



2020
Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education
Board of Directors Profiles

Chris Aaby (2019-2021)- Chris Aaby is a long time resident of Colorado Springs and is an active supporter of environmental sustainability. Chris was born in Norway and spent his summers there hiking and exploring while growing up. Chris has been at Catamount Institute for over 7 years. Chris started as Marketing Manager and was promoted to Executive Director in 2015. Chris works hard every day so the education staff have the resources they need to work with over 8,000 youth each year. Additionally, Chris serves on the board of the Peak Alliance for a Sustainable Future, is a member of the Southeastern Colorado Environmental Education Leadership Council, and is on the regional council for Project Angel Heart. Chris was named a 2017 Colorado Springs Business Journal Rising Star, has received the Colorado Springs Independent Inclusion Award, and received the 2018 Leadership Pikes Peak Community Inspiration Award. In his free time, he enjoys baking cupcakes, hiking, and perfecting his photography skills.

Melanie Armstrong (2016-2021) - Melanie moved to Colorado in the summer of 2015 to join the faculty in the Master in Environmental Management (MEM) program at Western Colorado State University. She works as the MEM's Public Lands Coordinator and teaches courses in environmental policy and politics, skills for resource management, and environmental studies. Prior to taking this position, she worked for nearly 15 years with the National Park Service, most recently supervising the interpretation and education activities in the Island in the Sky District of Canyonlands National Park. In her NPS career, she was a certifier with the Interpretive Development Program, Eppley coach, interpretive trainer, and part of a national committee to innovate new platforms for resource education and science. While pursuing her PhD in American Studies at the University of New Mexico, she worked with UNM's Natural High Program, an outreach program aimed to teach alternatives to at risk behavior through experiential and environmental education. Melanie's academic pursuits have involved studying questions of nature and how our ideas about the environment are culturally constructed. In her position at Western and through involvement with CAEE, she aims to explore the role of higher education in supporting environmental educators, leaders and decision makers, as well as the unique ways EE works to create more just and sustainable futures for residents of my new home state and all people. Melanie's interest in serving on the CAEE Board stems from the creative and intellectual excitement she has found working on a national NPS committee to review the agency's programs for environmental education and interpretation. In the coming years, she would like to see CAEE engage in a dialogue with institutions of higher education about the potential of EE/university partnerships to impact both the EE field and communities. She is excited about CAEE's interest in expanding provider services around the state.

Natalie Brower-Kirton (2016-2021)- Natalie is currently the Environmental Education and Outreach Program Manager for Aurora Water. She is a Colorado Native and has a bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado in Environmental Conservation and Theater. As a Sr. Water Conservation Specialist with Aurora Water for twenty years, Natalie had the opportunity to develop and coordinate a wide range of environmental education and outreach programs from Xeriscape Seminars and Conservation Rebates to the City of Aurora's Drought Management Plan. In addition she developed the Aurora Water Department's award winning Youth Education Programs, which include school presentations for K-12 students, assemblies, field trip experiences, an outdoor water camp for high school students, teacher professional development workshops and the Aurora Youth Water Festival focused on water conservation and water pollution prevention. Most recently her work has culminated in the creation of a new division within Aurora Water specifically focused on Environmental Education and Outreach. Her creativity, collaboration and enthusiasm for water efficiency and protection continues to grow the education and outreach programs at Aurora Water with the Education team reaching over 13,000 Aurora students and over 400 adult learners last year. CAEE has provided Natalie with support,

training and networking opportunities that have been extremely valuable in creating programs and she would like to have the opportunity to give back to the organization and further its mission. As CAEE continues to partner with organizations such as the Colorado Foundation for Water Education, Natalie is interested in fostering these connection by representing water education in Colorado as part of the board of directors. She would like to see CAEE expand its membership to education experts in positions with organizations that may be nontraditional participants.

