



Andrea Vona, Executive Director

Andrea Vona is the Executive Director of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. Andrea oversees the organization's staff and programs. She manages various projects, implements and updates the Strategic Plan, and prepares and monitors the annual budget.

Background and qualifications:

- M.S. in Environmental Science from Cal State University Fullerton
- B.A. in Environmental Studies from the University of California at Santa Barbara
- Over nine years of experience in management and habitat restoration including numerous restoration projects such as coastal sage scrub, riparian, freshwater marsh, and grassland habitats.
- For the Land Conservancy she has managed the White Point Nature Preserve master plan implementation project in San Pedro, in partnership with the City of Los Angeles. She chaired the White Point Advisory Board and organized and led volunteer days in support of this project. She also managed the requirements of the NCCP for the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve such as coordinating rare plant and sensitive wildlife surveys and writing a three-year restoration plan.
- Experienced in delineating wetlands and waters of the United States. Involved with project compliance of permits and stipulations as related to waters of the United States.
- Recipient of the PV/South Bay Audubon Society's 2007 Restoration Award.
- She has been a Land Conservancy staff member since 2002.
- Prior to joining the PVPLC, she managed the habitat department at Ocean Trails Golf Course and aided in the compliance with the Habitat Conservation Plan of the 100-acre coastal sage scrub restoration project. She also served as an ecologist for a consulting firm in Irvine.



Jill Wittman, Administrative Assistant

Jill Wittman is responsible for managing the general office and administrative needs for the organization. Her responsibilities include support for the entire office. She is the primary telephone contact for incoming calls, handles general administrative responsibilities, maintains the PVPLC website, assists with maintenance of records and files, and keeps employee records.

Background and qualifications:

- Jill has a background in general office management and human resources.
- AA degree in Apparel Manufacturing Management from the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising
- Jill spent the past 15 years working in the fashion industry in Los Angeles and the South Bay Area.
- She was born and raised in Torrance, where she currently resides.
- Jill joined the Land Conservancy staff in September 2009.

LAND STEWARDSHIP



Adrienne Mohan, Conservation Director

Adrienne Mohan is the Conservation Director for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. Adrienne oversees the Stewardship Program staff and conservation projects including habitat restoration, species protection, and management of the Preserves and open spaces.

Background and qualifications:

- M.A. and B.A. in Geography from California State University, Long Beach
- Experience restoring coastal sage scrub, salt marsh, coastal dune, and riparian habitats.
- Experience coordinating volunteer habitat restoration and plant propagation projects for several nonprofits organizations in southern California.
- Adrienne joined the Land Conservancy staff in March 2010.



Cris Sarabia, Stewardship Manager

Cris Sarabia is the Stewardship Manager for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. Cris is responsible for implementation of land stewardship activities on nature preserves on the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

Background and qualifications:

- B.A in Environmental Science and Policy from California State University, Long Beach
- Specialized in the management and restoration of coastal sage scrub habitat, coastal salt marshes, coastal dunes and marine habitats for over the past four years.
- Experience in developing naturalist education programs, California native plant propagation and community based restorations within the non-profit sector.
- Cris joined the Land Conservancy staff in February 2009.



Josh Weinik, Stewardship Associate (Biologist)

Josh Weinik is the Stewardship Associate (Biologist) for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. Josh performs biological monitoring, mapping, and reporting for stewardship activities. Josh also contributes to community outreach efforts.

Background and qualifications:

- M.S. in Environmental Studies from California State University Fullerton studying habitat associations of rare and listed species.
- B.A. in Business Administration from California State University Fullerton.
- Experience includes the management of biological monitoring and land stewardship programs for the City of Newport Beach and City of Santa Ana.
- Experience in the development and implementation of habitat restoration efforts of various plant communities including coastal sage scrub, coastal dune, perennial grassland, and southern oak woodland.
- Josh joined the Land Conservancy staff in February 2016.



Megan Roy, Stewardship Associate (Volunteer Coordinator)

Megan Roy is the Stewardship Associate (Volunteer Coordinator) of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. Megan organizes and leads outdoor volunteer programs including Saturday Volunteer Days, scout projects, and conservation-related special projects.

Background and qualifications:

- B.S. in Environmental Studies from the University of California at Santa Barbara
- Five years of experience in habitat restoration and program outreach including restoration projects in California coastal sage scrub, saltwater marsh, coastal dune and grassland habitats.
- Experience in program leadership and volunteer coordination for numerous nonprofits and agencies
- Experience in environmental consulting and land management
- Megan joined the Land Conservancy staff in March 2016



Damian Morando, Field Operations Technician

Damian Morando is the Field Operations Technician. He provides support for the management of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy's managed properties, trails, signage, and related volunteers. Damian conducts trail closures and rehabilitation projects with volunteers and/or independent contractors.

