

# GISS 2025 Speakers & Bios



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:** Jay Shepherd leads CNW's wolf recovery and coexistence field program, including the Range Rider Pilot Project and administering the independent Northeast Washington Wolf-Cattle Collaborative.

Jay S, Ph.D. has a long history in wildlife research and management with state and federal agencies in western North America, most recently immersed in wolf recovery and reducing wildlife conflicts in Washington. Jay grew up in Walla Walla, Washington where he worked on his family's wheat farm and cattle ranch into his twenties. As a biologist, Jay worked with amphibians, ungulates, predators, seabirds, and raptors, as well as shrub-steppe and old-growth forest habitat. He has a B.S. in Wildlife Resources, an M.S. in Wildlife Biology, and a Ph.D. in Natural Resources from the University of Idaho.



Dave'y Lumley is a Yakama Nation Fish Biologist. She has been with the YN Pacific Lamprey Project since 2011 and her current research focuses on Pacific Lamprey restoration, aquaculture, translocation, habitat surveys, traditional ecological knowledge, and educational outreach. Dave'y is also a KEEN Board Member. Dave'y is our Friday night social speaker and will do 4 live lamprey releases on Saturday.



Marie Marchand served as Ellensburg Poet Laureate 2022-24, and is now an Arts Commissioner. Her poems have been published in numerous journals including Poetry Ireland Review, California Quarterly, and Catamaran Literary Review. She is hosting a guided poetry walk through YCIC.



Using decades of naturalist training, Kevin O'Malley served as a freelance naturalist in various settings on the West Coast ultimately becoming the In-School Programs Specialist at Seward Park Audubon. He served as a Teaching Assistant for the renowned WAS Adult Tracking Intensive Program 2015-2018. He currently holds a Cybertracker Level 3 Wildlife Track & Sign and coordinates the Ellensburg Tracking Club. As the Lead Naturalist and Executive director of South Sound Nature School Kevin also teaches birding field classes across the state of Washington and served as the Education Chair of the Juneau Audubon Society for three years.



Aimee Taylor - Aimee Taylor is the Field Biologist and Bull Trout Recovery Coordinator for Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group. She has been working on native fish recovery efforts for over a decade and has spent the last six years working on bull trout conservation in the Yakima River Basin. She enjoys fishing, hiking, mushroom foraging, and teaching the public about our amazing ecosystems.

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Jill Scheffer is one of the original founders of the Kittitas Environmental Education Network (KEEN) non-profit based in Ellensburg WA and has served as the President and Executive Director since 2006. Her educational background is in Geography and Environmental Studies from the University of Victoria in BC. Jill served on the Ellensburg City Council for 9 years. She worked for 11 years as the Central Washington Director of Forterra, the largest land conservation organization in the state. She is currently a Streamflow Restoration Planner at the Department of Ecology.



Dan Beck is a retired CWU biology professor, ecologist, and herpetologist who, since before he can remember, has studied reptiles and enjoyed working with people all over the western U.S. and Mexico. He has lived and worked in Washington's Shrub-Steppe since 1994. He is hosting several guided walks on snakes during GISS this year.

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Originally from California, Deb Essman studied Natural Resources Management at Cal Poly SLO and spent her career in conservation—as a raptor rehabilitator, ornithology instructor, zoo veterinary technician, and WDFW Game Warden. A longtime volunteer, Deb has led birding trips for KEEN, taught wildlife tracking at 5th Grade Camp for 30+ years, and serves on WDFW and DNR committees. She has lived in Kittitas County for 36 years, and is an avid birder (266 species county Life List). She also enjoys hunting across the West with her husband and is passionate about connecting kids with nature. Her presentations this year are focusing on the birds that call the canyon their home.

SHRUB-STEPPE



Ron Bockelman is a retired environmental project manager who lives in Redmond. He began to appreciate the sagebrush-steppe of Central Washington and in 2018 he started studying the distribution of basalt cactus at Wild Horse Wind Farm. Ron is a member of the Washington Native Plant Society, Cascade Cactus and Succulent Society, and also volunteers as a rare plant monitor for the UW Rare Plant Care and Conservation Program (Rare Care). His journal articles about basalt cactus have appeared in *Douglasia* and *Cactus and Succulent Journal*. He is hosting several explorations on basalt cactus at Wild Horse Wind Farm this GISS.

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Bruce Palmquist is a professor in the departments of Physics and of Science & Mathematics Education at CWU. He has given dozens of shows in the CWU Lydig planetarium and traveled around the state with CWU's portable planetarium. He's giving a day of presentations on the stars at CWU's planetarium.

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SHRUB-STEPPE

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