

# 2023 EPA Region 9 Wetlands Virtual Meeting

## SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

### **Devon Aguiar, HI Department of Land and Natural Resources, Habitat & Fish Monitoring Specialist**



Devon Aguiar was born and raised in Ewa on the island of O‘ahu, Hawai‘i. He is on contract to the Division of Aquatic Resources of the Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources. As a habitat and fish monitoring specialist, Devon spends his time between coral reef and anchialine ecosystems on the island of Hawai‘i.

### **Maravilla Clemens, California State Coastal Conservancy, NOAA Coastal Management Fellow**



Maravilla has a bachelor’s degree from Colby College and a Master of Science degree from the Rutgers University Geography Department, where she was also a Coastal Climate Risk and Resilience trainee. She is currently working as a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Management Fellow with the California State Coastal Conservancy. Most of her work takes place within the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP), where her role is to support, implement, track, and evaluate the existing regional plan for Southern California wetlands. Maravilla manages the WRP’s Community Wetlands Restoration Grant Program and is the project manager

for the WRP Regional Monitoring Program, which is funded in part through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Wetland Program Development Grant.

### **Christine Cosby, Yurok Tribe Environmental, Project Coordinator**



Christine has over seven years’ experience working in freshwater ecosystems in the Lower Klamath Basin including, but not limited to, water quality sampling and monitoring in tributaries and headwater wetlands, amphibian prevalence studies through eDNA technology, benthic macroinvertebrate sampling, and wetland assessments utilizing rapid assessment methods. Christine was a Specialist for the 2017-2018 Tribal Wetland Program Development Grant for Freshwater Wetlands working to expand the knowledge of high-elevation freshwater wetlands and determine restoration and conservation priorities in headwater streams. Christine is a member of the

Association of State Wetland Managers and holds a practitioner-level certification in California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM) for assessing and monitoring conditions of wetlands.

### **Rebecca Dils, U.S. EPA OWOW, Environmental Protection Specialist**



Rebecca Dils is an Environmental Protection Specialist for EPA’s Oceans, Wetlands, and Communities Division and the EPA Headquarters’ Regional, State, and Tribal Nations Partnerships lead.

**Matthew Hanington, Yurok Tribe Environmental, Water Program Manager**



Matt has 13 years of technical experience working with monitoring water quality through calibration and maintenance of electronic water quality instruments. Matt has also been working in the Klamath River for 12 years and has inherit knowledge of Yurok Ancestral Territory and its water quality. Matt is proficient in a variety of software for analyzing water quality data, visualization and has compiled data for comprehensive fisheries reports and water quality reports.

**Dr. Peter Houk, University of Guam Marine Laboratory, Professor**



Peter Houk is a professor at the UOGML and conducts coral-reef, fisheries, and watershed research with students and colleagues across Micronesia and the tropical Pacific. His recent research has linked watershed land uses with water quality, coral reef, and fisheries condition. These results are currently being used to revise nutrient and biological criteria that reside in water quality standards in Guam and American Samoa. He also focuses on forecasting the impacts of climate change on fisheries and watershed management. Much of his research is conducted alongside governmental and non-governmental agencies across the Pacific.

**Chantal Iosso, Nevada Division of Natural Heritage, Wetland Program Coordinator**



Chantal Iosso holds a B.S. in geology and environmental studies from Washington and Lee University. While obtaining her degree, she worked with nonprofits, university groups, and government agencies on a number of local hydrologic projects. After graduating, she worked for Friends of Nevada Wilderness as the Springs Monitoring Coordinator. In that role, she led technicians and hundreds of volunteers in a near-complete inventory of springs on public lands in southern Nevada. She joined the Nevada Division of Natural Heritage in the summer of 2022 as the first Wetland Program Coordinator. She is working to develop Nevada’s wetland program, by updating the state

Wetland Program Plan, documenting pristine and rare wetlands, and supporting wetland-related work through partnerships.

**Matthew Lee, U.S. EPA, OEJECR, Environmental Protection Specialist**



Matthew Lee is Environmental Protection Specialist in the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights at U.S. EPA, where he co-leads EJSscreen. Matthew started at EPA in Region III and has dedicated his entire career to mapping for environmental justice. Matthew also serves as a Lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania, where he teaches a course on The Principles of Mapping for Environmental Justice.

