratively with children and parents in Aalborg, Denmark and Sydney, Australia to design and test these new approaches.

Jennifer Cutraro
Jennifer Cutraro is an editorial project director at the WGBH Educational Foundation in Boston, where she writes curriculum and outreach materials for the PBS Kids and WGBH production Plum Landing. She writes about science, education, and creativity for outlets including The Boston Globe, Scholastic Science World, and Science News for Students. An educator at heart, Jenny has taught at science and outdoor centers across the country and coordinated teacher professional development workshops at the New England Aquarium, and today volunteers as a science leader in her daughter’s kindergarten classroom. A Milwaukee native, Jenny enjoys kayaking, hiking and exploring with her husband and two young daughters.

Nakia Douglas, M. Ed.
Nakia Douglas earned his B. A. in Elementary Education from Livingstone College and a Master’s in Instructional Technology from Houston Baptist University with an Administrative Certification. Nakia has served as an Elementary Teacher (K, 1st & 2nd) and Administrator (Elementary, Middle and High School) for the last eighteen years in Winston – Salem (N.C.), Pflugerville, Georgetown and Dallas ISD’s. Nakia is the Founding Principal of Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy at B.F. Darrell in Dallas ISD.

Scott Feille
Scott Feille is the Regional Director for REAL School Gardens, North Texas. Before joining REAL School Gardens to lead its flagship program in Dallas/Fort Worth, Scott taught Special Education and 5th Grade for eight years. He was the lead science curriculum writer for the Fort Worth Independent School District Frameworks program and is a recipient of the Lockheed Martin Teaching Chair of Excellence Award in Elementary Science. Scott served as the Place-Based Education Chair for the North American Environmental Education Association. He is a former member of the state and North Texas steering committees for Texas Children in Nature and is proud to be a Texas Master Naturalist.

Mónica Franco
Mónica Franco is the founder and Vice President of Bloom Movement, a children and family conservation non-profit in Portugal whose mission is to re-connect children and families with Nature through a powerful approach to Nature education: the magic of nature. Mónica is also the Portugal coordinator for Sharing Nature Worldwide, founded by noted naturalist and educator, Joseph Cornell. Leveraging Sharing Nature’s Flow Learning, based on universal principles of how people learn, combined with myths, legends, games, folklore and magical traditions, the Bloom Movement provides workshops and engaging nature-sharing activities to give children joyful and profound experiences with the Natural world.
**Joe Frost, Ed.D., L.H.D.**
Following graduate study in child development, Dr. Frost directed a four-decades running research program on play and child development. He supervised more than 50 Ph.D. dissertations and authored and coauthored more than 20 books. His first book, *The Disadvantaged Child*, (1966) was recognized by Pi Lambda Theta as one of the year’s outstanding education books. His most recent was *A History of Play and Play Environments* (2010). He was President of ACEI and IPA-USA.

**Melina Gerosa Bellows**
Melina is the Chief Education Officer of the National Geographic Society. She is responsible for the Kids and Family media divisions, School Publishing, the National Geographic Education Foundation and the National Geographic Bee. Bellows joined National Geographic in 2000 as the editor of National Geographic World magazine (now National Geographic Kids). In 2007, she launched National Geographic Little Kids for preschoolers and their parents, which received the Parents’ Choice Gold Award for the past seven years. She is an internationally published, best-selling author of both children’s and adults’ outdoor adventure books.

**Christina Goldfuss**
Christy is the Managing Director of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. She oversees implementation of environmental and energy policies and initiatives, including the President’s Climate Action Plan, and works with other partners to develop new strategies to tackle this global challenge. Christy joined the CEQ in early 2015, after serving as the Deputy Director for Congressional and Legislative Affairs with the National Park Service. Prior to this role, Christy worked at The Center for American Progress, where she created and directed the Public Lands Project, which introduced new policy ideas to responsibly develop energy on public lands.

**Jaime González**
Jaime is responsible for developing and implementing an annual schedule of activities and outreach programs to augment public access and awareness of the prairie. Mr. González’s work also involves expanding collaborative efforts with other organizations and agencies around the issues of conservation and education. He also assists with grassland restoration efforts on several Katy Prairie preserves and at over twenty Prairie Builder Schools and Parks locations throughout the Greater Houston area.

**José G. González**
José G. González is the founder of Latino Outdoors, a growing community and volunteer-run organization that exists to “connect cultura with the outdoors”. This involves connecting network of Latino professionals, supporting outdoor leadership capacity-building opportunities for youth, and serving as a storytelling platform for defining the ambicultural identity of Latino communities and the outdoors. He received his B.A at the University of California, Davis, and his M.S at the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources & Environment. Connect with José on Twitter @Green_Chicano or via his website, www.josegagonzalez.com.
Jessica Gordon
Jessica Gordon is an educator for the City of Austin Watershed Protection Department. Her work involves teaching about aquifers, watersheds, and water quality. She is passionate about outdoor environmental education and has more than ten years of experience leading Earth and Environmental Science field trips. Jessica earned two graduate degrees from the University of Texas: one in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education and the other in Geography and the Environment. She has previously worked with a number of innovative programs, including UTeach, the Environmental Science Institute, and GeoFORCE Texas. Jessica enjoys outdoor adventures with her family.

CJ Goulding
CJ Goulding is a Program Assistant with the Youth Programs office of the National Park Service. He helps manage programs connecting youth to parks through play, education, volunteering, and work opportunities. He has led backpacking trips for teens in the Pacific Northwest and has served with the Student Conservation Association working with teenagers in the Seattle’s parks and green spaces. CJ attended the 2013 Natural Leaders Legacy Camp and returned in 2014 as a trainer.

Judit Green
Judit Green, Urban Wildlife Biologist with Texas Parks & Wildlife for the past 26 years, conducts outreach and offers technical guidance on natural resource projects that benefit wildlife, landscapes, and water. She co-founded the first chapter of Texas Master Naturalists in San Antonio in 1996 and still serves as their advisor and is a contributing author and photographer to the Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife book. She’s been with the San Antonio TCIN chapter since 2011.

