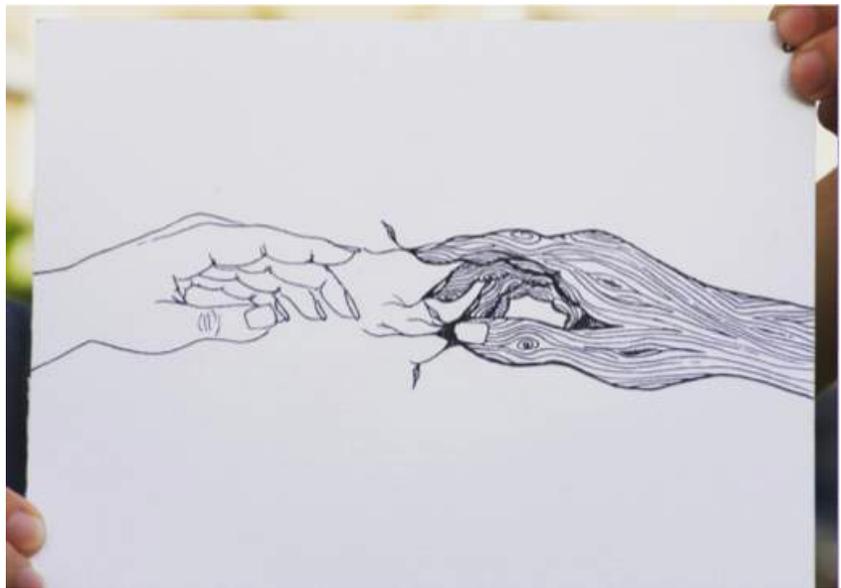




Association for Environmental & Outdoor Education

Spring 2018

# Newsletter



"Connections" by Paris Faas

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Dear AEOE Friends and Supports,

### The New Normal

Last summer a wildfire raced through my home county of Mariposa. The Detwiler fire was 80,000 acres before it was contained and at the time I thought how close it came to wiping out our town. Then in the fall the Santa Rosa Fire made us all rethink what wildfires are capable of. Back in December, Governor Jerry Brown held a press conference to address the Thomas Fire, one of the many fires that ravaged Southern California, he talked about increasingly large fires and a fire season that goes through December as "the new normal" and he talked about the potential role that climate change is playing in this deadly new normal.

That is some dark news and while a potential reality, anyone that has heard me speak before know that I'm always going to choose to look at the Bright Green, over the Dark Green.

What I choose to get excited about is the potential for our work in outdoor and environmental education to make changes in developing minds to help fight climate change. There are dozens of programs across our state that have specific curriculum on climate change and I have seen carefully planned approaches based on age or grade level. Programs that don't actively talk about climate change or climate science still do important work to plant the important seeds of connection to the natural world or teach problem solving skills that young adults will need to grow into the leaders of tomorrow that we need to help deal with climate change. A future where every Californian is exposed to multiple opportunities for environmental education and meaningful outdoor experiences are woven into their

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lives is the new normal that I want to talk about.

Many of work in the frontline of outdoor and environmental education at parks, zoos and aquariums, and residential programs, others work for larger coalitions, agencies, or networks. Increasingly we need to learn to align our resources, pull in the same direction when appropriate, better leverage our collective efforts, and focus resources where we can.

A systemic approach to an environmentally literate

California might be aspirational at this point but it's within our reach. AEOE for one is committed to working towards this new normal and will be drawing on the resources of our members, board of directors, and partners to continue to move the needle.



Photo : NASA Archive

## AEOE Council Update

Angela Kemsley

Happy Winter Everyone!

Winter is my favorite time of the year. I get to drink hot chocolate, wear all my cute sweaters, and dream of my colleagues at other sites who do not have to turn on the air conditioner to enjoy winter things because in San Diego it's still ninety degrees outside. But hey, here we have to SCUBA dive to get our pictures with Santa, which in my opinion is pretty cool!

Speaking of pretty cool, thanks to everyone who turned out for the regional conferences! The southern conference hosted over 70 people while the northern conference had over 160! Wow! Even though I have worked in the outdoor/environmental education field for over a decade I still get inspired every time I go to a conference. In fact, it might be because I have worked in the field for a while that I get so inspired at these conferences. I love seeing both the old faces I have come to know and depend

on, as well as those brand new faces of people just starting out. We have so much to learn from one another. Long-time members bring with them invaluable institutional knowledge and more tricks than you can count, while new members bring an enthusiasm that reminds us that while this may be our 30th or maybe even 100th week, it is the students' first and only week.

