



Now accepting applicants for the 2017

Wilburforce Fellowship in Conservation Science

The Wilburforce Fellowship invests in the professional development of scientists so that they may more effectively inform and advance sustainable conservation solutions in western North America.

Announcing the 2017 Wilburforce Fellowship in Conservation Science

Wilburforce Foundation, in partnership with COMPASS, is now accepting applications for the 2017 Cohort of the Wilburforce Fellowship in Conservation Science, a year-long program beginning April 2017. The fellowship is intended to build a community of scientists advancing decision-relevant research, effectively communicating scientific findings, and contributing to conservation solutions by engaging with local communities, policymakers, land managers and advocates. At the root of this initiative is Wilburforce Foundation's commitment to empowering scientists to engage in conservation management and policy discussions, because when scientists are part of the conversation, we get better solutions.

This fellowship is open to 20 scientists working in conservation biology, ecology, environmental economics, or traditional ecological knowledge in one or more of Wilburforce's Priority Regions. Applicants can be from any affiliation and any career stage. We aim to bring together a diverse network of researchers - young to senior scientists, from a range of backgrounds - to build their skills and networks in a continuing community of mutual support and inspiration.

Fellows will attend a six-day intensive training led by COMPASS from April 23-28, 2017 in Tucson, Arizona at the [Westward Look](#). The training will provide fellows with a comprehensive foundation of leadership and communications skills. At the training, each participant will set a goal for individual or collective engagement on a specific conservation issue, and begin to define an action plan to achieve it. Throughout the following year, fellows will receive coaching and support from trainers and peers to achieve their goals, as well as help connecting with targeted individuals and audiences. Fellows will also attend a three-day gathering later in the year with location and dates to be determined.

Applications are due September 30, 2016 and decisions will be finalized by January 16, 2017. Questions may be directed to COMPASS at WilburforceFellows@COMPASSonline.org.

*Wilburforce Foundation is Protecting Important Lands, Waters,
and Wildlife in Western North America by Empowering
Conservation Organizations and Leaders.*



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About the Wilburforce Fellowship in Conservation Science

Scientists in many environmental fields realize the urgency for society to understand what is happening in the natural world. There is a growing need for scientists to bring scientific findings and knowledge of their field into society's conversations and decision-making processes on a wide range of issues. Scientists, however, are not typically trained to communicate with non-scientific audiences and often struggle to find the time, institutional support, and access to skills and training that are necessary for wider engagement. Additionally, science communication training often focuses on skills development – *how* to communicate, neglecting *when* and *why*. The Wilburforce Fellowship in Conservation Science is designed to provide scientists with the experience, competence, and confidence necessary to overcome these barriers and connect more effectively with the media, policymakers, or other audiences appropriate to their expertise and goals. Fellows will work together to identify conservation goals and bring a strategic mindset to developing an action plan for achieving their goals. Fellows will become part of a developing network of trained and mutually supportive scientific leaders engaged in management and policy. Ultimately we hope fellows will catalyze a culture change within their home institutions and motivate more scientists to actively engage.

About the Training and Fellowship

Fellows will meet from April 23-28, 2017 in Tucson, Arizona at the [Westward Look](#). The training will be delivered by Wilburforce Foundation staff, COMPASS, and other topic experts.

COMPASS will work with fellows prior to the April training in order to customize training content. The training will include a strong foundation in science communication and leadership, with an emphasis on adapting communication and leadership styles depending on cultural contexts. The training will additionally cover how to work with policymakers and journalists; framing research for relevance to a variety of audiences; mock interview scenarios with journalists; discussion of select social media tools for scientists and how to use them; and network mapping. Additionally, each fellow will be asked to develop an individual action plan. Wilburforce staff and others will support the fellows in identifying key resources that can help them connect to the right audiences and individuals at the right time. Throughout the following year, fellows will have access to coaching and webinars and will also attend a three-day gathering with location and dates to be determined.



Following a year of engagement, fellows will have the competence and confidence to implement their outlined goals and action plan and will become members of a growing network committed to engaging in policy and management issues to contribute to conservation solutions.

Fellow Eligibility, Evaluation, and Selection

Twenty fellows will be selected representing a diverse mix of fields of study, geographies, and career stages. We have a commitment to supporting an inclusive conservation community and believe the fellowship program is stronger when multiple voices, values, ways of knowing, and identities are a part of it. We welcome applicants from any affiliation (academic, NGO, agency, tribal, etc.) and career level. We are seeking scientists whose career trajectory and impact will benefit from the training, network, and tools garnered through the fellowship. We expect fellows to be fully committed to dedicating the time and energy necessary to fully participate in the in-person meetings and to follow through on the aspirations and personal goals that will come out of them.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate applicants:

