

INTERNATIONAL
LAND CONSERVATION
NETWORK

NEWS FROM OUR PARTNERS

The first class of the ILCN Academy is underway, providing a deep dive into land and water conservation innovation

Lily Robinson – ILCN Program Coordinator

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On May 17, the first cohort of the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN) Academy gathered virtually to kick off a summer-long deep dive into conservation history, practice, and innovation. 13 participants joined from seven countries, including China, Togo, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, the United States, and Mexico. They bring expertise in wildlife conservation, agriculture, urban and rural landscape conservation, and more.

The ILCN Academy evolved from the ALPINE Summer Institute, which was supported by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Wildlands & Woodlands, and Highstead. Participants are early- and mid-career professionals working for ILCN partner organizations who are looking to build their skills, knowledge, and network base.

Over eight weeks, the class will explore a variety of case studies illustrating innovation across the United States and the world and will hear from the conservation experts who led or researched the initiatives. This year's curriculum covers topics including: establishing pillars of success for exemplary land trust organizations; contributing to global 30x30 targets; introducing conservation finance with a focus on water funds; sharing the benefits of land and resource protection through community conservation; and partnering to uplift Indigenous-led conservation.

Participants will engage with these concepts on discussion boards and apply them to a project of their choosing. The final meetings are an opportunity for participants to present these projects to their peers. The ILCN will compile their written cases into a report that will be published by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and made available as a free learning resource for the land conservation community.

Read more about the participants in the first cohort of the ILCN Academy below.

Participants

Akou Akakpo is the Human Resources Manager at the Land Trust Alliance. Akou has worked at the Land Trust Alliance for the last four years, holding multiple roles in the Operations Department; and just recently, was promoted to the position of Human Resources Manager. She is a certified Human Resources professional through the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) and is passionate about advocating for employees in the workplace. Akou attended Ithaca College and studied Public and Community Health. She grew up in Togo, in a family of farmers from whom she learned the importance of protecting the lands that serve us. Equipped with her passion for social justice, lessons learned from her family and land conservation advocates, Akou hopes to cultivate a career of advocating for accessible natural places for people; especially in communities who have been excluded from land conservation discussions. In her spare time, Akou enjoys baking to share with people and exploring natural spaces around Washington, D.C.



Dr. Cheng Chen is Program Director of the Nature Watch Program, in Shanshui Conservation Center. She worked on population genetics of Sichuan snub-nosed monkey and snow leopard landscape genetic conservation in Sanjiangyuan during her PHD and postdoc with the Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences and Center for Nature and Society of Peking University. She has established a genetics research platform for supporting wildlife conservation in Sanjiangyuan National Park. Since 2015, she has been continuously coordinating and promoting the Snow Leopard China network. Since 2019, she started the current position as the Director of the Nature Watch Program, and is mainly focused on and dedicated to promoting the biodiversity conservation mainstreaming in sustainable policy and investment, from the perspectives of biodiversity databases, technology empowerment, research, and policy advocacy.



Konstantinos Gouzas is a student at Northeastern University who was accepted for a Co-op position at the Lincoln Institute for the Summer and Fall period. He is pursuing a BA in International Affairs as well as a MS in Security and Resilience Studies with an expected graduation in 2024 and 2025 respectively. Konstantinos is a US Navy veteran with extensive international experience in the Navy's 5th Fleet. Additionally, he served in previous Co-op positions for the National Ombudsman in Greece and the Landmine Relief Fund, an American 501c that operates in Cambodia to assist in landmine and unexploded ordnance disposal to which he is a current sitting member on the board of directors. Along with conservation, Konstantinos is interested in climate change resilience and utilizing Geographic Information Systems for research and policy solutions.

Carolina Halevy is the project coordinator of the LIFE project “European Networks for Private Land Conservation” (LIFE ENPLC). The project aims to expand the use of private land conservation tools in the European Union by improving financial incentives, fostering citizen engagement, and expanding networking among organizations and individuals. She is working for BirdLife International conducting research on standards and practices regarding conservation easements in quarries. She is also the regional representative for Europe at the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN) and a member of the IUCN WCPA.



