2018 Candidates for OBFS Office

Vice President (Vote for One)

Brett Biebuyck
I currently am the Associate Director for Operations and Finance at Toolik Field Station (TFS), run by the University of Alaska. Toolik is a large field station in the U.S. Arctic with many unique challenges, including extreme environmental conditions, a remote location, independent utility systems, challenging logistics, diverse scientific interests, and a transient clientele from around the world. Managing the intersection of these diverse and unique challenges, all in the context of the important mission of supporting scientific research, education, and outreach, I find a particularly interesting and engaging role of OBFS members. I have found the OBFS community to be a great asset as I work through many of these challenges. Expanding these connections and resources for the entire community is important, as we are often working on similar issues and have much to learn by sharing and communicating with one another. The annual meeting is a key component of this interaction. As the OBFS Vice President, I would have the privilege of continuing and enhancing the fine traditions of the annual meeting, a challenge I would find particularly engaging and rewarding. I have solid experience in planning large meetings and logistics, which would serve me well in this role. I will continue to bemoan that fact that OBFS makes me leave Alaska as the dark and cold set in for the winter, but if service to OBFS requires it, I will get on that plane and come see you all in Belgium and Montana.

Jeffrey Clary
Currently Associate Director of the UC Davis Natural Reserves, I've been employed at field stations for more than 10 years, and working on them for 20. Math suggests that this makes me 'experienced,' 'seasoned,' and potentially 'old.' I also serve as president of the Davis Botanical Society and as member of the statewide board of the UC Natural Reserve System climate change initiative. Over the past 10 years, OBFS has repeatedly demonstrated its relevance to me. Before my current role, I was director of a public-oriented, multi-partner field station. OBFS colleagues shared their rich set of experiences as I dealt with administrative, safety, financial, public relations and agency partnership challenges. Likewise, the outreach and citizen science lessons of the group helped build success at my reserve. The organization remains essential, as UC Davis creates a new partnership with a national park and works to strengthen our field stations as welcoming workplaces. In light of these values, I look forward to the upcoming strategic discussion about the future of OBFS, now that the organization’s reserves have reached robust levels.
The role of vice president is a serious one, responsible for helping the hosts of the OBFS annual meeting organize the event. For next year’s meeting at the Hasselt Field Research Centre, I am excited about the prospect of bringing new European field stations to our table, and stoked to have an excuse to practice my Belgian jokes. Trust me, they’re a thing. (Pourquoi les belges ne produisent-ils pas beaucoup de poulet? Parce qu’ils plantent les oeufs bien trop profond.) I’m here all week.

Treasurer (Vote for One)

Skip J. Van Bloem
Back in 2002 I attended my first OBFS meeting at Kellogg Biological Station as a grad student chauffeur. I still use the snazzy portfolio that was meeting bling that year. By that time, I’d already been a student at both KBS and Stone Lab. Field stations fit my comfort zone, after growing up camping with family and Scouts and then as a Peace Corps volunteer. Today I’m the director of Clemson University’s Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology and Forest Science, in Georgetown, SC. We have about 24,000 square feet of buildings and 20 employees and, happily, a stable budget that we finally got shifted from red to black since I started with Baruch 5 years ago. In that time we’ve also increased our faculty and greatly expanded undergrad opportunities at the Institute. I’ve gotten lots of great ideas from OBFS that have helped our program and management and that I’ve shared with other Clemson field stations. As a good Scout, I’m also mindful of the charge to give back through service and would be honored to be selected to be Treasurer of what I think must be the most welcoming and practical scientific organization around. I think the new membership fee structure is an excellent step forward and my pledge is to be fiscally conservative where appropriate so that OBFS can continue to be on the right financial track to realize its dreams. Also, I excel at microphone holding, as shown in my photo. When calling out delinquent auction winners, those microphone skills are really important.

Paul Wetzel
I am manager of the Ada & Archibald MacLeish Field Station, a “liberal arts” field station run by Smith College in western Massachusetts. Although not new to field stations, I am fairly new to the OBFS. I have thoroughly enjoyed the people that I meet through OBFS and completely support the goals of field stations and their representative organization. So, I am pleased to offer my support of the OBFS in a deeper capacity as Treasurer. I am on the Finance Committee of my hometown of Williamsburg (population 2,500; $7.2 million annual budget), a position I’ve held for seven years and being chair for the last two. I have also been the treasurer for a local governmental solid waste management consortium for three years. Perhaps more importantly, I work well in team settings and with many different types of people—after all hermits do not make good land managers. I would enjoy the challenge of working for the OBFS and carrying on the good work of the organization!
**Steven Mnuchin** After reading the “fake news” bios of the other candidates for Treasurer, I am sure you will agree with our Commander in Chief that I am the best candidate. I am a full blooded American and former investment banker who is serving as the 77th (and current as of today) United States Secretary of the Treasury as part of the Cabinet of Donald Trump. Previously, I was a hedge fund manager. After I graduated from Yale University in 1985 (and joined Skull and Bones of G.H. and G.W. Bush fame), I worked for investment bank Goldman Sachs for 17 years, eventually becoming its Chief Information Officer. I was a member of Sears’ board of directors from 2005 until December 2016, and before that was a director for K-Mart, which was acquired by Sears in 2005. As you can see from recent news accounts, my tenure at Sears and Kmart were wildly successful. During the financial crisis of 2007–2008, I bought failed residential lender and all around loser company IndyMac. I quickly changed the name to OneWest Bank and rebuilt the bank, then sold it to CIT Group in 2015 for lots of lots of money. Along the way I was dubbed “The Foreclosure King” from Senate Democrats who are sore losers. You can be sure I will use my hedge fund magic getting the government to write down billions of loans to quintuple money in our OBFS coffers.

