

HIGH MEADOWS FELLOWSHIP

*Winter 2015
Newsletter*



Welcoming two new High Meadows host organizations

New this year! The Wilderness Society

The Wilderness Society is the newest addition to the organizations participating in the High Meadows program, offering a fellowship position for the first time beginning in 2014. TWS is a national conservation organization that protects public lands and inspires Americans to care about wild places.

Based in Washington, D.C., with regional offices across the country, TWS works to preserve wildlands, designate wilderness and other types of protected land, advocate for respon-

sible public lands management, and connect the public to the wild places that are a part of our national legacy.

Partnerships and combined efforts with the federal land management agencies, policymakers, local organizations, and other stakeholders help make The Wilderness Society an effective voice in environmental efforts and a leader in conservation.

The existing fellowship position in Wildlands and Forest Policy will be joined by an Energy and Climate Policy position beginning in 2015.

New next year! Real Food Generation

The 2015-2017 cohort of High Meadows fellows will include a fellow place at the Real Food Generation in Cambridge, MA for the very first time. The Real Food Generation supports the Real Food Challenge, which aims to shift \$1 billion of existing university budgets towards local, sustainable, and community-based sources.

This newest fellow position will support student food activists at universities around the country in implementing their commitment to “Real Food” and will design systems to track progress.

Current High Meadows Fellows

William Barrett, Development Fellow, Climate Central, Princeton, NJ
Andrea Chu, Corporate Partnership Fellow, Environmental Defense Fund, Boston, MA
Stu Fram, Environmental Philanthropy Fellow, High Meadows Fund, Middlebury, VT
Rafael Grillo, International Climate and Air Fellow, Environmental Defense Fund, Washington D.C.
Heather Hammel, Communications and Marketing Fellow, The Food Project, Boston, MA
Katherine Hsia, Carbon Market Analyst & Research Fellow, Environmental Defense Fund, San Francisco, CA
Julia Marsh, Wildlands and Forest Policy Fellow, The Wilderness Society, Washington D.C.
Dana Miller, Terrestrial Carbon Policy Fellow, Environmental Defense Fund, Washington D.C.
Rachel Neil, Energy Policy Fellow, Environmental Defense Fund, San Francisco, CA
Greta Shum, Mutlimedia Journalism Fellow, Climate Central, Princeton, NJ
Amy Tourgee, Oceans Fellow, Environmental Defense Fund, San Francisco, CA
Regina Wang, Research Fellow, Climate Central, Princeton, NJ
Allegra Wiprud, Community Programs Fellow, The Food Project, Boston, MA

ABOUT HIGH MEADOWS

The High Meadows Fellowship program places recent Princeton graduates in two-year positions with nonprofit organizations that aim to protect the environment and build environmental sustainability, or that bring an environmental focus to building community capacity and increasing the self-sufficiency of community residents. Through their work with these nonprofits, Fellows have an opportunity to gain valuable professional experience while exploring a career in the public interest and making a genuine contribution toward advancing the organizations’ objectives.



On the second day of the fall retreat, current fellows visited the Cherry Grove Organic Farm, a short drive from Princeton, New Jersey. Fellows learned about raising and tending to livestock, small-batch cheesemaking, and farm management. The farm, which also grows vegetables for sale at local farmers markets and through their CSA, has been certified organic since 2002.

THIS YEAR’S HIGH MEADOWS fall retreat at Princeton was jam-packed with professional development activities, environmental studies and discussions, and, of course, recruiting.

Career services talked with us about networking and our goals after High Meadows. Fellows also practiced the art of public speaking with John Weeren, director of the Princeton Writes program. Then we used our new skills to recruit the next class of High Meadows Fellows at our open house.

The fellows culminated the retreat with a field trip to the Cherry Grove Organic Farm to see food sustainability in action. We learned about management practices that optimize the relationship between animals and land, such as rotational grazing, where livestock are moved between different portions of the pasture so that they eat grass at its peak production, while giving other areas time to regenerate.

At the end, we led the cows off to milking and ourselves to the store for cheese tasting (and for some, holiday gift buying). We can’t wait for our spring retreat, which we plan to spend in Vermont!