- Scientists who are established enough to have a relevant body of work and to be seen as a leader (or emerging leader) in their field. In general, this is early to mid-career PhDs, however, we will take experience into consideration in lieu of a PhD. We also welcome applications from senior scientists who feel they could benefit from this training and a community of peers and experts from a mix of disciplines, experience, and backgrounds. Peer learning and sharing will be fundamental to the program so we are looking for individuals who are generous in their approach to working with others.
- Terrestrial work within Wilburforce Priority Regions (pg. 6) including northern Mexico, U.S., and Canada. (Direct connection to Wilburforce initiatives is not a prerequisite and we welcome scientists we have not worked with in the past. Additionally, becoming a fellow does not guarantee future funding support from Wilburforce Foundation.)
- Field of study in ecology, conservation biology, or environmental economics, including, but not limited to, climate adaptation, habitat connectivity, conservation planning (eg., renewable energy siting), biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services, resilience, traditional ecological knowledge, and related fields. While the subject areas relevant to our work are broad, applicants will be evaluated on how their expertise can inform our place-based strategies and the work of our grantees and partners. Please see our [website](#) for more information on our work.
- Expertise relevant to a timely policy process or issue, with a willingness to help scientifically engage in a meaningful way through public awareness, partnerships with NGOs, direct engagement with policy makers, or other avenues. We want scientists to move beyond the occasional sign-on letter or op-ed, and think about how their participation can substantially advance conservation solutions. Please see the [2015 Fellows](#) for examples of meaningful engagement.



- Preliminary idea of what goal or action you would like to pursue, and some background knowledge to build from.
- Willingness to commit time and energy to the workshop and to making a difference.
- Passion and capacity to exercise leadership and respond to social and environmental challenges.
- Ability and desire to remain an active member of the Wilburforce Fellows in Conservation Science Network after the in-person training and year of engagement.

How to Apply

All materials must be submitted electronically to WilburforceFellows@COMPASSonline.org with the subject line: "Wilburforce Fellowship 2017 Application" by September 30, 2016. Application materials should be submitted as one PDF and titled "FirstName_LastName_WF2017".

Application Materials

1. **Applicant Overview:** Please complete the online [Applicant Overview form](#).
Your application will not be considered complete until we receive your response.
2. **Cover Letter:** Provide a short (one page) cover letter outlining why you believe you are uniquely suited to be selected as a Wilburforce Fellow in Conservation Science.
3. **Current Resume or CV:** Format and length at your discretion.
4. **Please list and answer the following questions in no more than two pages total:**
 1. What do you hope to gain by being a Wilburforce Fellow?
 2. What is your goal for engaging beyond your peers? What is the change you'd like to see in the world, and who do you hope to engage to make that happen?
 3. How will this fellowship help advance that goal and your career?
5. **Two letters of endorsement:** Letters can be submitted by you (grouped in application material PDF) or by the recommender. Letters will be accepted via e-mail body or attached PDF with applicant's last name in the file name.

Deadlines and Contact Information

Applications will be accepted until September 30, 2016. Applications will not be reviewed until all components, including the online [Applicant Overview](#) form and letters, have been received. Decisions will be announced **no later** than January 16, 2017, however we may inform you of our offer sooner. Questions about the application process may be directed to COMPASS at WilburforceFellows@COMPASSonline.org.



Fellowship Support

Wilburforce Foundation will support the costs of all training needs, meals, lodging, and activities during your time in Tucson, and for follow-up coaching and in-person meetings as needed. Fellows are asked to pay their own travel expenses to and from the April training and subsequent gathering. Travel awards are available if needed, and ability to pay travel expenses is not a factor in program eligibility. Specific arrangements regarding travel awards will be made after applications are accepted. There is no stipend associated with the fellowship, and becoming a fellow does not guarantee future funding support from Wilburforce Foundation.

A Note About Advocacy

The Wilburforce Fellowship in Conservation Science program advocates for the understanding and use of science in decision-making. However, there are many ways for scientists to engage in policy issues, from merely providing information, to actively seeking and promoting the right information, to advocating for the role of science in policy decisions, to advocating for a specific policy outcome. Scientists and organizations have different opinions about the degree to which scientists should engage in advocacy. Wilburforce and COMPASS agree that the decision is deeply personal, but scientists do need to think explicitly about this issue, decide what is right for *them*, and make careful judgment calls. As part of the training you will have an opportunity to explore your relationship to advocacy, consider how to present yourself as a scientist, or as a citizen, and to identify and articulate which perspective you are representing in a given context.

About Wilburforce Foundation

Wilburforce Foundation envisions a connected network of lands and waters that allow wildlife to thrive throughout Western North America. We support and connect organizations and individuals that are committed to protecting wild places and the wildlife that depend on them. We invest in science-based solutions, advocate for responsible policies, and ensure that our partners have the capacity to achieve lasting outcomes.



Wilburforce Priority Regions

Wilburforce has identified 13 priority regions throughout Western North America that are critical for wildlife and ecological resilience. An interactive version of the map below can be found on wilburforce.org [here](#).

