

Curriculum vitae

MARIT L WILKERSON, PhD

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Policy advisor and conservation scientist connecting people with nature with fourteen years combined training and experience in conservation ecology and socio-economic development as a donor, policy advisor, researcher, and practitioner

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Washington, DC

Climate-Smart Agriculture Specialist for Bureau for Food Security

Jan 2017-present

Function as part of the small, agile team dedicated to climate-smart agriculture (CSA) for the Agency.

Serve as main external/internal point-of-contact for CSA policy, strategy, and design with particular focus on behavior change, adoption, and decision-making, backstopping natural resource management.

Specific accomplishments:

- *Managed project on private investment in CSA spanning three E African countries, inc. overseeing partner staff progress, providing technical guidance, M&E & budget evaluation;*
- *Invited to serve as Bureau representative on process-based mid-term field evaluation for Food for Peace flagship programs in focus country;*
- *Designed trainings on climate-smart agriculture for Agency core course*

Technical areas: Climate-smart agriculture; Natural resource management; Biodiversity conservation; Ecosystem services; Science communications; Systems thinking & analysis

EDUCATION

PhD

University of California, Davis, Graduate Group in Ecology, 2007-2013.

Dissertation title: "Invasive plants in conservation linkages: from conceptual model to understanding real-world patterns"

Conservation Management training certificate, completed in 2011

BS/BA

University of Texas, Austin, Biology with a focus in Ecology, Evolution & Behavior/Plan II Honors, both summa cum laude & Phi Beta Kappa, 2002-2006

RESEARCH

- 2014 Urban conservation, socioeconomics, and ecosystem services (global concepts)
- 2010-2012 Content analysis and targeted interviews on wildlife corridors in conservation planning (USA) and on skills for non-academic conservation careers (USA)
- 2009-2013 Matrix effects on invasive plants in large-scale conservation linkages (Riverside & San Diego Counties, CA)
- 2009-2013 Landscape ecology of invasive plants in agricultural hedgerows (Yolo County, CA)
- 2009-2011 Climate change vulnerability analysis (Willamette Valley, OR)
- 2008-2013 Restoration of native forbs for pollinator services (Yolo County, CA)
- 2007-2012 Trophic interactions in working landscape (Laikipia District, Kenya)
- 2005 Demographic study of invasive plant species (Harvard Forest, MA)

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EMPLOYMENT

United States Agency for International Development

Washington, DC

Environmental Advisor for Bureau for Africa

Sept 2016-Jan 2017

Officially represented Africa Bureau interests drafting interagency Global Food Security Strategy; Drafted, edited & coordinated internal/external USAID communications for Marrakesh COP 22; Led trainings on and facilitated climate risk screening for USAID headquarters and field offices

United States Agency for International Development

Washington, DC

Climate Change Advisor for Bureau for Africa and AAAS S&T Policy Fellow

Sept 2014-Aug 2016

Fostered and led internal inter-Bureau team of CSA technical experts via consensus-based influence; Conceptualized, procured & managed, to completion, research on CSA adoption to improve project design; USAID lead on co-developed project on private investment in CSA to address gap in programming; Led design on flagship country program on integrated agriculture, nutrition & climate change; Led development of communication materials used by USAID and State Dept; Served as core member in focus group developing Agency policy on climate risk management; Co-led training in climate risk management for USAID to over 150 staff and partners across six workshops & seminars

University of California

Davis, CA and

University of Queensland

Brisbane, AUS

Research Associate & Visiting Research Fellow

Sept 2013-Aug 2014

Organized 2 workshops on socioeconomics, ecosystem services, & urban conservation; Led 5 collaborative urban conservation conceptual projects; Filmed and produced researcher profile shorts.

University of California

Davis, CA

Research Fellow & PhD Candidate

Sept 2007 - Aug 2013

Designed, planned, conducted, analyzed & interpreted research on landscape and systems ecology, invasive ecology, conservation management and planning, and international wildlife conservation; Engaged with private landowners, farmers, NGO's, consulting agencies, and local, state & federal government agencies in developing, implementing, and communicating applied research projects; Grew and maintained professional networks; Trained in stakeholder engagement, basic negotiation, and science communication; Developed outreach materials for multiple public audiences.

United States National Park Services

Petrified Forest National Park, AZ

Seasonal Biological Technician

Jun - Aug 2006

Autonomously managed herpetological & small mammal monitoring; Redesigned park monitoring protocol; Initiated Park's analysis of long-term data.

