



Cultivating the Future
of Environmental Education
Environmental Education
of New Mexico

Meet the 2021 Fellows

Environmental Education of New Mexico Fellowship



Tiffany Abbott holds a bachelor's in Elementary Education with a minor in Music and found environmental education quite by accident; her first experience as a Camp BioPark teacher changed everything. She has seven years of experience connecting kids to nature via the Albuquerque BioPark, Sea Life Park of Hawaii, and Sol Forest School. In her youth, you could find her climbing the red rocks and hogback of Gallup, NM. Since becoming a parent (her three joys are her boys), and relocating to Edgewood, NM, you can find her outside with her kids tending the chickens and goats and loving the lessons and connections that

spontaneously occur when you let nature take the lead. Tiffany is ready to turn her enthusiasm, professional and lived experiences, and her love of nature into action! She believes that collaboration is the key to creating a more inclusive system in which all NM kids are supported and have equitable access to the benefits and rewards that come from deep connections with nature.

Shelby Bazan is a native Burqueña and has a great passion for the city, land, and culture. Shelby has a degree in Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology from the University of NM and is currently an Educator for the Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP) in Albuquerque, NM. One of her biggest joys is seeing students light up when they see their first porcupine or smell the yerba mansa. In her spare time, she loves crafting, hiking, birding, herping (looking for reptiles/amphibians), listening to music, and volunteering with Latino Outdoors. Shelby is looking forward to joining the EENM fellowship to further build connections with her community and strengthen her passion for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion for NM students, particularly in the outdoors.



Samuel Villarreal Catanach is from and grew up in P'osuwaegheh Owingeh (the Pueblo of Pojoaque). He is of both Indigenous and Hispanic heritage and comes from family with deep roots in northern New Mexico. He holds a master's degree in American Indian Studies from Arizona State University, is the eldest of seven siblings, and is the proud parent of a young son. His current role is that of inaugural director of the Pueblo of Pojoaque Tewa Language Department. Samuel's interest in the EENM Fellowship and *Every Kid, Every Day, Every Way* stem from his desire to explore and create opportunities for others to learn about and engage in the interconnected and interdependent web of culture, language, and land. His on-going goal is to continue to give back to his Pueblo and the greater Indigenous community of the southwest and beyond.

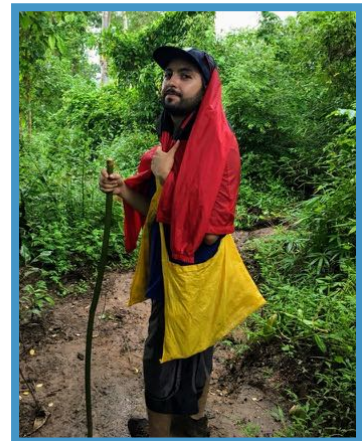


Tanya Cole is a mother of two boys in Albuquerque's South Valley. She is a gardener, community radio DJ, and Program Assistant at the NM Local News Fund. Examining and understanding the root causes that may prohibit equal access to environmental education for all NM kids is a key approach for the implementation of lasting positive change into the future. Outdoor education and learning can only deepen the relationship to the land and community as well as uplift spirits and well-being. Helping to further the mission of *Every Kid, Every Day, Every Way* will improve land stewardship and appreciation, as well as help to better understand ecosystems, microclimates, biodiversity and sustainability, for all involved. She looks forward to taking part in this very important work.

Heather Conyngham, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist who works within multiple systems, including the Albuquerque VA Medical Center (inpatient psychiatry) and the Mind Research Network (supervising clinical psychologist on a NIDA-funded research grant). She is looking forward to working as a consultant/clinician with State of the Heart, a methadone clinic that incorporates holistic care into substance use disorder treatment. Dr. Conyngham moved to Albuquerque in 1999, where she is raising her two children. As a mother, she interacts with other systems in Albuquerque, including Animal Welfare and Animal Humane Association and the NM Museum of Natural History. As a psychologist, she is particularly drawn to this fellowship and its foundations. Dr. Conyngham believes an understanding of the natural environment and our place in it is foundational to healing for a wide variety of medical/mental health issues, such as trauma history and substance use.



Jesus Godinez is the school garden program coordinator at La Semilla Food Center, based in Anthony, NM. As a program coordinator, Jesus collaborates with school staff, volunteers, students, and members of other organizations to ensure that school gardens are safe and inclusive spaces where all the members of the community can cultivate their connection with Earth. Jesus strives to build a more equitable and just food system that cares for the earth in collaboration with other members of the community with a shared vision. He is a Fronterizo, with deep roots embedded in the binational, tri-state community of the Paso Del Norte region, excited to be part of this fellowship, and looking forward to continuing to learn about outdoor education.