For any of you new to AEOE this level of participation in conferences is especially great because we are a member-run organization. Right up to the Board of Directors AEOE is driven and inspired by you. Moving forward we are looking to create many more opportunities for our members to get involved. I challenge each of you to think about what you would like to get out of AEOE and brainstorm ways we can make that happen. Specifically, think of ways you can help us make that happen. We look forward to hearing from you!



Photo Credit: Nicole Carbone

# Educators of the Year

## 2017 Northern EE of the Year

Nominee: Alison Hartman

Nominator: Sarah Angulo



Having worked a number of years at Foothill Horizons Outdoor School, Allison has taught not only hundreds of children, but high school students, and naturalist interns as well. Her thoughtful and maternal approach to teaching has inspired students to think deeply about their observations in nature, and encouraged them to try looking or doing something in a safe environment. Her mentorship has nurtured many interns over the years who have all received thoughtful, useful feedback in helping them grow as educators. She challenges them to think not only about what their students are learning, but also how they are learning it. Allison's humor, nurturing disposition, and thoughtfulness contributes to a supportive work and learning environment that has influenced many, many people.

## 2017 Southern EE of the Year (3 winners)

Nominee: Lauren McLaughlin

Nominator: Charlie Young

Lauren came to Arrowhead Ranch as a teacher and has worked her way up the ladder to Program Director. She was a great teacher when she arrived, but it was her natural curiosity and excitement for science and finding new ways to share with her students and inspire them that made her a candidate to become our Program Director.

Once promoted, her passion and energy grew even more as now her focus was not just on students but also the staff. She was given the freedom and opportunity to use her talent to help our staff become better educators to youth and ambassadors to the outdoors. She has increased the awareness and importance of professional development across our company, including doing research to design and implement a staff improvement plan with incentives for each individual. She has introduced new programs and new ways of presenting materials using the BEETLES program, as well as introduced technology to bring community based environmental projects with sharing information with other students and learning centers across the country. The efforts Lauren has made to inspire and educate our staff has carried into a stronger and higher quality program being delivered to our students. Through our staff, Lauren is making an impact on 10,000 students from across Southern California each and every season.

When looking for our new Program Director, I was meeting with my assistant and asked "who is that one person who can bring excitement and new energy to our program to help us elevate our



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standards to the next level?". Instantly we both said Lauren's name at the same time. There are times where I have to reign her in because she has so many ideas and so much passion and energy for more - but I love that because whatever idea we choose, she makes it great. I know people that are pushing their program directors to come up with ideas - I do not have that problem! She is also currently working with multiple teachers from our schools as she is designing a new student journal for our program. I am proud to nominate Lauren McLaughlin, I have never worked with anyone more deserving of recognition as an Outstanding Educator and for Excellence in Outdoor Education.

### **2017 Southern EE of the Year (3 winners)**

Nominee: Elizabeth Willoughby  
Nominator: Ryan Mayeda

Elizabeth (aka Otter) has taught EE for over 4 years now at Pathfinder Ranch as a Teaching Naturalist and now the Assistant Director. Despite her administrative role, she still teaches students and trains our staff. She and one of our other employees attended the BEETLES Institute this past August and have been training our other instructors on BEETLES principles. Over the years she has revamped curriculum and assisted with our transition to incorporate NGSS in our classes, even our non-academic classes. She is constantly working to improve our program and how we deliver our curriculum! She has also attended a couple of the EOSM meetings to network and share ideas with other managers and admin staff to help them improve their programs.

Otter puts her heart and soul into teaching and training staff so our students can understand their place in the environment better. She also strives to spread conservation awareness to those around her. Her love for the environment and teaching are easily apparent to students and colleagues, which is infectious and a joy to see!