Background and qualifications:

- 7 years with the SEA LAB in Redondo Beach, a program of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, 3 years spent on the native plant restoration project for the El Segundo Blue Butterfly.
- Worked with the Catalina Island Conservancy on the control and eradication of invasive species utilizing integrated pest management approach.
- Conducted trail work for one season with the California Conservation Corps Backcountry program in the interior of Yosemite National Park.
- Damian joined the Land Conservancy in March 2008



Hugo Morales, Stewardship Technician Lead

Hugo Morales is the Stewardship Technician Lead. He works on all PVPLC-managed properties.

Background and qualifications:

- Hugo is training in trail installation and maintenance for PVPLC preserves
- Skilled in the identification of Southern California native plants
- Hugo has been working with the PVPLC since spring 2008



Humberto Calderon, Stewardship Technician

Humberto Calderon is a Stewardship Technician. He works on all PVPLC-managed properties.

Background and qualifications:

- Humberto helped with the initial installation and maintenance of White Point and the habitat areas of Oceanfront Estates
- Skilled in the identification of Southern California native plants

- Humberto joined the Land Conservancy in October 2006



Neli Gonzalez, Lead Nursery Technician

Neli Gonzalez assists in the plant nursery, with plant propagation, seed preparation and general upkeep.

Background and qualifications:

- Neli has acquired an extensive knowledge of native plant propagation, seed collection, and nursery maintenance during her time with the PVPLC.
- Neli is an aspiring graphic artist, attending college in pursuit of this goal.
- Neli has been working with the PVPLC for more than three years.



Juan Saravia, Stewardship Technician

Juan Saravia is a Stewardship Technician. He works on all PVPLC-managed properties.

Background and qualifications:

- Juan was born and raised in Los Angeles.
- Juan has an extensive background in landscaping, construction and gardening.
- Juan is skilled in Southern California Native plant identification.
- Juan enjoys camping, traveling and spending time with his family.
- Juan joined the Land Conservancy full-time in September 2016



Cristhian Carlos Torres Betancourt, Stewardship Technician

Cristhian is a Stewardship Technician. He works on all PVPLC-managed properties.

Background and qualifications:

- Cristhian was born in Madrid Spain, and came to the United States at the age of 10.
- Cristhian is attending Long Beach City College and Cal State Long Beach where he is studying architecture and interior design. He plans on getting his degree in Landscape Architecture.
- Cristhian is skilled in identification of Southern California Native plants. He has always been interested in the arts, environmental issues and nature.
- Cristhian joined the Land Conservancy full-time in September 2016

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS



Brittany Goldsmith, Volunteer Program Manager

Brittany Goldsmith is the Volunteer Program Manager for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. At the Conservancy, Brittany is responsible for organizing and recruiting volunteers to help with planned land stewardship and outreach initiatives. Brittany also plans and executes events that recognize the volunteers' efforts.

Background and qualifications:

- B.S. in Wildlife Biology with a concentration in Conservation Biology from Colorado State University.
- M.S. in Rangeland Ecology and Management from Montana State University. During this time Brittany was a graduate teaching assistant in soil science and GPS mapping courses.
- Served as an AmeriCorps member teaching watershed science and conservation in Knoxville Tennessee public schools.
- Worked as an Outdoor Science Instructor for the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.
- Experience with non-profit land conservancies thru positions as Outreach Assistant and Conservation Easement Monitor for the Colorado Chapter of The Nature Conservancy as well as Community Stewardship Coordinator for the Irvine Ranch Conservancy.
- Brittany joined the Land Conservancy staff in April 2015.

DEVELOPMENT



Susan Wilcox, Director of Development

Susan oversees the marketing and communications activities as well as the community outreach events and is directly involved in planning the fundraising activities while refining these to fit in the mission of the conservancy.

Background and qualifications:

- M.B.A. in Marketing from the University of Southern California
- B.A. in Literature from the University of California at Berkeley
- Over 30 years of experience working in the non-profit world including conference planning, student recruitment, program evaluation, marketing and development.
- Over 24 years of experience in fundraising including campaign planning, endowment and annual fund development
- Over ten years of experience in forming a small non-profit entity which presented cultural and educational events while focusing on audience development and community outreach at the historic Warner Grand Theatre in San Pedro
- Commendation from the City of Los Angeles - 2009
- Susan was born in France and lived in Fontainebleau as well as in Heidelberg, Germany before coming to California. Her interests include hiking, bicycling, gardening, reading and animals.