Harvard Forest

Petersham, MA

NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates intern

May - Aug 2005

Managed data collection & analysis of multi-year field experiment; Designed & implemented region-wide demographic study of invasive species

United States Fish & Wildlife Service

Wichita Mountains Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, OK

Student Conservation Association intern

May-Aug 2004

Ground-truthed Refuge-wide vegetation map; Co-managed biological monitoring responsibilities; Taught Environmental Education

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AWARDS and HONORS

- 2016 USAID Group Award for Climate Risk Management
Internally nominated award; only awardee from Bureau for Africa
- 2016 USAID Group Award for Climate Smart Agriculture Global Learning
Internally nominated award; only awardee from Bureau for Africa
- 2014 Shapiro Family Award for Excellence in Science, Dept. of Plant Sciences, UC Davis
Recognition of top-level Plant Sciences dissertation in 2013
- 2011 Spurr Service Award, Graduate Group in Ecology, UC Davis
Presented to current student for outstanding accomplishment in outreach
- 2009 Directors' Award for best poster presentation, California Native Grass Association/ Society for Ecological Restoration-California conference
- 2006 Dean's Honored Scholar for Natural Sciences, UT Austin
Awarded to .1% of graduating class
- 2006 Joynes Award for Creative Thesis for Plan II Honors, UT Austin

USAID Training Given

Climate risk management, facilitator and trainer. 2016. **Context-tailored seminars** given to 2 field offices. Co-led **workshop session** at BFS Global Learning & Evidence Exchange Summit in Zambia. **Training designer and facilitator** for Global Climate Change Integration & Food Security training in Washington, DC.

Technical story-telling. 2016. **Workshop session** given during 2016 AFR Climate Change Technical Officers Meeting, Malawi.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Secretary for Board of Governors, Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) 2015-present
Co-led transition process for former Executive Director; Managed progress and completion of Action Items across SCB sub-units and staff; Served as direct advisor to Board President and Executive Director; Co-led development of Implementation Plan for global Society

Co-Chair, AAAS Fellows Biodiversity Affinity Group 2015-2016
Co-organized regular events for AAAS Fellows focused on biodiversity science and policy, inc. panels, seminars & roundtables

Co-Chair, Scientific Committee, ICCB 2015 2014-2015
Co-led solicitation and evaluation of largest-to-date abstract submissions; Co-developed scientific programme with volunteers & staff; Managed difficult professional interactions with meeting company

Financial Affairs (current), SCB Chapters Committee 2012-present
Prior position: Conference Coordinator
Managed finances for Chapters Committee; Co-developed new Chapter Event Grants program; Coordinated travel & lodging awards for simultaneous Congresses across globe; Organized & oversaw concurrent, varied events for grassroots leaders at regional and int'l Congresses, inc. workshops, symposia, and fundraising

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PROFESSIONAL SERVICE cont.

Group mentor, *Student and Landowner Education and Watershed Stewardship* 2008-2012

Recurring mentorship of high-school students, primarily from underserved communities, in restoration science & place-based ethics and skills

President (final position), *SCB-Davis Chapter* 2007-2012

Prior positions: Executive Planning Committee member for NACCB 2012; Vice-President, Secretary & Volunteer Coordinator

Advanced expansion in scope of Chapter's program and leadership; Managed differing and changing projects and initiatives over multiple years; Led official partnership of Chapter with city NGO; Coordinated Chapter's engagement as part of local organizing committee for NACCB 2012; Created position of Volunteer Coordinator

Co-founder and member, *Davis Chapter of California-Invasive Plant Council* 2009-2012

Represent parent organization at local events; Developed "Don't Plant a Pest" fact sheets for California Native Plant Society's Gardening Committee; Spread awareness of invasive plant issues through Cal-IPC lobbying and informational pieces

PUBLICATIONS

Wilkerson, ML, M Mitchell, D Shanahan, KA Wilson, CD Ives, C Lovelock, & JR Rhodes. In review. The role of socio-economics in mediating ecosystem services in urban green spaces. *Ecosystem Services*.

Winford, E, **ML Wilkerson**, L Porensky, I Lacher, K Garbach, K Deiner, J Blickley & M Meek. In press. Skills for Non-Academic Wildlife & Conservation Careers. Book chapter in: Wildlife Professions: Becoming Marketable for Employment. Henke, SE & PR Krausman, eds. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Wilkerson, ML, K Ward, K Ullmann, N Williams & TP Young. 2014. Diminishing returns from higher density restoration seedings suggest trade-offs in pollinator seed mixes. *Restoration Ecology* 22: 782-789.