**Sarah Lowe, San Francisco Estuary Initiative, Senior Environmental Scientist**



Sarah Lowe is a senior environmental scientist at the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI). She has over 25 years of experience in environmental monitoring and assessment and project management. In 2010 Sarah joined Josh Collins, Sarah Pearce, and Cristina Grosso in SFEI’s Resilient Landscapes Program and Environmental Informatics Program to support the development of standard monitoring and assessment methods and online tools designed (under the supervision of the CWMW) to support WRAMP and the State Water Quality Control Board’s 401 Program’s need to assess and track the amount, distribution, diversity, and

condition of streams and wetlands across the state in a watershed context. Sarah has led several projects that employ USEPA's recommended 3-level approach to monitoring wetlands using the California Aquatic Resources Inventory (CARI, Level-1) geospatial dataset, the California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM, Level-2), and a spatially balanced random sampling design to characterize the overall ambient condition of riverine, estuarine, slope, vernal pool, and depressional wetlands at a watershed scale in Northern California. Those surveys produce Cumulative Distribution Function estimates of the condition of wetlands with a known level of confidence and help wetland mitigation and restoration projects compare their condition scores to watershed conditions.

**Sarvy Mahdavi, U.S. EPA Region 9, Life Scientist**



Sarvy Mahdavi is a Life Scientist in the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water Act 404 program. She provides regulatory oversight of 404 permit applications and is the program coordinator for the Wetlands Program Development Grants. She holds a Master of Environmental Management from UC Santa Barbara and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Economics from UC Berkeley.

**Emily Moloney, Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, Water Program Coordinator**



Emily Moloney is the Water Program Coordinator for Buena Vista Rancheria. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Management and Protection and has been working in Tribal natural resources for 5 years and has been working in environmental resource protection for 9 years. Emily develops and manages the water program for the tribe including the non-point source pollution prevention program and the pollution control program by developing and implementing surface water monitoring programs to evaluate water resources and plan projects to prevent, restore or mitigate pollution sources and instream impacts. Finally, Emily has been involved in developing the Tribe's wetland program by writing grant applications, developing the wetland program plan, and supporting grant implementation.

**Joe Morgan, EPA Region 9, Aquatic Ecologist & Hydrologist**



Joe Morgan is an aquatic ecologist and hydrologist in EPA Region 9's Wetlands and Oceans Section. Joe is the geographic jurisdiction lead for Region 9 and is responsible for applying the regulations defining "waters of the United States" across Clean Water Act programs. Joe is also a Project Officer for Wetlands Program Development Grants related to aquatic resource mapping and monitoring in California, particularly streams and vernal pools.

**Thomas Starkey Owens, Yurok Tribe Environmental, Environmental Specialist**



Thomas has six years' experience conducting research on major tributaries of the Klamath River and its mainstem. Thomas's experience includes conducting novel research in aquatic food web dynamics below dams, stream riparian interactions, conducting stream assessments using rapid protocols, the collection of eDNA and managing/analyzing water quality/quantity data in the Lower Klamath Basin. Thomas is proficient in the use of software including MS suite, R base, R Studio, ESRI GIS (Geographic Information System) suite, Aquarius water management software as well as database management tools including MS SQL, MS PowerShell and more.

**Sarah Pearce, San Francisco Estuary Institute, Geomorphologist**



Sarah Pearce is a geomorphologist with the San Francisco Estuary Institute with over 20 years of experience in creeks, rivers, wetlands, and coastal areas across California. Sarah works within the Resilient Landscapes Program conducting watershed geomorphic assessments, developing sediment budgets, and creating plans for regional sediment beneficial reuse. Sarah also conducts wetland assessments using the California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM) completing over 1,100 assessments in all modules across the state. She also serves on the Level-2 Committee (L2) of the CWMW, is the statewide training coordinator, is the primary “customer service representative” for CRAM, and is an author of multiple modules, guidance documents including a contributing author for the CRAM Technical Bulletin Update. Sarah regularly implements CRAM ambient and roject studies, validation studies, and develops training materials, Cumulative Distribution Function plots and Habitat Development Curves to support the methodology.

**Myra Price, U.S. EPA OWOW, Environmental Protection Specialist**



Myra Price is an Environmental Protection Specialist for EPA’s Oceans, Wetlands, and Communities Division and the National WPDG Coordinator.

**Troy Sakihara, HI Department of Land and Natural Resources, Aquatic Biologist**



Troy Sakihara is an aquatic biologist with the Hawai’i Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Aquatic Resources. His work with the division has primarily focused on the biology and life history of sport fishes in insular estuaries, and anchialine pool ecology in Hawai’i. These efforts aim to inform new and improved resource management actions.

**Hannah Savage, Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, Wetland Program Coordinator**



Hannah Savage is the Wetland Program Coordinator for Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians and has been working for the Tribe since January 2022. She manages the Tribe’s wetland program and implements the Tribe’s EPA 104 Wetlands grant. Hannah is finishing her master’s degree from CSU Sacramento. Her research is focused on how land-use surrounding vernal pools influences what species of plants and invertebrates are found within the pools. Prior to working for the Tribe, Hannah did work with the Bushy Lake Restoration Project in Sacramento, California.



