

JASON M. MEYER

EDUCATION

- ~ Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs, *Certificate in Nonprofit Executive Leadership*, 2019
- ~ Indiana University School of Philanthropy, *Certificate in Fundraising Management*, 2013
- ~ Michigan State University Dept. of Teacher Education, *Pursued a Ph.D. in Education, Concentration: Integrated Environmental Education*, 2001-2004 (left program for employment in California)
- ~ Purdue University Dept. of Forestry & Natural Resources, *Master of Science, Concentration: Environmental Education*, 2001
- ~ Purdue University Dept. of Forestry & Natural Resources, *Bachelor of Science in Forestry, Major: Wildlife Management*, 1999

SKILLS / SPECIALIZATIONS

- ~ Strong understanding of and ability to implement organizational strategies, goals and objectives, structures, policies and procedures, and models for leadership growth and success
- ~ Demonstrated success at quickly and authentically building trust with individuals, corporations, and private family foundations to secure significant (\$1M+) financial gifts to support capital campaigns, endowments, land acquisition and conservation, and environmental education programming (as well as programming that integrates art and culture, health and wellness, and outdoor recreation with environmental education)
- ~ Experienced at collaborating with diverse individuals and groups, including non-profits, corporations, foundations, federal and state agencies, and other community groups and representatives, as well as internal collaborations across departments and functions to achieve strategic goals
- ~ Demonstrated high level of professionalism and integrity
- ~ Adept at conceptualizing, planning, and implementing a wide variety of projects and strategic efforts that creatively involve interdisciplinary interested parties
- ~ Strong knowledge of board governance, development, and engagement in pursuing mission, vision, and values
- ~ Skilled in the art of staff development and supervision through quality leadership
- ~ Successful at building strong cultures of philanthropy where everyone feels welcomed into the effort from their position and comfort level

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

White Oak Initiative – Executive Director April 2023-Present

- ~ Leads a collaboration between federal, state, and local governmental units, nonprofit organizations, universities, and the forest products industry (including the spirits industry) to address the decline of the White Oak as a species
- ~ Responsible for organizational planning, capacity-building, networking, media relations, fundraising, and more

LaFontsee Galleries and Framing – Owner April 2023-Present

- ~ Primarily works in an advisory capacity for business development, human resources, and community engagement while wife runs the day-to-day operations of the business

JKM Consulting, LLC – Owner and Consultant November 2021-Present

- ~ Provides consulting services to nonprofit organizations, specializing in high-level organizational reviews and assessments, board/staff training and development, as well as offering executive leadership coaching and mentoring, annual/capital fundraising planning and support, major gifts strategy development, and strategic planning

Firebird Outfitters, LLC – Owner and Guide July 2021-July 2023

- ~ Provided outdoor experiences in the Grand River watershed including fishing trips, photography and nature tours, and ecotourism experiences.

Blandford Nature Center – *President & CEO* August 2014-November 2021

- ~ Provided strategic leadership and oversaw all administration and operations of a complex and rapidly-growing nonprofit that worked in the spaces of formal and informal environmental education, land conservation and management, community supported agriculture, community outreach and alliances, and much more
- ~ Critically evaluated and operationalized efforts to increase staff and board diversity, created more equitable access to nature for all, and authentically included multiple voices and experiences while planning for the organization's future
- ~ Designed, managed, and completed multiple fundraising campaigns totaling over \$20M that led to organizational stability, capital improvements, land acquisition, programmatic growth, and the creation and management (by committee) of a set of investment accounts, including a significant permanently-restricted endowment
- ~ Became known as a leader in the nonprofit sector for continuing to explore unique and atypical opportunities for collaboration, including partnerships, potential mergers, and community-wide events that could drive change
- ~ Served as a thought-partner for local philanthropic leaders, including family foundation CEOs, related to process improvements to better meet the needs of both funders and recipients, opportunities to bring together multiple agencies toward a common goal, and the role that funders may fill as nonprofits navigate a global pandemic

Fenner Conservancy – *Executive Director* May 2010-August 2014

- ~ As the organization's first Executive Director, was responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the organization were developed and managed legally, ethically, and successfully, including board development and governance, business and operational planning, fund development, creation of investment opportunities, human resources, financial management, environmental education programming, and more
- ~ Primarily responsible for building and leading the implementation of Fenner Conservancy's fund development plan (539% increase in annual funding from 2010 to 2013)
- ~ Developed programming and secured funding for long-term and meaningful efforts such as a county-wide partnership with Capital Area Community Services Head Start, Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital, and other local nature centers to provide environmental education curricula and training to teachers, access to nature for Head Start families, and resources to integrate physical and mental health with experiences in the outdoors
- ~ Led the collaborations between Fenner Conservancy and various stakeholders including politicians, city officials, corporate and foundation representatives, individual philanthropists, and the general public

CAL FIRE – *Forester I* April 2007-April 2010

- ~ Primary duties included supervising and training field foresters while working with landowners to increase forest health and fire safety on their property (includes educational outreach regarding forest health, fire safety, and green tree thinning; assisting landowners with marking trees for removal)
- ~ Served as a Public Information Officer on complex and emotionally-charged wildland fire incidents, conducting media interviews and escorts, facilitating community information meetings, and assisting families who lost their homes with finding appropriate resources