Wilkerson, ML. 2014. Using hedgerows as model linkages to examine non-native plant patterns. *Agriculture, Ecosystems, and Environment* 192: 38-46

Blickley, J*, K Deiner, K Garbach, I Lacher, M Meek, LM Porensky, **ML Wilkerson**, E Winford & MW Schwartz. 2013. Graduate students' guide to necessary skills for nonacademic conservation careers. *Conservation Biology* 27: 24-34. *First 8 authors contributed equally

Lacher, I* & **ML Wilkerson**. 2013. Wildlife connectivity approaches and best practices in U.S. State Wildlife Action Plans. *Conservation Biology* 28: 13-21 *Authors contributed equally.

Wilkerson, ML, LM Roche & TP Young. 2013. Indirect effects of domestic and wild herbivores on pollinators in an African savanna. *Ecology and Evolution* 3: 3672-3682

Riginos, C, LM Porensky, KE Veblen, WO Odadi, RL Sensenig, D Kimuyu, F Keesing, **ML Wilkerson** & TP Young. 2012. Lessons on the relationship between livestock husbandry and biodiversity from the Kenya Long-term Exlosure Experiment (KLEE). *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice* 2:10

Schwartz, MW*, K Deiner, T Forrester, P Grof-Tisza, MJ Muir, MJ Santos, LE Souza, **ML Wilkerson** & M Zylberberg. 2012. Perspectives on the Open Standards for the practice of conservation. *Biological Conservation* 155: 169-177. *All authors after first contributed equally

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PUBLICATIONS cont.

Z Steel, **ML Wilkerson**, P Grof-Tisza & K Sulzner. 2011. Assessing species and area vulnerability to climate change for the Oregon Conservation Strategy: Willamette Valley Ecoregion. Report for Defenders of Wildlife and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Vaughn, KJ, LM Porensky, **ML Wilkerson**, J Balachowski, E Pepper, C Riginos, and TP Young. 2010. Restoration Ecology. *Nature Education Knowledge* 1(8):66.

PRESENTATIONS

Wilkerson, ML. 2016. Invited speaker. Connecting to the story of connectivity and corridors. 3rd North American Congress for Conservation Biology, Madison, WI.

Wilkerson, ML. 2016. Invited speaker. Incentivizing climate-smart agriculture through public-private partnerships. 2016 Cracking the Nut, Washington, DC.

Wilkerson, ML. 2015. Oral presentation. International policy and pressure around climate-smart agriculture. 27th International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB) & 4th European Congress for Conservation Biology, Montpellier, France.

Wilkerson, ML. 2015. Oral presentation. International policy and pressure around climate-smart agriculture. 27th International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB) & 4th European Congress for Conservation Biology, Montpellier, France.

Wilkerson, ML. 2015. Invited speaker. Processes and ideas to affect local change for conservation. Society for Conservation Biology policy webinar series, online.

Wilkerson, ML 2014. Invited speaker. Forgotten pieces: the state of wildlife linkage planning in the U.S. Dept. of Wildlife & Entomology seminar series, University of Delaware, Newark, DE.

Wilkerson, ML 2014. Guest lecture. Location, location, location: How socio-economic context impacts valuation of ecosystem services. Environmental Decisions Group seminar series, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation office, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.

Wilkerson, ML 2014. Invited speaker. Context matters: socio-demographics influence ecosystem service delivery. School of Agricultural and Resource Economics/Australia Agricultural and Resource Economics Society seminar series, University of Western Australia, Perth, WA, Australia.

Wilkerson, ML 2013. Poster presentation. Invasive plants in the conservation linkage? How matrix, edge effects, and species dispersal mode matter. 26th ICCB, Baltimore, MD.

Wilkerson, ML*, K Ward, N Williams, K Ullmann & TP Young. 2013. Oral presentation. Rewilding Central Valley field margins with native forbs. 20th Annual Conference of the California Society for Ecological Restoration, Santa Barbara, CA.

Wilkerson, ML 2012. Oral presentation. A conceptual model and framework for addressing the unaddressed issue of invasive plants in conservation linkages. 97th Annual Meeting of the Ecological Society of America (ESA), Portland, OR.

Wilkerson, ML 2011. Oral presentation. Invasive plants in conservation linkages: what have we been overlooking? 25th ICCB, Auckland, New Zealand.

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PRESENTATIONS cont.

Wilkerson, ML 2011. Oral presentation. The importance of landscape context in invasive plant patterns within conservation linkages. 20th California-Invasive Plant Council Symposium (Cal-IPC), Tahoe City, CA.

Wilkerson, ML*, K Ullmann, C Kremen & TP Young. 2011. Award-winning oral presentation. Planting California hedgerows: native forb mix success at different densities. 4th World Conference on Ecological Restoration, Mérida, Mexico.

