



Wilburforce Leaders in Conservation Science

Overview

Scientists have knowledge that is crucial for decision-making in a rapidly changing West, but frequently lack the skills, connections and support to get their research into the hands of the people who can use it. Furthermore, the challenges facing people, western lands and wildlife demand solutions that are equitable, inclusive, and just.

To meet these needs, [COMPASS](#) and [Wilburforce Foundation](#) are launching the Wilburforce Leaders in Conservation Science program to activate a strong network of scientists across [Wilburforce Foundation Priority Regions](#) from Alaska to Mexico, with the readiness and vision to be leaders. COMPASS is committed to growing a network of conservation leaders who reflect the diversity of society as a whole and are individually and collectively working toward change.

If you are eager to grow into a new sense of possibility as a leader, gain the skills needed to make your vision for conservation a reality, and be a part of a thriving and supportive network of peers, we invite you to express your interest in being a Wilburforce Leader in Conservation Science.

Program Structure

This year-long program, which begins in May 2021, will prepare you to advance meaningful change within yourself, your community, and society. The backbone of the program will be three intensive virtual workshops, held on May 18-20, Oct 5-7, and Dec 7-9, 2021 (with the possibility of a final, in-person event in the spring of 2022, if it is safe to gather then). During these workshops, led by COMPASS staff and external partners, you'll gain strategic communication, engagement, and leadership skills, and set and work towards specific, self-identified conservation goals. In between these virtual intensives, the full cohort will meet monthly for ongoing learning and support, augmented by small peer groups and individual coaching.

Benefits of Becoming a Wilburforce Leader in Conservation Science

- ▶ A mutually supportive cohort of 20 motivated, inspirational leaders, eager to help each other advance conservation solutions in the West.
- ▶ Workshops with world-class experts and trainers where you will build essential skills in science communication (such as distilling complexity, framing, listening, messaging, storytelling, communicating across difference) and strategic



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engagement (such as how to engage with diverse audiences, how to identify levers of change, and how to navigate networks).

- ▶ Meaningful connections to a broader network of conservation leaders, including the 2015 and 2017 Wilburforce Fellows, and to guest experts—including community organizers, advocates, journalists, and decision-makers.
- ▶ Guidance and coaching as you create and work toward a self-identified, strategic conservation goal over the course of the program year.
- ▶ Opportunities to identify your leadership purpose and develop capacities in emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and resilience to support you to lead effective change for the long haul.

Who Should Apply and Eligibility

We are looking for people who are ready to embrace a transformative year-long program, and who are working on issues relevant to the conservation goals of Wilburforce Foundation. (Learn more about Wilburforce's programs and strategies [here](#)). We value multiple identities, voices, perspectives, fields of study, geographies, backgrounds, values, and ways of knowing and seek applicants who embody and express the many ways of being a scientist. A spirit of open-mindedness and generosity, in addition to a willingness to contribute to a collaborative, mutually supportive network of peers, is highly desirable.

Social and natural scientists working to conserve wild places and wildlife across western North America within [Wilburforce's Priority Regions](#) are eligible for this program. We particularly encourage scientists who are members of or working in partnership with Indigenous communities to apply. We welcome applicants of any career level and affiliation (universities; federal, state, local, Alaska Native, First Nation, Indigenous groups and tribal governments; NGOs; independent researchers). We seek people whose career trajectory and conservation impact will benefit from the training, network, and tools garnered through the program.

The initial eligibility screen will be based on geography (do your science or science-related conservation efforts focus on Wilburforce Foundation Priority Regions?) and relevance (does your work inform Wilburforce Foundation's place-based strategies and the work of Wilburforce Foundation grantees and partners?).

How to Apply

Please fill out this [brief form](#) to express your interest in the program by December 11, 2020. If you are eligible, you will receive an invitation to submit a full application in early January 2021. The full application will be due on February 5, 2021. Our goal with this two-step process is to reduce effort on the part of applicants. Final selections will be made by March 2021.



