

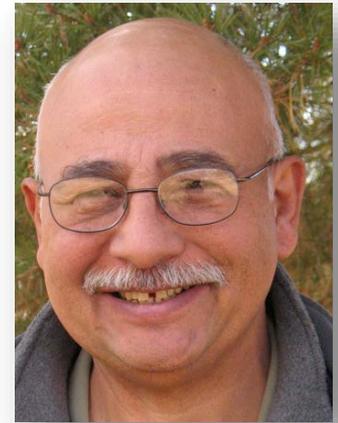
# CASE STUDIES

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FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION  
AND CONSERVATION CAREERS

# Assistant Staff Forester

## VINCE URBINA Colorado State Forest Service



I have a B.S. degree in Forest and Range Management from Colorado State University. I was trained to manage forested land, but today I am more of an arborist. I have been working with trees in one way or another for 40 years. I have worked as a forester, fruit-grower, nurseryman, fire fighter and arborist. Today, my job is to teach people how to select, grow and maintain trees. These people can be range from a single homeowner to an audience of hundreds. I educate people of all ages using the spoken and written word.

I went to high school in Pueblo CO. I chose forestry because I was better at the sciences in high school. When I graduated from high school the military was drafting high school graduates for the Vietnam War. There were no natural resource jobs back then. The returning military veterans were snagging the few jobs available, but I put myself in the right place at the right time and got a job in forestry.

I learned early in my job career you have to make sacrifices to do what you love. Early on, I wanted to work with trees so I sacrificed making a lot of money to work with trees. I also learned to be diligent and persevere. I can't tell you how many tree jobs I interviewed for only to be the second choice to someone else. That didn't stop me from applying. Instead I would find out why I came in second so I would be in a better position to come in first the next time. When applying for a job I learned to do your homework about your future employer and be enthusiastic during the interview process. I learned to live within my means and to spend less money than you make.

Now that I am nearing the end of my career working for someone else I am preparing for my next career as a tree consultant. Trees have been very good to me. I tell young people to do what you love and you will never tire of going to work.

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# Inspiring Connections

## Outdoors Program Manager

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**GRACE ANDERSON**  
Sierra Club



I just knew that I was going to be an elementary school teacher and then I discovered my connections outdoors on a spring break trip with the Student Conservation Association in Joshua Tree National Park. I was hooked and the day after graduating with a Sociology degree, I moved to North Dakota where I taught environmental education at a state park. Since then I've stayed in the outdoor industry working with organizations such as NOLS, GirlVentures and Conservation Patagonica. I've also worked in the field instructing 2-24 days courses in backpacking, kayaking and climbing - where I've gotten the opportunity to be with people discovering their own connection to the outdoors. Currently, I manage the Inspiring Connections Outdoors Program (ICO) at the Sierra Club. ICO's mission is to connect youth with limited access to the outdoors.

The challenge that I'm most often confronted with is being the only woman of color in these wild spaces. Sometimes I feel lonely and unwelcomed but have to remind myself "that this is my land and this is where I want to be." I have been encouraged lately because it's becoming less and less of a challenge as many organizations, like ICO, are creating welcoming and encouraging opportunities for people of color to engage in the outdoors on their own terms. And that's what I love about my job, being able to identify ways to engage the many diverse people that want to connect with the outdoors.

# Cultural Specialist

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**PEI-LIN YU**

National Park Service –  
Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystems Unit



I work for the National Park Service as a Cultural Specialist. My training is in archeology, the study of ancient human-environment relationships. I help parks find university researchers who can investigate solutions to the challenges facing national parks today. For example, ice patches in Glacier National Park that are melting due to climate change contain ancient objects like animal bones, seeds, and artifacts made by ancestors of the Salish, Kootenai, and Blackfoot tribes. I helped to find money, scientists, and tribal experts to work with the park to preserve these precious items.

My career pathway started with art and moved toward archeology. I cleaned kennels and movie theaters to pay for college. My Chinese dad wasn't sure archeology was a good career (not enough money!) but when he visited an Ice Age bison kill site I was excavating he saw how exciting it was. A really rewarding thing about my job is helping Native American students discover how archeology builds a bridge between heritage past and present. This should happen with young people of all nations! We need viewpoints from every culture to enrich our understanding of the natural world, our changing relationship with it, and safeguard the health of natural and human communities

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# Education Director

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## BEN LAWHON

### Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics



I joined the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics staff in 2001, where I serve as the Education Director. My current responsibilities include research, curriculum development, management of national education and training programs and coordinating general outreach efforts. Previously I worked as the Associate Regional Representative for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy in Asheville, North Carolina from 1997–2001. While with ATC I was responsible for open-areas management, volunteer training, oversight of regional ridgerunner/caretaker programs and trail crews, and development of strategies for sanitation on the AT. I also worked as an American Canoe Association whitewater-kayak and swiftwater rescue instructor. I have a B.S. in Natural Resources Management from the University of Tennessee and an M.S. University in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources from Colorado State University. I am an avid outdoor enthusiast, enjoying whitewater paddling, telemark skiing, fly fishing.