Trevor Hance
Trevor Hance is a Grade 5 science teacher and outdoor learning specialist with a focus on incorporating constructivist learning theory into authentic environmentally-minded student learning experiences that meet required curriculum learning standards while giving students the opportunity to pursue their individual interests and demonstrate their learning through their preferred modes of expression. Trevor’s education background includes a Bachelor’s Degree in Economics, a Master’s in Curriculum and Instruction, and a Juris Doctorate degree. He has been one of seven Austin area teachers selected over each of the past two years to participate in the University of Texas Environmental Science Institute’s “Scientist in Residence” program, was awarded a Fellowship with EECapacity, and has been accepted to the 2015 NOAA Teacher at Sea Program. Most recently he was named a Finalist in the 2015 Texas Environmental Education Awards by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for the “Legacy Projects” his students complete at the end of their fifth grade year.

Cullen Hanks
Cullen Hanks is a Texas Nature Tracker Biologist in the Wildlife Diversity Program at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. He grew up in Texas with an interest in natural history, especially birds. Cullen earned a BA in biology from Cornell University, and a MA in Latin American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. In his masters, he focused on issues relating to biodiversity conservation and conducted research on the economics of the wildlife trade. Cullen has extensive experience with the collection and management of data on rare and threatened species. He is very passionate about being a naturalist and the contribution of the naturalist community to conservation. Cullen lives in Austin, Texas with his wife.
**Ky Harkey**
Ky Harkey is the Outdoor Education & Outreach Coordinator for Texas State Parks where his work focuses on bringing more diversity to park visitation. Ky has instructed with the National Outdoor Leadership School, the Wilderness Medicine Institute and was a Community Outreach Specialist for REI. Ky attended the Natural Leaders Legacy Camp in 2012, and returned in 2013 as an instructor. Ky is an active member of the NLN Green Play to Green Pay team.

**Mikal Hart**
Mikal Hart, senior software engineer with Intel Corporation, is a computer scientist, inventor, writer, and musician. Mikal holds three patents, two for his curious “Reverse Geocache Puzzle”—the treasure chest that opens at only one designated location. He has written articles on the Maker Movement for MAKE Magazine and contributed to several O’Reilly Press books relating to creative microcontroller development. Mikal also performs regularly as a classical French hornist.

**Patricia Hasbach Ph.D.**
Patricia Hasbach, Ph.D. is a licensed psychotherapist with a private practice in Eugene, Oregon; a faculty member at Lewis & Clark College and Antioch University Seattle; and a consultant for hospitals, schools, design firms, corrections facilities, and community groups on various topics related to the human-nature relationship. She has published articles in numerous journals and is the co-author of two books published by MIT Press: Ecopsychology: Science, Totems, and the Technological Species (2012) and The Rediscovery of the Wild (2013).

**Nate Hawley**
Nate was born and raised in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. After graduating with a degree in conservation biology Nate served in Suriname, South America as a Peace Corps Volunteer. After 2 years of living in the rainforest Nate was hooked on tropic ecology and studied tropical butterfly ecology in Tobago for his graduate thesis. After graduate school Nate accepted a position on the island of Saipan as a herpetologist for the local government which transitioned into a full time position with the Fish and Wildlife Service. After nine years on Saipan Nate moved to Washington D.C. to help launch the Secretary’s Youth initiative to engage, educate, and employ young people. In 2011, Nate accepted a position at the National Conservation Training Center where he continues to support youth programming.

**Nancy Herron**
Nancy Herron is the Outreach and Education Director for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Her background includes over 20 years with TPWD in conservation education, and prior work as a non-profit administrator, teacher and journalist. Nancy has been a leader in the movement to reconnect children and adults with nature at the state and national level. Nancy is a recipient of multiple awards for educational innovations and leadership and is passionate about bettering our children’s future.

**Pam Hess**
Pam Hess holds a Master of Science degree in Natural Resources in Environmental Education from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Biology from the University of Vermont. Hess is Director of Youth Engagement at the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), where she has held a leadership role in youth outdoor education for the past 11 years. She is also the program director for AMC’s Outdoors Rx program, and in 2014 received the White House “Champion of Change” award for Engaging the Next Generation of Conservation Leaders.
Cassie Honolka
Cassie is a native Texan with passion for outdoor education and sharing her love of nature. This has led to 7 years of service with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Five of those years have been with the Texas Outdoor Family Program. Cassie has led camping workshops and outdoor recreation activities and also finds free time to pursue them on her own. She loves hiking, rockhounding and backpacking.

Jeannette Ickovics
Dr. Ickovics is Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health and of Psychology at Yale University. She was the Founding Director of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the School of Public Health (2000-2012). Dr. Ickovics is Director of CARE: Community Alliance for Research and Engagement—committed to bringing “evidence to action” to improve health. She is also Deputy Director for the Yale Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS, where she has served as Director of Training since 1999. Jeannette Ickovics’ research investigates the interplay of complex biomedical, behavioral, social and psychological factors that influence individual and community health. She uses this lens to examine challenges faced by those often marginalized by the health care system and by society.

Jonathan B. Jarvis
Jonathan B. Jarvis began his career with the National Park Service in 1976 as a seasonal interpreter in Washington, D.C. Today, he manages that agency whose mission is to preserve America’s most treasured landscapes and cultural icons. Jarvis’s 37-year career has taken him from ranger to resource management specialist to park biologist to superintendent of parks such as Craters of the Moon, North Cascades, Wrangell-St. Elias, and Mount Rainier. Before being confirmed as the 18th Director of the National Park Service on September 24, 2009, Jarvis served as regional director of the bureau’s Pacific West Region. Today, he is responsible for overseeing an agency with more than 22,000 employees, a $3 billion budget, and 407 national parks that attract more than 280 million visitors every year who generate $30 billion in economic benefit across the nation. The National Park Service brings the park idea to virtually every county in America. Grants from the Land and Water Conservation and Historic Preservation Fund help communities preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Since 1976, the Service’s tax credit program has leveraged more than $60 billion in private investment in historic preservation to help revitalize downtowns and neighborhoods across the country.