Carolina has a background in Business Administration (B.Sc.) and Environmental Sciences (M.Sc.) from Utrecht University, where she led the business team of the Hogeschool Utrecht at an international competition of the U.S. Department of Energy (Solar Decathlon) worked as a research assistant, took an active role in university governance as council member and followed the European Institute of Innovation & Technology Climate- KIC programme. She previously worked for the Kumasi Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Natuurmonumenten, Eurosite and the Reef Renewal Foundation International.



Ana C. Ibarra-Macias earned her Ph. D. from University of Miami studying how habitat fragmentation impacts movement of tropical forest birds at the landscape level and completed her postdoctoral research at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) working on bat ecology and conservation. For the last 10 years, she has been dedicated to monitoring the effects that habitat transformation has on bats and their habitats, and how to better prevent, manage and restore bat populations. Ana, a Mexico citizen based in Chiapas, serves as the in-country advisor for Endangered Species Interventions for Bat Conservation International, facilitating and expanding BCI’s activities in Mexico and Latin America, while promoting collaboration with local partners, and building capacity with local agencies and communities. She is an active member of the Mexican Program for the Conservation of Bats (PCMM) where she participates as advisor for conservation, monitoring, and educational programs.

Jose “Pepe” A. Iracheta is Director General of the Mexican National Institute of Sustainable Land, a decentralized body of the Federal Government of Mexico; and he collaborates with Fundacion Tlaloc in Mexico, which is an NGO dedicated to sustainable development, emphasizing the role of communities and their empowerment towards a harmonious development with the environment, from the bottom up. He has a PhD in Public Affairs specialized in Urban Environmental Policy from Indiana University-Bloomington (O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs), he has a Masters in Administration and Public Policy from the Center for Economic Research and Teaching (CIDE) and has a degree in Economics by the Iberoamerican University. He has been a beneficiary of CONACYT and Fulbright-García Robles scholarships, and of educational financing from the Fund for the Development of Human Resources of the Bank of Mexico. He was Director of Public Policy at Centro Eure S.C. where he coordinated various applied research and consulting projects. He is co-author of the Report on the State of Prosperity of Mexican Cities and the National Report of Saudi Arabia, both from UN-Habitat, as well as the Evaluation of the Metropolitan and Regional Funds of the Federal Government of Mexico of the CLEAR Center, SHCP and IDB. He is a specialist in land policy and urban / metropolitan environmental policy. He has more than 15 years of experience in public policy analysis.



Nina Jeffries is the 2022 Fellow for the Land Trust Alliance's Scholars for Conservation Leadership Program. She works at the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, which conserves natural landscapes, protects family farms, and creates vibrant urban green spaces to support thriving, healthy communities. While completing a B.S. in Environmental Science and Policy from the University of Maryland, Nina spent time at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Environmental Law Institute, and managed a small urban farm. In college, she was deeply involved in environmental activism, advocating for climate action, economic justice, and environmental education at the university, county, and state level. She will be starting law school at Duke University this fall, where she hopes to build a career in legal solutions to climate change and environmental injustices.

Nina is excited about the opportunity to learn more about tools for conservation, the role of land trusts, and be introduced to a global framework for conservation through the ILCN Summer Institute. She additionally is looking forward to connecting with and learning from her peers in the program.

Dr. Kristen Lear is a bat conservationist dedicated to developing practical, equitable, and meaningful solutions to bat conservation challenges through collaborative research, community-based conservation, multi-sectoral partnerships, and public engagement and outreach. She has over 15 years of experience working on bat conservation, education, and research projects around the world including in the U.S., Mexico, and Australia. She currently leads Bat Conservation International's Agave Restoration Initiative, a bi-national, landscape-scale restoration to restore native agaves to the U.S. Southwest and Mexico to support threatened pollinating bats and community livelihoods. She earned her B.A. in Zoology from Ohio Wesleyan University, and her Ph.D. in Integrative Conservation from the University of Georgia, where her research combined natural and social science approaches to assess opportunities for agave restoration with rural communities in Coahuila and Nuevo León, Mexico.

