

Walter Veselka

Certified Wildlife Biologist®

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AWARDS / RECOGNITIONS / INFORMATION

- Certified Wildlife Biologist by The Wildlife Society
- The Leadership Institute alumni (competitive selection by The Wildlife Society, Class of 2010)
- University of Maine - Award of Professional Excellence 2017

EDUCATION

West Virginia University Morgantown, WV United States

Master's Degree 08/2008

GPA: 4.0 of a maximum 4.0

Major: Wildlife and Fisheries Management

University of Maine Orono, ME United States

Bachelor's Degree 05/2000 with *magna cum laude* honors

GPA: 3.51 of a maximum 4.0

Major: Wildlife Ecology

WORK EXPERIENCE

West Virginia University (February 2020 – present)

Natural Resources Analysis Center

333 Evansdale Dr.

Morgantown, WV 26505 United States

Grants Administrator

Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills

Identify and apply for funding opportunities (grants, sponsorships, etc.) for research, curriculum, and outreach activities aimed at developing professional opportunities for students in the Energy Environments graduate degree program – “environmental opportunities in the energy ecosystem”

Turn-key grant specialist, from concept to team formation and submission, developed and recruited inter-disciplinary experts from academic positions, non-profits, Federal and State agencies, etc. to create grant writing teams to guide proposal and project development. Established deadlines and writing assignments for team members to enable timely proposal submission.

Mentored undergraduate and graduate students to promote job skills relevant to professional opportunities, including but not limited to task delegation, GIS mentoring, monitoring, and performance feedback on assigned projects.

Participant in the National Science Foundation Innovation Corps training. Uses I-Corps business model canvas and concepts to develop project scopes and ascertain feasibility of grant endeavors

Ecological Assessments and Procurement Services, LLC (January 2020- present)
1538 McKinney Cave Road
Reedsville, WV 26547

Member, Senior Ecologist

Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills

Natural resources consulting (part-time basis) for clients with exceptional character. Includes conservation planning and assessments (bat), conservation easement inspection and monitoring, cost-calculators for long-term stewardship responsibilities.

AllStar Ecology LLC (December 2007 - November 2019)

1582 Meadowdale Road
Fairmont, WV 26554 United States

Member (Founding Member)

Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills

Conceptualized, established, recruited partners, and grew AllStar Ecology LLC (ASE) into a 50-person LLC generating over \$4M+ annual revenue with main office, two field stations, 1500 acres of dedicated conservation projects, 20+ fleet vehicles, heavy equipment, and dedicated vegetation management (herbicide) trucks.

Developed proposals for providing permitting and siting services for over 1,500 projects across 50,000+ acres in West Virginia, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Included 404/401 water quality permitting and consultations with all relevant State and Federal agencies, as well as municipalities, when applicable.

Responsible for the training, recruitment, hiring, day-to-day oversight, and ongoing professional development of multi-disciplinary staff of biologists and subject matter experts with primary duties including but not limited to:

- Clean Water Act 404/401 permitting and associated field surveys;
- Endangered Species Act Section 7, 9, and 10 consultations / field surveys for freshwater mussels, crayfish, bats, plants, and bees and associated conservation measures (onsite and offsite).
- Cultural resource management services (Section 106 permitting) under National Historic Preservation Act;
- Contracting services, including heavy equipment operators and vegetation management personnel, for habitat restoration, creation and maintenance;
- Environmental inspection services for erosion and sediment control monitoring;
- Administrative / human resource duties, accounts payable / receivables, professional and general liability insurance, workers compensation, and payroll.

Established partnerships with academic institutions (West Virginia University), state agencies (West Virginia Division of Natural Resources [WVDNR]), local and national non-profits (West Virginia Land Trust, The Conservation Fund, West Virginia Land Stewardship Corporation) to create opportunities for habitat enhancements and long term protection. This includes the creation of two wetlands on state

Wildlife Management Areas, the targeted and planned acquisition of over 800-acres for habitat managed to support bat populations with eventual transfer to Pennsylvania Game Commission as new state land, and the ongoing management of private lands for conservation (six properties totaling approximately 650 acres).

Guided the establishment of stream and wetland mitigation banking instruments in West Virginia and Ohio, and in approval process for conservation banks (bats) in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Includes site selection, negotiating easements or the purchase of land, managing project timelines, and targeting specific habitat enhancements and restoration goals above required success criteria. Project approval required consensus and approval from multiple state and Federal Agencies.

