

## STAFF



### **Adrienne Mohan, Executive Director**

Adrienne Mohan is the Executive Director of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. She oversees the non-profit land trust annual budget of \$2.1 million, management and maintenance of 1600 acres of public land serving a populated region of southern Los Angeles County with 40 miles of multi-use trails, the operation of two nature centers, and the delivery of community programming; maintaining productive relationships with stakeholders, community members, government staff and officials; directing, supervising and evaluating the planning, organizing and operations of public service programs; providing detailed budgets and cost projections for programs and projects and monitors budget; preparing all board agendas, staff reports, financial statements and presentations.

#### Background and qualifications:

- Adrienne brings over 15+ years of experience in land conservation and ecosystem management, and non-profit board management
- Adrienne has earned Masters in Geography from California State University, Long Beach
- Before her current role, Adrienne served as the Conservancy's Conservation Director
- Adrienne joined the Land Conservancy staff in March 2010.

## ADMINISTRATION



### **Jill Wittman, Office Manager**

Jill Wittman is responsible for managing the general office and administrative needs for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. Her responsibilities include support for the entire office. Jill 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



## Cris Sarabia, Conservation Director

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

Background and qualifications:

- Master of Science in Geographic Information Science and a 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.
- Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner by the Society for Ecological Restoration, Qualified Applicator Licensed, and Certified Wildlife Protector from The Wildlife Training Institute
- Cris joined the Land Conservancy staff in February 2009.



## Johnny Perez, Stewardship Manager

Johnny Perez is the Stewardship Manager for the Land Conservancy. Johnny has been with the Land Conservancy seasonally as Stewardship Technician since 2013, and become 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. In January 2016, Johnny joined our naturalist team and worked on sharing knowledge about local nature and conservation with the community. In October 2017, Johnny became the Field Operations Specialist where he focuses on implementing trail management and rehabilitation projects, maintaining signs, kiosks and other property infrastructure, and ensuring safe enjoyment of visitors hiking within our managed lands. In June 2019, Johnny became the Stewardship Manager where he oversees the development, implementation, and maintenance of various habitat restoration projects throughout the peninsula. In this position, he also oversees the maintenance and restoration of the PVPLC's diverse network of trails.

Background and qualifications:

- In 2015, Johnny completed training to become a certified California Naturalist through the University of California Extension Program.

- Johnny is pursuing a degree focused on environmental biology and ecology.



## Olivia Jenkins, Stewardship Associate

Olivia Jenkins is the Stewardship Associate for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. Olivia performs biological monitoring, mapping, and reporting for stewardship activities as well as overseeing community science monitoring programs.

Background and qualifications:

- M.S. in Conservation and Restoration Science from University of California, Irvine
- B.A. in Geography and Geospatial Information Systems (GIS), with a minor in Spanish from University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
- Experience includes: Monitoring many at-risk bird populations such as California gnatcatcher, coastal cactus wren, least bittern, snowy plover, least tern, among other species; Vegetation assessments in coastal southern California habitats; Habitat restoration within various southern California ecosystems
- Olivia joined the Land Conservancy staff in June 2022



## Caleb Rod, Field Operations Specialist

Caleb Rod is the Field Operations Specialist of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. He maintains the trails, interpretative signage, etc. at 10+ managed lands. Tasks from clearing brush & graffiti, closing spur trails, nearly any general maintenance to accessible areas. He also leads the Rapid Response teams Friday and Saturday, where volunteers have fun learning tool safety and techniques, and quality trail etiquette.

Background and qualifications:

- Volunteering hundreds of hours with other organizations, and hosting his own beach cleanups he has a strong love for volunteerism.
- Before his current role, Caleb served full time in the Conservancy's Land Stewardship Technician position and volunteered within the Conservancy since 2020.
- Honing his skills from his past as a handyman, he uses his problem solving skills, and his knowledge of tools to complete projects with ease around the Peninsula.



## Hugo Morales, Stewardship Technician Lead

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

Background and qualifications:

- Certified Irrigation Repair Technician
- Hugo is training in trail installation and maintenance for PVPLC preserves
- Skilled in the identification of Southern California native plants and habitat restoration techniques
- 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.



## Stu Woodward, Native Plant Nursery Assistant

Stu Woodward is the Native Plant Nursery Assistant at the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. He handles the Native Plant sales that are available online and held in person the second Saturday of each month at George F Canyon Nature Center, and the fourth Saturday of each month at White Point Nature Education Center. He is also responsible for planning and carrying out the nursery Best Management Practices protocol. In addition, he contributes to general planning and daily operations at the nursery.

### Background and qualifications:

- Stu is a certified California Native Plant Landscaper and amateur Botanist.
- He earned a B.A. in Geological Sciences at the University of California Santa Barbara, and a Master's Degree in Technology Based Education and is also a Google Certified Educator.
- Before working at Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, he had been a longtime Science and Technology educator.
- He also practices GIS field work, native plant design, and environmental restoration.

## EDUCATION & SCIENCE



## Holly Gray, Education Director

Holly Gray is the Education Director 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 Hosteling International's "Discover Your World" education program.