Working in the conservation field can be incredibly rewarding but is full of challenges. The greatest challenge for me has been to not become jaded by seeing ever-increasing impacts to our shared public lands. I work for an organization with a mission to teach people how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly, which seems simple enough. However, education is a challenging prospect and often takes time. That means you have to stay positive, keep your focus, and know that one person can make a difference!

The most fulfilling part of my job is ending every day knowing that I did something that benefited more than just me; my work benefits all public lands, and those who enjoy them.

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# Geographer / Remote Sensing Specialist



## BLAKE EICKMEYER

### Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE)

I work for the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) which is a federal agency located in Denver, CO. At OSMRE my job title is a Geographer/ Remote Sensing Specialist, where I support mine teams with the most up-to-date maps and satellite imagery. OSMRE teams use the maps to monitor mine reclamation and enforce mine permit rules and regulations based off of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act 1977, also known as SMCRA.

I graduated from college at the University of Washington located in Seattle with a Bachelor's of Arts in Geography. After I graduated I accepted an AmeriCorps Intern position at OSMRE in Denver, CO. I interned at OSMRE for 2 years and then accepted a position at the State of Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety (DRMS). I worked at DRMS for 5 months until I was offered my current position.

I was faced with many different challenges while working for both OSMRE and at the state of Colorado DRMS. One challenge that I faced was learning new software or technology that no one else in the office knew how to use. I taught myself how to use something without a textbook, which also required me to do my own internet research, and ultimately to do my own project experimentation. This type of challenge was the most intimidating but also the most rewarding.

The most fulfilling thing that I find about my job is being able to work with so many different people, across the country, who are also passionate about the environment.

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# Lead Organizer

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## CJ Goulding Natural Leaders Network



I first started working outdoors through a college internship with the National Park Service Academy in the Grand Tetons, and have been passionate about connecting others ever since, leading trips and working with youth-serving organizations in Yellowstone, Seattle, and Washington DC. Currently, I am the Lead Organizer for the Natural Leaders Network, where my role is to lead training and support for over 200 diverse millennials across the country who are active in creating change and connecting their communities to nature. I am working to complete a Masters of Arts in Education in Urban Environmental Education at IslandWood, in a program that is striving to redefine "environmental education" and understand how urban communities connect to and have control over their environment.

I believe that genuinely connecting to people and investing in them is the first step in creating any type of change. Even though it may be challenging and take time to build those connections, they are vital to the work. I am passionate about leadership, connecting people, places, and ideas, whether it be through the written word, storytelling, or simply facilitating groups dynamics and interaction. I also loves reading, playing sports, photography, and the New York Knickerbockers.

# Permits Unit #2 Manager

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## **KENAN DIKER**

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment



I work as a Permits Unit Manager at the Water Quality Control Division of CDPHE. I oversee preparation and issuance of individual and general discharge permits.

In 1989, I started working as a teaching/research assistant after graduating from the Agricultural Engineering, University of Cukurova, Adana, Turkey. Then, I received a scholarship from the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute, Bari, Italy for a master's degree. After completing that, I came back to my work and started studying my PhD. In 1993, I received a scholarship from Turkey Government for a PhD. I came to Colorado State University and completed my PhD in application of advanced technologies to groundwater protection. Then, I worked as an assistant professor in Turkey, post-doctorate fellow with USDA. In 2004, I came to the Division as a GIS specialist and became an Environmental Protection Specialist in 2007. In November 2013, I became the unit manager.

The biggest challenge for me was to learn technical English since it was my second language when I went to Italy and came to the USA. I found protection of the water quality is extremely fulfilling since it is part of keeping the quality of life for the citizens of Colorado including my kids.

# Naturalist, Environmental Educator

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## TIFFANY ADAMS

Urban Environmental Education Program  
at Islandwood / Antioch University



My name is Tiffany Adams. I come from Lower Manhattan in New York City. I have lived most of my life in Chelsea Houses, which is a public housing development located on the Westside of Manhattan. I became interested in nature at a very young age. I would watch hours of National Geographic Explorer visualizing myself as the person on television in the African Bush talking about lions and other animals.

