

# Thomas C. O'Keefe, PhD

Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director, American Whitewater

okeefe@americanwhitewater.org

425-417-9012

---

## SUMMARY OF SKILLS

---

- More than 25 years of experience in watershed ecology and management and outdoor recreation management including scientific research, teaching, and public policy advocacy.
- Expertise in federal environmental laws including primarily the Federal Power Act, Clean Water Act, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and National Forest Management Act.
- Technical expertise in hydropower licensing, instream flow evaluation, access and travel management planning, and forest and river management planning with a focus on engaging recreational users in conservation and stewardship of public resources.
- Research Coordinator for remote field work for scientific research with a focus on watershed ecology and management.
- Instructor and guest lecturer for courses, workshops, and seminars in ecology, watershed ecology and management, outdoor recreation management, river safety, and related fields at the university level.
- Experienced expedition coordinator for travel and field research in remote wilderness settings.

Specialties: hydropower licensing, instream flows, water chemistry, riparian ecology, limnology, hyporheic ecology, wild and scenic river management, public lands legislation, watershed management, river conservation

---

## EDUCATION

---

**B.S. Degree in Biology (Major Ecology, Minor Asian Studies)** 1994  
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

**M.S. Degree in Zoology** 1997

**PhD Degree in Zoology** 2002

University of Wisconsin, Madison WI (S.I. Dodson, adviser)

- Thesis Topic: Zooplankton Ecology
- Field based research at the North Temperate Lakes LTER site

**Visiting Research Scholar** 1994

University of Tokyo

- Research Focus: Mitochondrial division in *Cyandioschyzon merolae*

---

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

---

**Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director, American Whitewater** 2005-present

- Serve as organizational lead on projects that include river conservation and restoration initiatives, coordination of volunteer stewardship events, acquisition of land for conservation and access, and river safety initiatives.
- Provide testimony on both federal and state legislation affecting river conservation, public access to rivers, and river safety as a representative of the river user community and those who engage in dispersed recreation on public lands.

- Manage over a dozen volunteers who represent the organization in forest planning, wild and scenic rivers management, hydropower licensing, and other planning and project implementation efforts.
- Represent the organization and serve as the National Chair for the Hydropower Reform Coalition, a consortium of more than 160 national, regional, and local organizations with an interest in restoring rivers that are impacted by hydropower dams. Work collaboratively with hydropower operators throughout the Pacific Northwest region and across the country and negotiating hydropower licenses issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.
- Serve as a Policy Advisor representative with the Outdoor Alliance coordinating policy efforts that affect human-powered recreation: climbing, hiking, mountain biking, paddling, and backcountry snowsports in the Pacific Northwest.

**Rivers and Creeks Institute, Owner**

**2005-present**

- Natural resources consulting services for non-profits on public policy issues related to watershed ecology and river management.
- Instructor for Cornell Adult University, Ecology and Geology of Mt. St. Helens, Columbia River Gorge, Olympic Peninsula Study Tour.
- Instructor for University of Chicago Summer Teacher Institute, Water: An Interdisciplinary Examination of the World's Most Essential Resource.
- Instructor for NatureBridge, River Ecology of the Olympic Peninsula.

**Research Coordinator and Instructor, University of Washington**

**1998-2005**

- Coordinated research program on Keystone Interactions: Bear, Salmon, and Riparian Vegetation in the Riverine Corridors of the Pacific Northwest in Bristol Bay, Alaska including all aspects of managing a remote field camp for 3 months and supervising a research crew.
- Coordinated research program on Production Ecology of Riparian Trees in the Pacific Coastal Rain Forest on the Queets River in Olympic National Park, Washington including field work with 3 graduate students and seasonal research staff.
- Coordinated research program in Kruger National Park, South Africa including logistics of deploying field equipment and research team overseas.
- Taught Watershed Ecology and Management, a 400 level course.

**Research and Teaching Assistant, University of Wisconsin**

**1994-1997**

- Research responsibilities with the North Temperate Lakes Long Term Ecological Research program.
- Undergraduate and Graduate Teaching: Limnology, Plankton Ecology, General Biology.
- Limnology Instructor for Campus Outreach Programs.
- National Science Foundation Young Scientists Exchange Program with Taiwan Ecological Research Network (TERN) and China Ecological Research Network (CERN) sites.

**Visiting Research Scholar, University of Tokyo**

**1994**

- Conducted original research and electron microscopy analysis of mitochondrial division in algae.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

---

**Mountains to Sound Greenway, Board of Director:** The Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust leads and inspires action to conserve and enhance the landscape of the Mountains to Sound Greenway, ensuring a long-term balance between people and nature.

**The Mountaineers, Advisory Committee Member:** An organization with a mission to enrich the community by helping people explore, conserve, learn about and enjoy the lands and waters of the Pacific Northwest.

**Seattle City Light, Environmental Advisory Group Member:** Advisory group to Seattle City Light CEO and GM on environmental and clean technology issues.

---

*PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS*

---

I am a published author or co-author on ten peer-reviewed publications in the field of cell biology, zooplankton ecology, and riparian forest ecology.

---

*OTHER PUBLICATIONS*

---

I have written articles on conservation and outdoor recreation topics for American Whitewater Journal, Kayak Session Magazine, River Management Society Journal, and The Mountaineers Magazine.

---

*PUBLIC LECTURES*

---

I have presented on the topics of watershed ecology and recreation management for American Society of Limnology and Oceanography, Canoecopia, Chinese National Academy of Sciences – Hydrology and Water Resources, Ecological Society of America, Evergreen College, International Society of Limnology, Japanese Society of Limnology, River Management Society, Society for Freshwater Science, The Mountaineers, University of Chicago, University of North Carolina – Charlotte, University of Washington, University of Wisconsin – Madison, and Whitman College. In addition, I have presented at several local clubs, organizations, and service organizations.

---

*HONORS AND AWARDS*

---

**Eagle Scout**

**1988**

- Eagle Scout is the highest achievement or rank attainable in the Scouts BSA program of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA).

**Frank Church Wild and Scenic Rivers Award**

**2019**

River Management Society,

- In recognition of protecting, promoting and supporting Wild and Scenic Rivers through legislation, dam removal, education, research, and public awareness.

**River Steward of the Year**

**2019**

Whitewater Awards

- The Whitewater Awards is a platform that highlights and showcases the best in the world of whitewater kayaking. The Awards are peer voted by a group of nearly 200 of the world's most elite whitewater kayakers.

## **Conservation Voices Award**

**2009**

### Washington Wild

- The Conservation Voices Award is given each year to an individual who has lent their voice as a compelling messenger in support of protecting Washington's wild lands and waters.