## Zoe Allen, Education Program Manager

Zoe Allen 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 the PVPLC nature centers. Zoe grew up in San Pedro and spent much of her life exploring the local flora and fauna of the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

### Background and qualifications:

- B.S. in Marine Biology from California State University, Long Beach
- Currently pursuing an M.S. in Science Education, with an option in Informal Education at California State University, Long Beach
- Over 5 years of experience as an informal science educator at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, Roundhouse Aquarium Teaching Center, and Marine Science Floating Lab
- Developed and implemented curriculum and virtual classes for AltaSea at the Port of Los Angeles
- Over 5 years of experience conducting field surveys at the Cabrillo Coastal Park and along the Palos Verdes Peninsula
- Volunteered for the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium as a naturalist and lab intern for several years



## Helen Ashford, Naturalist

Helen Ashford is a Naturalist with the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. She assists with Education Program activities and works at the two nature centers managed by the Conservancy at George F. Canyon and White Point Nature Preserve. Since moving to the South Bay in 2003, Helen has been a volunteer with the Conservancy as a Trail Crew member, Cactus Wren and Wildlife monitor. Prior to this position, Helen worked at the Conservancy several seasons as a Stewardship Technician performing habitat

restoration.

### Background and Qualifications:

- Award-winning Historic Preservationist and Literary Consultant, L.M. Montgomery Institute, Prince Edward Island, Canada
- Archivist & Historian with the Bureau of Land Management & State Park System, Sierra Nevada Mountains – Jawbone Canyon, Death Valley Junction, Bodie Ghost Town
- Certified Technical Writer / Grant Writer and Administrator

- Seasonal Stewardship Technician, Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy
- Helen joined the Conservancy as a Naturalist in 2022



## Adina Bakos, Naturalist

Adina Bakos is a Naturalist with the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. She assists with Education Program activities and works at the two nature centers managed by the Conservancy at George F Canyon and White Point Nature Preserves. She has been a lifelong resident of the Palos Verdes Peninsula and has been passionate about the protection of Earth's ecosystems and wildlife since childhood. Adina

hopes to spread awareness in appreciating the natural world around us and coexistence with local wildlife.

### Background and Qualifications:

- Graduated from California State University Long Beach with a Bachelor's in Geography and a Minor in Environmental Science and Policy
- Certificated Naturalist completed through the UC California Naturalist Program
- Former Corpsmember of the SEALab Aquarium in Redondo Beach, responsible for performing environmental oversight of the AES Power Plant by rescuing, monitoring and recording the impingement of marine life. Responsible for animal husbandry and facility maintenance of the aquarium as well as implementing West Basin Municipal Water District's water education program through outreach and field trips.

## DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS



## 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-Digby, Manager of Marketing Communications

Louise Olfarnes-Digby 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.



## Kenny Roth, Development Manager

Kenny Roth is the Development Manager for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. At the Conservancy, Kenny is responsible for maintaining the membership database, processing donor correspondence, assisting with fundraising activities and special events. Kenny is currently helping to create programs that will expand new donor engagement and

retention.

Background and qualifications:



- Over 8 years of experience with Greenpeace USA and Greenpeace New Zealand
- B.A. in Psychology from Cal State University Fullerton
- 3 years of Volunteering with National Ski Patrol at Snow Summit, CA
- Hurricane Relief Volunteer with All Hands and Hearts in Yabucoa, Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.
- Passion for activism, hiking, snowboarding and disc golf.
- Kenny joined the Land Conservancy staff in August 2022

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS



### Lynn Rotunno, Volunteer Program Manager

Lynn Rotunno is the Volunteer Program Manager for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. At the Conservancy, Lynn is responsible for organizing and recruiting volunteers to help with planned land stewardship, trail work, monitoring, outreach initiatives and other programs. Lynn also plans and executes events that recognize volunteer efforts.

#### Background and qualifications:

- Over 10 years of professional experience recruiting/engaging volunteers and members for non-profit environmental and parks organizations.
- Developed a coalition of over 100 community members organized to create an EPA-approved watershed plan resulting in significant grant funding for local communities.
- Environmental representative on the government-facilitated Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Supply Planning Group. Successfully integrated priority ecological needs in long-term water supply plan.
- Experience developing and leading outdoor recreation/environmental education activities for youth and adults.
- M.A. in Biology from Miami University - Ohio. Coursework in conservation biology, environmental volunteerism, and conservation education. Member of The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi
- Served as a volunteer with many nonprofit environmental organizations. Roles included ecological restoration, wildlife rehabilitation, public outreach, river water quality monitoring, communications lead, and land conservation organization board member.
- Lynn joined the Land Conservancy staff in March 2022.



## Susannah Miles, Volunteer & Stewardship Coordinator

Susannah Miles is the Volunteer & Stewardship Coordinator of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy. Susannah organizes and leads stewardship-based outdoor volunteer programs that focus on habitat restoration and preservation including weekend Volunteer Days at our nature preserves throughout the peninsula, scout projects, and conservation-related special projects.

### Background and qualifications:

- B.S. Fisheries and Wildlife Science Oregon State University
- Experience developing and leading conservation programs with non-profits and zoological institutions
- Experience in program leadership and volunteer coordination for conservation based nonprofits
- Experience as a volunteer for non-profit organizations focused on environment and educational work
- Experience in community engagement, serving on the City of Long Beach Mayor's Task Force for Animal Care Services developing a five year strategic plan
- Successful at collaborating with local organizations such as educational institutions, museums, non-profits and governmental partners to provide outreach programs and large-scale events
- Susannah joined the Land Conservancy staff in January 2023