Impactful environmental ethics in the corporate world



By Allegra Wiprud, first-year fellow at The Food Project in Massachusetts

I ENJOYED THE OPPORTUNITY to take a few days away from the farm in Boston to connect with other Fellows during our annual retreat in Princeton this past November. The highlight of the retreat for me was

a group conversation with Carl Ferenbach.

Many of the young people in the fellowship program were drawn to environmental work based on the environmental advocacy we've been exposed to since adolescence that has pushed us to become nascent environmental advocates, researchers, activists, or farmers. Yet these environmental awareness campaigns often present issues in a simplified manner, pitting "the people" against "big business" in a veritable war to protect the environment and future generations. Such a combative world view can even make it difficult to feel hopeful about civil society and environmental health.

Our conversation with Carl reminded us that people taking positive action towards environmental sustainability aren't only found in the nonprofit sector, regulatory bodies, farms, or universities. The choices of people in the corporate world also have an impact. Actions towards the

“Businesses can and do make decisions based on environmental ethics in any part of their operations.”

wellbeing of the environment aren't just enshrined in flashy corporate responsibility campaigns, either. Businesses can and do make decisions based on environmental ethics in any part of their operations. Carl told us about the process he and business partners had in forming the standards of ethics and practices in their firm, based in part on environmental ethics. He also told us about some of the steps towards environmental sustainability taken by executives at Walmart, a mega-corporation that, by dint of its size as well as its business model, produces about 20 million metric tons of greenhouse gases per year, more than four times that of its nearest retail competitors.

Our conversation was an encouragement to be advocates for environmental ethics in every part of our lives. By thinking deeply and creatively about how to live out environmental ethics, we can discover new ways to live as ethical members of society and be positive examples for others. It was also a reminder that being good citizens of our human society is key in being good citizens of the natural world: by encouraging one another, rather than demonizing, and being that positive example, we can help people in every sector of society pursue a deeper expression of environmental ethics.

Where are they now?



Ruthie, a former fellow at the Vermont Community Foundation from 2010-2012, now works for Walmart in Bentonville, Arkansas.

By Andrea Chu, first-year fellow at the Environmental Defense Fund in Massachusetts

In 2010, Ruthie Schwab began her fellowship as the Vermont Community Foundation's Philanthropy Fellow. She was just one of two employees in the office and living in a state with the highest cow to human ratio in the country. Four years later, Ruthie now works for the largest company in the world: Walmart.

Ruthie has worked on a number of farms, investigated the linkages of the coffee supply chain in Guatemala, and eaten her way across Asia, learning about food production at the local level and she wanted to do more. "I wanted to be a part of leveraging market forces to do the work that I was doing in philanthropy," she said. "I embraced the idea that if you want to improve something, become a part of it, where you can have the biggest impact." And so, Ruthie went to graduate school where she earned an MBA and Masters of Science in agriculture from Stanford.

Currently, Ruthie sits on Walmart's finance and strategy team, where she anticipates sales and works on optimizing logistics and supply chains to reduce waste. "Walmart is really good at shipping things on pallets in truck beds, which works great for our supercenters, but that is not really translatable to smaller formats," she said, which is a critical emerging issue as the number of Walmart convenience stores and neighborhood markets grow.

Given Walmart's 30 percent market share over the U.S. grocery industry, Ruthie understands, "We're making really big decisions that have global impact."

Where are they now?

A current and former fellow meet at the United Nations Climate Conference in Lima, Peru

“Learning about how the UN international climate regime works and could be improved, and also contributing to IDDRI’s efforts to influence the 2015 climate agreement’s outcome has so far been fascinating.”

– Alexandra Deprez, Princeton Class of '12, Former High Meadows Fellow (2012-2014)

By Dana Miller, second-year fellow at the Environmental Defense Fund in Washington D.C.

AMIDST A CROWD of thousands of negotiators and thought leaders, I spotted a friend and former colleague Alexandra Deprez (High Meadows, P '12) at the United Nations Climate Conference in Lima, Peru last month. In her new research fellowship with the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI, in French), Alexandra is immersed in international climate policy in Paris, France, which will be the birthplace of the global climate agreement in December, 2015. As part of a mandate from the French government, IDDRI is formulating papers on mitigation, adaptation, finance, verification, and legal elements in the agreement in order to impact the negotiations and spur debate.

