EPI Teacher Fellowship

Professional Development Program

Ecology Project International
Teacher Fellowships
Yellowstone Fellow Biographies

April 6-13, 2019

Brian Ingmanson
Brian Ingmanson is a passionate and creative advocate for science and technology. He has over ten years experience working with students and children, from inside the classroom to the mountain peaks. He is currently a seventh grade teacher, a time travel instructor, and a puzzle connoisseur. Brian uses his free time to plan events, instruct his high school drumline, and drink inordinate amounts of coffee.

Leroy Jones
Leroy Jones is a tertiary level educator from Belize. He is the Head of the Science Department and lectures in biology and chemistry at Sacred Heart Junior College in San Ignacio, Belize. Leroy has 9 years of teaching experience and is an avid believer of promoting conservation and environmental awareness through experiential learning. He will graduate from Miami University’s Global Field Program in December 2018. Through the program, Leroy has learned a lot which he has implemented both in and outside his classroom, regularly engaging his students in inquiry activities, field trips, and citizen science projects.

Nichelle Allen
Nikki lives and teaches in Dansville, New York. She has taught secondary science, including Living Environment, Environmental Chemistry, Integrated Science, and more for over 16 years. She is also an Adjunct Lecturer for the Ella Cline School of Education at SUNY Geneseo. In June 2018, she was a co-facilitator for a professional development training on STEM Teaching in Beijing, China through a SUNY Geneseo/MindXplorer partnership. Nikki is also a past participant in the Yellowstone Forever STEAM Teacher program. She enjoys traveling, hiking, birding, gardening, and is an avid nature photographer.

Claire Trainer
Claire Trainer is a seventh and eighth grade life and physical science teacher at Sauganash Elementary School in Chicago. She is very passionate about students engaging in their learning as active participants, making sense of their world, and building connections across different content areas, through formal and informal learning experiences. She was selected as a 2018-2019 TeachPlus Illinois Teaching Policy Fellow, a 2017 National Geographic and Lindblad Grosvenor Teacher Fellow, and is a National Geographic Certified Educator.

Kate Nordyke
Kate Nordyke is an educator from Cincinnati, Ohio. She is a part-time instructor with the Project Dragonfly Program at Miami University. She also serves as co-director at Evergreen Holistic Learning Center, a non-profit organization that she and her family established in 2009. The Center has the mission of offering unique, hands-on learning opportunities promoting environmental awareness, holistic health, and personal and professional development. Kate holds a B.S. in environmental studies/education from Union Institute and University and an M.A. in biology through Miami University’s Global Field Program.
Justine Lines

Justine Lines is a science teacher at Glendale High School in Springfield, Missouri. She has been a teacher for 20 years, including teaching high school biology in Costa Rica. Upon returning from Costa Rica, she started a school garden and uses it to teach biological and ecological concepts to students. She is also a board member of the Springfield Compost Collective. Justine worked in Yellowstone in 1988, the “year of the fires,” and witnessed the greatest restart of succession in the Park’s history. In her spare time, she can be found canoeing, hosting wood-fired pizza parties, or walking a trail.

Katie Pollifrone

Katie is a high school biology teacher in Sarasota, Florida. She attended Bowling Green State University to earn a B.S. in education and attended Miami University to earn an M.A. in biology. Katie enjoys experiencing different cultures and strives to gain new perspectives through traveling. She enjoys being outdoors, trying new and local cuisine, and aims to be an environmental steward within her community.

Bethany Dorin

Fascinated by the world we live in, Bethany Dorin’s passion for the study of life has always been her driving force. She obtained a B.A. in biology from University of California, Santa Cruz in 2005 and a teaching credential in 2010. Inspired by Sylvia Earle’s The Earth is Blue, Bethany completed her M.S. in biology from University of the Pacific in California, with a focus in fisheries biology in 2013. Bethany teaches high school science and is the advisor of the school’s Environmental Club. Awakening teens to the value of their ecosystems is what keeps her fire burning.