Southern California Mountains Foundation – *Program Manager (Children's Forest)* July 2005-April 2007

- ~ Successful at partnership development, grant writing, media development, and marketing
- ~ Managed formal Conservation Education programming for schools, scouts, and other groups
- ~ Managed Youth Leadership Program, which focused on leadership development for over 100 youth volunteers (ages 12 – 18) so they could effectively plan and lead reforestation projects on public lands, staff the only U.S. Forest Service Visitor Center completely operated by youth, and work with engineers and other professionals to design and construct a 4.5-mile interpretive trail in the San Bernardino National Forest
- ~ Managed special events and projects such as the Native American Fall Festival, which connected Youth Leaders to members of the indigenous community to collaborate on a culturally-appropriate interpretive celebration. Another project brought together youth from rural mountain areas and their urban at-risk counterparts from a gang prevention agency to use nature as the venue to build bridges and expand their worldviews

Fenner Nature Center – *Naturalist*, August 2003 – July 2005

- ~ Conducted on-site and outreach interpretive programs for various groups and the general public on a variety of topics related to natural resources and conservation issues.
- ~ Was responsible for scheduling tours, marketing programs, and providing assistance to the public over the phone, via the internet, and in person
- ~ Assisted with staff development

Michigan State University – *Lead Instructor*, January 2004- June 2005

- ~ Responsible for preparing migrant farm workers to successfully complete the science and social studies portions of the GED exam

ENVISION Environmental Science Institute (Purdue University) – Project Coordinator, January 2000 – July 2002

- ~ Participated in the design and implementation of a NSF-funded environmental science institute for pre-service and in-service teachers across the country. Helped teachers utilize inquiry-based hands-on environmental science instruction that met local, state, and national science education standards.
- ~ Coordinated “Forestry Field Day” - introduced teachers to various forest harvesting systems, forest measurement tools, and educational resources related to forest ecosystems. Focused on ways to help students explore the forest from a variety of dimensions including educational value, hands-on research opportunities, social factors, and economic outcomes. Responsible for demonstrating other ways to teach about the environment including topics such as waste management, the use of technology, environmental justice, water quality testing, soil studies, and more.
- ~ Conducted program evaluation and other research that led to various co-authored publications in peer-reviewed journals. Made presentations at local, state, and national education meetings.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND BOARD/COMMITTEE SERVICE

- ~ Association of Fundraising Professionals, Member
- ~ Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA), Past Board Member/Secretary; Past Peer Consult Committee Chair; Founding Chair of the Mentor Committee
- ~ City of Grand Rapids, Urban Agriculture Committee
- ~ Grand Valley State University, Past Member of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (confidential)
- ~ Xi Sigma Pi National Forestry Honorary
- ~ Gamma Sigma Delta National Agriculture Honorary

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Meyer, J. (2002). Invited Book Review: Educating for Eco-Justice and Community (Bowers, C.A.). Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, 7(1): 232-233.

Meyer, J. (2002). Accuracy and Bias in Children’s Environmental Literature: A Look at Lynne Cherry’s Work. The Social Studies, 93(6): 277-281.

Shepardson, D. P., J. Harbor, C. Bell, J. Meyer, T. Leuenberger, H. Klagges, and W. Burgess. (2002). ENVISION: Inquiry-based Environmental Science. ScienceScope 26 (2): 28-31.

Shepardson, D.P., Harbor, J., Bell, C., Meyer, J., Leuenberger, T., Klagges, H., & Burgess, W. (2003). ENVISION: Teachers as environmental scientists. Journal of Environmental Education, 34(2), 8-11.

CERTIFICATES, AWARDS AND HONORS

- ~ West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum, *Sustainable Business of the Year Winner*, 2021
- ~ West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum, *Clean Water Leadership Award*, 2021
- ~ Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs, *Certificate of Nonprofit Executive Leadership*, 2019
- ~ MiBiz, *Best Managed Nonprofit (\$1 - \$3 million) Winner*, 2018
- ~ Grand Rapids Business Journal, *Newsmaker of the Year Finalist*, 2018
- ~ MiBiz, *Best Managed Nonprofit (under \$1 million) Finalist*, 2017
- ~ Young Nonprofit Professionals of Grand Rapids, *Breakthrough Award Nominee*, 2017
- ~ Young Nonprofit Professionals of Grand Rapids, *Exemplary Executive Award Nominee*, 2015
- ~ Association of Nature Center Administrators, *Outstanding New Leader Award*, 2014
- ~ Indiana University School of Philanthropy, *Certificate in Fundraising Management*, 2013
- ~ Michigan State University College of Education *Teacher Education Endowed Fellowship*, 2004
- ~ Purdue University Dept. of Forestry and Natural Resources *Stanley Coulter Leadership Award*, 1999
- ~ Purdue University Dept. of Forestry and Natural Resources *Society of American Foresters Outstanding Senior*, 1999
- ~ Purdue University Dept. of Forestry and Natural Resources *Boone and Crockett Outstanding Wildlife Senior*, 1999
- ~ Completed Toastmasters International SpeechCraft Public Speaking Course, 1999
- ~ *Eagle Scout*, 1995