Rafael Salgado
Executive Director, Cal-Wood Education Center

It could be said that Rafael Salgado walks in dual worlds functioning as a crucial bridge between two countries, two languages, and two cultures. His lifetime of exceptional accomplishments as an environmental educator is achieved through his diverse experiences, humble approach, genuine enthusiasm, and driving spirit.

Originally from Mexico, Rafael grew up immersed in the natural environment and helping his family with farming and raising livestock. His career began conducting the first field research project in Mexico studying black bears alongside his professional mentor, Dr. Julio Carrera. Fondly referring to him as the “Mexican Aldo Leopold” their work together ultimately lead to the creation of a national park.

Rafael’s career progressed into developing environmental education (EE) curriculum and training teachers and volunteers in its implementation, in Mexico, Texas, and Colorado. Today, at Cal-Wood Education Center, Rafael has become a catalyst for helping underserved populations including low-income students and Spanish-speaking families to discover how beautiful and accessible nature can be to them. As a native Spanish speaker, Rafael has a special ability and deep commitment to engage our Latino community of Colorado providing experiences to create appreciation for and understanding about the environment.

Rafael’s most recent endeavor—a Latino Family Camp Program—provides an overnight camping program for multi-generational Latino families. Since 2014 this highly successful program, engaging many partners, has touched almost 1,000 youth and their families, directly impacting the civic, educational, and cultural aspects of the Latino community. Again, acting as a bridge, he is providing traditional EE opportunities to diverse and underserved populations.

Locally, nationally, and internationally, Rafael has operated as a leader exemplifying the best of EE and working to improve the field of EE. The many distinctive awards he has received, as well as his mentorship of other local and national organizations are a testament to his vision of and commitment for an environmentally literate world.

Georg Ek, 1995
George A. “Buddy” Wilson, 1996*
Glen A. Hinshaw, 1997
CeCe Forget, 1998*
Enda Mills Kiley, 1998*
Roxanne Brickell-Reardon, 1999
Elizabeth Gardener, 2000
Oakleigh Thorne II, 2001

Mary Ann Bonnell, 2002
Shawna Crocker, 2003
Mike Way, 2004
Wendy MacPhail-Brigham, 2005
Dave Sutherland, 2005
Wendy Hanophy, 2006
Raymond Tschillard, 2007
Dave Van Manen, 2008

Patrick Emery, 2009
Lisa Evans, 2009
George Wallace, 2010
Marcella Wells, 2011
Cyndra Dietz, 2012
Mark De Gregorio, 2013
Jeff Brigham, 2014
Dan Parker, 2015

*In Memoriam
## Program and Educator Awards for Excellence

### Advancing Environmental Literacy Award
**Hub Program, Alliance for Sustainable Colorado**
Supports a collaborative sustainability community by bringing together thought leaders and promoting learning through more than 300 events in 2016.

### Outstanding Environmental Educator Award
**James Garcia, Denver Zoological Foundation**
Reaches underserved audiences through inclusive programs and involves students in STEM education and technology to work on international conservation issues.

### Innovative Environmental Education Program Award
**Pollinators in Peril, The Butterfly Pavilion**
Teaching and empowering learners in Colorado and beyond about the importance of pollinators through interactive, real-time video conference.

### Innovative Environmental Education Program Award
**Wooly: Landfills Explained, Pitkin County Solid Waste Center**
Uses mobile application technology to teach about how personal waste impacts the environment through videos, scientific experiments, career cards and fun cartoons.

### Innovative Environmental Education Program Award
**Green Star School Program, Aurora Public Schools**
Created “living laboratories” in more than 60 schools where students learn about real-time energy use and conservation, explore real-world problems and build skills.

### Innovative Environmental Education Program Award
**Sustainability Incentive Program, Douglas County Public Schools**
Financial incentives to reduce school impacts on the environment through student-led projects ranging from energy conservation, waste and idle reduction to school gardens.

### Outstanding Environmental Youth Leadership Award
**Get Outdoors Colorado Youth Research Team**
Angel Bujanda, Samuel Frykholm, Joe Koch, Samantha Montes, Brayhan Reveles, and Yesenia Martinez worked together to understand how places, programs, career pathways and a central hub could increase youth access to

### Outstanding Retiring Educator Recognition
**Betsy Leonard**
President’s Award

Luis Benitez
Director, Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office

Over the course of a decade, Luis Benitez has emerged as one of the most inspirational adventurers, busiest professional guides and most experienced leadership consultants in the world. In July 2015, Benitez became the founding Director for the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office, an agency tasked with bolstering the state’s $34 billion outdoor sector. He brings a strong conviction that not only is education and workforce training critical components of this work, but also in the cultivation of the next generation of adventurers.

The importance of education was rooted early in his career when Benitez served as the Rocky Mountain regional director of Outward Bound Professional, and was responsible for conducting courses in various mountaineering/climbing/skiing techniques, all with the fundamentals of leadership, communication, and problem solving that make up the core of the Outward Bound curriculum. He has also designed leadership development programs for Vail Resorts in Eagle County as the resort operator’s head of talent management and served as a trustee in Eagle, where he advocated for the growth of the town’s singletrack network and helped plan a proposed whitewater playpark in a town park on the Eagle River.

Throughout his career, Luis has summited the top of the famed “Seven Summits” a cumulative 32 times, including being a six-time summiteer of Mt. Everest. Between managing expeditions on some of the most remote peaks in the world, Benitez works to tie the lessons available from the mountains and carry them back to the everyday challenges of life and business.

2016 Certified Environmental Educators

Master Certified
Debbie Bangs
Maggie Kehlenbeck

Certified Environmental Educators
Jeremy Becker
Genevieve Buzan-Dansereau
Aiden Dempsey
Barrett Donovan

Julianne Gagnon
Nick Kramer
Sharon Reuth
Helena Thatcher

Thank you to the 2016 Awards Committee and Event Sponsors

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Tim Sandsmark
Kim Weiss

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