Anne Griffith

Anne Griffith began teaching at The Miami Valley School in Dayton, Ohio in 1987. She has taught high school biology, environmental science, and other life science electives to high school students for the past 22 years. She emphasizes inquiry and immersive learning experiences by involving students in exploration of the natural surroundings of her school’s campus, regional parks and wetlands, or international trips to the Amazon rainforest. Her fellowship goals include helping students to develop critical thinking skills and scientific habits of mind while enjoying the natural world.

Melissa Williard

Melissa Williard has taught at Berne Union Schools in Sugar Grove, Ohio for the past seven years. She received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees through the Dragonfly Program from Miami University. As an undergraduate, she traveled to South Africa for a teaching program, and through Project Dragonfly, she was also able to experience Belize, Thailand, and the Galapagos Islands. She teaches College Credit Plus classes in biology and anatomy. She is excited to share a new understanding of the importance of the ocean environment and the impact we have on nature with her students after participating in the EPI Fellowship.
Thomas Kenning
Thomas Kenning is an author, educator, and adventurer. He currently teaches middle school social studies at Plato Academy in Clearwater, Florida. Mr. Kenning is the creator of the award-winning Openendedsocialstudies.org, a library of free lesson plans and travel writing designed to foster a sense of wonder about the world and our place in it. He has also written extensively about Washington, DC, including in the recently published book Abandoned Washington, DC. He firmly believes that success in life means leaving the planet a little bit nicer than he found it.

Jeff Webb
Jeff Webb, from Grand Rapids, Michigan, is in his 15th year of teaching and currently teaches Honors, AP and IB Biology at East Grand Rapids High School. With a love of learning and science, he enjoys connecting his students to the marvels of the natural world. He holds a B.A. in Biology from Anderson University and an M.S. in Exercise Physiology from Indiana University. During breaks from teaching, he takes every opportunity he can to travel and explore alongside his wife, Monica, and their two daughters, Blythe and Eve.

Heather Meixelsperger
Heather Meixelsperger teaches sixth grade physical science and seventh grade life science at River Valley Middle School in Plain, Wisconsin. She is married to her high school sweetheart who is a middle school science teacher in the same building—where they make up the science department and split the teaching of sixth grade physical science students. In her spare time she enjoys fishing, kayaking, attending high school athletics and music programs, playing with her dog, Charlie, and spending time at her parent’s farm with her husband, Jason, their son, Jack, and daughter, Makayla.

Daniel Kinzer
Daniel Kinzer is Director of the Luke Center for Public Service at Punahou School in Honolulu, Hawaii, and a National Geographic Grosvenor Teacher Fellow. He has a degree in psychology and neuroscience from Vanderbilt University, and since graduating has spent over a decade working and learning in international schools and non-profits, across more than 50 countries on all 7 continents. His current vision is of an educational paradigm that helps us discover and co-create a resilient, regenerative, and sustainable future. He is committed to finding opportunities to empower youth voices and co-create learning experiences with his students.

Jennie DeMarco
Dr. Jennie DeMarco is a faculty member in the School of Environment and Sustainability at Western Colorado University where she teaches courses in the science of environmental management, climate change, environmental monitoring, and data management. She is always looking for ways to engage her students with communities and organizations to develop solutions to real problems.
Brynn Hand
Brynn Hand received her B.A. in biology from Carroll College in Helena, Montana. After working in forensics and underwater robotics, she gravitated toward teaching. She now teaches IB MYP biology and freshmen seminar at Innovation High School, a public charter school in Spokane, Washington. As a biology teacher, she wants her students to discover parts of the natural world that are truly fascinating and to have them demonstrate their knowledge in a way that shows ownership and passion. Brynn looks forward to bringing experiential and inquiry-based lessons back to her classroom.

Christine Fleischacker
Dr. Christine Fleischacker is an associate professor of biology at the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota. She enjoys teaching courses on microbiology, immunology, developmental biology, general biology, and bacteriophage research. She also co-instructs a creation and evolution course with her husband. She currently is investigating the genes bacteriophages use to infect different host cells with her undergraduate students. As an advisor for biology students at the university, her goal is to motivate and inspire future science teachers.