Established, organized and budgeted for annual professional development training program, and re-certification for 30+ staff. This includes Leadership and Management Training (WVU Extension Service), Wetland Delineation and Regional Supplement Training (Swamp School, LLC). Ohio Rapid Assessment Method (ORAM) v. 5.0 , Headwater Habitat Evaluation Index (HHEI) and Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index (QHEI) (Midwest Biodiversity Institute), River Hydrology Courses I-IV (Rosgen Training), Environmental Permitting in Pennsylvania (Gailey Environmental), CPR and First Aid Training (American Heart Association).

Contacted by and coordinated with subject matter experts (John Dorney, Rick Savage, Ralph Tiner and Paul Adamus, editors) to create a book chapter on West Virginia techniques for rapid field assessment in developing stream and wetland mitigation banks. Served as contributing author and in-house editor for content.

Established office protocols for staff to ensure safety compliance, vehicle maintenance, data archiving and data redundancy, and access to traditional benefits (e.g., 401(k), health insurance, etc.); created incentive programs for safety, comp time for salary employees, and additional health and wellness procedures to minimize worker's compensation exposure while safeguarding employee welfare. Oversee and review biweekly payroll (\$70,000-\$100,000+ per pay period).

Created, interview and hire for internship program that has had over 30 summer interns from six academic institutions over seven years.

West Virginia University Research Corporation (August 2008 – April 2011)

886 Chestnut Ridge Road
Morgantown, WV 26505 United States

Wildlife Biologist

Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills

Directly responsible to and represented Dr. James T. Anderson (Wildlife and Fisheries Department) at West Virginia University, serving as full-time Wildlife Biologist, managing a subset of projects and providing leadership in his absence. Specifically, was responsible for the development and testing of the preliminary version of the West Virginia Wetland Rapid Assessment Method. This included:

- Selecting over 1,000 wetlands across the state of West Virginia for testing and the hiring, training, and coordination of a five-person field crew over two summers;
- Deriving GIS-based landscape variables to integrate with field data collection to validate, score, and determine various wetland functions including sediment retention, biodiversity, nutrient and heavy metal abatement, floodwater attenuation, and biological integrity;
- Creating the User's Manual for this methodology to ensure consistency in its application and enable general public and consultants to understand the variables used to derive metrics indicating wetland functions and values.

Provided mentorship and guidance to ten graduate students in Wildlife and Fisheries Management in reference to Division procedures and protocols (including Animal Handling and Care procedures), study design and analysis, site selection, outreach, recommendations on hiring strategies; as well as provided additional field labor when needed.

Developed modules for WVU Wildlife and Fisheries online class content for Restoration Ecology which is still in curriculum and been taken for credit by over 400 undergraduate students.

Initiated and guided the creation of an Endangered Species training program in cooperation between West Virginia University and the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources for freshwater mussels that has been ongoing for 9+ years and now serves as the primary avenue to become a certified for freshwater mussel surveys in West Virginia.

West Virginia University (January 2005 – August 2008)

333 Evansdale Dr.

Morgantown, WV 26505 United States

Graduate Research Assistant

Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills

Applied for a PhD research project and earned position as a Master's student due to extensive job experience and after interview expressing views of importance on engaging public to support wildlife policy and natural resource management.

Designed and executed wildlife research project to evaluate community characteristics of anurans, birds, vegetation, and macroinvertebrates in across 151 wetlands in West Virginia to determine metrics that indicated biological integrity responsive to human disturbance. These metrics were tested for specific and validity across both hydrogeomorphic (HGM) classes of wetlands and National Wetland Inventory classifications.

Specifically used methodologies typically adopted by volunteer groups to increase impact of project so effort could be expanded and supported by general public after conducting outreach events aimed at watershed groups and community science groups (e.g., Master Naturalist Programs). Gave programs and research updates to these groups to build stakeholder involvement.

Conducted research in 39 of 55 West Virginia counties, engaging land owners for site access, and coordinating with State and Federal natural resource professionals for support. Visited each site seven

times during a field season, including initial site selection, three survey periods to survey for anurans matching the National Acoustic Amphibian Monitoring Protocol, twice for bird point county surveys, and an additional survey to quantify relative abundance of plant species, and collection of macroinvertebrates from water column and substrate.

Served as Teaching Assistant to general biology lab; earning unique honor of having the highest rated teacher feedback while having lowest overall class average. This demonstrates consistency in approach to mentorship in defining expectation and holding students accountable. Taught over 60 students over course of two semesters.

