

LEONARD & SANDY SARGENT EVST GRADUATE FELLOW

2016-17

Terri Nichols

Terri Nichols comes to the University of Montana EVST program after an extensive background in environmental field work and communications. She earned a BFA in Journalism from Wayne State University (2002) and an AAS in Natural Resource Conservation & Management from Flathead Valley Community College (2012) before serving as a Peace Corps Agriculture/Environment Volunteer in Zambia from 2013 to 2015. Her commitment to preserving ecosystems while strengthening the human communities that rely upon them has informed her work in watershed research, ecosystem restoration, teaching, and learning.



Originally from the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan, Terri grew up exploring small remnant patches of urban forest and the state's many lakes and streams. She didn't begin her environmental career until she moved to Santa Barbara, California, where she discovered hiking, backpacking, and watershed science. While there she worked as a Stream Team Leader for the Water Keeper Alliance, leading groups of volunteers sampling the Ventura River watershed as part of efforts to remove the Matilija Dam and restore the watershed. She then worked on trail crews in the San Rafael, Gros Ventre, and Bob Marshall Wilderness areas of California, Wyoming, and Montana, respectively.

Terri returned to conservation and volunteer outreach with the Student Conservation Association, restoring habitat around Wilderness areas in the deserts of California and leading groups of high schoolers building trails and community in national parks. She moved to Montana's Flathead Valley in 2007 and has since done research on stream and wetland health throughout the state for both the U.S. Forest Service and the Montana Natural Heritage Program.

During her time in the Peace Corps, Terri lived in a small village in rural northern Zambia, where she worked with her neighbors on projects related to food security, soils improvement, agroforestry, business skills, and girls' empowerment. She also organized and directed northern Zambia's first-annual Camp TREE (Teaching Respect for Everyone's Environment), where 16 local youth and eight community mentors learned about environmental stewardship practices both in the village and within the larger landscape.

Terri's goals in the EVST Masters of Science Program are to are to explore the ethical and social justice implications of environmental preservation and restoration and to foster human connection to wild places. She also hopes to find ways of combining her field work experience with her background in communications, teaching, and community building. Terri plans to continue her career in Montana, working in environmental education, outreach, and conflict resolution programs in either the non-profit or public sector. Her strong record of commitment to the land and to social and environmental justice position her to do important work in the EVST Program and in her career after graduation.