Joseph Centoni
Joseph Centoni has been teaching for the past 12 years and currently teaches marine ecology, introductory biology, and AP Environmental Science at Half Moon Bay High School in California. He has degrees in environmental studies and philosophy from the University of California, Santa Cruz. He loves developing lessons and field studies that help students engage with their local environment, and he is excited to participate in a hands-on conservation research project in the Sea of Cortez. He hopes to integrate his new knowledge of the Sea of Cortez into conservation projects for his students in California.

Todd Haney
Todd Haney has been a science instructor at Sage Hill School in southern California since 2005. He holds a B.S. degree in zoology from Northern Arizona University, an M.S. in marine science from University of Charleston, South Carolina, and a Ph.D. in evolutionary biology and ecology from University of California, Los Angeles. He enjoys learning from the perspectives of his students as they engage in classroom discussions. Todd believes that one day in the field is worth ten in the classroom and has led domestic and international trips for students focused on natural history and service-learning.

Heidi Hisrich
Heidi Hisrich is the Richmond High School Project Lead the Way Biomedical Sciences Instructor. She is a strong believer that science education can help shape society in positive ways. She is the HOSA Future Health Professionals Advisor at her school and has worked with her students to expand science education opportunities for elementary and middle-school aged students. She has chaperoned students as they participated in state and national leadership conferences and also on domestic service learning trips. She has also led international trips for students and in June 2020 will take 16 RHS students to Costa Rica through EPI.

Brooke Fatula
Brooke Fatula has been a high school biology teacher at Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School in Massachusetts since 2006. She studied marine biology as an undergraduate and obtained two master’s degrees in teaching. She enjoys beekeeping, spending time with her husband and three children, scuba diving, stand-up paddle boarding, and skiing. Brooke continually seeks new and unique ways to keep her science knowledge fresh and engage her students. She looks forward to bringing more hands-on experiences to her students.

Joan Koob
Joan Koob received her bachelor’s in environmental and conservation biology from Jefferson University, and her master’s of education from Cabrini University. She has been teaching in the sciences for 8 years, both as an outdoor educator and in the classroom. She currently works at an all-girls’ high school in Malvern, Pennsylvania, where she teaches biology and environmental science. Joan is also the head coach of her school’s rowing team. During the summer, she works as a park ranger for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers in Riverdale, North Dakota.
Carmen Campos
Carmen Campos has worked as a World Language supervisor and is currently a middle school Spanish teacher at The Dalton School in New York City. She earned a doctorate in educational leadership and supervision at St. John’s University in New York. She has presented workshops across the United States on her two passions: puppetry and technology in the language classroom. Carmen received the Remuda Cadoux Award for Leadership in Foreign Language Supervision, as well as a Fulbright-Hays award, where she explored the indigenous heritage of Peru.

Sarah Kuszaj
Sarah Kuszaj graduated with a B.S. in biology from Wofford College and earned her Master of Arts in teaching from UNC-Chapel Hill. She currently teaches at Cardinal Gibbons High School in Raleigh, North Carolina, of which she is an alumnus. She has taught primarily biology for 17 years, including AP Biology and marine ecology, though she has taught physics, earth science & zoology as well. Sarah is also an Assistant Coach for the varsity women’s soccer team at Gibbons. She enjoys traveling, especially in the mountains of North Carolina, hiking, taking photos, and relaxing with friends and family.

Betsy Craske
Betsy Craske teaches STEM classes and leads outdoor education programming at Sussex School in Missoula, Montana. She has a bachelor’s in environmental studies from the University of Montana and is working towards her M.S. in science education at Montana State University. She has led trail crews in Alaska and Washington and taught environmental science at the Aspen Center for Environmental Science in Colorado. Betsy is excited to learn how to incorporate more inquiry-based field science in her classes through her fellowship with EPI. Throughout the year you can find her adventuring through mountains on foot, mountain bike, and skis.