Cathy Jordan
Cathy Jordan, Ph.D., L.P., is Extension Faculty in the Center for Community Vitality and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota. She has been a community-based participatory researcher for 20 years. She serves as the founding editor of www.ces4health.info, a peer-reviewed repository of products of community-engaged scholarship that are intended for community audiences. She applies these skills to her passion for improving developmental outcomes for children through nature exposure.

Rusty Keeler
Rusty Keeler is an author, designer, and speaker who works to inspire and collaborate with communities to create beautiful outdoor environments for children. He has designed and built natural play spaces around the world for over twenty years and is the author of the book Natural Playscapes: Creating Outdoor Play Environments for the Soul (Exchange Press: 2008) His favorite project is the adventure-playground inspired “Hands-on-Nature” ANARCHY ZONE at Ithaca Children’s Garden, a place filled with loose parts and adult playworkers where kids are free to climb trees, dig in the dirt, build forts, cook over fires and more.
Bill Kilburn
Bill Kilburn is the leader of Ontario’s Back to Nature Network. Among successes, Bill led the effort to create the Ontario Children’s Outdoor Charter, Canada’s first charter to state children have the right to explore in nature. Bill is currently leading programs to train trainers in every Ontario school board to empower educators to teach outdoors, and develop an accredited presentation on nature and human health in partnership with the Ontario College of Family Physicians.

Andrew B. Kim
Andrew B. Kim currently serves the Comal Independent School District, a fast growth school district that covers 589 square miles from San Antonio to New Braunfels, as the Superintendent since 2012. He has been in education for 20 plus years serving in multiple school districts from Dallas to Comal ISD. His teaching background is in English as a Second Language. He has previously served in the role of Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Professional Development, principal and teacher in multiple school districts in Texas. He holds a Masters in Educational Administration from the University of Texas at Austin and a Bachelor of Arts in Medieval Studies and Classical Civilization from Fordham University, Bronx, New York.

James E. King Jr
James E. King Jr is a National Delegate of the Children and Nature Network, former Ambassador of Outdoor Nation, National Park Service Fellow with Greening Youth Foundation, Outreach Coordinator for Atlanta Mentorship Program for Sustainability, and is also a Youth Program Volunteer Specialist for Atlanta Watershed Alliance. His great contributions to the environment have not gone unnoticed within the south. In 2010, Mr. King was nominated as an Atlanta Cox Conserve Hero. He was also honored by Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI) with the Community Service Award in 2011 for taking diverse families camping and providing stewardship at local, state, and national parks.

Ben Klasky, M. Ed., M.B.A.
Ben Klasky is the President and CEO of IslandWood, an innovative nonprofit organization that introduces thousands of low-income children to the outdoors each year. He is committed to serving at-risk youth, having led nature outings for children from Harlem and Chinatown in New York, and having taught in an under-resourced Louisiana school district through Teach For America. Ben teaches a graduate course on Social Entrepreneurship at the University of Washington’s Evans School of Public Affairs. He co-founded the first Board Fellows program, while earning an MBA and a Masters in Education at Stanford University. And, he is the co-founder of Camp Galileo – the largest set of day camps in Northern California. He is a public speaker, having given a TEDx Talk entitled “Get Hooked on Nature.” In his spare time, he enjoys restoring a 50-year-old log cabin and chasing after his two young boys with his wife Lisa.

Andy Kuhlken
Andy is an 8th grade student at Austin Montessori School. He has just been accepted as a Green Schools Fellow. Andy has designed and implemented a sustainability project at his school, turning unused grass area into wildlife and edible gardens. He volunteers as a junior leader for Austin Families in Nature and has assisted in building a natural playscape for Parkside Community School. Andy also enjoys writing about nature on his blog http://natureleif.com.

Heather Kuhlken, M.A.T.
Heather incorporated her experience as a teacher and biologist and her passion for nature to found Austin Families in Nature in 2008. Since then, Heather has guided AFiN’s growth into a 501c3 non-profit (Families in Nature). Heather leads nature-rich travel experiences for families in the U.S. and abroad. She also works as a nature photographer, designs natural playscapes, serves on the leadership team for the Children in Nature Collaborative of Austin and volunteers for Children & Nature Network.
**Joel Krupa**

Joel Krupa is a Ph.D. student at the University of Toronto’s Department of Geography, where he studies under climatologist Danny Harvey and is pursuing research on renewable energy financing innovations in emerging and frontier markets. He is also a volunteer for Agents of Nature and extremely passionate about outdoor activities, nature, and fitness.

**Margaret Lamar**

Margaret is the Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Children & Nature Network where she builds initiatives in target communities across the U.S. to fuel the effort to connect children to nature. Margaret is a policy and program architect who connects environmental learning and play with the goals of achieving health and wellness for children. Across Texas and the U.S., she facilitates community planning to increase children’s access to nature through partnerships and community action plans. For over 25 years, Margaret has been committed to helping children achieve educational excellence in schools. As a researcher and curriculum designer in the fields of K-12 reading and science, she has designed award-winning educational programs that have reached hundreds of thousands of children across the U.S. She is a native Texan and spends countless hours in creek beds with her two boys.

**Jamie Larsen**

Jamie Larsen is the co-founder of Educational Gaming Environments (EdGE) at TERC. EdGE’s work includes innovative ways to integrate science content and research on how scientific experiences and collaborations can be taught through the use of science-infused games. His current work includes STEMLandia: a land of outside gaming adventures, Ravenous: a bird flight game, and SportsLab: a game-based environment for teams to learn about STEM and 21st Century Skills through a sport research and design challenge.

**Martin LeBlanc**

As a teenager, Martin’s own life was turned around through an outdoor experience. Martin is Senior Vice-President at IslandWood and Outdoor Center on Bainbridge Island WA that serves 15,000 children a year with outdoor environmental education experiences. A founding Board Member of the Children and Nature Network, Martin is inspired by the vision of Richard Louv, author of Last Child in the Woods. For 10 years Martin was with the Sierra Club as the National Youth Director. Martin has established non-traditional alliances with the military, educational groups, and health organizations. He was instrumental in establishing the Outdoor Alliance for Kids (OAK), a national partnership of organizations from diverse sectors with the common interest of expanding opportunities to get kids and families outside.

