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Woods Institute names 19 Leopold Leadership Fellows

Nineteen environmental researchers from across North America have been awarded Leopold Leadership Fellowships for 2009.

Based at Stanford University's Woods Institute for the Environment, the Leopold Leadership Program was founded in 1998 to help academic scientists communicate scientific information more effectively to journalists, policymakers, business leaders and the public. Each year the program selects as many as 20 mid-career academic environmental scientists as fellows.

"These 19 outstanding researchers are engaged in cutting-edge research about Earth's environmental systems," said Pam Sturner, the managing director of the Leopold Leadership Program. "Through our program, they will gain new skills and connections to make sure their research is heard and is useful to decision making."

The 2009 fellows come from a wide range of disciplines, including marine science, ecology, engineering, geography and economics. They will join a network of 134 past fellows who are active in science outreach and are working to infuse scientific understanding into public- and private-sector discussions about the environment.

The fellows were chosen for their outstanding qualifications as scientists, demonstrated leadership ability and strong interest in communicating science beyond traditional academic audiences. Each fellow participates in two weeklong training sessions that include practice media interviews and testimony at a mock congressional hearing. The fellowship also offers peer networking and mentoring through the Leadership Network of program advisers, trainers and past fellows.

"Academic scientists work hard to understand environmental problems and to develop potential solutions, but actually solving problems requires a two-way flow of information and communication between scientists and decision makers," said Pamela Matson, dean of Stanford's School of Earth Sciences and scientific director of the program. "The Leopold Leadership Program trains academics to close the gap between knowledge and action."

The Leopold Leadership Program is funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

Following is a list of the 2009 fellows and their current research:

Kevin Arrigo, Department of Environmental Earth System Science, Stanford. Role of polar marine microalgae in global biogeochemical cycling.

Brendan Bohannon, Department of Biology, University of Oregon. Microbial biodiversity; response of microbial communities to environmental change.

David Breshears, School of Natural Resources, University of Arizona. Dieback of woodlands in response to

severe drought.

Anne Chin, Department of Geography, University of Oregon. Dynamics of dryland rivers affected by urban development; dynamics of headwater mountain streams.

Simon Donner, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia. Effects of climate change and land use change on ecosystems.

Victoria Fabry, Department of Biological Sciences, California State University-San Marcos. Impact of ocean acidification on marine ecosystems.

Margot Gerritsen, Department of Energy Resources Engineering, Stanford. Optimization of environmentally friendly oil production processes, carbon sequestration and tidal energy systems.

Gretchen Hofmann, Department of Ecology, Evolution and Marine Biology, University of California-Santa Barbara. Impacts of ocean acidification on marine populations.

Madhu Khanna, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Economic mechanisms for encouraging voluntary corporate environmental initiatives; environmental and economic implications of biofuel mandates, subsidies and tariffs.

David Lea, Department of Earth Science, UC-Santa Barbara. Implications of paleoclimate data for understanding and predicting climate change.

Laura Meyerson, Department of Natural Resources Science, University of Rhode Island. Identification of native plant populations at risk of extinction from invasive plant species.

Paige Novak, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Minnesota. Contamination of water and wastewater by estrogen compounds.

Dov Sax, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and Center for Environmental Studies, Brown University. Species extinction; evaluation of "assisted migration" as policy.

Karen Seto, School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Yale University. Impacts of urban growth.

Whendee Silver, Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management, UC-Berkeley. Land use management effects on climate change; impact of tropical reforestation.

U. Rashid Sumaila, Fisheries Centre, University of British Columbia. Economics of fishing and impacts on marine conservation policies.

Jeanne VanBriesen, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Carnegie Mellon University. Drinking-water safety.

Jianguo "Jingle" Wu, School of Life Sciences and School of Sustainability, Arizona State University. Urbanization and its ecological effects in Arizona; biodiversity and ecosystem function in Mongolia.

Luis Zambrano González, Department of Zoology, Instituto de Biología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Dynamics of freshwater fish populations.



Related Information

- Leopold Leadership Program (<http://leopoldleadership.org>)