

Greetings!

A warm and hearty welcome, all *Dragonfly* alums, to the inaugural *Project Dragonfly* Alumni Newsletter (PDAN, for those of you who have been missing our many acronyms)!

With our 2018 December graduation recently behind us and our May 2019 graduation almost here, there is a growing swarm of Dragonflies fighting the good fight worldwide. We hope these alum newsletters--which we plan to send out twice a year--will keep everyone informed on new developments and opportunities, strengthen our shared mission for social and ecological change, and serve as a reminder of extraordinary friendships forged across diverse communities, professions, and geographies. We encourage everyone to stay engaged and shape what the *Dragonfly* alum network will become. Drop us a line anytime. You know where to find us!








Chris Myers and Lynne Born Myers
Founders and Directors, *Project Dragonfly*

With hugs from the entire *Dragonfly* team. Onward!

Lynne & Chris
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2018 Highlights by the Numbers

-  238 students graduated: 138 AIP graduates and 100 GFP graduates
-  24 Earth Expeditions course sections
-  427 students embarked on Earth Expeditions courses
-  185 newly admitted AIP students enrolled in 2018
-  25 publications written by *Dragonfly* students and alums

Commencement, December 2018

Following the official Miami University graduation ceremony in December, *Dragonfly* hosted a "Commencement and Future Building" celebration in the Armstrong Pavilion at Miami. About 300 recent grads, family, friends, and *Dragonfly* staff attended, many of them sharing stories from inside and outside their comfort zones on the way to well-earned triumphs in their AIP and GFP journeys. We live-streamed the celebration, which included faculty thoughts at the beginning and

students talking about the programs' impacts later; click throughout the [video](#) to hear more!

Here is Miami University President Greg Crawford's tweet about our AIP and GFP grads:

Greg Crawford @PresGreg 16 Dec 2018

Congratulations to 206 @Prjdragonfly master's students @MiamiUniversity. 1,338 grads since degrees started in 2009. Students in Project Dragonfly's Advanced Inquiry Program & Global Field Program lead inquiry-driven change in communities. Awesome Masters Degree Program #MiamiOH.



Miami President Greg and Dr. Renate Crawford with some 2018 Dragonfly grads

World Community Conference 2018

Dragonfly celebrated the 15th annual World Community Conference (WCC) at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden in December. AIP and GFP graduate students, alums, and *Dragonfly* faculty showcased their community engagement, inquiry, and conservation work through presentations and posters. Check out this [video of the World Community Conference](#).



Pictured left to right: Dragonfly Director Chris Myers and Co-director Lynne Myers, WCC speaker and AIP student Coen Cobb, WCC speaker and MU grad Jenna Franklund GFP '18, AIP Assistant Director Karen Plucinski, MA/MAT Associate Director Kevin Matteson, WCC speaker and Dragonfly Visiting Assistant Professor Rama Callan, Field Programs Assistant Director Jill Korach, WCC speaker and MU grad Angelina Komatovich GFP '18, Dragonfly Program Assistant & registration expert Meggan Davison, and her son, Ben. Breakout session presenter not pictured: Amanda Hinton GFP '18.

New Faces in 2018

In early 2018, *Dragonfly* welcomed Dr. Karen Plucinski as assistant director of the Advanced Inquiry Program. Karen came to *Dragonfly* with more than 22 years of experience on the biology faculty at Missouri Southern State University and Defiance College teaching general ecology, field zoology, mammalogy, and conservation biology. A familiar face to Earth Expeditions and master's students, Karen has led a number of our courses to Belize and has also taught *Dragonfly* core courses online.

Zac Lawson began work at *Dragonfly* in the summer of 2018 as our Interactive Media Developer, joining Mark Celsor on the tech team. Zac and Mark were instrumental in developing our newly designed [Project *Dragonfly* website](#). If you haven't yet, be sure to check it out!

And in the fall of 2018, we welcomed Dr. Rama Callan (ask her about pandas!). Rama joined our rock-star team of Visiting Assistant Professors, Drs. Katie Feilen, Shafkat Khan, Amy Sullivan, and Rachel Yoho.

We're so happy to have each of them with us; they're stellar additions to the *Dragonfly* team! Read more about our newest team members on the [Project *Dragonfly* Team page](#).



Karen Plucinski



Zac Lawson



Rama Callan

Networking for Alums & Students

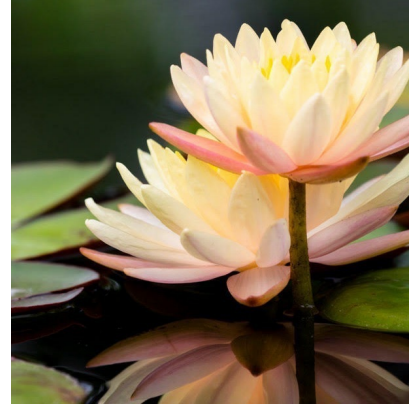
Last fall, Project *Dragonfly* hosted its first-ever Networking and Career Webinar, a constructive dialogue between alums and current students. Hosts were Dr. Kevin Matteson, associate director MA/MAT programs at Project *Dragonfly*, and Dr. Rose Marie Ward, associate dean of the Miami University Graduate School. *Dragonfly* alum panelists included Emily Anderson AIP '17, Diego Jimenez AIP '17, and Fabiana Figueiro Spinelli GFP '16. Be sure to check out the [Project *Dragonfly* Networking and Career Webinar](#), and email Kevin at matteskc@miamioh.edu if you're interested in being a future panelist.