**Richard Louv**

Richard Louv is co-founder and Chairman Emeritus of the Children & Nature Network and the author of eight books, including Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder and The Nature Principle: Reconnecting with life in a Virtual Age (Algonquin). His books have been translated into 12 languages and published in 17 countries, and helped launch an international movement to connect children and their families to nature. He is the recipient of the 2008 Audubon Medal; past recipients include Rachel Carson, E.O. Wilson and Jimmy Carter. Among other awards, Louv received the 2007 Cox Award, Clemson University’s highest honor for “sustained achievement in public service.”
**Juan Martinez**

A proud product of south central Los Angeles, Juan D. Martinez is C&NN’s Director of Leadership Development and the Natural Leaders Network. Juan empowers youth leaders worldwide to connect children with nature, pursue conservation careers, and transform lives in underserved communities. In 2011, Juan was named a National Geographic Emerging Explorer and the promotional video series highlighting Juan’s work won an Emmy. His TED talk is featured on the curated educational videos, TEDEd. He represents The North Face as an ambassador for outdoor engagement. In 2012, Juan became the youngest board member in Sierra Club Foundation history.

**Colleen McCue**

Colleen McCue coordinates the South Texas Children in Nature Network. She is the Outreach & Volunteer Coordinator for the Mission-Aransas Reserve at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute. She works to recruit and retain a large community of volunteers that work in education, animal rehabilitation, and stewardship. She manages the Reserve’s Blue Crab Monitoring Citizen Science Project. She enjoys leading educational programs for all ages in the field and in the classroom. Colleen coordinates the UT Summer Science Program for 3rd-8th grade students. She also produces the Reserve’s biannual newsletter, digital marketing, and social media.

**Stacy McReynolds**

As leader of the San Antonio Zoo’s Education Department since 1999, Stacy has overseen the start of San Antonio’s first Nature Preschool, the design and operation of Kronkosky’s Tiny Tot Nature Spot and much more. This award-winning acre and a half is the first zoo exhibit anywhere designed specifically to connect families with very young children to nature. Stacy is also a leader in the Partnership for Texas Children in Nature, serves on several advisory boards and was on the executive team writing Texas Environmental Literacy Plan.

**Sarah Milligan-Toffler**

Sarah Milligan-Toffler is Executive Director of C&NN. Sarah is a creative, energetic, and mission-driven leader who brings more than 20 years of experience in developing, funding, and implementing outdoor education and adventure programs that provide a deep connection to nature for people of all backgrounds and abilities. Sarah formerly served as Associate Executive Director of Wilderness Inquiry, a national leader in providing wilderness trips and environmental education activities that include people with disabilities, low-income families, and disadvantaged urban youth. While at Wilderness Inquiry, Sarah helped to develop the Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures program, which has been recognized by President Obama’s America’s Great Outdoors initiative as a national model for engaging urban youth and families in the outdoors. Sarah is an avid runner, hiker, and backpacker and enjoys camping with her husband Jeff, son Jacob, and Golden Doodle Honey.

**R. Brent Lyles**

Lyles began his science-education career in the Teach For America Charter Corps in 1990, and he has stayed in education ever since. He holds Masters degrees in biological anthropology and nonprofit management, and his career path has included nonprofit leadership, fundraising for wildlife conservation, teacher training, and the writing of national science textbooks. He currently serves on the Boards of Leadership Austin, the American Genre Film Archive, and EarthShare of Texas.
Kim Moore Bailey
Kim is the Executive Director for Foundation for Youth Investment. She is an experienced management executive, with expertise in strategic planning, community engagement and youth outdoor program development. Kim is the former COO of College Possible, a national non-profit focused on making college attainable for low-income students. She was also Vice President of Outward Bound, Inc., Manager of Denver City and County Parks and Recreation, and a Regional Manager for the Chicago Parks District. Kim continues to serves as a Board Member for GP RED (Research, Education, & Development for Health, Recreation & Land Agencies) and for the Voyageur Outward Bound School.

Andrew Moore
Andrew O. Moore is a Senior Fellow with the National League of Cities’ Institute for Youth, Education and Families, a foundation-funded “action tank” that helps municipal leaders take action on behalf of the children, youth, and families in their communities. Among Moore’s many roles with the Institute, he is leading the initiative Cities Promoting Access to Nature in partnership with Children & Nature Network. During and prior to his time with the Institute, Moore has written and published extensively on youth development topics. Earlier, Moore spent 15 years building the nationwide network of service and conservation corps, and has consulted on strategic program development with the National League of Cities’ YEF Institute and other clients in the youth development field in the U.S. and United Kingdom.

Robin Moore
Robin Moore, Hon. ASLA, is Professor of Landscape Architecture, College of Design, NC State University, and Director of the Natural Learning Initiative (NLI, co-founded with Dr. Nilda Cosco in 2000). Professor Moore holds degrees in architecture, Bartlett School, London University, and city and regional planning, MIT. He conducts research at the interface of built environment design and the behavioral needs of children and families. Moore supervises doctoral students and teaches advanced courses in urban design. He is former chair of the Environmental Design Research Association and former president of the International Play Association. Recent publications include, Nature Play & Learning Places (2014) and “Design for Healthy Childhoods and a Healthy Planet,” in Biophilic Design (2008).

Tom Norquist
Senior Vice President, Game Time Marketing Product Development & Design, Playcore. Tom is an award-winning playground designer and children’s advocate for safe, inclusive and fun play. He was a founding board member of the International Play Equipment Manufacturers Association in 1995, and still serves today. Tom is an active representative of the American Society for Testing and Materials, a founding steering committee member on the U.S. Coalition for Play, and he serves on the boards for the International Playground Contractors Association and Dr. Stuart Brown’s National Institute for Play. Tom recently received Auburn University School of Industrial and Graphic Design Distinguished Service Award.

