



USDA Forest Service
Presidential Management Fellows
2014 Cohort

Future Leaders Growing Future Leaders





Jason Armbruster

Assistant Forest Lands Program Manager

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests

Jason Armbruster hails from St. Paul, Minnesota, and is currently serving as the Assistant Forest Lands Program Manager for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests on Colorado’s Western Slope. He received a Juris Doctor degree with a certificate in Environmental, Land Use and Real Estate Law (ENLURE) from Chapman University School of Law. The ENLURE program integrates the study of environmental protection and land use regulation with the study of real property transactions and development. During law school, Jason interned for the United States Attorney’s Office for the District of Alaska where he helped to bring to justice guides who had violated federal wildlife statutes. He also served as a law clerk for the Environmental Protection Unit of the Orange County District Attorney’s Office, and for Ventura Coastkeeper, a program of the non-profit Wishtoyo Foundation. Prior to joining the Forest Service, Jason practiced law with a civil litigation firm in Los Angeles. He looks forward to drawing on his legal training and experience and the many new skills he will learn from the knowledgeable land and resource managers of the Forest Service to help ensure the responsible and sustainable use of National Forest System lands. In his spare time Jason enjoys spending time with his wife, son and three huskies (who are much happier in Colorado than in Southern California). He is also an avid mountaineer and has climbed the highest point in each of the fifty states.



Jennifer Austin

Recreation and Lands Officer

Inyo National Forest

Jennifer Austin is a 2014 Presidential Management Fellow and works at the White Mountain and Mount Whitney Ranger Districts of Inyo National Forest as the District Recreation and Lands Officer. In her Presidential Management Fellow position, Jennifer hopes to gain program-level planning and implementation experience as well as training to effectively collaborate with Forest Service partners. Jennifer’s professional interests are in the field of wildlife conservation and management. She completed her Bachelor of Science Degree in Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology from Colorado State University in 2009, and her Master of Science Degree in Conservation Biology from the University of Maryland in 2014. In 2011, Jennifer worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a Wildlife Inspector on Long Island and has worked three summers as a wildlife field technician. Jennifer is a Coast Guard veteran who was stationed in San Francisco on board the 378’ Coast Guard Cutter Munro where she was awarded with the Cutters “Enlisted Person of the Year”. As a quartermaster on board the Munro, Jennifer helped navigate the ship to conduct fisheries patrols in the Bering Sea and drug-busting patrols in the Pacific. When not working, Jennifer enjoys birding, climbing, hiking, mountain biking, and conversing with her cat Ryu.



Kelly Balcarczyk

*Nature-based Tourism and Economic Development Specialist
National Forests in Alabama*

Kelly, originally from Buffalo, NY, has moved around the country chasing a career in the natural resource field. After finishing her M.Sc. at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, she worked for the National Audubon Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Kelly joined the Forest Service after completing her Ph.D. at West Virginia University in Forest Resource Science. Her dissertation work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service focused on improving the recruitment, hiring, and retention of young adults and underrepresented groups in natural resource organizations. This work inspired Kelly to pursue a full-time career with a federal land management agency. Kelly plans to use her unique background in both natural and social sciences while working to strengthen partnerships and nature-based tourism in the National Forests in Alabama. Kelly is excited about the PMF opportunity, especially the numerous training and skill-building opportunities available to her. She is looking forward to being a member of the Forest Service and PMF communities, which will not only help to build a professional network, but also life-long friendships. New to the South, Kelly is eager to become part of the Montgomery community, as well. She volunteers with the Alabama Nature Center and the Montgomery Humane Society.



Nick Goldstein

*Management Analyst
Office of Regulatory and Management Services
Washington D.C. Office*

Like his favorite president, Teddy Roosevelt, Nick is a native New Yorker but a westerner at heart. He left the Hudson Valley and headed to the Rocky Mountains for college and graduated with a degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Colorado in 2006. After a few years of fleeting employment in the outdoor recreation industry, he returned to the east coast and enrolled in a joint-degree program at Pace Law School and the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, where he earned Juris Doctorate and Master of Environmental Management degrees, respectively. He is now an attorney in both Colorado and New Mexico (where he lived briefly after graduate school) and has worked, interned, or volunteered with numerous government agencies and non-profit advocacy organizations focused on environment and natural resource issues, including the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the New Mexico State Senate, the New York State Office of the Attorney General, Western Resource Advocates, the Open Space Institute, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and Hudson Riverkeeper. He joined the Forest Service's Office of Regulatory and Management Services in Washington, DC as a Presidential Management Fellow in July of 2014. His work is focused on developing and issuing regulations, refining the agency's public engagement practices and processes, and interpreting and advocating for conservation-related budget appropriations.