Christopher Wilkinson
Christopher Wilkinson is a science educator and innovator, currently teaching biology and chemistry at the Uruguayan American School. He has taught at International schools for over 20 years in Africa and South America. He experiments with practical, hands-on learning, and emphasizes his students’ responsibility in their learning process. At conferences, he has presented on environmental service programs and creating innovation fairs. He has taken students to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro and dive in Mozambique and Curacao, and looks forward to engaging with other educators in a field setting in Costa Rica.
Cori Longstreet
Cori Longstreet lives in Portland, Oregon, where she teaches middle school at Sunnyside Environmental School. Students at Sunnyside explore the issues of environmental and social justice, and participate in weekly field studies to watersheds to connect to the idea that our planet’s health deeply depends on our watershed health. The middle school also takes yearly overnight field studies to the Oregon coast to study marine biology. She lives with her son, a high school senior, and her little dog, Banjo.

Michele Witkowski
Michele Witkowski graduated from Stony Brook University’s BS/MAT program. She currently teaches biology and serves as the yearbook advisor at Edison High School in New Jersey. Michele recently completed Miami University’s Project Dragonfly/WCS Advanced Inquiry Program, receiving an M.A. in biology. She seeks to foster adolescents’ connections with nature and increase their experiences with and appreciation for biodiversity. In her spare time, she enjoys learning new things, being outdoors, fishing, and crafting.

Elizabeth Padilla Crespo
Dr. Elizabeth Padilla Crespo has degrees in biotechnology and industrial microbiology from the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez, an M.S. in biology from the Georgia Institute of Technology, and a Ph.D. in microbiology from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. She studies biofilms and bioremediation of pesticides, hydrocarbons, and chlorinated solvents. Dr. Padilla was the 2013 Congressional Hispanic Institute Fellow for the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology and led a policy summit on Green and Sustainable Remediation. Three years ago, she decided to return to Puerto Rico to contribute to the island’s “knowledge-based economy” and to inspire students—especially women and minorities—to pursue careers in science.

Tania Kobelkowsky
Tania received her bachelor’s degree in biology in Mexico City and a master’s degree in marine science in Sydney, Australia. Through her academic life, she has studied in various locations to look at the biogeography of birds and reptiles, morphology, and ecology of coral reefs. She currently teaches science at the high school and undergraduate level in Mexico City. She loves teaching environmental science and uses her life experiences in the field as first-hand examples for her classes.

Robbin Dilley
Robbin Dilley teaches high school science at the Watershed School in Boulder, Colorado, and spends her summers as a wilderness instructor for Hurricane Island Outward Bound School. She received a B.A. in biology from Columbia University and a master’s in education from the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Robbin believes in engaging students in research and problem solving around real-world issues through field experiences and travel. Her goal is for students to become active and thoughtful change-makers in their local and global communities. When not teaching, Robbin enjoys exploring the West with her husband and their dog.

Pamela Ulicny
Pamela Ulicny has taught biology and environmental science for over 25 years at Tri-Valley Junior/Senior High School in Hegins, Pennsylvania. She puts ‘life’ into her classes in many different ways, including maintaining over 30 different species of reptiles and amphibians in her classroom. Pamela has participated in national and international teacher workshops, which enhanced her commitment to foster global awareness and change. After a workshop in South Africa, she kickstarted a partnership with a business in Cape Town to empower youth with the skills and training needed to introduce photovoltaics to households in energy poverty.
Angela Dill
Angela Dill has been teaching physical science, chemistry, and biology for eleven years with the last eight at Prospect Mountain High School in Alton, New Hampshire. She received her B.S. in biological science education from Plymouth State University. She recently graduated from the Global Field Program at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio with a Master of Arts in Teaching in 2018. She lives in Sanbornton, New Hampshire, and in her free time, she enjoys traveling, skiing, hiking, swimming, yoga, dancing, and all the wonderful things the White Mountains have to offer.

Brian Faulkner
Brian Faulkner is currently in his 17th year as a science teacher at Poudre High School in Fort Collins, Colorado, at the base of the Rocky Mountains. Brian has worked in a variety of educational settings including teaching abroad in Berlin, Germany, in the International Baccalaureate program, in expeditionary learning settings, and in the more traditional AP Biology and AP Environmental Science. When Brian is not teaching he enjoys rock climbing, white water kayaking, fly fishing, and coaching track and field.