Louise Olfarnes, Manager of Marketing Communications

Louise Olfarnes provides marketing support for the organization in the area of marketing communications, event planning, and database management. She is responsible for producing the newsletter and other publicity materials and supervises outreach activities.

Background and qualifications:

- M.A. in International Affairs from the American University (1989)
- B.A. in Political Science from the University of California at Santa Barbara (1986)
- Fifteen years professional experience in non-profit development, fundraising and communications most recently for the Executive Service Corps of Southern California.

- Louise was previously the development officer for the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (affiliate of the IRC), Global Kids, Inc. and Doctors of the World-USA, in New York. She was also a former foreign policy staff assistant in the U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.
- Louise grew up in San Pedro, CA and has lived and worked in Washington, D.C., New York City, Cambridge, Geneva, Oslo, Montevideo and, most recently, Mexico City, where she was Vice President of Communications for the Newcomers' Organization (2006-2007).
- Louise joined the Land Conservancy staff in January 2009.



Laura Lohnes, Development Associate

Laura Lohnes is the Development Associate for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. She is responsible for providing support for the Development Staff. Her responsibilities include maintaining the membership database, processing donor correspondence, and assisting with special events.

Background and qualifications:

- Bachelor of Arts from University of California at Los Angeles
- Over 20 years of administrative experience working in local South Bay cities including Torrance, Carson, El Segundo, and Inglewood.
- Laura has lived in the South Bay for over 25 years and enjoys hiking, cycling and tennis.
- Laura joined the Conservancy staff in December 2015.

EDUCATION



Holly Gray, Education Program Manager

Holly Gray is the Education Program Manager for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. She is responsible for a variety of tasks focused on implementing school-based education programs at various locations throughout the Peninsula and surrounding cities, and additional operations at PVPLC nature centers. Holly spent her childhood exploring the open spaces of the Palos Verdes Peninsula and is now dedicated to sharing the importance of our unique local habitats with others.

Background and qualifications:

- B.A. in Environmental Studies & Biology and Postgraduate Certificate in Science Communication from University of California, Santa Cruz.
- M.S. in Biology from University of Nebraska studying anthropogenic impacts on seabird diets
- Designed and implements an online science education program for Algalita Marine Research Institute.

- Over 11 years of experience teaching and supervising volunteers at Cabrillo Marine Aquarium.
- 3 years of experience as the Lead Educator and Program Co-Director of a wetland ecology education program for the Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society.
- Native plant propagation and restoration experience working for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy's Native Plant Nursery, Natural Landscapes, and Cabrillo Marine Aquarium's Native Plant Demonstration Garden.
- 6 years of experience as the Program Leader for Youth Hostelling International's "Discover Your World" education program.

NATURE CENTERS



Johnny Perez, Naturalist

Johnny Perez is a Naturalist for the Land Conservancy. Johnny has been with the Land Conservancy seasonally as Stewardship Technician since 2013, and became a full time staff in spring 2015, where he helped restore coastal sage scrub habitat by removing non-native plants and planted thousands of plants each year. During his work on the nature preserves, he has shared information about the restoration with hikers and trained volunteers during outdoor volunteer days.

Background and qualifications:

- In 2015, Johnny completed training to become a certified California Naturalist through the University of California Extension Program.
- Johnny joined our Naturalist team in January 2016. He enjoys to providing information about local nature and conservation with the community.
- Johnny is also pursuing a degree focused on environmental biology and ecology.



Neil Uelman, Naturalist

Neil Uelman is a Naturalist for the Land Conservancy. He works at both George F Canyon Nature Center and White Point Nature Education Center. He is especially interested in botany and likes to share his enthusiasm about the local flora with visitors.

Background and qualifications:

- B.A. in Environmental Studies from Cal State Dominguez Hills.
- Currently completing a Field Botany Certificate with the University of Riverside Extension.
- On the Board of Directors for the California Native Plant Society South Coast Chapter.
- 3 years experience working with native plant restoration as a Habitat Steward for the El Dorado Nature Center.
- Aquatic Bird Rehabilitation Technician and Volunteer Coordinator for International Bird Rescue.
- 2 years experience with wetland habitat restoration as a Bolsa Chica Wetlands Steward.
- Holds a program certificate in Introduction to Riparian/Wetland Plants from the California Native Plant Society.
- Experience with outdoor education with Youth Hosteling International as a program leader.