Tommie Herbert

*Natural Resource Specialist, Ecosystem Services and Markets
Cooperative Forestry, State & Private Forestry
Washington DC Office*

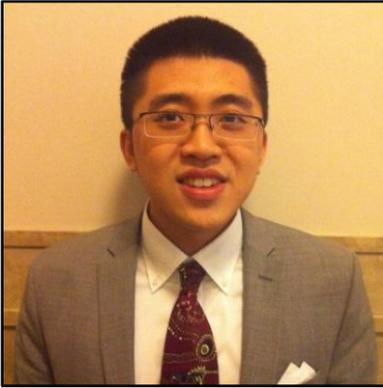
Tommie is from Middleburg, VA and currently lives in Arlington, VA. She is fascinated with the connection between people and place, and is interested in how innovative partnerships and finance can promote healthy working landscapes and healthy communities. At Vanderbilt, she completed a bachelor's in Human and Organizational Development, focusing on International Community Development, with a minor in Spanish. While in Nashville she worked for the Country Music Association in the Marketing department, and volunteered for ArtReach, a program helping underserved children frame and interpret their worlds through art. She worked from 2008 to 2009 for the Environmental Defense Fund's Land, Water, and Wildlife program supporting rotational grazers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. She worked from 2009-2012 for Forest Trends to build capacity, through training and policy advising, for ecosystem services transactions and environmental markets frameworks in Tropical America and East & Southern Africa. In 2014 Tommie completed a Master of Forestry from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Here, her coursework focused on forest management and conservation finance. She co-founded a student interest group on Conservation Investing, was Vice President of the Society of American Foresters, managed a webinar series called 'Nature's Returns: Investing in Ecosystem Services', and was a teaching fellow for Forest Operations. Tommie loves playing sports, spending time with family/friends, listening to live music, yoga, travel, and cooking. She is looking forward to learning about how the Forest Service can integrate ecosystem services into its programs and operations, and how the agency can continue to engage with private landowners on collaborative conservation.



Jasmine Napier

*Natural Resource Specialist
Sam Houston National Forest*

Jasmine currently serves as a Natural Resource Specialist, in the recreation program on the Sam Houston Ranger District. She holds a BS in Environmental Studies from Spelman College and a MPH in Environmental and Occupational Health from Saint Louis University. As a student and lover of the environment, Jasmine has pledged a life of service dedicated to a better understanding of the exchange of impact of the environment and society. Before embarking on a career at the Forest Service, she recently worked for the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, OSHA, and Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals. One of her proudest moments, to date, was receiving and embarking upon PMF journey. In her spare time, Jasmine serves as a mentor through the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program, enjoys pottery making, and visiting all 50 states. In her current position, she looks forward to its flexibility most. She believes the program, and position, have afforded her the opportunity to cultivate the fellowship experience to tailor her interests while meeting the needs of the community. "There is no greater feeling than doing what you love, while utilizing the skills you've acquired to serve a higher purpose." Jasmine thinks the Forest Service is the perfect vessel to achieve that mission.



Sunny Ng

GIS and Climate Change Specialist

Forest Management

Washington D.C. Office

Sunny Ng joined the Forest Management Staff in the Washington Office in June 2014. A true New Yorker, he grew up in New York City's Lower East Side. Sunny has a master's degree in Climate Science from Columbia University and a BA in environmental policy from Middlebury College. Sunny is passionate about using geospatial technology and remotely sensed information to improve decision making. Sunny is a proud Gates Scholar alumnus and is actively engaged in connecting urban youth to the outdoors.



