ENVIRONMENT & SOCIETY

MEET OUR GRADUATE MENTORS

MEGHAN TAIT
NATALIE OTTO
BEN MUHLESTEIN
EMILY WILKINS
RYAN TARVER
MICHELLE 'SHELLEY' ARNOLD
CLINT CARNEY
I grew up in Annapolis, Maryland and completed my B.S. in Ecology at the University of Georgia. While completing my undergraduate degree, I studied abroad three times conducting field research all over the world from the Great Barrier Reef in Australia to the jungles of Cambodia. I enjoy traveling, hiking, camping, and paddle boarding. My research interests are broadly how culture influences the development and implementation of management and conservation. I am also interested in how this research can be applied to community-based conservation or co-management of protected areas with local people. My thesis will be on collaboration between the National Park Service and Native Americans on natural and cultural resource management.

MEGHAN'S AREAS OF SPECIALTY

1. Advice on looking for graduate programs
2. General advice on picking a graduate program
3. Help with first contacting potential advisors
4. Advice on how to prepare for and what to expect from grad school
5. Help preparing and editing CVs and resumes
6. Mock presentations
7. Advice on seeking alternative careers (Americorps, Peace Corps, Conservation Corps, etc.)
8. Advice on looking for summer/post-graduation internships
ABOUT ME

Born and raised in Portland, OR. I wasn’t ready to leave my beautiful home state and ended up getting my B.S. degree at the University of Oregon (Scoo Ducks!!) in Environmental Studies, with a double minor in Geology, as well as Public Policy Planning & Management. My hobbies include camping, backpacking, snowboarding, swimming in rivers, traveling, good food, friends, and music (which Logan is sorely lacking).

My thesis research is still TBD, and I am currently on a Teaching Assistantship for ENVS 2340. I am in the Social-Ecological-Systems lab, and am interested in conservation psychology, and how and why people interact with natural areas the way they do. Using a social science approach, my goals are to find ways to increase environmental stewardship.

NATALIE'S AREAS OF SPECIALTY

1. Advice on looking for graduate programs
2. Help editing personal statements for graduate programs
3. General advice on picking a graduate program
4. Help with first contacting potential advisors
5. Advice on how to prepare for and what to expect from grad school
6. Help preparing and editing CVs
Ben Muhlestein
Master's Student

Contact me!
ben.muhlstein@gmail.com

ABOUT ME

Ben Muhlestein is currently a master’s student at Utah State University studying Recreation Resource Management. Ben grew up in rural Utah next to both desert and mountain landscapes, which he came to adore. While studying to become a high school teacher he spent several summers working for the U.S. Forest Service. After a few years of teaching high school social studies, he decided his real passion lay outdoors instead of in a classroom. Ben’s passion for all types of recreation has led him to study Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use in the West Desert of Utah. Outside of education and career, Ben is a family man with a wife and three kids. He spends most of his free-time trying, in various ways, to get his family outdoors with him.

BEN’S AREAS OF SPECIALTY

1. Advice on looking for graduate programs
2. General advice on picking a graduate program
3. Help with first contacting potential advisors
4. Advice on how to prepare for and what to expect from grad school
5. Help preparing and editing CVs and resumes.
6. Advice on interview skills
I'm originally from Minnesota and ventured to the land of corn (Iowa) to get my B.S. in Environmental Science and Policy at Drake University. During my summers in undergrad I worked on conservation corps crews in Colorado. I then went to the University of Maine to earn my M.S. in Forest Resources with a focus on outdoor recreation and tourism. After my M.S. I worked as a fellow for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Mississippi, and then as a social scientist for USGS in Colorado. I enjoy hiking, camping, backpacking, and gardening. I'm interested in providing research than can help the decision-making of public lands managers.

Broadly, my dissertation research is exploring how protected area managers can better utilize social media data to understand visitation, and how visitation and visitor behavior may be altered by changing weather and climate conditions.

**Emily's Areas of Specialty**

1. Advice on looking for graduate programs
2. Help editing personal statements for graduate programs
3. General advice on picking a graduate program
4. Help with first contacting potential advisors
5. Advice on how to prepare for and what to expect from grad school
6. Help preparing and editing CVs
7. Advice on seeking alternative careers (AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Conservation Corps, etc.)
Ryan Tarver
PhD Student

Contact me!
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ABOUT ME

I was born and raised in Seattle, Wa and feel lucky to call the Pacific Northwest my home. I completed my B.S. in Recreation and Tourism Management and my M.S. in Cultural & Environmental Resource Management at Central Washington University. I had the opportunity to teach during my M.S. program and absolutely loved it. This experience inspired me to pursue my PhD here at USU. I’m currently a member of a research team looking into cross-boundary land management across five protected-area-centered-ecosystems, all of which are centered on National Parks. Generally, my dissertation research focuses on the social dynamics that influence land management within larger social-ecological systems. During my free time I enjoy skiing, mountain biking, or anything else that gets me into the mountains.

RYAN’S AREAS OF SPECIALTY

1. Advice on looking for graduate programs
2. Help editing personal statements for graduate programs
3. General advice on picking a graduate program
4. Help with first contacting potential advisors
5. Advice on how to prepare for and what to expect from grad school
6. Advice on interview skills
7. Mock presentations or interviews
8. Locating the best mountain bike trails in northern Utah
ABOUT ME

I'm originally from Upstate New York and received my B.S. in Conservation Biology at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry. My research interests center around human-energy interactions. This includes doing research on traditional along with alternative energy sources. My dissertation focuses on the United States and if alternative liquid biofuels are not only a viable option, but also feasible and desirable. My methods include Energy Return on Investment calculations, discourse analysis, and researching innovation production trends. This research will better inform policy makers, private investors, and the public about the past and current state of liquid biofuels, helping to inform decision making into the future. My hobbies include swimming, hiking, camping, mentoring/teaching and overall travel.

SHELLEY'S AREAS OF SPECIALTY

1. Helping dealing with the stress and anxiety of taking the next steps after undergrad.
2. Help with editing personal statements for graduate programs.
3. Advice on how to prepare for and what to expect from grad school.
4. Help preparing and editing CVs and resumes.
5. Advice on interview skills.
6. Help with mock presentations or interviews.
ABOUT ME

I returned to school after working 16 years as a hydrologist in the private and public sectors of Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska. I made this rather unorthodox life move because I wanted to redirect my career towards environmental policy—specifically in water resources. I grew up in the Midwest, and earned my BS degree in geology and environmental studies at Iowa State University. After that, I received an MS in geology and GIS at Northern Illinois University. This background afforded me the opportunity to work on groundwater modeling studies of the High Plains aquifer for the next several years. During this time, I also earned a second master’s degree in hydrology from the Colorado School of Mines.

Additionally, I took a slight break from the technical side of water resources to serve on a geoscience policy internship with the American Geosciences Institute in Washington, DC, which further spurred my interest in science policy. Throughout these endeavors, I was exposed to the multitude of water management issues our nation faces and the policies that were the catalysts for the studies I helped conduct. Hence, my interest in water policy. My research at USU is focused on the social and institutional complications of water reallocation in the arid west, and the interface of social predilections and institutional choice in the matter of redistribution of water resources.

CLINT'S AREAS OF SPECIALTY

1. Advice on searching for graduate programs
2. General advice on selecting a graduate program
3. Help with contacting potential advisors
4. Advice on how to prepare for and what to expect in graduate school
5. Help preparing and editing CVs and resumes
6. Interview advice
7. Advice on seeking alternative careers
8. Advice on working with different age groups