Also, if you know of a job, a grant, or something that you think would interest current students and fellow alums, let us know through the [Project *Dragonfly* share form](#).

Going Green in Saint Louis

We are delighted to welcome the Missouri Botanical Garden as *Dragonfly*'s newest AIP Master Institution! Internationally renowned for its strengths in science and research, MBG is the first exclusively dedicated botanical garden in the AIP alliance of premier community learning institutions throughout the country. Read the [MBG/Miami announcement about the AIP](#),

and check out [the MBG AIP website!](#)



Global Conservation Fellows: A 2018 Graduate

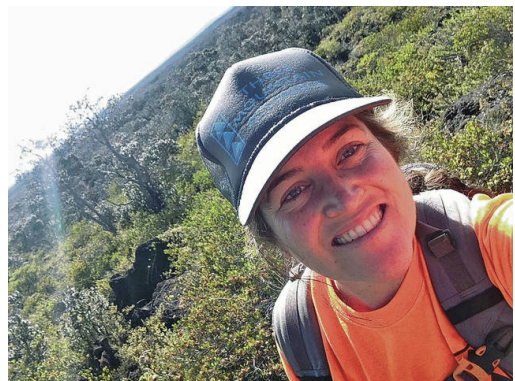
After having grown up in Tulsa, Okla., Colleen Cole moved to the Big Island of Hawai'i about 20 years ago. She now lives in Volcano, Hawai'i, where she directs [Three Mountain Alliance](#), an Earth Expeditions partner for the Hawai'i course. Colleen, who graduated from the Global Field Program in December, is a Global Conservation Fellow.

Project *Dragonfly's* Global Conservation Fellows (GCF) program empowers established and emerging leaders on the frontlines of conservation worldwide. Fellows receive financial and academic support that enables them to join the GFP community and earn their master's degree while advancing socio-ecological change. Previous GCF projects include research and public programs to reduce tapir deaths in Belize, impact assessments of community cattle ranch lands in Mexico, the application of Buddhism to conservation in Thailand, and youth photography workshops to support eco-literacy in Rwanda.

As TMA coordinator, Colleen spends her time building and maintaining relationships with partners, managers, researchers, and communities to ensure people and organizations are all working together to implement conservation activities on the land.

"I started thinking about the environmental education programs my organization offered and how we needed to focus less on informational or awareness campaigns," said Colleen. "I also became aware that I needed to make my own significant changes in consumer behavior and practices."

Colleen's Master Plan explored the question, "What are the barriers to sustainable behaviors and how can we remove those barriers to encourage and facilitate more sustainable lifestyles?" Colleen also published an [op-ed in the Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#) about



Colleen Cole on Hawai'i Island

the misinformation surrounding the Hawai'i County polystyrene ban. She challenged readers to do their own research, critically analyze sources, and check the facts.

A *Dragonfly* Fellow receives partial to full support for course costs and associated expenses through donations to Project *Dragonfly* or through institutional partnerships. A big thanks to our contributors!

A 2018 Student Reflection from our Newest EE

John Scott, a wild animal keeper at Wildlife Conservation Society's Central Park Zoo in New York City, traveled on an Earth Expeditions course to Brazil last summer. He joined the ongoing multifaceted effort to save golden lion tamarins and their home in the critically threatened Atlantic Forest. Read John's [Field Reflections from Brazil](#).



John Scott in the Atlantic Forest

Alumni Survey

In 2019, stay tuned for an alumni survey. We'd love to hear about your post-graduation life and work, and how you'd like to stay engaged with Project *Dragonfly*! Also, so that we're able to stay in touch, please be sure and [update your contact information](#)!

Keep Wandering and Wondering

Are you missing the camaraderie of *Dragonfly* students? Is there a dream site you have not visited, or one you want to revisit with a new perspective? Remember that AIP and GFP alums can explore and apply for [Earth Expeditions courses](#) and select AIP course offerings that have experiential learning at your neighborhood AIP Master Institution. To find out what's available, visit the [AIP homepage](#) and click on the Master Institution in your area.

Share Your Successes

As a *Dragonfly* alum, have you presented at a conference, had a paper published, been awarded a fellowship, or received some other form of recognition? Or, has a project you've been a part of been recognized in your local paper? Exceptional work doesn't end with graduation. *Dragonfly* alums are invited to submit news for us to share on our social media sites and our Earth Expeditions media web page. Share your success with us through the [Project *Dragonfly* share form](#).

Alumni Career Education and Development (ACED)

The Miami University Alumni Association offers help to Miami alumni, near and far, as they navigate their career development and job searches. Services are free to Miami alums who have been out of school for more than a year. Visit the [Miami alum web page](#), and under Resources select "Career Education and Development."

Your Donation Transforms Lives and Communities

No matter the size of your gift, by contributing to Project *Dragonfly* as a program alum you advance our shared mission as we work together for a more ecologically balanced and socially just future. Please visit our new [donations page](#) to support the Project *Dragonfly* Fund, the Advanced Inquiry Program Fund, or the Global Field Program Fund.

STAY CONNECTED:

