

Adirondack Core Team Contacts & Bios 2023

Staff

Tiffany Rea-Fisher- Director

Tiffany has extensive experience in the performing arts and organizational leadership, having earned a bachelor's of fine arts at the SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Dance in 1999 and participated in professional development programs with the Association of Performing Arts Professionals and National Arts Strategies Chief Executive Program. She is a Creatives Rebuild New York awardee with John Brown Lives!, and has earned recognition for her role as a principal dancer, community organizer and direct action activist. Tiffany is the first woman of color to serve as director of the Lake Placid School of Dance, where she has helped increase class participation and faculty diversity since 2017. During this period, she also improved funding support, audience engagement and community impact of EMERGE125, a dance company focused on performance, education and social justice. Tiffany is a seven-time consecutive AUDELCO Award nominee, an National Dance Project Award winner, 2022 Toulmin Fellow at the Center for Ballet and the Arts at New York University (NYU). She was also awarded a citation from the City of New York for her cultural contributions. Approaching her Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) work through an art and culture lens, Tiffany uses positive disruption through inclusion as a way to influence her work. "I love this region and its people, the opportunity to make the Park a more welcoming environment for all is something I am committed to and look forward to doing with our partner organizations."

Melanie Reding- Administrative Manager

Melanie has been engaged in the fields of environmental education, diversity and inclusion, and communication for over 20 years. As an educator, she has focused on providing high-quality, conservation, climate, and cultural education programs that engage the learner while empowering them to make informed decisions and take responsible actions. Melanie holds a degree in Outdoor/Education and Native American Studies from Northland College in WI and a certificate in Community Based Social Marketing from the University of Florida. Over the last several years she has focused on using research-based communication tools known as Strategic Framing, to help elevate social issues by creating public understanding, unique partnerships, and building public will for social good. In her spare time she develops humane education curriculum for a number of elephant advocacy organizations in North America and Africa.

David Yisreal Epstein HaLevi - ScholarACTIVIST-in-Residence

David earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Chicago in Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities, where he focused on philosophy of education. David enrolled at Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy as the Ruth J. Simmons Fellow and earned his teaching license for all secondary sciences. He earned a masters in adolescent education, with a teaching license in social studies, from the College of Saint Rose in Albany, NY in 2011. Thereafter he began his PhD at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he was also managing editor for the Comparative Education Review journal. David transferred

to UAlbany in 2013 and is now nearing completion of his PhD in Educational Policy & Leadership with a focus on eco-pedagogy, systems thinking, and their intersections with equity and justice. He has published book chapters as well as journal articles, on topics ranging from critical consciousness, critical civic literacy, inter-being, and eco-social resilience using alternative development methods such as permaculture.

Core Team-

Rocci Aguirre

Rocci is the Deputy Director/Director of Conservation for the Adirondack Council and is responsible for the design, implementation, and leadership of the Council's statewide conservation program. Primary duties focus on public land-use planning, natural resource management, and environmental policy within the six-million acre Adirondack Park. Rocci graduated with a BS in Outdoor Recreation and a BA in History from SUNY Cortland in 1995 and completed a MS in Resource Management and Conservation from Antioch University New England in 2012.

Cali Brooks- President & CEO, Adirondack Foundation

After working with nonprofit organizations in Southeast Asia, Central America and the United States, Cali returned to the Adirondacks on the staff of the HKH Foundation where she conducted a survey to assess the economic, social, cultural and environmental strengths of the Adirondack region. She then joined the Public Affairs office of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and co-founded the Wildlife Conservation Society's Adirondack Communities and Conservation Program. Today Cali is the CEO of Adirondack Foundation which is dedicated to enhancing the lives of people in the Adirondack region through philanthropy

Gerald W. Delaney, (Jerry) Executive Director, Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board

Jerry has a deep attachment to land, growing up on the farm purchased by his ancestors in 1889. He worked as a farmhand, until starting a career as a production logger, where he eagerly learned about silva culture. Becoming skilled in all aspects of the Industry. Jerry began a career in 1993 retiring in 2018, as a New York State Department of Corrections Correction Officer. This experience was an introduction to people that were different in many ways, racially, geographically, sexual orientation, religious beliefs. This career taught Jerry that respect for others, and communication are the most important tools to bridge differences and to build trust. Jerry has served on the Town of Saranac Town Board since 2008. He has been a Board member of the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages since 2010. Was Chairman of Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board from 2011 to 2018, 2018 he became Executive Director. 2014 joined the Board of the Northern Forest Center, where he serves on the DEI Committee. Jerry also Coached wrestling to give back to his Community. Where he integrated girls into the program. His goal for all participants was to learn the value of hard work, winning and losing, to build confidence and strength of character.

Elizabeth Cooper- Executive Director, ANCA

Born and raised in the Adirondacks, Elizabeth really developed a love for this region when she was 15 and worked for Scenic Tours, assisting with seaplane rides. Elizabeth attended the United States Merchant Marine Academy and while there, traveled the world.. Receiving her Commission in the Air National Guard, Elizabeth became an Aircraft Maintenance Officer, developing leadership skills as Commander the Maintenance Operations Flight.

Elizabeth brings real-world entrepreneurial experience to her role, having started and successfully run a small business in one of the most remote corners of the Adirondack Park. In addition, she has professional fundraising experience and grant administration experience. Most importantly, she has a passion for seeing our region thrive.

Paul Hai- IAssociate Director of SUNY ESF's Adirondack Ecological Center in Newcomb.

In addition, Paul leads the *Northern Forest Institute for Conservation Education and Leadership Training* (NFI), which is also based at ESF's Newcomb Campus. Paul has a strong commitment to reconnecting children, families and adults to nature, a commitment he infuses throughout his professional and personal work. He is co-founder of *Children in Nature, New York*, and serves on the Grassroots Leadership Team of the national *Children and Nature Network*. In partnership with NYS DEC, he co-founded the Hudson River Environmental Opportunities Network and is one of four co-founders of the Adirondack Diversity Initiative.

Jen Kretser- Director of Climate Initiatives, Wild Center

As Director of Climate Initiatives, at the Wild Center, Jen leads the Center's Youth Climate Program which works to engage with and empower youth around the world to take action on Climate Change. Under her direction, the Program has been recognized by the White House and the Environmental Protection Agency, and has taken part in the United Nations Climate Change Conference and the Climate Reality Project. Jen is an active member of the Climate Reality Project and has been involved in Climate Literacy Energy Awareness Network (CLEAN) for serving on the national CLEAN board for four years. Jen also serves on the U.S. Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) coordinating team working to uplift climate change education, awareness, training and public engagement at a national and international community.

Kelly Metzgar

Kelly serves as the Executive Director of Adirondack North Country Gender Alliance, and on many non-profit boards, where her activism creates a safe space for the LGBTQI community of the Adirondack North Country.

Temnit Muldowney

Elementary school teacher for the Saranac Lake School District (13th year). New York State Union of Teachers (NYSUT) Civil and Human Rights Committee Member. Adirondack

Experience Teacher Advisory Committee Member. Delta Kappa Gamma (professional society for women educators) member. Member of Saranac Lake School District's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Along with a co-worker spearheaded my district's annual Multicultural Night, which celebrates cultural diversity with elementary school students. The project was launched in 2018 and has grown every year since, gathering over 300 people last year to view students' poster displays, taste international cuisine and learn more about cultures from around the world.

Pete Nelson- Educator/Advocate

Pete is a co-founder of the Adirondack Diversity Initiative and member of ADI's Core Team. He has been involved in diversity work for more than three decades, from community work to academic institutions and politics. Pete is also a writer, co-founder of Adirondack Wilderness Advocates and a mathematics teacher at North Country Community College.

Martha Swan- Director, John Brown Lives!

Martha is the founder and Executive Director of John Brown Lives! (JBL!), a freedom education, racial justice and human rights organization and the official New York State "Friends Group" of the John Brown Farm State Historic Site in Lake Placid. She also teaches Spanish full time at a small public school in the Adirondacks and lives in New York's Champlain Valley with her beloved Vito and their four-legged companions.