Wilkerson, ML 2011. Oral presentation. The role of the surrounding landscape matrix in invasion of conservation linkages by non-native plants. 96th Annual Meeting of the ESA, Austin, TX.

Steel, Z*, P Grof-Tisza*, K Sulzner & **ML Wilkerson***. 2011. Group oral presentation. Assessing species vulnerability to climate change in the Willamette Valley ecoregion. Bay Area Conservation Biology Symposium (BACBS), University of California, Berkeley, CA.

Wilkerson, ML 2010. Oral presentation. Downsides to landscape connectivity: examining plant invasion potential in conservation linkages. 95th Annual Meeting of the ESA, Pittsburgh, PA.

Wilkerson, ML 2010. Guest lecture. Upsides and downsides of conservation linkages. Conservation Biology Seminar Series, EVE 198 UC Davis.

Wilkerson, ML 2010. Oral presentation. Downsides to landscape connectivity: examining plant invasion potential in conservation linkages. BACBS, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA.

Wilkerson, ML 2010. Invited speaker. Downsides to corridors: examining plant invasion potential in linear biodiversity features. 3rd Annual Symposium presented by Northern California Botanists, California State University, Chico, CA.

Wilkerson, ML* & TP Young. 2009. Oral presentation. Indirect effects of domestic and wild herbivores on pollinators in an African savanna. 2nd Annual UC Davis Graduate Student Symposium in Ecology, UC Davis.

Wilkerson, ML*, K Ullmann, C Kremen & TP Young. 2009. Poster presentation. What to plant in Central Valley hedgerows: relative success of three native flowering forb mixes at three densities. California Native Plant Society Conservation Conference, Sacramento, CA; California Native Grass Association/Society for Ecological Restoration-California dual annual meeting, Folsom, CA; 94th Annual Meeting of the Ecological Society of America, Albuquerque, NM.

Wilkerson, ML* & TP Young. 2008. Poster presentation. Indirect effects of domestic and native herbivores on pollinators in an African savanna. 93rd Annual Meeting of the ESA, Milwaukee, WI.

COMMUNICATIONS and ENGAGEMENT

“Development, Rwanda, and Agricultural Innovations.” 2016. **Day-long hackathon** co-facilitated with USAID Senior Scientist for senior industrial design students, James Madison Univ, Harrisonburg, VA.

“Different Ways of Knowing: Faith and climate change, morality and conservation.” 2015. **Blog entry** published on Sci on the Fly, AAAS S&T Policy Fellow science & science policy blog. URL: <http://www.aaaspolicyfellowships.org/sci-fly/different-ways-knowing-faith-and-climate-change-morality-and-conservation>

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COMMUNICATIONS and ENGAGEMENT cont.

Communications Strategy & Social Media lead on organizing committee for half-day symposium "Combating Wildlife Trafficking." 2015, sponsored by AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellowships Program and Biodiversity Affinity Group.

"Science communication through film." 2014. **Invited speaker** for graduate-level science communication seminar series, University of Delaware, Newark, DE.

"Weeds in your hedgerows? Actions to consider." 2013. 2-part article published in Colusa County Conservation, Colusa County Resource Conservation District **quarterly newsletter**. Volume 3: 4 & 5.

Factsheets for hedgerow research projects (invasive plants and native forbs). 2013. Emailed or mailed to all private landowners involved in hedgerow research and local Resource Conservation District, National Resource Conservation Services, and Audubon California offices.

<http://maritwilkerson.com/outreach-and-service/general/>

"Invasive plants and conservation linkages: missing pieces of the conservation puzzle." Dec, 2012. **Invited speaker** at the monthly Riverside County land managers meeting, Riverside, CA.

"Advice for getting your dream job in conservation science." 2012. K Deiner, ML Wilkerson & LM Porensky. **Blog post** entry on popular website about graduate skills paper (Blickley et al. 2013). <http://conservationbytes.com/2012/12/04/advice-for-getting-your-dream-job-in-conservation-science/>

"Role of science and scientists in collaborative conservation decision-making and planning: a workshop in skill development." 2011. Co-organized with another grad student and two staff members of John Muir Institute for the Environment. 2-day evening **workshop** with 15 grad students, UC Davis campus.

"Climate Change and Conservation." 2011. Co-organizer and presenter of Conservation Connoisseur Seminar Series. 2-part **public seminar** held at Davis City Library.