I discovered a deep curiosity for exploring nature through plants, arthropods, and mammals walking the streets of Manhattan with my binoculars. People would stop me as I observed birds in the trees of my apartment complex and I knew that I wanted to teach about nature in the city to kids like me. I labeled myself a naturalist. I felt a longing to teach what I have learned to other children of color in my neighborhood. It was when I applied for the Urban Environmental Education Program at Islandwood/Antioch University, I started to understand that Urban Environmental Education is deeper and more meaningful than showing kids nature in their neighborhoods. This is an immersion and ally-ship within the community. I don't see myself as a "Teacher." I see myself as an educator, a partner, a friend, a student, and an advocate for stewardship within urban neighborhoods.

# Assistant District Forester

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**DIANA SELBY**  
Colorado State Forest Service



I am an Assistant District Forester for the Colorado State Forest Service, Fort Collins District. I manage several grant programs and assist both forested and urban communities with tree and forest topics by providing technical advice.

From high school through postgraduate school, I worked summer jobs for the Youth in Natural Resources program, Science Motivation Program, National Park Service and United States Forest Service. I obtained a Bachelor's of Science in Biology from Fort Lewis College and used work-study aid to work in the biology department as an undergrad. I held seasonal jobs several years before I earned a Master's of Science in Forestry from Colorado State University. I then accepted a position with the Colorado State Forest Service, Franktown District. I later moved to the Fort Collins District and was promoted to Assistant District Forester.

My greatest challenge was to compete for a full-time career in locations that I desired.

My current job allows me to work with a variety of different people. There is a lot of flexibility and autonomy on how I accomplish my tasks. I like that each day is different and that I have opportunities to take on different projects and learn new skills.

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# SW Sales Representative

## CHRIS MORISSETTE Alta Group & Straight Up Sports



My name is Chris Morissette and I am one of the SW Sales Representative with the Alta Group and Straight Up Sports for Petzl, Scarpa, Nikwax, Julbo Eyewear, SteriPEN and VFuel. I graduated from Cal State San Marcos with a BA in Anthropology and Environmental Studies with a Minor in Spanish. I spent most of my college years climbing around the south west, and traveling to Latin America. I studied Spanish in Cuernavaca, Mexico and Bariloche, Argentina where I fell in love with traveling. My true background is in Education. After college I taught outdoor education for Adventure's Cross Country, based in Mill Valley, CA. This job allowed me to take 15 high school students to Costa Rica on a language immersion program. This was such an eye opening experience I decided to pursue teaching.

After returning back to San Diego I got a job at High Tech High and created the Environmental Engineering Program there. At that time my wife was working for prAna and always said I would be an amazing sales representative, but I didn't really have an desire to leave teaching. She caught word of a job opening up with a sales rep agency that represented Petzl... how could I pass that up. I applied and here I am almost 4 years later.

The path you take is always going to house some sort of challenges. Some of the biggest challenges I've faced along my career(s) path(s) have been balancing my work, personal endeavours and family life.

With that being said, one of the most fulfilling components of my job is my ability to spend time with my wife and son and I mean true quality time and also continue climbing.

# EIFERT Range Management & Noxious Weed Program Lead

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## JOHN FINLAY

Dakota Prairie Grasslands, USDA Forest Service

My role is to manage and eradicate noxious weeds in the district as well as to work with permit holders on the successful management and development of grazing plans on the district. I also am a BAER (Burned Area Emergency Response) team Leader for the Dakota Prairie Grasslands.

My path started at Colorado State University with a degree in Rangeland Ecology. While at CSU I worked for the Restoration Ecology Lab as an undergraduate researcher for 3 years. After graduation I began work as a seasonal intern with the BLM as an AIM (Assessment Inventory & Monitoring) Technician.

Challenges faced along the way in my case were very few. The biggest challenge was managing time and having patience to navigate the complexities of applying, interviewing and getting a federal job. This knowledge proved to be invaluable in eventually gaining permanent federal employment.

What is most fulfilling about my job is that I have an integral part in caring for the land and helping to better manage our beautiful resource for future generations to enjoy and utilize.

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# 2x SCA Intern

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## AMIE SCHILLER Student Conservation Association



In my last SCA position, I worked as a trail partnership intern at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Woodstock, VT for a year. In that year, I helped supervise trail crews in our forest, conducted GIS surveys and made maps for the trails system and for several events, and helped develop our centennial program “Boots to Boats”.

I received my BS in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology with a minor in geospatial technology from the University of Vermont in 2015. While I was a student, I worked several internships in two state agencies (Vermont Dept. of Forestry Parks and Rec, and Vt. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife), which gave me a taste of how state-run conservation agencies functioned. After I graduated, I decided I wanted more experience exploring conservation work within federal agencies, so I interned for about 1.3 years with the National Park Service through the SCA. Right now, I’m applying for full time term or career positions through the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The most challenging part of my job has definitely been justifying the necessity of accepting unpaid or stipend positions to get enough experience to qualify for full time positions.