Jackie Ostfeld
Jackie Ostfeld has a decade of experience working to connect young people with the natural world. Currently, Jackie directs the Sierra Club’s Nearby Nature initiative to build a new generation of diverse environmental leaders by engaging kids and communities to explore, enjoy and protect parks, waters and green spaces close to home. In 2010, Jackie co-founded the Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK) a national strategic partnership working to expand the number and quality of opportunities for children, youth and families to connect with the outdoors. Jackie Chairs OAK’s Steering Committee and serves on the Board of her local Friends of Petworth Park group, established to support a small urban green space and recreation center near her home.
Robert Owen

Originally from Western New York, Robert embarked on his adventures in Texas by pursuing a job in the field of environmental interpretation after receiving his degree from SUNY ESF in Syracuse, New York. Robert’s function with Texas State Parks is coordinator of the Texas Outdoor Family program which has shared beginner camping experiences with 4,000+ families. Robert is also charged with administering the Texas State Parks Geocache Challenge and additional outdoor education trainings.

Iliana A. Pena, M.S.

Iliana Pena joined Audubon Texas in 2003 as a Center Director in Corpus Christi and was quickly asked to launch the Mitchell Lake Audubon Center in San Antonio in 2004. Her background and passion has always been in wildlife conservation so in 2009 she happily accepted the position as statewide Director of Conservation. Under Iliana’s leadership the program has grown 3-fold and now supports the Coastal Stewardship, Prairie and Grassland and the Urban Conservation Programs. Iliana has a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M University, and a Master degree in Range and Wildlife Management from Texas A&M University - Kingsville. She lives in San Antonio with her husband and 3 kids. Her hobbies include back country camping, hiking, birding, fishing, and reading.

Gil Penalosa

Gil Penalosa is passionate about cities for all people. Gil advices decision makers and communities on how to create vibrant cities and healthy communities for everyone regardless of social, economic, or ethnic background. His focus is on the design and use of parks and streets as great public places, as well as sustainable mobility: walking, cycling and public transit. Gil is Founder and Chair of the Board of the successful Canadian non-profit organization 8-80 Cities. The organization was created based on a simple philosophy; if you create a great city for an 8 year old and an 80 year old, you will create a successful city for all people. As former Commissioner of Parks, Sport and Recreation for the City of Bogota, Colombia, Gil was an integral part of the city’s much celebrated transformation of public space and sustainable mobility during the late 1990s. Gil successfully led the design and development of over 200 parks, and his team also initiated the “new Ciclovia” — a program that sees over 1 million people walk, run, skate and bike along 121 kilometers of Bogota’s city roads every Sunday, and today is internationally recognized and emulated.

Don Perkins

Don Perkins has served as President/CEO of the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) since 1995. Don works with GMRI’s staff, board, and external partners to drive GMRI’s evolution as a strategic research, education, and community institution that serves the Gulf of Maine bioregion and to scale GMRI’s impact beyond. Don is dedicated to building creative, strategic organizations, traditional or virtual, that contribute to solving intractable problems and creating new opportunities in marine conservation, science literacy, and common property governance and management. Don is also active in the Gulf of Mexico serving in the capacity of Executive Director of the Harte Charitable Foundation (HCF). Don is a Maine native with a B.A. in Anthropology from Dartmouth College and a M.B.A. from the Stanford University Graduate School of Business.

Suzanne Pierce, Ph.D

Dr. Suzanne Pierce is a computational Earth Scientist. She is uses a scholar-practitioner approach to integrate scientific information with technology systems. Leading applications include decision support systems for conflict resolution applied to groundwater and energy case studies. She has developed innovative teaching techniques that incorporate interactive games with 3D printed tangibles and content that aligns with next generation science standards.
**Nette Pletcher, M.A.**

Nette develops and delivers the Association’s conservation education initiatives, promoting the role of AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums in education leadership, building capacity for informal science education, and leading multi-institutional projects that strengthen science and environmental learning in zoos and aquariums. Prior to joining AZA in 2009, Nette was an educator at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. and worked as an evaluation research assistant for the Institute for Learning Innovation.

**Stephen Pont, MD, MPH, FAAP**

Stephen Pont, MD, MPH serves as the founding medical director for the Texas Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Obesity, which strives to empower families and communities to lead healthy, happy lives. Dr. Pont also serves as the medical director for Austin Independent School District’s Student Health Services, and he works with a team including the UT-School of Public Health and the USDA/Baylor College of Medicine on a CDC Childhood Obesity Research Demonstration Project that funds a systems based childhood obesity intervention. Dr. Pont works with many organizations to promote health and to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic including the Children and Nature Network, Marathon Kids, Children’s Optimal Health, Latino Healthcare Forum, Texas Department of Agriculture, Fitnessgram, Texas Medical Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, where Dr. Pont serves as the founding chair of AAP Section on Obesity. In his free time he enjoys spending time outdoors, an annual mission trip to Guatemala with his church, and learning Bakido karate with his sons and wife.

**Marcia Pradines**

Marcia Pradines is the Division Chief of Visitor Services and Communications for the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. She oversees the Branch of Visitor Services and Branch of Communications in order to engage the American public in the mission of the Refuge System. Her passion is helping people care about wildlife conservation. She oversees public recreation, communications, environmental education and interpretation at the National scale, as well as develops national strategies for creating a connected conservation constituency. She facilitates implementation of Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation, the strategic vision for the National Wildlife Refuge System. This includes co-chairing the Urban Refuge and Outdoor Recreation Teams. She has led the Service’s development of a new Urban Wildlife Conservation Program aimed at engaging new communities to foster stewardship and a conservation ethic.

