

EMERGING WILDLIFE CONSERVATION LEADERS (EWCL)

DETAILED SUMMARY OF INITIATIVE

Summary: Emerging Wildlife Conservation Leaders (EWCL) is an initiative that brings 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 benefits through 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 wildlife conservation leaders while conducting skills training and guiding concrete, innovative conservation projects.

Objectives:

- Identify and nurture future wildlife conservation leaders from NGOs, foundations, private, and public sectors;
- Offer two training sessions for each EWCL class 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 classes;
- Provide networking opportunities for emerging leaders and their organizations/agencies, in order to build solid peer-group support and long-term successful career conservationists;
- Facilitate “cross-pollination” opportunities among different NGOs, 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 a comprehensive conservation campaign experience including all implementation aspects from inception to completion and evaluation; and
- Conduct two-year international wildlife issue conservation campaigns with tangible benefits for at-risk species or classes of species.

Existing Need: Entering the conservation field 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 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 professionals' careers through networking opportunities with both peers and established practitioners, while providing structured, hands-on skills training, as well as the resources necessary to launch important conservation initiatives. The long-standing need for capable leaders in the conservation field who 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 Board of Directors, along with representative EWCL alumni, select a new class of 20 emerging wildlife conservation leaders based on a competitive application process. The class attends two week-long training sessions in Florida and a two-day session in Washington D.C. over the course of the two year class. The training sessions are organized by the EWCL Board of Directors with assistance from EWCL alumni and outside advisors. At the trainings, comprehensive conservation campaign training is taught to the new EWCL class by a combination of Board members and speakers recommended by experts from within the conservation community and beyond. During the first training, each EWCL class is asked to choose from a selection of timely issues in international wildlife conservation, and create a campaign strategy for addressing the issue. The last day of the first training requires class participants to use the skills they have learned over the past week to create a detailed two-year campaign workplan, 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, most importantly, 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, and web development. 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 Board of Directors members, and will be asked to check in regularly with the alumni advisors and Board Chairs.

The second training session provides more advanced campaign training, as well as the opportunity to evaluate the challenges and successes of the class issue campaign to date. This meeting provides the opportunity for corrective measures to be taken if the campaign is floundering or has strayed from its mission. Simultaneously, it will allow class participants to make changes if aspects of the campaign are no longer realistic or beyond the resources available for completing the effort. At the end of the two-year period, the class reconvene in Washington D.C. for a series of final training sessions and a final presentation on the projects. As part of this meeting, the class conducts a thorough evaluation of the campaign, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the EWCL projects. The D.C. meeting includes a V.I.P. luncheon, where various members of the

D.C. environmental and decision-making community join the EWCL participants to offer advice and interact on a social level. Past guests at the V.I.P. luncheon have included major conservation organization CEOs, government agency leaders, foundation representatives, University professors, and a U.S. Congressman. After the D.C. session and graduation, the EWCL class leaders then become alumni, and join the network of professional environmentalists available to future EWCL class participants.

Board of Directors: The Board of Directors is made up of passionate and 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. Board Members volunteer their time to nominate prospective leaders for each year's EWCL class, assist in planning the training week, participate in the training sessions as speakers and perform an on-going service as valuable mentors and coaches for EWCL class members as they implement their EWCL campaign and continue their professional careers in wildlife conservation.

Criteria for EWCL Applicants: EWCL class members come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences in the conservation field. Applicants are expected to have a minimum of three years demonstrated conservation experience and at least 15 more years of professional wildlife conservation potential ahead of them. It is also critical that applicants desire to learn from all three components of the EWCL training (i.e., skills training, networking and hands-on experience) and expect 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. All participants must be eager for emersion in all three cornerstones of the EWCL.

Costs: White Oak Conservation Center/The Gilman Foundation hosts the EWCL training for two week-long sessions over two years. This includes room, lodging, recreation, facilities, and transportation to-and-from the airport, for participants, Board Members, and guest speakers. There are no costs for class participants based in the United States, enabling anyone who is interested in the course to apply regardless of organizational support. For interested applicants outside of the United States, the Wildlife Conservation Network sponsors two international participants in each class, selected from a pool of applicants nominated from within their own partnership network. Other interested international participants must demonstrate sponsorship of airfare (for two trips to the U.S.). All of their in-country costs are covered by the EWCL program.

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Jeff Flocken works for the International Fund for Animal Welfare DC Office Director where he leads the organization's team of legislative professionals advocating for policy initiatives on behalf of wildlife conservation and animal welfare. Before this

appointment, Mr. Flocken worked for five years as an International Affairs Specialist in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Division of International Conservation, where he focused on international species conservation policy, outreach, and global conservation grant programs. Prior to joining the Service, he worked as an Education, Policy 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 Conservation International, 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 has served as a consultant on numerous movies and television shows addressing endangered species topics.

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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 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*.