*(no picture provided)*

### **2017 Southern EE of the Year (3 winners)**

Nominee: Nathan Taxel  
Nominator: Mary Lawson



Nathan spearheaded the Ocean Institute's partnership with the Ranch at Laguna Beach to create a summer campout program that provides tuition free overnight EE experiences for about 300 underprivileged students a year. The student participants come from communities all over Southern California including San Bernadino, Santa Ana, Los Angeles, and Long Beach. The campouts include teambuilding, natural science, and trips to the beach. All the meals, equipment, and transportation to and from their neighborhoods are included at no cost to the participants and their chaperones. One 2016 chaperone wrote that "It was an incredible experience, not only fun filled but educational, which can be trying together but you guys pulled it off so well that my kids had no idea they learned so much."

Nathan has consistently shown leadership, compassion, ingenuity and a wonderful sense of fun to bring outdoor education to life for the students going through our Ocean Institute programs. He inspires us all with his "can do" attitude and has enthusiastically accepted roles outside of his traditional job description for the good of the organization. Nathan is a man that I would feel confident getting lost in the wilderness with, and I am certain that I can count on him for any professional challenge that comes his way.

Underlining all of this professional competence and good humor is a good man, good father, good husband and good friend.

## EOSM at Camp Ocean Pines

### *Retreat in the Pines*

Ryan Mayeda

AEOE Board Member  
& EOSM Coordinator

On November 10, 2017, Camp Ocean Pines in Cambria hosted 22 people for the second annual EOSM (Environmental and Outdoor School Managers) Retreat. The participants came from 15 organizations across the state as far as Sonora and Dana Point, representing residential non-profit camps, county-run residential camps, and day programs.

This retreat has become a great way for managers and leadership staff to learn from one another, recharge, and get reinvigorated. Jamie Langley from Santa Cruz County presented on student supervision protocols and safety, which led into a productive conversation on student safety and made its way to emergency procedures before moving on. Ryan Mayeda then gave a presentation on AEOE's pursuits of the Environmental Educator Certification Program, along with what other states are currently doing to provide professional development for outdoor instructors.

Besides presentations, each participant gained a lot from the round-table discussions which included: Crisis management, where to post jobs, staff training and professional development, social media usage, accommodating transgender students, medical certifications, Epi-pen training, and what else EOSM could provide to AEOE's institutional members. During this last topic, people mentioned staff exchanges to observe other programs, utilizing a Facebook group for managers to ask each other questions between in-person meetings, and keeping

the annual EOSM Retreat to every Veterans Day weekend.

We finished the afternoon with a tour of Camp Ocean Pines, which ended outside the dining hall with a gorgeous view of the ocean and sunset! We are looking forward to the next in-person meetings, one in the north and another in the south, which will hopefully be in early spring.

Keep your eyes out on the AEOE website for these meetings, or come to the spring AEOE conference in Malibu for administrator-related workshops and the EOSM breakout session! See you at the next AEOE or EOSM event and happy holidays everyone!

## Calling All Donations

*All proceeds go toward Joie's  
Daisies Scholarship Fund*

Are you an artist or maker of some sort? Does your organization have some extra sweatshirts with your logo on them laying around? Perhaps you know someone who works at a museum, aquarium, or outdoor gear company? Or maybe you just like reaching out to companies for free stuff? If so, AEOE would love your help with getting items donated for our annual silent & live auction at the spring conference! 100% of proceeds go towards our Joie's Daisies Scholarship Fund.

If you have an item ready to donate, please fill out our Google form:

<https://goo.gl/forms/3oBUSefcEYbTgYDz2>

Questions? Contact our Donations Coordinator Leah at [leah@aeoe.org](mailto:leah@aeoe.org).



## "But we've always said 'biner!'"

### Exclusionary Words in Outdoor Recreation and Education

Guest Contributor  
Montserrat Alvarez

The ways we show up for communities and marginalized folks starts with our words. Our words hold power. Our words have impact. We cannot use ignorance as an excuse for continuing to use language that perpetuates exclusion in the Outdoors. Below are words and phrases that are commonly used in the Outdoors that can perpetuate exclusion; we know this list will continue to grow as we continue to explore the impact of our words. Please remember that not every \*insert marginalized identity\* will be impacted the same by these words or phrases.

#### **BINER**

Commonly used by climbers, the word “biner” is short for carabiner. “Biner” has a very similar pronunciation to the word “beaner,” which is an extremely derogatory word toward “Mexican” folks (and perceived Brown people). Although our intention and context may not be the same, hearing the word can have an immense impact on folks who were and are targeted for the color of their skin. Stop using the word “biner,” even if your Brown friend does. Alternatives: use the whole word, carabiner.