Chris Cohen (2019-2021)- Chris first came to Colorado in 2008 to participate in the Gore Range Natural Science School's Graduate Fellowship program through which she earned her M.S. in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources from Colorado State University. Prior to this graduate experience, Chris gained a wide variety of experiences teaching and managing at nature centers and science schools across the country including WI, CT, WA, PA and DC. Chris served as the Rock Bottom Ranch Programs Manager at the Aspen Center for Environmental Studies and recently rejoined the Walking Mountains (formerly Gore Range Natural Science School) team as Youth Programs Director in 2018. Through this position, Chris oversees a wide variety of programming including Field Science Programs, Summer Camps, Sowing Seeds Garden Programs, and Girls in Science and STEM after-school programs. Chris also plays an active role in the Graduate Fellowship Program at Walking Mountains Science Center. She loves to teach about the natural world and hopes to inspire students of all ages to become stewards of their own backyards. Chris has been involved with CAEE for over 10 years and is a Master Certified Environmental Educator. She brings experience on a variety of non-profit boards as well as a wealth of experience with special events, marketing, digital media and photography. Chris has been actively involved in the CAEE Northwest EE Leadership Council and the Western Slope Conference planning committee. Chris hopes to bring her interest in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to the CAEE Board in order to forward state-wide initiatives toward engaging diverse audiences in environmental education.

Jenifer Doane (2018-2020)- Jenifer Doane is an established communications professional with 15 years of experience in public relations and marketing. She has successfully marketed small businesses, nonprofits and government agencies. Throughout her career she has established a reputation for being extremely innovative and passionate. Jenifer's proven track record of building partnerships and coalitions among businesses, government agencies, community groups and the media have allowed her to maximize limited resources and successfully execute communication goals. She combines strategy, experience and evaluation to effectively create awareness of and build affinity for an organization and its mission. Jenifer has a Bachelor's degree in Journalism from Colorado State University and Masters of Public Administration from the University of Colorado Denver. Born and raised in Colorado, Jenifer is passionate about our natural resources and enjoys the outdoors with her family. She has worked at the Butterfly Pavilion, City of Golden and Colorado's Office of Economic Development. Jenifer brings a strong understanding of communications, marketing and public relations to CAEE to assist with spreading our mission and promoting events and programs. She is interested in helping grow CAEE's media outreach.

Robert Galin (2018-2020)- Robert Galin is both an interpreter and ranger with Colorado Parks and Wildlife and an associate professor with the University of New Mexico at Gallup. As an interpreter/ranger for national and state parks, college educator and journalist, Robert works to connect people to their roles and responsibilities in the natural world. When possible, Robert helps students and park visitors link with their own cultural and historical roots to better understand how they as individuals and leaders of their communities can be pro-active in protecting the environment. Robert helps students create a community hydroponic garden, combining modern technology with traditional Native American practices and beliefs. As part of CAEE's board, Robert hopes to influence other EE leaders in recognizing and developing cross-cultural awareness and cooperation from a non-paternalistic position. Robert hopes to help CAEE work with indigenous communities in developing the EE (and CAEE) leaders of the future.

Dele Johnson (2018-2020)- Dele Johnson is a Colorado Native and a long time environmental and outdoor enthusiast. Dele's experience as an environmental educator dates back to his high school days, and more recently as a youth program leader at Groundwork Denver after graduating from MSU Denver. Dele has

volunteered with CAEE as part of the 5 year EE Capacity Building Grant and is currently working with CAEE on the EE360 initiative. Dele is currently a Communications Associate at The Denver Foundation and looking forward to progressing through his career as a nonprofit professional working to make Denver and greater metro area a better place for all who live here. Dele hopes to help CAEE increase it's online presence and move the organization's communication of our important work into the modern age of technology and communication.