**Nooshin Razani, MD MPH**

Nooshin Razani, MD MPH is a pediatrician and researcher at UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital Oakland. She participated in the National Environmental Education Fund’s “Nature Champion” training in 2010, and since then has engaged in collaborative efforts to integrate nature and health care. Last year she served as Senior Health Fellow at the Institute at the Golden Gate, a program of the National Parks. In collaboration with the San Francisco Department of Public Health, she developed and evaluated a case-based training curriculum on increasing access to nature for low income populations. She currently serves on the Leadership Committee of the Bay Area Healthy Parks Healthy People Collaborative, and directs FIND Nature, a shuttle that takes patients into nature once a month. This program reflects a collaboration between the East Bay Regional Park District and Children’s Hospital Oakland. Her research interests is the potential for nature to relieve stress, create resilience, help families with special needs, and environmental justice.
**Parke Richeson**

Parke leads WTTW’s public media production and distribution which has included three-time Emmy Award winning PBS children’s series Word World, popular music series Soundstage, favorite television series Mexico-One Plate at a Time with Rick Bayless, McLaughlin Group, CEO Exchange and Legends of Jazz with Ramsey Lewis; in addition to many Specials such as David Broza at Masada, Ten Buildings that Changed America, and Rx. Parke is the Project Director for Nature Cat, as well as the Ready to Learn initiative UMIGO which engages children in math with interactive narrative experiences across multiple media platforms.

**Ray Rivera**

Ray Rivera is the Vice President of Elected Leadership for Leadership for Educational Equity. He is a leader in political campaign strategy, policy advocacy, coalition building, development and community organizing. He served in President Obama’s Administration at the Obama-Biden Transition, with Secretary Ken Salazar at the Department of the Interior, and at the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Ray was a political director and union organizer for AFSCME, America’s public employees’ labor union. He earned his Master’s Degree in Public Administration at the Harvard John F. Kennedy School of Government; where he co-founded a non-partisan civic engagement platform, Democracy.com. Ray helped create the grassroots organizing curriculum and strategy for the Natural Leaders Network; and is co-founder of the Team Tió foundation where he supports youth development through team sports.

**Dave Room**

Dave’s most important identifier is Melia’s Papa. His tween-age daughter Melia is his motivation and inspiration. Since graduating from Stanford, Room has worked in a number of emergent fields and had leadership roles in several tech startups and a non profit. With the intention to reconnect tens of millions of children worldwide to nature, Room co-founded BALANCE Edutainment and created Pacha’s Pajamas with Aaron Ableman. Check out his life learnings at MeliasPapa.com. Twitter: @meliaspapa

**Rudolph Rosen, Ph.D.**

Dr. Rudolph Rosen is an authority on leadership and funding of nonprofit conservation organizations and public agencies. Recent work at the Meadows Center for Water and Environment focused on integrating technology into experiential education about water. He has served on over 130 boards/committees on natural resource conservation and authored over 500 articles and blogs, including the books “Texas Aquatic Science” a STEM curriculum for high school and university, and “Money for the Cause” all about fundraising.

**Susan Rowe**

Susan is the Education Program Manager at Lubbock Lake National Historic Landmark and teaches Heritage Education for the Museum Science/Heritage Management graduate program at Museum of Texas Tech University. As Education Program Manager, Susan develops and coordinates all programming at the Lubbock Lake Landmark. She was instrumental in bringing Nature Rocks to the Panhandle-Plains. Susan serves on the Informal Science Educators Association of Texas (ISEA) board, and other national and international museum associations and committees.
Adam Rudman
Adam is a six-time Emmy Award-winning writer for Tom & Jerry (WB/Cartoon Network), Cyberchase (Nelvana/PBS), Handy Manny (Disney), Sesame Street (PBS), Scooby Doo (WB), Astroblast (Scholastic/Sprout), Sid the Science Kid (Henson/PBS) and Jungle Junction (Disney). He has worked as Head Writer and Executive Producer on Jack’s Big Music Show, Bunnytown and Curious Buddies. He is the author of the first Cyberchase book for Scholastic, “The Search for the Power Orb”. Adam is the co-creator, co-executive producer and head writer for Nature Cat.

Christopher Rutgers
Christopher Rutgers is the founder of Outdoor Outreach, and now serves as the Executive Director of TYO. As a competitive skier, whitewater river guide, expedition rock climber and avid surfer, Chris has spent most of his life developing a passion for the outdoors. It was this passion that helped Chris overcome his own at-risk childhood. In 1999, he founded Outdoor Outreach as a means to give at-risk and underprivileged youth the same life-changing opportunities. Drawing from his own personal experiences, Chris developed the Outdoor Outreach program model and philosophies that have proven to be so successful working with at-risk and underprivileged youth. Chris has been nationally recognized as an expert on programming for youth at-risk. He is frequently asked to speak at national conferences and symposiums, and to consult with government agencies, academic institutions and other nonprofit organizations.

Scott Sampson
Scott is a dinosaur paleontologist, science communicator, and passionate advocate for connecting people with nature. He serves as Vice President of Research and Collections and Chief Curator at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. He is perhaps best known as “Dr. Scott,” host and science advisor of the Emmy-nominated PBS KIDS television series Dinosaur Train, produced by the Jim Henson Company. Sampson is author of Dinosaur Odyssey: Fossil Threads in the Web of Life (University of California Press, 2009) and How to Raise a Wild Child: The Art and Science of Falling in Love with Nature (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015).

Andrew Sansom
Dr. Andrew Sansom is one of Texas’ leading conservationists. He is a former Executive Director of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Executive Director of the Texas Nature Conservancy, and founder of The Parks and Wildlife Foundation of Texas. For his commitment to the management and protection of natural resources, Dr. Sansom also is a past recipient of the Chevron Conservation Award, The Chuck Yeager Award from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, The Pugsley Medal from the National Park Foundation, and the Seton Award from the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. He is a Distinguished Alumnus of Texas Tech University and Austin College, and received a PhD in Geography from Texas State University. Andrew Sansom now serves as Executive Director of the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment and Research Professor of Geography at Texas State.

Autumn Saxton-Ross, PhD
Autumn Saxton-Ross, PhD, is a resident of the District of Columbia and is currently the Program Director for the National Collaborative for Health Equity. With degrees in sociology, health education, and exercise science, her research, academic and professional interests are on the social and physical environment and their influences on health behaviors, specifically in Black and urban populations, and the health benefits of parks and green spaces. Her life’s work is improving the health of communities through engagement, activity, education, exposure and opportunity, truly believing that a healthy life is lived better outdoors.
**Sahil Shah**
Sahil Shah is a 6th grader in Canyon Vista Middle School. He enjoys staying outdoors and exploring nature. His favorite sports are basketball, tennis and chess. His dad, a technology manager, got him interested in technology when he was 3 years old. Now it is his passion and he uses it for school projects. He first got to use his technology skills in 5th grade when Mr. Hance introduced him to the Westcave Preserve.