Dan O'Toole

NEPA Planner

Carson National Forest

Dan O'Toole, a native of Camden County, NJ, received his Master of Philosophy in Culture, Environment, and Sustainability from the University of Oslo in Norway. He is a Registered Public Archaeologist and has worked in the field throughout the eastern United States and in Europe. He has also worked on international development projects in Haiti, Bolivia, and Nicaragua, and has contributed as a writer and researcher for the National Geographic Books Division. In 2008, he hiked the entirety of the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine, and has continued the nomadic lifestyle ever since. He started with the Forest Service at White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire as a seasonal field archaeologist, and has since made the great western migration to the Carson National Forest in New Mexico as a NEPA Planner. His first son was born in 2013, making child-rearing his primary activity, but he also enjoys playing music, transcendent nature, collecting wild edibles, gardening, and wanderlust. As a PMF, he looks forward to pursuing his interests in a professional capacity.



Torey Powell

*Partnership and Community Outreach Coordinator
Chugach National Forest, Supervisor's Office*

Torey Powell is currently serving as a Partnership and Community Outreach Coordinator on the Chugach National Forest in Anchorage, Alaska. He received his Master of Social Work degree from University of Houston and his B.A. in Communications and Public Relations from the Concordia University Texas in Austin, Texas. Torey is a social worker with a focus on community building and community engagement. Before coming to the Forest Service, Torey was involved in the strategic planning for a Houston based nonprofit, helping to establish a comprehensive community identity for an economically challenged community. Additionally, Torey served as a policy analyst for the Texas House of Representatives. Torey is currently serving in the United States Army Reserve and is a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom Afghanistan where he received multiple commendations for his service. Torey's interests include, running, outdoor exploration and collecting snazzy socks! As part of the PMF program, Torey hopes to weave his unique social work background into his current and future positions and looks forward to the unique opportunities that the PMF program offers.



Matthews R. Smith

*Financial Policy Accountant, CFO
Washington D.C. Office*

Matt has lived throughout the Mid-Atlantic but mostly grew up between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, PA. After high school, he briefly attended a state college before enlisting in the US Army as an active duty infantryman stationed out of Fort Drum, NY. Matt served with honors under Bravo Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division. He is proud to have earned an Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB) during his time there. After the service, Matt spent his undergraduate years studying political science and American studies at the Pennsylvania State University Capital College. While there, he enjoyed playing Division III men's volleyball. Matt was a member of Chi Gamma Iota, a national scholastic honor society for veterans, and was also a member of Epsilon Alpha Kappa, the national American studies honor society. While attending Penn State, he worked part-time as a production/shipping clerk in a warehouse and nights as a local high school football coach. Matt did his graduate work in community and regional planning at the School of Environmental Design at Temple University. While attending Temple, he studied how the economic impact of Harrisburg's financial troubles affected the greater Central PA region. Matt also gained professional experience in financial management and policy analysis by working full-time as a financial correspondent for a major Medicare contractor and later as a compliance manager and housing coordinator at one of Pennsylvania's four health councils that work under the Governor's office. He also volunteered his time with the Harrisburg Rain Barrel Coalition, City Beautiful 2.0, and co-founded the annual Harrisburg Trash to Treasure Festival. Matt is excited for the opportunity to work with the Forest Service and to combine his professional background with his academic pursuits. He is also excited to now be living in Maryland with his wife, Amber, and their son, AJ.



Melissa Steward

NEPA Planner

Mark Twain National Forest

Melissa Steward, a St. Louis native, is excited to return to her home state and join the Mark Twain National Forest as a NEPA Planner. She is particularly appreciative of this southerly opportunity in the Ozark Highlands after having lived exclusively along a 500 mile stretch of Interstate 70. Melissa received her B.S. in biology education from the University of Missouri in 2004 and her M.S. in biology from Purdue University in 2012. She funded a portion of her graduate studies as a National Science Foundation GK-12 STEM Fellow, dedicating a portion of each week as a visiting scientist in a high school classroom. Before joining the Forest Service, Melissa enjoyed over a decade teaching and conducting biological research for the non-profit sector. Her passion has always been making discoveries and sharing them with the public. She has presented findings at international meetings, taught at various levels, and published with distinctive collaborators. Interacting with diverse audiences has always brought energy and innovation to her work. She finds it to be an incredibly rewarding and humbling opportunity to work for the national forest that she grew up appreciating. Melissa enjoys spending time with her husband and pets, relaxing and playing outdoors, traveling, learning new cooking techniques and sneaking science into everyday conversations. While her varied career has always focused on serving people, she looks forward to doing so with a new mission that also includes caring for the land. As a natural-born Steward, she couldn't imagine a more suitable duty.