Full application materials will include:

- A brief personal biography
- Resume or short CV
- References from two individuals who can speak to why you would be a good fit for this program
- Responses to short-answer questions to help us understand what you hope to gain from this program, including: how you would use the skills you'll gain and the network you'll build, and efforts you've undertaken to strengthen the roles of science in society

Selection Criteria

We are committed to crafting a cohort that is inclusive of many identities and represents a mix of fields of study, geographies, and perspectives relevant to Wilburforce Foundation's mission. If invited to apply to the program, we (COMPASS staff, in consultation with Wilburforce Foundation) will use the following criteria to select the final cohort:

- ▶ **Inclusive.** We look for scientists who are working to bridge divides and bring people together around shared values. We welcome scientists who work in collaboration with communities, decision makers, or other stakeholders. Applicants should have a demonstrated commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- ▶ **Relevance.** We look for people with expertise that can inform Wilburforce Foundation's place-based conservation strategies and the work of their grantees and partners, across the natural and social sciences.
- ▶ **Goals.** We look for people with a preliminary idea of a goal or action that will advance conservation solutions through meaningful public engagement, that they can pursue over the course of the year. It is not necessary for your idea to be fully fleshed out. However, it should be something that you have the ability and drive to pursue during the course of the program, and that will have impact in Wilburforce Priority Regions.
- ▶ **Growth potential.** We look for people who seek to grow as leaders and are ready to identify and move toward the next step on their journey.
- ▶ **Generosity.** We look for people who take a caring and collaborative approach to working with others, building bridges across difference and approaching their work with humility and open-mindedness. Peer support and inclusive cohort relationship-building are key elements of the program.
- ▶ **Commitment.** We look for people prepared to invest time and energy in the program for the full year (including full participation in three virtual retreats, and approximately 5 hours/month of time during non-retreat months) and beyond, as active members of the Wilburforce Leaders in Conservation Science Network.

You do NOT have to be a current or former Wilburforce Foundation grantee or actively working with current or former Wilburforce Foundation grantees to be selected.

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However, you do need to be doing work relevant to Wilburforce Foundation's mission, and this is what we will be screening for through the initial expression of interest. Scientists working for or with Wilburforce Foundation grantees will be given priority consideration. Acceptance to the program does not represent a commitment for future funding from Wilburforce Foundation.

FAQ

Is there a cost to participate if I'm selected?

No. Costs of training and coaching are covered by the program (if it is viable to meet in-person, the costs of lodging, meals and transportation will also be covered by the program).

Is there a stipend if I'm selected?

No.

Do I need to have a PhD or Master's Degree?

No. Relevant experience in the field of conservation science and its application will be considered in lieu of a graduate degree.

What if I'm trained as a scientist, but not currently doing research?

We are seeking people whose current, primary professional role is science-related and science-informed, which could include doing scientific research or synthesis, communicating science, building collaboratives where science is a strong component, etc. It is not necessary to be currently conducting research.

Are marine scientists eligible?

No, marine scientists are not eligible. Please see the [Leadership Programs page](#) on our website for other relevant opportunities (including [Leaders for Sea Change](#), a year-long leadership program for marine and coastal natural and social scientists).

About COMPASS

We envision a world where science helps people and nature thrive together. COMPASS achieves this vision by preparing scientists to become agents of change. We invest in science leaders that reflect the diversity of society as a whole, creating inclusive, safe, and empowering spaces for learning and transformation. With strategic skills, connections, and support, scientists can advance just, equitable solutions to climate change and biodiversity loss.

Since 1999, COMPASS has supported over 8,000 scientists to communicate about their work and engage beyond lab and field. We've connected them with journalists,

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policymakers, and community leaders across the United States, when and where it matters, ensuring science has a seat at the table.

Our community is our strength. We work within and across a consciously-woven network spanning disciplines, ideologies, sectors, and fields. From our unique vantage point, we spot and open doors that lead to new partnerships and solutions, bringing scientists and communities together to co-create the future.

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