#### **FIGURE 8 KNOT**

How did you learn figure 8 knot? The most common phrases I recall and never questioned were rooted in violence. Two very specific ways of teaching the figure 8 that are rooted in violence, particularly towards communities of color are: “choke the alien, poke it in the eye” or “hang a man, punch them in

the eye.” “Hang a man” makes reference to a deep legacy of lynching in the United States. Using the term “alien” and choking them makes reference to violence toward immigrant communities. Think about who gets called an “alien” in the United States, this term is used interchangeably with migrant communities or people we perceive as “other.” Alternatives: “you have snow person, you give them a scarf, you give them a carrot nose”

#### **LAME**

This word is very commonly used in our everyday language to reference something that sucks or is bad. This word actually refers to people’s physical abilities; it is ableist to use this word. The connotations to the word lame comes from a society that views disabilities as something negative. The Outdoors is already inaccessible to folks with disabilities, let’s not further alienate them. Alternatives: say what you mean. Here is a list of emotions.

#### **REFERENCES TO “TIPI,” “POWWOWS,” “MY TRIBE,” SPIRIT ANIMALS, NATIVE AMERICAN TRAIL NICKNAMES**

Our society is quick to appropriate marginalized communities’ cultures while oppressing the people.

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References to Native communities are common in the Outdoors, whether we are referring to fire and shelter structures to trail names and “spirit animals.” We cannot take pieces of Native culture and make it ours. We need to be mindful that Native peoples and their culture were pushed out of Outdoors spaces to make room for “pioneers” and the “public” lands on which outdoor educators operate. Alternatives: when referring to structures, use polyhedron, pyramid, or simply triangle. When referring to meetups use circle, meeting, check-in, etc. When referring to people’s connection to another creature or trying to find creative ideas for trails names, be creative and question if you are appropriating Native culture. When referring to your group or family, don’t call them your “tribe”.

### **BOMB PROOF**

This term is used in the context of making sure camp is secured and everything is put away. References to war can be triggering to survivors of wars, veterans, and others impacted by wars. Again, just because this phrase is commonly used does not mean we need to continue to use. Alternatives: storm proof, weather proof, etc.

### **MAN/SACK/COWBOY/BUTCH UP**

This is rooted in the idea that in order to endure difficult situations one needs to become masculine or demonstrate “masculine” attributes. It perpetuates the dynamic that men/masculine of center folks are strong and women/femme of center folks are weak. Additionally, the word “butch” has historically been used to negatively describe a specific group within the Queer community. Although folks are reclaiming that word, if we are not from that community we should not use it. Alternatives: brace ourselves, be brave, rise to the moment.

As outdoor educators, our journey for learning and growth is life long. Let’s continue to engage in conversations and change the norms that exclude and impact marginalized communities. Let’s make inclusion the norm.

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*Montserrat (Guachichil/Mexica) is an outdoor educator from the South who works for a more equitable and inclusive Outdoors. She currently works at cityWILD as their program assistant where she combines her love for the Outdoors, youth development, and social justice. You contact her via email at [alvarez.m1992@gmail.com](mailto:alvarez.m1992@gmail.com)*



"Newt Earth" by Paris Faas

## Adventures from the Southern Conference

Angela Kemsley

As soon as I saw you, I knew an adventure was about to happen. -Winnie the Pooh

What does AEOE mean to you? Sure, technically it means the Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education, but just like we teach our students, there are multiple layers of meaning to everything. I like to imagine that the A in AEOE also stands for Adventure as many of my first experiences with nature and best adventures have been through AEOE. AEOE inspires so many of us to explore some of the most beautiful and important places in the world as well as encouraging us and giving us the tools to lead our students on once-in-a-lifetime experiences with nature.

The sense of adventure that weaves together the story of so many educators in California runs strong in the the veins of Bryan Snyder, long time AEOE member and keynote speaker at the 2017 fall regional conference at Pathfinder Ranch in Mountain Center. Bryan was the second AEOE member I ever met, so I was excited to welcome him back to impart his wisdom on a new batch of members. Author of the Off the Map Adventures series, seasoned naturalist, and previous outings coordinator for AEOE, Bryan knows adventure. From narrowly escaping doom in the form of an ice-encrusted cliff to lounging in hot springs, Bryan used his engaging expertise as a storyteller to encourage everyone to instill a sense of danger and wonder in all of our students. He just suggests avoiding the “cliffy” adventures and sticking to less harrowing ones like utilizing your impressive burping abilities to avoid bears.