Tim Stroope

NEPA Coordinator

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests

Tim joined the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forest in June as the forest NEPA Coordinator. Prior to joining the Forest Service he worked as a post-doctoral research assistant at IIHR – Hydroscience and Engineering, a unit of the University of Iowa's College of Engineering. Tim worked at IIHR after earning a PhD in Geoscience from the University of Iowa. His PhD dissertation examined the effects of the 1997, northern Colorado, Routt-Divide Blowdown on watershed sediment production. During graduate school Tim also spent time with the USGS as a student intern. These experiences have provided him with a broad environmental science knowledge base that includes geomorphology, geochemistry, hydrogeology and forest hydrology. Combining this knowledge with the unique opportunities that the PMF program provides, Tim looks forward to a rewarding career with the Forest Service protecting and enhancing water resources. A native of Des Moines, Iowa, Tim lived in Iowa City and Denver prior to moving to the western slope of Colorado where he spends his free time hiking, fishing and stargazing away from the big city lights. He has travelled extensively both in and out of the United States and looks forward to future adventures both home and abroad.



Veronica R. Van Hulle

Community Connections Specialist

Coronado National Forest

Veronica Van Hulle, originally from Sterling Heights, Mich., is currently serving as the Community Connections Specialist on the Coronado National Forest. Veronica earned her bachelor's degree in marketing from Michigan State University, where she had the opportunity to study international dimensions of marketing in France, Belgium, and Italy. Veronica earned a spot in the Spartan Marching Band, allowing her to travel to and perform at a total of four bowl games. While completing her bachelor's degree, Veronica worked as a field manager for the environmental nonprofit Clean Water

Action, rallying her community to support key conservation legislation. After graduation, Veronica began work with the Michigan State University Federal Credit Union, where she rose quickly - but ultimately made the decision to pursue her passion for public service by earning her master's in public administration from Wayne State University, specializing in nonprofit policy and management. While earning her graduate degree, Veronica worked with many Detroit area nonprofit organizations writing grants and advising administration. She also worked as a patient rights advisor for Macomb County Community Mental health. Veronica was selected for an inducted in to Pi Alpha Alpha, the national honors society for public administration. She is excited to bring together the Forest's partner organizations to help leverage resources to achieve mutually desired goals. Veronica is a loyal Spartan, and spends her free time with the Tucson chapter of the Michigan State Alumni Association cheering on the green and white, and volunteering on behalf of the university. She is also enjoying exploring the unique Tucson landscape with her boyfriend and miniature dachshund.



Amarina Wuenschel

Ecologist

Rocky Mountain Regional Office

Just prior to coming on with the Forest Service, Amarina was a spatial analyst for the Great Basin Landscape Conservation Cooperative where she worked with an inter-agency group of ecologists and land managers on sage-grouse conservation strategies. These projects culminated in a Forest Service General Technical Report and a Bureau of Land Management driven landscape-scale management prioritization effort. Amarina originally started with the Forest Service as a

seasonal with the Sawtooth National Recreation Area while a biology student at the University of Idaho. After graduating, she returned to the Sawtooths to work in the recreation, wilderness and range programs. During off-seasons, she studied canyon tree frogs in the Grand Canyon, sampled fish hauls aboard fishing vessels in the Bering Sea, and measured aquatic invertebrates in Portland, Oregon bioswells. She also spent two years in Sheridan, Wyoming as an environmental consultant. Amarina did her graduate (MS) work in rangeland ecology at the University of Wyoming where she studied greater sage-grouse habitat management. As an ecologist for the Forest Service, Amarina assists with developing approaches for meeting ecological integrity requirements under the 2012 Planning Rule. Amarina feels very fortunate to be a PMF with the agency both because of the strength of the Forest Service PMF community and because of the wide-ranging developmental opportunities available to PMFs within the Forest Service.



A Career Working for the Great Outdoors

"Where conflicting interests must be reconciled, the question will always be decided from the standpoint of the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run."

Gifford Pinchot
First Chief, Forest Service
1905-1910

