



EMERGING WILDLIFE CONSERVATION LEADERS (EWCL)

Sponsored by:

Defenders of Wildlife

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

White Oak Conservation Center/Howard Gilman Foundation

Summary: Emerging Wildlife Conservation Leaders (EWCL) will bring together twenty new, emerging leaders in the wildlife conservation field for capacity building and intense training in campaign development and skills, including implementation of a two-year group international wildlife issue campaign. Wildlife conservation will be benefited by the nurturing of future leaders, information sharing and idea exchange amongst conservation entities, and the tangible conservation products generated as part of the group campaign exercise.

Mission: The mission of EWCL is to facilitate cross-organizational networking for emerging environmental leaders while conducting training and guiding concrete innovative conservation projects on a bi-annual basis.

Objectives:

Identify and nurture future wildlife conservation leaders from NGO's, foundations, private, and public sectors;

Offer two training sessions for each EWCL class of leaders in such things as campaign basics, advocacy, media awareness, fundraising, managing employees, integrating sound science, and objective evaluation techniques for holistic and successful wildlife conservation initiatives;

Mentor up-and-coming wildlife conservationists by providing access to seasoned professional conservationists who have already established themselves in the field;

Increase cultural and ethnic diversity in the wildlife conservation field by specifically targeting under-represented groups in the membership classes;

Provide networking opportunities for emerging leaders and their representative groups in order to build solid support peer-groups for long-term successful career conservationists;

Open "cross-pollination" opportunities among different NGO's, foundations, private and public sector groups involved in wildlife conservation, thereby breaking down traditionally existing competition and communication challenges between different sectors of the wildlife conservation community;

Allow future leaders to participate in comprehensive conservation campaign experience including all implementation aspects from inception, to completion and evaluation of success; and

Conduct two-year international wildlife issue conservation campaign with tangible benefits for an at-risk species or class of species.

Existing Need: Entering the field of conservation can be challenging on a number of fronts. Not only is there a wealth of information and a wide range of strategies to learn, but networking with colleagues can be difficult, especially given the geographical and ideological span of wildlife professionals and organizations. Simultaneously, neither the large nor small conservation organizations typically have the interest or resources to invest in young leaders, and opportunities to experience wildlife conservation

aspects outside of department pigeonholes, such as development, communications or grassroots divisions, are rare.

EWCL will help jump-start young conservation professional careers through networking with both peers and established practitioners, while providing structured and hands-on training in skills and resources necessary to launch important conservation initiatives. The long-standing need for capable leaders in the conservation field, that are familiar with a full arsenal of skills to launch a well-rounded and successful conservation campaign, will be simultaneously addressed by this effort.

Description: Every two years, the EWCL Steering Committee and EWCL alumni representatives will nominate a class of 20 emerging wildlife conservation leaders to attend a three-day training conference. The conference will be organized by the EWCL Steering Committee Chairs with assistance from EWCL alumni and advice from EWCL Steering Committee members. At the retreat, comprehensive conservation campaign training will be taught to the new EWCL class by a combination of Steering Committee members and speakers recommended by Steering Committee experts.

After two days of campaign skills training, the new EWCL class will be asked to select a timely issue in international wildlife conservation, and create a campaign strategy for addressing the issue. The last day of the retreat will require the leaders to use the skills they have learned over the past week to create a detailed 2-year campaign work-plan, including all elements of the campaign from fundraising and implementation, to the final evaluation of success. Campaign projects can have local, regional, national and international components, and must contain multiple elements of conservation work (e.g., education, public relations, on-the-ground projects, local volunteer coordination, and government affairs initiatives) and have a demonstrative international wildlife conservation outcome. Such projects will provide experience to EWCL class leaders in all aspects of conservation strategies, including education, advocacy, research, fundraising, media, outreach, web development, and lobbying. The plan will require the class members to work as a team and utilize their various skills and professional connections to make the campaign a reality. The leaders are encouraged to draw on the skills and advice of EWCL Steering Committee members, and will be required to check in regularly with the two alumni advisors (or in the case of the pilot class, the two EWCL co-chairs).

After one year, the group will reconvene for more advanced campaign training, and the opportunity to evaluate the challenges and successes of the class issue campaign so far. This meeting will provide the opportunity for corrective measures to be taken if the campaign is floundering or has strayed from its mission. Simultaneously, it will allow the leaders to make changes if aspects of the class campaign are no longer realistic or beyond the resources available for completing the effort.

At the end of the two-year period, the leaders class will conduct a thorough evaluation of the campaign, as well as assess the strengths and weaknesses of the EWCL project. The EWCL leaders will then become alumni, and join the network of professional environmentalists available to future EWCL leaders classes, with the exception of two class members who will volunteer to become alumni advisors for the next class. These two volunteers will join the EWCL Steering Committee members, playing active roles in planning the next EWCL training session, and participating in the selection process for new class members from within the environmental community.