The entire weekend ran sort of a like a “How to Adventure” manual as over 15 of our members led workshops, breakout sessions, and planning sessions

aimed at keeping the adventure alive. There was even a traverse wall in the room where our wonderful guest band, Jake’s Mountain, played! During the conference almost 70 participants enjoyed workshops such as using the science and engineering practices to study watersheds, clean a lake, or ward off dragons, empowering students to get hands on with citizen science, and how to be an effective leader. As a volunteer-run organization AEOE depends on you to make the conference great by offering to share your skills as a workshop presenter, so a big thank you to all our presenters!

Just as Pooh knew an adventure was about to happen every time he saw Christopher Robin, our students know an adventure is about to happen every time they see us, and I know an adventure is about to happen every time I see any of you. Now, more than ever, it is crucial for us to connect students with nature and instill a sense of stewardship in the next generation. I am so proud of each and every one of you and I cannot wait to see all of grand places our adventures will take us.



Photo Credit: Tom Drake

Over 15 AEOE members led workshops, breakout sessions, and planning sessions at the Southern Fall Conference

## The Northern Fall Conference:

### *We Are Part of Something Bigger*

Sarah Angulo

Having attended AEOE spring and fall conferences for 3 years, stepping into the role of organizing a conference didn't seem too difficult. I was in for quite the shock when this fall's northern conference was one of our highest attended yet! There were over 160 people in attendance, and I was running around making sure everyone had registered, adding in last-minute workshops to accommodate some overflow signups, and counting and recounting the amount of food that had been bought. I had my first behind-the-scenes glimpse of the organized chaos of conference planning. It was exhausting work, but I was proud to give back to an organization that has given so much to me and many others over the years.

This year was no exception. Once again, we accomplished offering high quality workshops and speakers to connect educators to innovative teaching resources. As attendees trickled in the first night, they gravitated towards the fire to warm up and meet new colleagues at the beautifully renovated campfire amphitheater on the Foothill Horizons Outdoor School campus. The next morning, everyone returned to the amphitheater to listen to our keynote speaker, Lisa Murphy, give words of inspiration to help kick off the conference. From journaling with a captive Red Tailed hawk, to storytelling, geology recaps, blindfolded walks, new games, songs, and activities, the day was full of teaching and learning from everyone. For many, the highlight was the afternoon recreation period which included a walk down the road to the Harvest Festival at the local apple cider brewery.

The call for dinner brought everyone back up to

campus. I had help from volunteers and my own former Foothill coworkers and friends in cooking up dinner for 160 people. It was truly an enormous feat! With full bellies, we made our way up to the amphitheater once again to learn about bats from Lisa and hand out our Educator of the Year award. This year's award went to Allison Hartman from Foothill Horizons Outdoor School, a longtime inspirational naturalist mentor to countless students and interns, including myself. From there the fun kept rolling with the talent of our own conference attendees at an open mic, followed by tunes from The String Chimers to keep us warm dancing all night long.

After breakfast on the final day of the conference, we all joined in one last workshop and heard feedback from the annual Northern Council meeting attendees. With reflections on taking what we learned into a changing world, and a fond farewell out at Deer Meadow, we said our goodbyes to new friends from far and near. I was left in awe of the incredibly kind, hardworking, generous community that AEOE brings together. Our calls during the conference to donate to relief efforts of those affected by the fires at Rancho Alegre reminded us the we truly are a Part of Something Bigger. As I do every year, I left the conference feeling inspired and invigorated to keep doing the life-changing work we strive to do every day. Thank you to all who donated in any way--you made this conference a success, and we couldn't have done it without you!



Photo Credit:  
Nicole Carbone

The AEOE Northern Fall Conference was highly attended, with over 160 AEOE members learning, reflecting, and collaborating at Foothill Horizons Outdoor School



# AEOE Spring Conference

**The CA Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (AEOE) is proud to announce our Statewide Spring Conference, April 27 - 29, 2018 at Camp Hess Kramer in Malibu, CA.**

Our theme this year is '**Creating a Culture of Science.**' Join us for 60+ workshops; keynote address by Kathayoon Khalil, Principal Evaluator for the Seattle Aquarium; music, entertainment, job fair, and networking!