Responsible for all phases of research, including recruitment, training and hiring of field technicians. Empowered summer field technicians to pursue independent research supported WV Odonate project resulting in three county records, one state record, and one specimen sent to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History.

Archived data in Microsoft Access database linked to spatial geodatabase in ArcMap. Developed and wrote SQL queries to tease out metrics in data by combining reference excel tables to Access database. Completed spatial analysis in GIS to develop Landscape Disturbance Index for site selection.

Taxonomic familiarity in macroinvertebrate identification, including knowledge and use of keys.

Completed six chapter thesis, "Developing Volunteer-driven Indices of Biological Integrity for Wetlands in West Virginia"

Grants as Primary Author (Awarded)

- Veselka, W. and Paul Kinder, Michael Strager, Shawn Grushecky. 2022. Machine Learning Targeting and Destruction of Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) on Reclaimed Mine Lands. Office of Surface Mining. \$199,950.
- Anderson, J.T., and W. Veselka. 2020. Validation, Calibration, and Adoption Feasibility of Stem Area at Groundline (SAG) as a Core Indicator of Restoration Trajectory in Compensatory Wetland Mitigation Sites. Environmental Protection Agency. \$151,053.
- Anderson, J. T., H. Ghadimi, M. Strager, W. Veselka, J. T. Petty, and T. Katzner. 2011. Pilot test the ecological approaches to environmental protection developed in capacity research projects CO6A and CO6B. National Academy of Sciences \$360,628.
- Anderson, J. T., and W. Veselka. 2010. Scaling up the West Virginia Wetland Rapid Assessment Procedure (WVWRAP) to Formulate a Statewide Wetland Monitoring Process. West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. \$328,159.
- Anderson, J. T., W. Veselka, J. Skousen, and L. McDonald. 2011. The poultry-based biochar industry roadmap. Blue Moon Fund \$130,000.
- Anderson, J. T., and W. Veselka. 2010. West Virginia wetlands program database development. West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. \$60,000.
- Anderson, J. T., and W. Veselka. 2010. Developing Level III Assessment Surveys for West Virginia wetlands. West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. \$115,000.

- Anderson, J. T., W. Veselka, S. A. Welsh, L. Lin, Y. Park, and P. Turk. 2010. Chesapeake Bay Headwaters: Cacapon River Restoration. Chesapeake Bay Trust. \$75,000.
- Anderson, J.T., Strager, M., Petty, A. Collins, W. Veselka, N. Zegre, and S. Lamont. 2009. Appalachian assessment of natural assets: water. Appalachian Regional Commission \$248,150.

JOB RELATED TRAININGS

- Leadership and Management Training (WVU Extension Service)
- Regulatory V Wetland Delineation Training
- Wetland Delineation and Regional Supplement Training (Swamp School, LLC)
- Ohio Rapid Assessment Method (ORAM) v. 5.0
- Headwater Habitat Evaluation Index (HHEI)
- Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index (QHEI)
- CPR and First Aid Training (American Heart Association)

PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Veselka, W. V., J. T. Anderson, and W. S. Kordek. 2021. Using multiple taxa and wetland classification schemes for enhanced detection of biological response signatures to human impairment. *Ecological Indicators* 133: 108391.

Cunningham, D., W. Veselka, and R. Ward. 2018. The West Virginia Stream and Wetland Valuation Metric (WVSWVM) Crediting Procedure and Assessments in Developing a Stream and Wetland Mitigation Banking Site. Pages 305-315 in *Wetland and Stream Rapid Assessments: Development, Validation and Application*. Elsevier, London, UK.

Veselka, IV, W. E., and J. T. Anderson. 2013. Wetland indices of biological integrity. Pages 1-28 in J. T. Anderson, and C. A. Davis, editors. *Wetland Techniques. Volume 3: Applications and Management*. Springer, New York, New York.

Pitchford, J. L., C. Wu, L. Lin, J. T. Petty, R. Thomas, W. E. Veselka, D. Welsch, N. Zegre, and J. T. Anderson. 2012. Climate change effects on hydrology and ecology of wetlands in the mid-Atlantic Highlands. *Wetlands* 32:21-33.

Veselka, W. V., J. T. Anderson, and W. S. Kordek. 2010. Using dual classifications in the development of avian wetlands indices of biological integrity for wetlands in West Virginia, USA. *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment* 164:533-548.

Veselka, W. V., J. S. Rentch, W. N. Grafton, W. S. Kordek, and J. T. Anderson. 2010. Using two classification schemes to develop vegetation indices of biological integrity for wetlands in West Virginia, USA. *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment* 170:555-569.