Morika Vorenberg Hensley is a product of O’Gah P’Ogeh/ Haashuk/Santa Fe and Taos, and she is currently the Director of Planning, Education, and Restoration for the Santa Fe Watershed Association. She is a lifelong lover of wild beings, sacred landscapes, systems thinking, and terrible puns, devoted to discovering and embodying a path of place-based ecocultural stewardship. After earning her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Environmental Sciences from Emory University and spending time in India as a Fulbright-Nehru student researcher, Mori made her way home to NM. She is deeply grateful for the opportunity to learn constantly from the land, water, and beings around her, and for the chance to share this learning process with students of all ages.

LuAnn Kilday has been an educator with the state of NM for over 22 years. She has been a park ranger and game and fish officer and is currently an education coordinator at the NM Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces, NM. Throughout her career she has shared her knowledge about the Rio Grande Bosque, NM’s wildlife, and the history of agriculture with children of all ages. LuAnn’s current passion is fiber art and encourages the NM’s youth to connect to their rich heritage by learning about Navajo Churro wool and the process of turning it into fabric. The more we share our passions about the outdoors and our natural resources the better chance for future generations to appreciate it. LuAnn enjoys spinning and weaving, hiking, camping, gardening, bird watching, hunting, and spending time with her other half, Victor, and their six dogs.



Andrew Lescht loves people and the outdoors. With a BA in Anthropology and a passion for the outdoors, he worked for many years as a field archaeologist, environmental educator, and youth corps leader. These experiences, and a desire to become a classroom teacher, inspired him to return to school to gain an MA. in elementary education. Andrew is currently the 3rd / 4th grade teacher at Santa Fe School for the Arts & Sciences. His classroom experience also includes teaching in Ecuador, and Grand Junction and Aurora, CO. Andrew is dedicated to connecting his students to their environment by engaging them in hands-on inquiry. His experience working with kids in the outdoors has led him to witness the power outdoor learning has to spark students’ imaginations and

interests in science. He is honored to participate in the fellowship to support the positive effect for every child in NM of implementing *Every Kid, Every Day, Every Way*.



Yvette Martinez lives in Santa Fe, NM and has been a science educator for over 20 years in public charter and district schools, and is currently teaching high school science at the Santa Fe Indian School. Yvette is a native to the region. Born in El Paso, TX, raised there until the age of 7, then it was Tucson, Houston and finally Los Alamos for grades 7-12. After graduating a Hilltopper, she attended NMSU and graduated with a B.S. in Biology in 1991. After a stint in graduate school at WA State University studying everything from biochemistry to evolutionary ecology, Yvette decided the bigger problem to work on was educating to save our natural environment and resources. Moving back to NM brought her to the NMMNH&S where she first learned of EENM and participated in outdoor, environmental and informal science education. Yvette is enthusiastically looking forward to collaborating with like-minded colleagues to achieve the shared vision of EENM!

Florence Miera, LCSW is a Clinical Social Worker for Federal Programs at Taos Municipal Schools and is the homeless liaison for the district. She also works for Taos Behavioral Health where she and the team focus on empowering the most vulnerable students and their families. She enjoys the outdoor learning and exploring new ideas to support all students, pre-k- 12th grade using equine therapy, art therapy, and holistic practices using outdoor time to find new ways to self sooth, self -regulate and find inner peace. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, family time and watching her grandchildren laugh, play and grow.



Lisa J. Myhre is the Director of the Digital Arts and Technology Academy in Albuquerque and believes access and opportunity to explore the geological and natural resources of NM is an essential component of each student's journey of self-identity. Lisa wants their school to reinforce the connection between learning and exploring the outdoors, allowing students to see their world through a different lens and become stewards of our land. The opportunity to connect, network, and collaborate with others to build and create these experiences for all students is an exciting endeavor. Lisa has had the privilege of living overseas and engaging in outdoor experiences with students, such as hiking and skiing in the Alps, sailing in England, kayaking in northern Germany, and climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. Lisa has seen first-hand how these experiences build student's self-confidence and transform their perspectives.



Hayley Pedrick is a teacher at Bosque School in Albuquerque, NM. She currently teaches middle school humanities, having taught English and Spanish for grades 6-12 for the past 10 years. She holds a Master's in Latin American studies from UNM, and in addition to teaching, finds avenues to express her love of physical movement, hiking and camping, and vegetarian cooking. She loves exploring the lakes, springs and trails of the state of NM and joins EENM with an eagerness to learn about and contribute to the long-term incorporation of hands-on outdoor and environmental education in K-12 settings. Hayley also firmly believes in programming for families and individuals to feel

safe and equipped to enjoy the wilds of NM.