Amy Palmer
Amy Palmer currently teaches K-8 STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) at a small rural school on the coast of Maine. She loves hands on science and emphasizes getting students involved with citizen science projects, especially ones that have an impact on their lives. She has taught middle school science on an island, sustainability science through garden programs, and ecology at different outdoor schools around the country. She studied marine science at Moss Landing Marine Lab, and education at University of California, Santa Cruz. She loves to learn and explore new places.

Carrie Bray
Carrie Bray is a high school teacher at New Explorations into Science Technology and Math in New York City. She has a master’s in special education and biology. Previously, Carrie taught conservation and environmental science at a wildlife conservation-themed high school in the South Bronx, where she was able to develop an ongoing relationship with the Wildlife Conservation Society. Carrie has traveled to Namibia, South Africa, Belize and has even taken students to Costa Rica, all in the pursuit of amazing photos and adventures.

Maggy Belizaire
Maggy Belizaire has been a science teacher and dean at James Madison High School in Brooklyn, New York for nearly 20 years. She graduated from Touro College with a B.S. in education and special education. She believes that because of the rapid development in technology in our world today, that environmental science positions are on the rise and a good reason students should learn about the subject. She strives to motivate students to become critical thinkers and to challenge themselves to create sustainable solutions to environmental issues, such as declining biodiversity.
Mandy Batty
Mandy Batty is the science department chair and teaches chemistry, biology, forensics and environmental science at Waterford High School in Waterford, Connecticut. She received her undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Connecticut and her 6th year degree in administration from Sacred Heart University. She loves helping her students see the science in everything that they do. Her main goal is to teach her students that they can and will make a difference in the world. When not in the classroom, Mandy enjoys running, hiking, reading, and spending time with her husband, daughter and dogs.

Valerie Holmes
Valerie Holmes is co-director of the Ossining High School Science Research Program and serves as one of the teachers of their three-year sequence of advanced research courses. While her students pursue research in all areas of STEM, Valerie’s primary passions are field biology and ecology. She has been teaching in Ossining, New York for 19 years with prior research experiences in forest health, Hudson River ecology, and plant virology. In her spare time, she studies botanical illustration and enjoys hiking in the Hudson Valley, Catskill Mountains, and Adirondack Park.

Michelle Sipe
Michelle is an AP and Honors Environmental Science teacher at Livingston High School in New Jersey. This is her fourteenth year teaching, and she is an advisor for the Science National Honor Society and the School Chapter of Habitat for Humanity. Michelle is committed to lifelong learning to continue developing effective teaching practices to engage and inspire her students. She attends the National Science Teacher Association Conventions, New Jersey Science Conventions, and is an AP Reader for the National AP Environmental Science Exams. Michelle loves to travel and is an avid hiker and lover of National Parks.

Lisa Hinsz
Lisa Hinsz has been a high school science teacher for 19 years. She currently teaches AP Biology and Chemistry at Shakopee High School in Minnesota. She works with a diverse group of learners, and co-teaches chemistry for English language learners. Lisa has a B.S. in life science teaching from Minnesota State University, Moorhead and an M.A. in education from St. Mary’s University. She loves the outdoors, running, playing with her three kids, and exploring new things. As an educator, she strives to make science relevant, exciting, and fun for her students.

Ann Wegmann
Ann has been a high school science teacher for the past ten years. She currently teaches biology and marine science at Patrick Henry High in San Diego, California. Ann is excited to participate in EPI as she loves giving her students opportunities to learn through experiences! She has taken student groups on trips to tide pools, museums, conferences and even as far as the Amazon and the Galapagos Islands to conduct research with other students and scientists.
Zachary Rittner
Zach is a high school science teacher at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School in New Jersey. He teaches biology and created an AP environmental program at his school two years ago. In his classroom, he emphasizes critical thinking and hands-on learning experiences. He has studied abroad in Australia and New Zealand, where he enjoyed observing wildlife and conducting research in a new environment.

