

## LEONARD & SANDY SARGENT EVST GRADUATE FELLOW

2024-25

Mara Pellerito

Mara Pellerito, a native of the scenic northern Michigan, developed a profound love for the natural world and its wildlife. Her early experiences, including teaching ski lessons at the local hill, ignited a passion for sharing her appreciation of the outdoors. In 2024, Mara graduated from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and a minor in Creative Writing. Her unique blend of scientific and creative disciplines has equipped her with a deep understanding of the interconnectedness between humans and nature.

In her time at the University of Michigan, Mara was a member of the Sierra Club, which encourages students to come together to protect the environment. In the Sierra Club, Mara was part of environmental activism projects that sought divestment from fossil fuels, carbon neutrality of the university, and support for local food projects. Additionally, Mara taught ski lessons at Mt. Brighton for the Snowboard Outreach Society Program, which strives to make the outdoors more accessible to inner-city students from various surrounding schools. Finally, in partnership with the university, Mara conducted research on Environmental Education with the Grand Traverse Conservation District and worked as an Environmental Educator for two summers. In her time with the GTCD, Mara fell in love with teaching children about the importance of the natural world and how to protect it.



Mara's love for skiing took her on multiple road trips west toward the mountains, and she quickly gained a great fondness for the mountains and wilderness that could only be found in places like Montana. After graduating from the University of Michigan, she took one more road trip and decided Missoula was the place she wanted to be.

The Leonard and Sandy Sargent EVST Graduate Fellowship has allowed Mara to pursue her academic, career, and personal goals by enrolling in the EVST master's program at the University of Montana for the fall of 2024. Mara hopes to study the intersection of environmental writing and the role of environmental education in environmental activism and protection with the goal of creating a brighter, more sustainable future for generations to come.