**Ilya Shmuleenson, M.Ed.**
Ilya oversees Keep Austin Beautiful’s environmental education programming which reaches 11,000 students annually. He co-chairs the Austin Independent School District’s Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee. Ilya participated in the C&NN’s Natural Leaders Network Legacy Camp in 2013. Previously, he was the Operations Director and Programs Coordinator at Eden Village Camp, a back-to-the-land camp in NY. He holds a Master of Education degree from the University of Washington and a Certificate in Education, Environment, and Community.

**Benjamin Shrader**
Benjamin Shrader (Commander Ben, The Invasive Hunter) educates kids of all ages about invasive species in real life and with his blog and videos. Ben has entertained thousands of kids through school visits and with his invasive Hunter Academy at events across the country from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center to the United States Botanic Gardens. Ben has received numerous awards, including the Outstanding Terrestrial Invasive Species Volunteer and the International Young Eco-Hero award.

**Carter Smith**
Carter Smith is the Executive Director of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. He began his professional career at TPWD more than two decades ago as a Management Intern assisting in the Private Lands and Public Hunting programs. Today, he is responsible for overseeing an agency of 3,100 professionals in 11 different divisions, including Wildlife, Law Enforcement, State Parks, Coastal Fisheries, and Inland Fisheries. He serves on a number of local boards and has been particularly active in the realms of private lands stewardship, coastal resource and invasive species issues, children in nature initiatives and expanded outreach to the state’s urban populace. He was recently named an outstanding alumnus by Yale University and Texas Tech, and was honored by the Audubon Society with their Victor Emmanuel Conservation Award.

**Parc Smith**
Parc Smith started with American Youth Works in 1995 as a teacher and crew leader for the Environmental Corps, later filled roles as a program coordinator, Director of Environmental Corps and part of the Senior Management Team. Parc leads workshops and speaks at national conferences on national service and youth conservation corps involvement in land management, trail building and project-based outdoor education as a model for transforming lives of at-risk youth to youth “at-promise.” He serves on the Department of Interior 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Advisory Committee, Texas Recreation Trails Grant Review Committee and several regional advisory boards. He grew up in Stephenville, Texas, graduated from Texas Women’s University in Denton, Texas and has called Austin home since 1995.
Steve Smith, M.A.
Steve’s career path began with undergraduate certification and a master’s degree in education followed by six years of university-level teaching and program administration. He brings over twenty years of outdoor program experience working in the field with students and staff in remote wilderness areas and privately consulting organizations in risk management and training. He is also a two-time NOLS alum. Prior to SCA, Steve was at Outward Bound for twenty years, where he wrote handbooks and training manuals, hired and trained hundreds of staff, and served a wide range of field-based and administrative leadership roles. He is currently the Chair of the Wilderness Risk Management Conference and has attended and presented at the conference annually since 2009.

Jessica Snider
Jessica joined the Capitol Area Council, BSA in November 2013 as one of the organization’s first director of STEM, Conservation and Sustainability. While there, she has worked at enhancing STEM and Nature education within the BSA program and creating activities that combine the two discipline areas. Prior to working with BSA, Jessica worked as a Data Analyst with Texas Stream Team, a researcher and TA at University of New Mexico and a researcher at Baylor College of Medicine. While at UNM, she earned a Masters in Biology studying the effect of nutrient inputs on cave microbial communities and has written several papers and books chapters. She still actively enjoys camping, hiking, biking and researching through either her job, her free time or as a volunteer with the Texas Master Naturalists.

Molly Stevens
Molly Stevens is the CEO and Executive Director of Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center (WODC) in Central Texas and is the co-founder of the Children in Nature Collaborative of Austin (CiNCA). Prior to WODC, she spent 16 years with the Nature Conservancy of Texas and the EDF Texas Regional Office. Molly has recently joined the Board of Directors for the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and serves as chair of Families in Nature.

Haily Summerford
Haily Summerford is the Center Director of Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center and has over 20 years of experience in environmental education. Summerford recently completed a study linking outdoor science education with STAAR test improvements. This is the first study of its kind in Texas. Summerford has worked for the City of Fort Worth, Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, Fort Worth Zoo, Fort Worth Botanic Garden and the Fort Worth ISD as the Director of Public Engagement.

Janice Swaisgood, M.A
International speaker, consultant, and teacher, Janice is a passionate advocate for bilingual education, equity and access. Holding a M.A. from UCSD, she develops curriculum and programs, improving outdoor experiences for thousands of children and families. Janice is C&NN’s Director of the Natural Families Network. She and her husband Ron founded Family Adventures in Nature in San Diego where they serve over 1,500 families and enjoy weekly adventures with their two sons.

Elena Takaki
Elena has worked in the field of Environmental Education for over 20 years. With a B.S. in Natural Resource Management, a M.A. in Science Education (both from the University of Michigan) with a concentration in Educational Technology, and a M.S. in Environmental Studies from Johns Hopkins University, Elena has been able to combine her two passions: the environment and education. Elena has worked at non-profit, higher education institutions, and government agencies conducting professional development for educators and writing curriculum that incorporates the use of technologies to enhance student understanding of ecological concepts while learning in the outdoors. She has also served on several state, regional and national committees to connect children with nature in both formal and non-formal education settings. Elena currently works at National Geographic Society where she manages citizen science mapping.
**Betsy Townsend**  
Betsy Townsend is the co-founder and co-chair of Leave No Child Inside—Greater Cincinnati (LNCIgc), a collaborative of individuals and organizations educating the community that time spent in nature is essential to the physical, mental and emotional health of all children. LNCIgc works to connect the community to local organizations that provide nature facilities, programs, events and services. It also fosters creative solutions to the barriers which prevent children from safely accessing nature in their own neighborhoods. Founded in 2006 as a response to a call to action by author Richard Louv in his book Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder, LNCIgc was the first collaborative in the country to form specifically to address children’s growing disconnection from nature. From 2006 to the present time, Betsy has worked closely with the Children & Nature Network, and is the 2015 Chair of the Board of Directors. She has served on the C&NN Board since 2010, and was previously chair of the Grassroots Leadership Team.