Steering Committee: The Steering Committee will be made up of established professionals in the environmental conservation field, with an emphasis on members from the international wildlife conservation community, representing a broad array of skills, experiences, and organizations within the

conservation community. Steering Committee members will volunteer their time in nominating prospective leaders for each year's EWCL class, assist in planning the training week, offer to participate in the training week as a speaker or offer recommendations for volunteer speakers, and perform an on-going service as an available mentor and coach for EWCL class members as they implement their EWCL campaign and continue their professional careers in wildlife conservation.

Nomination Criteria for Leaders: Class members will come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences in the conservation field. While there is no age requirement or experience ceiling for class members, however, it is expected that the nominated class leaders will be emerging leaders in the wildlife conservation field with at least 15 more years of professional wildlife conservation potential ahead of them, and the ability to benefit from an assortment of training activities covering everything from the basics of creating a conservation campaign to the details of various niche professional aspects within the conservation field.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Standard monitoring of the project performance will be carried out by the EWCL Chairs, as well as the sponsoring institution of Defenders of Wildlife staff, using the project implementation plan and schedule of outputs as a guide. Metrics of success will be gauged by formal evaluations of the training week, the EWCL experience from leaders and steering member perspectives, as rated by the stated objectives of the project, at the end of the two-year period, as well as informally after each training course and at the half-way point of the campaign.

Similarly, a formal evaluation of the class issue campaign itself will be conducted separately by EWCL chairs, leaders, and Steering members at the completion of the two-year campaign effort. The success of the campaign will be gauged by its ability to meet the objectives as identified by the EWCL class members during their training.

Funding: White Oak Conservation Center/The Gilman Foundation has agreed to host the EWCL training dates for two classes, or four-three day training sessions. This will include room, lodging, recreation, facilities and transportation to-and-from the airport, for 28 participants twice, and for 25 participants twice, over four years, at the heavily subsidized cost of \$100 per participant, per day. Defenders of Wildlife will offer an in-kind contribution of Administrative staff to organize elements of the effort, including travel, materials, and follow-up communications, as well as contribute other in-kind and matching contributions. The USFWS Division of International Conservation is being asked to finance remaining costs for the second two-year class of the initiative as a cooperative agreement between Defenders and USFWS.

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Mr. Flocken is the DC Office Director for the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). In this capacity he manages all U.S. country conservation and animal welfare policy initiatives for IFAW – an international NGO with 16 offices worldwide and over two million supporters. Prior to accepting this position, Mr. Flocken was an International Affairs Specialist in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s Division of International Conservation, where he specialized in international species conservation policy and outreach, and was directly involved in global wildlife conservation initiatives and funding programs providing crucial conservation support to species and regions across the world. Prior to joining the USFWS, he worked as an Education and Outreach Director for Conservation International. He has a law degree from Wayne State University, and graduated with honors from the University of Michigan. Before working at CI, Mr. Flocken created and managed the leading national endangered species conservation campaign for the United States' largest conservation organization, National Wildlife Federation. In this capacity he worked on national and regional endangered species policy, orchestrated species conservation initiatives across North America, and developed-award winning educational and outreach materials on the need for endangered species conservation. Additionally, Mr. Flocken has worked with the general counsel at Greenpeace, USA; edited for the scholarly publication, *The Yearbook of International Environmental Law*; and served as a toxics policy specialist negotiating for higher water-quality standards in the Great Lakes watershed region. Mr. Flocken made his national television debut on the TBS Superstation as a co-star in the documentary, *Tiger!*, and has served as a consultant on numerous movies and television shows addressing endangered species topics. Publications include *The Keep the Wild Alive Booklet*, *The Endangered Cats of North America Report*, the *Investigate Biodiversity* website, and an article in *Michigan Today Magazine* entitled “Confessions of a Cautiously Optimistic Endangered Species Conservationist.”

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Nina Fascione is currently Vice-President for Field Conservation Programs at Defenders of Wildlife, where she oversees recovery programs for threatened and endangered species and on-the-ground biodiversity conservation initiatives. Her work involves promoting wildlife and habitat conservation through scientific research, conservation incentives, advocacy, education, partnerships with diverse stakeholder groups, and innovative proactive conservation measures. Ms. Fascione is an invited member of the IUCN Canid Specialist Group, an international body of scientists working for the recovery of wild canids around the world. Ms. Fascione has undergraduate and Master's degrees in Conservation Anthropology from the University of Maryland. Her professional work and education focus on both the biological and sociological aspects of wildlife conservation. Ms. Fascione has authored dozens of journal articles, book chapters, and technical reports covering various topics in wildlife science and conservation, and edited a recent book by Island Press titled *People and Predators: From Conflict to Coexistence*.