"Assessing species and reserve vulnerability to climate change in the Willamette Valley ecoregion." 2011. Led workshop organization with partners from Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife & Defenders of Wildlife; a half-day **workshop** on Conservation Management project results for local stakeholders. Presentations by Z. Steel, M.L. Wilkerson & P. Grof-Tisza. ODFW headquarters, Salem, OR.

"Outreach: Broader Impacts Resource Portal." 2011. Co-author/creator. **Online outreach module** with guidelines for developing outreach plans for dissertation research with an emphasis on involving underrepresented groups. <http://ecology.ucdavis.edu/outreach>

"Downsides to landscape connectivity: examining plant invasion potential in conservation linkages." Nov, 2010. **Invited speaker** at the monthly Riverside County land managers meeting, Riverside, CA.

"Ecological Restoration Workshop." 2009. Co-organized with three other graduate students and two professors. Daylong **workshop** with invited, sponsored speakers and approx. 50 attendees, UC Davis.

Wrote and hard- mailed **report updates** for private landowners and Audubon California staff involved in forb restoration project in Yolo County, California, 2008, 2009.

"Butterflies and blooms: contrasting effects of cattle and wildlife." 2008. ML Wilkerson & TP Young.

"KLEE Corner" #10, Laikipia Wildlife Forum **Newsletter**. May Issue.

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COMMUNICATIONS and ENGAGEMENT TRAINING

- July 2013 Half-day workshop at International Congress for Conservation Biology: “New media matters: communicating conservation research & ideas.” Led by Dr. Kate Christen of Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation. Baltimore, Maryland.
- Spring 2012 Translating Research Beyond Academia **seminar series**: “Communicating with Stakeholders and Decision and Policy Makers.” Sponsored by Environmental Leaders Program of John Muir Institute for the Environment (JMIE). UC Davis course.
- Dec 2011 **Workshop** at International Congress for Conservation Biology 201: “Involving People in Conservation: the role of human dimensions research and applied approaches.” Led by Dr. A. Bath of Memorial University Canada. Auckland, New Zealand.
- Fall 2011 Translating Research Beyond Academia **seminar series**: “Education Outreach and Broader Impacts.” Sponsored by JMIE. UC Davis course.
- Winter 2011 Translating Research Beyond Academia **seminar series**: “Science Communication and Writing.” Sponsored by JMIE. UC Davis course.
- October 2010 Week-long **immersion workshop** with ScienceFilm to learn technical and creative basics of scientific documentary film-making. Bodega Bay, CA.

USAID COURSEWORK and TRAINING

- Landscape Leadership Workshop (given by EcoAgriculture). 2016. 3-day course.
- Applied Political Economy Analysis. 2016. 1-day course.
- Global Climate Change Integration & Food Security. 2016. 1-day course. Project Design & Management. 2016. 10-day course.
- Biodiversity 101. 2015. 3-day course.
- Programming Foreign Assistance. 2015. 5-day course.
- Global Climate Change and Development. 2014. 5-day course.

FELLOWSHIPS and GRANTS

- 2014 Centre of Excellence for Environmental Decisions Early Career Researcher Grant, \$7400
- 2009-2012 National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Researcher Fellowship, \$90,000 + tuition
- 2008-2012 Jastro Shields Research Fellowship, UC Davis, 3 awards, total \$3645
- 2008, 2012 Humanities Graduate Research Award, UC Davis, 2 awards, total \$3000
- 2008-2012 Plant Sciences’ Madson Scholarship, UC Davis, 4 separate awards, total \$4000
- 2008, 2011 Northern California Botanists’ student research award, 2 awards, total \$2000
- 2008-2013 Plant Sciences Fellowship, UC Davis, 1 award for 8 academic quarters, \$35,000 + tuition
- 2007, 2008 Graduate Group in Ecology block grant, UC Davis, 2 awards, total \$21,600 + tuition

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SKILLS SUMMARY

Strategic planning & organizing: Rigorous training in theory of change, logical frameworks & results chains for implementation planning; stakeholder engagement processes & techniques; Planning, organizing & running small (<20 attendees) to large (<1000 attendees) conferences & workshops

Financial: Budget planning & management up to \$2 million; Grant & contract development and evaluation; Fundraising solicitations & coordination

Management: Tracking and overseeing progress of individuals across concurrent projects; Advanced project design & management training and experience; Advanced ability to develop and communicate vision of mission and implementation

Communication: Advanced science communications, inc. social and mass media & research translation for public audiences; Basic cinematography; Intermediate creative writing

Field research & analysis: Advanced ecological field research skills across multiple taxa; Applied experience with rigorous social survey & interview techniques

Other: Advanced Spanish (writing, reading, and speaking); Advanced training and experience in improvisation, movement, and stage acting