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**Member at Large 1 (Vote for One)**

**Tom Bansak**

Tom Bansak is a freshwater ecologist who currently serves as Assistant Director at the University of Montana’s Flathead Lake Biological Station (https://flbs.umt.edu/newflbs), where he encounters and works to solve every problem imaginable (and some that cannot even be imagined). After completing his undergraduate ecology degree at Dartmouth College (and then doing an appropriate amount of unemployed wandering under the guise of “comparative ecology”), Tom started at FLBS in 1996 as a graduate student studying river ecology on the Middle Fork Flathead River. Tom has since conducted water quality investigations around Montana, led research activities on large, pristine salmon rivers in Northern British Columbia and Southeast Alaska, constructed environmental sensor networks on Flathead Lake and the Middle Fork Flathead River, and been active in the battle against Aquatic Invasive Species. Tom’s teaching experience includes leading field ecology courses all over the West for a variety of educational organizations such as Glacier Institute and Wild Rockies Field Institute. For FLBS, he regularly gives educational (hopefully??) presentations to any and every type of audience (i.e., K-12 school groups; university students; professional, community and service groups; and anyone who will listen). Tom also oversees FLBS’s development activities. Tom and his family live at the base of the Swan Mountains near Bigfork, Montana spending a lot of time hiking, paddling rivers, skiing and shoveling snow. Thus far OBFS meetings have been a high point of each year for Tom, perhaps because he has thus far been a passenger with no OBFS organizational responsibilities.
Tom Doak
I’m a left-field candidate, pure and simple. As the director of the National Center for Genome Analysis Support (NCGAS), situated at Indiana University, my group is funded by NSF to help NSF-funded biologists apply genomics methods to their research, by providing access to big computers, help with industry-standard applications, and flat-out advice on how to do things. We work with many projects featuring non-model organisms, which already brings us close to field biologists and “real” biology. And all members of the NCGAS team are biologists, in addition to computer nerds: I myself am a Paramecium geneticist and both my siblings are ecologists. Given our experience with both biology and cyberinfrastructure, NSF asked NCGAS to investigate solutions to field stations’ computational needs — especially using national resources that are already available. You may have noticed my minions and me lurking at the last two OBFS meetings, asking questions, drinking, bidding on ridiculous things (we need to work on our costuming). We also sent out a survey a year ago on field station computation/data needs (another is on its way). I plan to continue working with you for some time to come; I believe we’re making good progress, we’ve provided a few immediate solutions, and we’re planning future workshops. To further this work, I’m running for an Member At Large position on the OBFS board, hoping to bring a novel set of skills and outlook to your organization.

Mike Kisgen
A lawyer empathetic to field stations, a highly funded field station director, and an OBFS member notorious for paying dues late are all hiking together when they simultaneously spot a gold nugget. Who gets it? The OBFS member with late dues, of course, the other two are fantasy creatures. Jokes aside, I am indeed a lawyer empathetic to the concerns of field stations and running for the Member at Large position because I believe I can contribute a unique perspective (fantastical or otherwise). Currently, I manage the law and policy for the University of California’s Natural Reserve System, which is comprised of 39 reserves totaling over 765,000 acres across the state and the world’s largest University administered network. I advise on a myriad of issues, ranging from the mundane to the rare existential crisis, that endlessly confront modern field stations. No matter how “at large” the role, I’m prepared to lend a hand. I have eleven years of legal and policy experience, specializing in environmental, land use, real estate, contracts, and risk management. Prior to working with UC, I was a litigator in soil and groundwater contamination cases. If nothing above convinced you, maybe we share an alma mater; I received my J.D. from the University of Arizona, Master of Environmental Management from Yale’s School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, and B.A. from UC Santa Barbara. Thank you for your consideration.

Jason Wallace
I am the Station Manager of the Desert Studies Center (aka: Zzyzx), a field station of the California State University System, located within the Mojave National Preserve. Before starting my professional field station career, I taught at California State University, Fullerton and Orange Coast College, teaching a wide variety of classes in biology, zoology and ecology. I really enjoyed getting my students out into the
field and utilized various field stations whenever and wherever possible. I hold both a B.S. and M.S. degree in Biological Science from California State University, Fullerton. My Master’s degree was earned studying the dynamics of reptile populations in the Eastern Mojave Desert, a research effort I was able to incorporate into our station’s research and monitoring program. I was also a zookeeper for seven years, caring for a wide variety of Central and South American animals, most of them primates. On some level I feel like this experience may have unwittingly prepared me for what some may consider to be the less glamorous, yet very necessary responsibilities associated with field station operation.

Running a State University field station within a National Park provides both challenges and opportunities. I am confident that my experience working in cooperation with the National Park Service as well as other various agencies including BLM, NASA, USFWS, USGS, and CDFW gives me a perspective that OBFS members can benefit from.

I am now 12 years into my Field Station Career and regrettably I have only had the opportunity to attend the past three OBFS conferences. Attending my first conference was an absolute game changer for me. From the get-go this organization welcomed me with open arms, providing the supportive, nurturing, collaborative environment I didn’t realize I was missing. Suffice it to say I am a big supporter of OBFS and I feel it is time for me to start giving back. What I can offer this organization is my unique perspective, my drive, my knowledge, my enthusiasm, and of course my 12 years of trial and error. Let us learn from each other. Thank you for your consideration.