At the multi-cultural and multi-lingual think tank, Alexandra has gotten the chance to use all three of her languages (English, French and Spanish), collaborate with think-tanks in Latin America (and, in the coming year, Europe), and co-author a paper on verifying countries' progress towards their mitigation goals with IDDRI's climate team director.

Alexandra feels that her fellowship with Environmental Defense Fund's Corporate Partnership Program set her up for success with IDDRI because it sharpened her ability to produce concise and rigorous analyses aimed at influencing actors, a skill she has been able to translate from a corporate audience to an international policy one. EDF also gave her the "savvy" (in Alexandra's Franglais) to collaborate with colleagues within and outside of EDF, as well as the exposure to a range of environmental topics from agriculture to energy efficiency that has deepened her understanding of the economy-wide

transition that is needed to move toward a decarbonized society.

In Lima, Alexandra experienced firsthand the formation of decision texts and the geopolitical stances that influence countries. For my part, I learned how NGOs influence the UN process, as we worked with others to integrate the land sector into the draft agreement. Alexandra says that the lead up to the Paris conference in December 2015 will be challenging but exciting, and she is optimistic that France's strong diplomacy and determination can ensure an ambitious and inclusive climate agreement.



A High Meadows reunion! Current fellow Dana Miller and former fellow Alexandra Deprez (2012-2014) meet at the United Nations Climate Conference in Lima, Peru.

An evolving perspective on money



By Stu Fram, second-year fellow at the High Meadows Fund in Vermont

BY THE TIME I LEFT college, I subscribed to the well-intentioned if naïve conviction that precludes money, by consequence of its negative socio-cultural associations, from the toolbox of legitimate strategies for advancing social and environmental progress.

This is a fairly common tendency among Environmental Studies majors at Middlebury, and not surprisingly. The college and its alumni have a storied history of adopting uncompromising approaches to environmental issues. Take Middlebury's pledge to become carbon-neutral by 2016, or seven graduates' creation of 350.org, the international organization "building a global climate movement," as but two examples.

These and other ambitious actions are justifiable sources of pride for the college's administration, faculty, and student body alike. They also tend to contribute, however, to a culture of moral superiority whereby those unenlightened to or unconvinced of the environmental crisis' urgency are presumed ignorant and societally parasitic. We come to believe it an expectation, if not a duty, to incite sweeping systemic change. This tendency manifests itself in a certain environmental asceticism, one frequently informed, though, by an in-

flated sense of agency and a distorted understanding of change.

For me, this came in the form of spurning money altogether. I viewed it as little more than a perverse tool used to maintain a profit-driven status quo. I assumed eschewing money symbolized my selfless commitment to the Cause. I came to consider the nonprofit sector as nobler than the private sector. I scorned the high salaries offered to those of my peers entering finance and consulting, often inserting them as punchlines about soul-selling and world-ruining.

It made enough sense for me to wind up as a High Meadows fellow at the High Meadows Fund (HMF). HMF is a foundation that supports the work of environmental nonprofits focused on sustainable working landscapes (food and forestry), energy efficient buildings and transportation, and resilient land use in

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Vermont, primarily through grantmaking. I thought of it as an opportunity to gain meaningful experience working on issues that closely aligned with my values.

There was cognitive dissonance in the realization that as a funder, HMF doesn't merely suffer a market-based approach to engendering progress, but premises its very theory of change on one. Previously captivated by the morally alluring narrative advancing monetary exchange and environmental progress as mutually exclusive, I suddenly had to come to terms with what now seems painfully obvious:

"Capital is the fuel that allows for the creation of organizations capable of creating value within a given

market. It is the resource that enables entrepreneurs to build organizations, both nonprofit and for-profit, and it is the necessary element that permits businesses [and social enterprises] to grow and prosper" (Jed Emmerson, Tracking the Intersects and Opportunities of Economic, Social, and Environmental Value Creation).

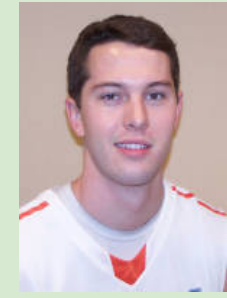
In college I came to admire enterprising nonprofits for their innovative prioritization of mission over profit. Never had I stopped to think about what it actually takes for these organizations to function and thrive. The answer, obviously, is money. About six months into my fellowship, I found myself bracketing my misgivings about neoliberalism (which remains a ubiquitous source of inequality, disenfranchisement, and heedless consumption) and viewing financial transaction in an entirely new light.