Kate Porterfield is an administrator for the Wildcat Blooms Committee supporting the garden at Wilson Middle School in Albuquerque. The Committee's goals are to create an exceptional outdoor learning environment for all students and to produce food to share with the school and neighborhood. Kate has been an organizer and has produced community events since the 1970's. She grew up in Southeast Asia and the US and has traveled and lived in a number of different cultures. After being a college dropout until her mid 30's Kate took an undergraduate degree in Psychology and Biology from George Washington University and has a Physician Assistant degree from Philadelphia University. She is a Fellow with the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars program. Kate has worked with the Indian Health Service on the Navajo Nation, School Based Health and with Casa de Salud community clinic in the South Valley.



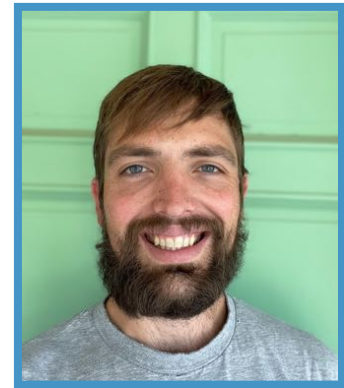
Matthew Salas is a student at the Native American Community Academy and is from the Pueblo of Zia. He believes that outdoor learning is important because you get to see the beauty of nature and the environment. The plants, animals, and landscape are what makes it more interesting. You get to learn about what makes the outdoors the outdoors and the resources it provides. It's also important to learn about the outdoor environment, like the effects and solutions. Youth, such as himself, should be more exposed to outdoor learning so they can learn, explore, and get involved.



Susan Schipull is the coordinator and garden elective teacher for the Wildcat Blooms garden at Wilson Middle School in Albuquerque. She also maintains the hydroponics system and co-sponsors a summer garden internship for garden students. Susan grew up on a farm in Iowa and always enjoyed helping on the farm and taking care of animals as a kid. She now experiences nature by biking, hiking, running and fishing. Susan began teaching 30+ years ago in southern Arizona as a high school biology/chemistry teacher. She has also been an At-Risk Coordinator and an administrator during her career. Teaching the garden elective has brought Susan full circle back to her agricultural roots.

She believes that children should put down their devices, get outside and explore the natural world every day. She has witnessed how a garden can provide opportunities for students to learn, make discoveries, self-regulate, and find their strengths.

Sebastiaan Stokhof De Jong grew up in Santa Fe, NM and after living in Bozeman, MT for 7 years, settled in Tiwa country (Albuquerque) to set roots and focus on environmental education. Sebastiaan teaches Biology and Environmental Science at the Native American Community Academy to juniors and seniors. Real learning happens as a result of developing an emotional connection to one's community and environment, and it is imperative for urban youth to learn and develop outside and with their hands. Tremendous inequities still exist in NM in the education system and in access to land-based environmental education. Sebastiaan is passionate about developing indigenized land-based curriculum, is starting a gardening project to provide free gardens for families in our community, and is thrilled to contribute to this ever-growing community of EENM visionaries working to provide equitable access to environmental education to all New Mexican youth.



Bridget Tam is from Ruidoso, NM and currently lives and works in Albuquerque as the Marketing/Publication Specialist for the USDA Forest Service. She proudly serves as the data steward for the State of Outdoor and Environmental Learning (SOEL) and fell in love with conservation education while working with the Master Naturalists at the Missouri Department of Conservation Cape Girardeau Nature Center while receiving her degree in culture and communication from Southeast Missouri State University. She has over 20 years of volunteer experience ranging from Big Brothers Big Sisters

and Intercambio de Comunidades in Colorado to Peace Corps Paraguay and the Northern NM Master Naturalists. Bridget is passionate about serving her community and can't wait to learn from and contribute to this incredible group of EENM Fellows.



Zoe Wadkins has been facilitating and collaborating on environmental education programs since 2002. She currently serves as Education Manager at Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP) delving into the intersectionality of community science and education in Albuquerque. Excited to explore the desert, she joins the EENM Fellowship having spent her youth immersed in the tidepools and forests of the Pacific Northwest. After witnessing the profundity that is fostered through an appreciation for the natural world, Zoe has sought a path that fuses natural curiosity with lifelong learning

and children's laughter. Zoe holds a master's degree in Environmental Education, Non-Profit Management and Northwest Natural History from the North Cascades Institute and Western Washington University. When she's not working as BEMP's Education Manager, Zoe is likely deep in thought about bioluminescence, carving spoons, or howling at the moon with her love and their four-legged fur babies.