Kevin Rohn
Kevin received his bachelor’s degree in environmental science from the University of Virginia and his Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Lesley University. He teaches middle school science at Beaver Country Day School in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. He strives to challenge and empower his students to ask their own questions about the world around them and then answer those questions through the scientific process. Through project-based learning, his students follow their curiosity to explore topics with real-world applications. He is an avid hiker and enjoys spending time outside in all seasons and environments.

Hope Bigwarfe
Hope Bigwarfe studied biology and secondary education at St. John Fisher College and science education at the University at Buffalo in New York. She has taught middle school science in a variety of settings across three states. She is currently teaching high school “Living Environment” in an alternative setting at Colonie Academy and eighth grade earth science at Sand Creek Middle School. She enjoys hiking, traveling, and exploring new places. She recently visited Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks on a family trip and fell in love with their beauty.

Carole Gonzalez
Carole Gonzalez is a Science Department co-chair and faculty member at Maryvale Preparatory School, an independent Catholic school for girls (grades 6-12) in Lutherville, Maryland. Carole joined Maryvale in 2014 and teaches Accelerated Biology, Honors Anatomy and Physiology, and Marine Biology to Upper School students. She also serves as an adjunct professor of biology at the Community College of Baltimore County. A gifted professional with 29 years of teaching experience, Carole holds an M.S. in biological sciences from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and a B.S. in biological sciences from Mount St. Mary’s University.

Faith Nelson
Faith Nelson has been teaching biology and AP Biology for fifteen years in the suburbs of Chicago. She has a B.S. in biology from The University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign and a master’s in natural science from Eastern Illinois University. Faith appreciates the unique and meaningful learning opportunity that travel provides for students, and she has traveled twice with students to Costa Rica. She would love to find new places to explore with students. Faith enjoys going on local nature walks with her husband and two daughters and is excited to explore Yellowstone National Park with EPI.

Lauren Thompson
Lauren received undergraduate and master’s degrees at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington. After graduation, Lauren worked for Friends Of the Rappahannock, a local watershed protection organization in Virginia. Working in environmental education inspired Lauren to continue as a teacher and to provide her students with the skills to make informed decisions about water and the environment. Lauren is now the Lead Coordinator of the Marine Science Academy (MSA) at Ashley High School in North Carolina. Her students in the MSA are actively involved in the community through beach clean-ups and community outreach.
Christine Boss teaches AP Environmental Science, anatomy and physiology, and biology at St. Mary’s Academy High School, an all-girls Catholic school in Englewood, Colorado. After first having a career in environmental consulting, she has now been a secondary science teacher for more than ten years in the Denver area. Christine received her B.S. in biology at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina and her M.S. in ecology at the University of Tennessee. She enjoys traveling, paddle boarding, teaching summer science programs, and volunteering at Hudson Gardens and Earthlinks, a community garden and program for the homeless.

Agnieszka Taciak is a New York State Master Teacher from Long Island, New York. She has taught Earth Science, AP Environmental Science and science research over the past 15 years. She encourages her students to pursue careers in geoscience, hydrology, and meteorology by organizing trips and bringing speakers from these fields into the classroom. She serves as a professional development provider for the Polish Supplementary Schools of America, Inc. Agnieszka is an avid rock collector with an unquenchable desire to travel with her family to atypical vacation spots like Iceland and Chernobyl.
INTERESTED IN STUDENT GROUP TRAVEL WITH EPI?

Once you’ve identified the program(s) that interest you for 2020 or beyond, here’s what our process looks like:

Get in Touch
We’re always happy to help answer your questions and provide additional information.

Select Dates
Your EPI contact will help you choose the right time to travel, depending on your school schedule and our field site availability.

Spread the Word
Share the opportunity with your students. We have posters, videos, pre-departure lesson plans, and many other outreach materials available, and we can provide suggestions for after-school and parent meetings. Enrollment is easy through our website, and if six or more of your students enroll before our June 15th deadline, group scholarship funds are available to first-time schools.