I began to understand HMF's grants, which are strategic injections of risk capital into Vermont's nonprofit sector, as a crucial ingredient for proving models, facilitating financial self-sufficiency, and encouraging creative and collaborative solutions.

My fellowship has been a humbling experience as it has challenged my notions about what it means to effect change. Accepting this reality has at times been intensely uncomfortable and has often invoked feelings of infidelity and disloyalty to the notion of environmentalism as I understood it for so long. At the same time, embracing this tension as healthy has been profoundly illuminating and empowering.

As the end of my High Meadows fellowship draws near, I expect to keep one foot firmly grounded in the environmental world. This experience has opened my eyes, however, to the possibility that money, transaction, and markets can be – indeed, need to be – additional forces for good.

Revisting the Baltimore Aquarium



By William Barrett, first-year fellow at Climate Central in New Jersey

EIGHTEEN YEARS AGO on a brisk February morning, I took my very first trip to the Baltimore Aquarium. A couple months ago, on an uncommonly hot and humid September afternoon, I visited the aquarium for just my second time ever. Although I had grown from a naïve child into a "sophisticated" college graduate, I still felt a pang of excitement and thrill reverberate through me when I stepped through the doors of that aquarium once again.

All of the old memories of my first visit came rushing back to me, as if I had been gone for only a short time. To some children, visiting an aquarium can be an unbelievably boring affair; full of facts, dates, places, and names they will never remember. To others, myself included, an aquarium can suddenly transform into an exciting wonderland full of new and beautiful discoveries just waiting to be explored.

Donning my early 90's Os-hKosh B'Gosh overalls, an unforgettably awesome pair of Power Ranger Velcro shoes, and a bright red, impossibly itchy wool hat knit by my Grandmother, I strode into the Baltimore Aquarium completely unaware of the endless beauty and natural wonder waiting for me inside. My nose was immediately hit with a blast of fresh, salty sea air, accompanied by the lingering smells of old chum and penguin

poop. Colorful banners with pictures of polar bears, giant squids, and great white sharks hung from the ceiling. To my left, a cascading, indoor waterfall crashed, filling the entire aquarium with a deafening roar. Everything was larger than life! In the main viewing pool, a manta ray with a wingspan that exceeded twenty feet glided through the underwater seascape with the ease of a torpedo, while a lemon shark menacingly flashed its razor-sharp teeth at me from an adjacent tank.

My fascination with this immense, ruthless carnivore grew so much so, that by the end of the day it was the only thing I could think about. I asked my parents a million questions about it: How could a creature that big be so fast and agile? Do they only eat meat? How many bites would it take for it to gobble me up? Is it bigger or smaller than a great white? Can we get one at the pet store?

The questions instinctively flowed from my young mind like an endless stream, awaiting new answers at every twist and turn. Once a question was answered, I would ask another before anyone could get a word in otherwise. The Baltimore Aquarium, and one very large and beautiful shark, had successfully loaded my brain with thoughts and ideas that I never even knew existed before, and because of these thoughts, my love for the natural world began to blossom.

While it was equally amazing,

and much shorter, my second trip to the aquarium occurred because of a much different reason. Along with the top environmentalists, scientists, and educators from across the state of Maryland, my Climate Central colleagues and I attended a meeting to begin planning an event that will be held at the Baltimore Aquarium in the spring of 2015.

Because this was my first professional business trip, I still felt like that same wide-eyed little kid who had once been flabbergasted by the mysteries and wonders witnessed in the aquarium. Except this time, instead of buying a ticket and walking through the doors as a regular visitor, my colleagues and I were escorted through the VIP entrance by the Senior Director of Visitor Experiences and given the full tour and run down of the entire aquarium.

Without becoming a High Meadows Fellow, and thus an employee at Climate Central, I never would have been able to experience the Baltimore Aquarium in this way. I first visited the Baltimore Aquarium as a novice in understanding the natural world and all of the beauty and mystery it holds. Although I am still very far from being an expert, I am now part of an organization that is doing something to make the world a better place, and that makes me just as happy as the little boy who once discovered what the Baltimore Aquarium was hiding within its walls.

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