Sarah Johnson (2015-2020)- Sarah R. Johnson, founder of Wild Rose Education, works to advance place-based education and civic engagement through authentic learning experiences connecting people to the landscape to foster their own personal land and water ethic. She believes in democracy, loves wild places, and strives to create opportunities for people to contribute to their future world through participation in public life. Sarah is committed to continual professional learning and utilizing innovative teaching techniques and best practices throughout her work. Sarah earned her MAEd: Natural Science and Environmental Education from Hamline University, St. Paul, MN, and holds a B.S. Biology from Missouri State University, Springfield, MO. Her graduate research involved case studies of science teacher professional development programs at biological field stations across the country. Sarah's background includes watershed education, outreach, facilitation, environmental education, wilderness trip leading, and interpretation. She, a leader in the field of EE, builds inclusive networks of colleagues committed to excellence. She has served in leadership on the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education board of directors since 2015. Sarah has been based in western Colorado working to protect rivers and public lands since 2004 where she enjoys playing outside during all seasons, gardening, and making music. Learn more about Sarah at www.WildRoseEducation.com/about

Erika Meyer (2019-2021)-Erika joined Great Outdoors Colorado in 2016 as the Youth Initiatives Program Officer and works to implement the Inspire and School Yard Initiatives. Before joining GOCO, Erika worked in education in a variety of roles: she was the program coordinator at the Advocacy Lab in NYC and worked at Get Smart Schools through the AmeriCorps VISTA program. Erika received her bachelor's in Political Science from Marymount Manhattan College and was a 2018 Rising Leaders fellow with Youth Outside. She was born and raised in Colorado and cares deeply about social justice and environmental justice issues.

Martin Ogle (2016-2021)- Martin Ogle received a B.S. and M.S. degrees in wildlife biology from Colorado State University (1982) and Virginia Tech (1984), respectively. He had a 27 year career as Chief Naturalist for the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, 1985-2012. Martin was awarded the 2010 Krupsaw Award for NonTraditional Teaching by the Washington Academy of Sciences for outstanding teaching in informal and nonacademic settings. Martin served on the boards of environmental, history and sustainability organizations in Arlington, VA, including as chair of the board for Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment. A proponent and educator of Gaia Theory for almost 30 years, he organized a major conference on the subject at George Mason University in 2006. Martin received the 2012 Arlington Green Patriot Award for outstanding work in sustainability. After retiring from the No. Va. Regional Park Authority, Martin moved to Louisville, CO with his wife, Lisa, and his twins, Cyrus and Linnea and started his own education and consulting business, Entrepreneurial Earth, LLC. Martin was born and raised in South Korea. He would like to help CAEE continue to expand its relevance for environmental educators and the relevance of EE to society. He would like to expand the use of systems approaches in both the subject matter and process of EE. Martin would like to support the board in move effectively ahead with its mission by helping with fundraising ideas, soliciting support from the communities of EE practitioners and through collaborating with business and municipalities.

Laurel Olson (2016-2021) – Laurel Olson is the Manager of School Programs at Denver Botanic Gardens. She has been with the Gardens since May of 2011. Laurel manages several school programs at the Gardens including the collaborative programs. Laurel's background is in environmental education, she enjoys spending time outdoors and working with youth. Prior to working with the Gardens, Laurel taught elementary science in the Denver area. Laurel has experience working collaboratively with Denver area nonprofits in science programming and believes her experience, professional network and management skills will allow her to be successful in promoting the mission of CAEE. She would like to support CAEE's initiative to maintain a strong

and relevant presence in Colorado education, continue to broaden CAEE's network, and broaden the scope of EE to reach the families and communities we serve.

Michelle Schrote, CPA (2020-2022) – Michelle and her husband moved to Colorado in 2015. She is currently the Finance Manager at Elbert County Government, and prior to her career in government finance, Michelle focused her accounting career in taxes and audit. Her love and passion for agriculture and the outdoors, as well as her professional expertise in finance and budget, is what brought her to CAEE. Michelle and her family live on a small ranch in Elbert County, where there is plenty of space to enjoy their hobbies and practice sustainable land management. Michelle's favorite pastimes include barbecuing with friends and family, hiking, horseback riding, and taking in the Colorado sunsets from their front porch.