**Nancy Trautmann, PhD**  
As Director of Education at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Nancy Trautmann leads a team that aims to inspire curiosity, learning, and action related to birds and nature. She focuses on empowering educators to go beyond lectures and textbooks to engage students in conducting investigations, participating in citizen science, creatively using information and communication technologies, and learning through inquiry. Her team provides experiences for visitors to the Lab and distance learning opportunities for people throughout the world.

**Brian Trusty**  
Brian is the Executive Director of Audubon Texas and the Vice President of the National Audubon Society. He has enjoyed a 20-year career in parks and recreation, land and habitat management, tourism, and economic development that includes executive management responsibilities in private for-profit, private non-profit, and public organizations. Brian now leads Audubon’s conservation and environmental education programs in Texas and throughout the Central Flyway. He has received multiple awards from state and local organizations, including “Innovator of the Year” award in Maryland in 2007 given by the Daily Record, Maryland’s leading legal and business journal.

**Laura Turner Seydel**  
Laura Turner Seydel is an international environmental advocate dedicated to creating a healthy and sustainable future for our children. Laura is chairperson of the Captain Planet Foundation which promotes hands-on environmental education projects worldwide. She is a director of, and works with, the Environmental Working Group to limit the toxic chemicals in food, air, water and consumer products. In 2004 she co-founded Mothers and Others for Clean Air and is currently the Chair of the Board. In 1994, she and her husband co-founded Chattahoochee Riverkeeper.

**Cherelle VanBrakle**  
As a Project Coordinator, Cherelle VanBrakle networks with local community organizations and businesses. At Dell Children’s Medical Center of Central Texas (DCMC), she coordinates the Healthy Hospital Committee, which creates activities and programs to encourage healthy lifestyles for the DCMC employees, patients, and visitors. Cherelle graduated from Texas Lutheran University with a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Physiology and Biology. She gained her Masters of Education in Exercise Science at Texas State University. Cherelle enjoys all things Austin, including running, live music, farmers markets, and hiking on the Greenbelt.
Carolyn Verheyen MA
Carolyn Verheyen is a Principal and Chief Operating Officer of MIG, Inc., a planning, design, communications and management consulting firm of 190 people and 13 offices. Through policy, organizational strategy, land planning, landscape architecture, urban design, ecological resources planning, MIG works with agencies and networks to create opportunities for all to experience nature. Carolyn has 26 years of experience managing organizational development, community service planning and strategic planning projects with a focus on children and families.

Sarah Walker
As an avid hiker, kayaker and traveler, Sarah’s favorite moments are those that connect her love of the outdoors with her love of people. Sarah has recently completed her Honors degree in Psychology at Queen’s University, currently lives in rural Ontario and sits on the board of directors of the Child and Nature Alliance of Canada. She has been a Natural Leader since 2013 and currently helps lead the Natural Leaders Alliance of Canada.

Taldi Walter
Taldi serves as REI’s Community Affairs Program Manager in Seattle, where she works to create and sustain access to inspiring outdoor experiences and places and introduce new audiences to the value of time spent in nature. Previously, Taldi served as Assistant Director of Government Relations for the National Audubon Society in Washington, D.C. With expertise in energy issues, public lands, and conservation policy, she has testified before the Obama Administration to advocate for wildlife refuges and conservation programs. She’s an avid cyclist and races on the Sound Velo Cycling Team. She’s also an advocate for local sustainable transportation and land use policies. Taldi holds a Masters in Biology, from the University of Central Arkansas.

Sarah Weaver
Sarah believes informed and empowered kids make an incredible impact on our environment and future. She graduated from Hamline University (1999) and completed her master’s degree at the University of Minnesota (2010). Her research focused on the pesticide permethrin and its impact on monarch growth and survival. Sarah taught for 7 years in St. Paul Public Schools. Her role at the Monarch Lab involves supporting teachers and students going outside to discover, learn, conserve.

Nancy Wells
Nancy Wells earned a joint PhD in Psychology and Architecture from the University of Michigan and completed a post doc at UC Irvine before joining the department of Design & Environmental Analysis at Cornell University in 2001. As an environmental psychologist, Dr. Wells studies the effects of the built and natural environment on human health and well-being. Her research includes examination of the effects of nature on children’s cognitive functioning and psychological well-being.

Rea Wolfe
Rae Wolfe is an artist and a creative with over 4 years of experience building interactive games. Ms. Wolfe was introduced to game development through a globally recognized course on video game design, taught by Mr. David Conover at Pflugerville High School in Texas. Specializing in graphic design and character development, her games incorporate content from Science, Technology, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM). Projects have debuted at SXSW and the John Lennon Bus. Most recently, Ms. Wolfe was profiled in a documentary film about Innovation in the Classroom sponsored by Dell.
**Melody Wood, M.S.**
Melody Wood is the Children’s Zoo Supervisor at the Dallas Zoo focusing on interpretation and nature play for the zoo’s youngest guests. She has a M.S. in Environmental Science from the University of New Haven and a B.S. in Zoology from Auburn University. Melody is Executive Chair of the TCIN–North Texas region, heavily involved in the Dallas Zoo’s Green Team, and is the person at work who digs recyclables out of the trash.

**Jaime Zaplatosch**
Jaime Zaplatosch is the Education Director at Openlands, a regional land trust founded in 1963. Jaime started working at Openlands in 2004. During her time with Openlands, the organization’s school-based programs have grown to include a substantial school garden and teacher training program, Building School Gardens, Eco-Explorations, and our newest program, Space to Grow under Jaime’s direction. Jaime has a B.A., Environmental Education, Prescott College, Prescott, AZ and an M.Ed., Curriculum and Instruction, DePaul University, Chicago, IL.