**Jennifer Siu, EPA Region 9, Senior Ecologist**



Jennifer Siu is a senior ecologist at EPA Region 9. She serves as a regulatory expert for Section 404 and 401 of the CWA and the Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act. She focuses on initiatives to improve regional wetland outcomes, including development of wetland regional monitoring programs, and supporting restoration and sediment management interagency regulatory teams for project delivery and promoting beneficial reuse of sediment for wetland restoration.

Jennifer has 25 years' experience in aquatic system characterization and management including bio- and sediment monitoring, rapid ecological assessment, wetland jurisdiction, compensatory mitigation analysis, and NEPQ/CEQA compliance.

**Dr. Eric Stein, So. CA Coastal Water Research Project, Biology Department Head**



Dr. Eric Stein is a head of the Biology Department at the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP). Dr. Stein oversees a variety of projects related to in-stream and coastal water quality, ecohydrology, bioassessment, hydromodification, watershed modeling, and assessment of wetlands and other aquatic resources. His research focuses on effects of human activities on the condition of aquatic ecosystems, and on developing tools to better assess and manage those effects. Dr. Stein has authored over 150 journal articles and 75 technical reports and participates on numerous technical workgroups and committees related to water quality and wetland

assessment and management. Prior to joining SCCWRP in 2002, Dr. Stein spent six years as a Senior Project Manager with the Regulatory Branch of the Los Angeles District Corps of Engineers, and four years with a private consulting firm.

**Kristin Szabo, Nevada Division of Natural Heritage, Administrator**



Kristin Szabo joined the Nevada Division of Natural Heritage in 2009 as a Biologist, specifically hired to conduct species climate change vulnerability assessments to inform the Nevada Wildlife Action Plan revision. She continued working as a Biologist for six years maintaining rare species data in the state, and she was appointed Administrator of the agency in 2015. As Administrator, Ms. Szabo manages a staff of eight, an approximately \$1.5M budget, and several rare species, wetland, and climate change-related grants and contracts. Ms. Szabo has a B.S. in Biology from California State University, Long Beach, and a minor in

Chemistry. She began her professional career as a consulting biologist working for a private environmental firm in Irvine, California. Over her 10-year consulting tenure, she climbed the ranks to Senior Biologist and Project Manager, managing large, complex, multi-disciplinary projects throughout southern California.

**Alexandra Thomsen, SF Estuary Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program, Environmental Scientist**



Alex Thomsen is an Environmental Scientist at the San Francisco Estuary Partnership, where she has primarily focused on development of the SF Estuary Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program for the past two years. Alex is interested in linking coastal science and management and maximizing the mutual benefits of environmental management and conservation for human communities and the environment, including improving environmental equity. She has a B.A. in Biology from Brown University and an M.S. in Environmental Science from California State

University Monterey Bay.

**John Vollmar, VNLC President/Principal Ecologist**



John Vollmar is founder and president of Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting, Inc. He is a senior vegetation ecologist, botanist, and aquatic wildlife biologist with over 25 years of professional experience. In recent years, his work has focused on the establishment and management of conservation and mitigation lands, regional conservation planning, conservation research, and restoration projects. His work often involves large-scale, multi-disciplinary biological studies, landscape-level habitat analyses, expert scientific review, and public outreach. Mr. Vollmar has directed more than 500 projects for a broad range of private, non-profit, government entities. He has worked with numerous landowners to establish conservation and mitigation easements, obtain easement funding, and develop and implement long-term resource management and monitoring plans on easement lands. He has worked with numerous conservation groups including The Nature Conservancy, Center for Natural Lands Management, The California Rangeland Trust, and various local land trusts. Through his work, he has helped establish more than 80,000 acres of conservation lands.

**Dr. Christine Whitcraft, CA State University Long Beach, Professor**



Dr. Christine Whitcraft is professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and Director of Environmental Science and Policy (ES&P) at California State University Long Beach (CSULB). She is currently serving as the co-chair of the Presidential Commission on Sustainability (PCS) at CSULB. Her major area of interest is coastal wetland ecology, focused on the impact of anthropogenic activities on functioning of brackish and salt marshes. Specifically, she investigates restoration strategies, impacts of invasive plants, and climate change-related impacts. She received her B.A. in Biology from Williams College, Williamstown MA, and Ph.D. in Biological Oceanography from University of California, San Diego, Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Her postdoctoral research was a CALFED position at San Francisco Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve until she started at CSULB in 2008.

**Kaylie Wilmot, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, Wetland Specialist**



Kaylie Wilmot is the wetland specialist for the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and has worked with the Department of Natural Resources since 2020. She received her bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Nevada Reno and is currently a master's student at the University of Idaho studying Restoration Ecology and Habitat Management. Her duties at the tribe involve managing the wetland program as well as other grants for bighorn sheep reintroduction and acoustic monitoring of bats species throughout the reservation.