The most fulfilling part though, is the opportunities that the SCA has opened for me- through the NPS Academy, and recently through attendance of the Emerging Leaders Program at SHIFT.

# Education Program Manager

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**MARK DEGREGORIO**  
Rocky Mountain National Park



Mark earned a forestry degree from Colorado State University. During summers he held natural resource positions including timber thinning and trail crew leader and wilderness ranger for the U.S. Forest Service. After graduation, Mark had an opportunity to substitute teach science, loved it, and earned a teacher's license. He discovered effective methods to connect science to the environment. He taught high school in Creede, Colorado, then middle school in the Poudre School District. He continued working summers for the Forest Service as a wilderness ranger, then helitack firefighter. Mark became the Poudre School District's environmental education specialist, and directed the sixth-grade residential Eco-Week Program, which served 23 elementary schools.

Since 1992, Mark has managed Rocky Mountain National Park's education program. Mark combined his early fieldwork and classroom experiences to meet the needs of learners, educators, and natural resource managers. Mark's program, Heart of the Rockies, employs ranger-led experiences for diverse audiences, providing many youth and some adults their first contact with nature, and perhaps their first opportunity in a national park. Heart of the Rockies has served over 160,000 children. Staff conducts field studies for nearly 10,000 students, from 70 schools annually, and over 2,000 youth and adults from 60 organizations. Mark's biggest fulfillment is seeing children light up when discovering nature for the first time.

# Senior Wholesale Marketing Coordinator

**CHRISTINE HAWK**  
prAna



My name is Christine Hawk, most call me Chawky, and I am the Senior Wholesale Marketing Coordinator at prAna. I currently plan all of our tradeshow for our wholesale market, roughly 12 per year. I also coordinate marketing materials, including instore signage, event swag, web assets, and fixture materials for our wholesale accounts.

I started working in retail at the age of 16 for an action sports company then landed a corporate job in the industry at the age of 20. I worked my way up from there starting at the bottom and learning and growing along the way which brought me to where I am today.

Since I jumped right into the industry I had to challenge myself to work very hard and learn everything I could so that not having a degree wouldn't be a burden on me when trying to find a new job. I learned that experience and hard work was key in this fast passed industry I was in.

The most fulfilling area of my job is the SEVA (selfless service) work we are all encouraged to do here at prAna. There are always opportunities to help others in our society and working for a company whose values align with yours is extremely fulfilling.

# Park Ranger II, Environment Education Specialist

**LAURA LACERTE**  
Highlands Ranch Metro District



My name is Laura Lacerte and I am a Park Ranger and Environmental Education Specialist for Highlands Ranch Metro District. As a Park Ranger in Highlands Ranch, our main duty is patrolling the parks, trails and open spaces owned by the Metro District. I am also in charge of the environmental education programs for kids up to adults.

While attending Colorado State University in Fort Collins, I began working seasonally at Lake Pueblo State Park during my breaks. After graduation, I continued seasonal work with Lake Pueblo. I gained a lot of valuable experience from these seasonal positions. My first full-time position was with the City of Aurora, where I worked as an Interpretive Park Ranger at the Morrison Nature Center at Star K Ranch. I have been with Highlands Ranch for seven years.

At times, it was difficult to find a permanent, full-time job with a natural resource agency. When you put in enough seasonal time with an agency, it definitely makes it easier for them to hire you when they know you and your work ethic.

I enjoy teaching programs the most! I want to get folks excited about nature and wildlife. I want people to walk away from a program and think differently.

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# Logistics Coordinator

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**JUAN ALVAREZ**

Outdoor Outreach, REI (Sales Specialist)



I was born in Guaymas Sonora, but grew up in Logan and Shelltown here in San Diego since the age of 9. Growing up for me was different than most kids, I faced a lot of barriers due to my immigration status and language barrier. The family I was living with at the time was not the best, I ran away when I was 14 and have been on my own since then. I was living at a shelter for homeless teens when I joined Outdoor Outreach, a program focused on getting underserved kids outdoors. Outdoor Outreach took me rock climbing, surfing, snowboarding, mountain biking and more. I went through their Leadership program, became an instructor and now I'm the Logistics Coordinator as well as a Senior Instructor. I also have been working at REI as a sales specialist for the last 7 years and work as a seasonal instructor for NOLS in the summer. What I love best about what I do is simple, I get to share my passion of the outdoors with kids that wouldn't otherwise be able to experience the outdoors. To see them enjoy the outdoors for their first time is priceless.

# Contact



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For further information please visit [MyTYO.org](http://MyTYO.org)



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