Online registration is now open at [www.aeo.org](http://www.aeo.org)! **Register by April 1** to take advantage of early reg. fees (\$193 for the weekend - includes 5 meals, 2 nights camping or cabins, and the conference). All attendees must be current individual members of AEOE (\$15 student/intern; \$20 regular). Alternative registration options are available. Premium housing is available for an additional fee per person.

## Calendar of Events

California Trails & Greenways 2018 Conference  
March 27-29, 2018

DoubleTree by Hilton Sonoma in Rohnert Park, CA  
[https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=24151](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=24151)

4EEE Coyote's Conference: A Gathering of Nature Connection and Wilderness School Leadership

April 5-8, 2018

Marin County, CA

<http://www.4eee.org/coyotes-conference-ca.html>

Children & Nature Network International Leadership Summit

May 21-22, 2018

Oakland, CA

<http://www.childrenandnature.org/cnc2018/>

CAEOE Spring Conference

April 27-29, 2018

Camp Hess Kramer

Malibu, CA

<http://www.aeo.org>

## Howard Bell Award Nominations

**This year's deadline has been extended to April 1, 2018**

The Howard Bell award was created to recognize outstanding achievements and contributions in the area of outdoor education. Any member of AEOE may submit a nomination form to the Board of Directors for this annual award. Nominees do not necessarily have to be an AEOE member and are kept on file for three years for future consideration. The award is presented at the annual spring conference and the awardee must be able to attend the conference.

For more information about the Howard Bell award and a link to the nomination form, check out our website [here](#). Or, go directly to the [form](#) and nominate someone today!

AEOE Website

<https://aeoe.org/about/awards>

Nomination form:

<http://form.jotform.com/>

## Interview With Spring Conference Keynote Speaker

*Kathayoon Khalil, Principal Evaluator for the Seattle Aquarium*



***What is a principal evaluator? How does your job and experience relate to education?***

Principal Evaluator is a title that we created here at the Aquarium. We wanted something purposefully vague, that could encapsulate the wide range of projects that would come my way. We also wanted the position to be agnostic of hierarchy - while I definitely have a supervisor and exist within the company structure, having a title that doesn't adhere to the typical manager/coordinator/director framework means that my recommendations can come across more objectively.

All of my experiences and jobs have been in education, since I was in high school. I started out as a teen volunteer at the Oregon Zoo interpreting animals to visitors and moved up the ranks over time. I've worked in a variety of outdoor, environmental, and conservation education

positions. My interest in evaluation sprouted from my desire to do more effective education and make decisions based on data.

***Why do you think it is important to include science in our everyday lives?***

We do science in our everyday lives all the time! We're constantly asking questions, experimenting, and making decisions based on the results of our inquiries. Our job is just to get people to recognize that and do it more intentionally. We can't escape science - it's everywhere and influences every living (and non-living) entity on this planet.

***What is empathy? How does it relate to science and education?***

Empathy is a learned skill that you can develop over a lifetime. It can be stimulated by different experiences and refers to our ability to take the perspective, understand, and care about the needs of other people and animals. Empathy helps us understand - either cognitively or affectively - the experiences that make all living creatures unique. It's critical to our ability to function in a social society - people who are able to feel empathy have an easier time forming connections to others and benefit from greater social rewards. Through empathy we can better understand how to improve the lives of those around us and make the world a place in which we all can live sustainably.

***What are three things everyone should know about you?***

I started out in this field thinking I would be a wildlife biologist, but quickly realized that my skills were better served in working with people - I believe that people are at the heart of conservation and that conservation cannot happen without people. I also get way too lonely only hanging out with animals. I identify both as a woman and as a person of color, and I'm passionate about increasing opportunities for both groups in science and environmental fields. And lastly, I love making things. I try to practice art every day and am working on projects that link my media of choice (calligraphy and watercolor) with conservation education and empathy building, creating products that teach people about animals in fun and colorful ways!



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*Mission: To advance the impact of environmental and outdoor education in California.*



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**Spring 2018**