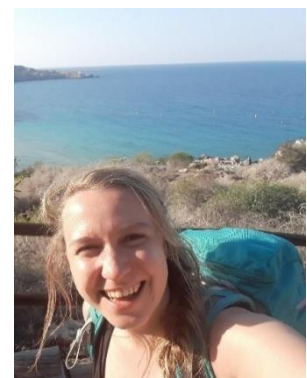


Dr. Lear is a founding member of the Nivalis Conservation Network, a collaborative group of U.S. and Mexican researchers, NGOs, and government agencies working towards the conservation of the endangered Mexican long-nosed bat, and is also on the Board of the Chihuahuan Desert Education Coalition. Dr. Lear is also passionate about bat outreach and regularly leads community bat presentations, public bat walks, and bat house building workshops, and is a 2018 National Geographic Explorer and an IF/THEN Ambassador for the American Association for the Advancement of Science working to encourage girls and young women in STEM fields.



Jingyi Liu is a policy analyst with the environmental policy and conservation at the Peking University-Lincoln Institute Center for Urban Development and Land Policy (PLC). Her research area includes Eco-environmental policy, protected areas framework, and biodiversity conservation. She got her master's degree in city planning from Boston University.

Anne-Sophie Mulier, M.Sc Bio-science Engineer in Agro- and Ecosystem services. She started her carrier as project manager at the University of Leuven investigating in the use of biogas for cook stoves in Ethiopia. In 2018 she joined the team of the European Landowners' Organization in Brussels as project officer with the duty of coordinating projects related to land conservation and biodiversity restoration. Her projects focus on tools and instruments to engage individual private landowners in national and regional conservation efforts in Europe. With this expertise she represents the network of individual landowners in the EU Conservation Landowners' Coalition (CLC), supporting the coordination of the 'European Networks for Private Land Conservation'. Anne-Sophie also has an advocacy role following EU institutions' decisions related to the topics of biodiversity and nature restoration. Anne-Sophie is fluent in Dutch and English and knows conversational French.



Claudia Viloría is a public policy manager, with experience in the private and social sectors. She focuses on the betterment of civil society organizations, and how to give them tools and knowledge to help them become experts on the promotion of rights. She has collaborated with Fundacion Tlaloc in Mexico for the development of local development initiatives related to sustainability and empowerment of indigenous communities. Claudia Viloría has a dual Bachelor Degree in Psychology and International Studies from Indiana University. She worked for Save the Children and for Centro Eure, both in Mexico, where she developed sound skills to work with non-governmental organizations, mainly for project management and development. She currently works at Sanofi Vaccines in Mexico.



Melina Addix currently serves as an intern at Eurosité/the European Land Conservation Network. She is earning her bachelor's degree in European and Comparative Law at the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg in Germany.

Staff



Jim Levitt is a co-founder and the director of the ILCN, based at the Lincoln Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. Levitt focuses on landmark innovations in the field of land and biodiversity conservation, both present-day and historic, that are characterized by five traits: novelty and creativity in conception, strategic significance, measurable effectiveness, international transferability, and the ability to endure. Such innovations include: the establishment of the first public open space in the English-speaking world in Boston in 1634; the creation of the world's first state and national parks at Yosemite and Yellowstone in 1864 and 1872; the invention of the world's first land trust in Massachusetts in 1891; and the ongoing emergence of landscape-scale conservation initiatives around the globe in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In each of these landmark innovations, key factors for success include: the engagement of highly talented social entrepreneurs; the leveraging of some of the most advanced technologies of the day; and the use of inventive financial and organizational tools.

Levitt has written and edited dozens of articles and four books on land and biodiversity conservation. He has lectured widely on the topic in venues ranging from Santiago, Chile to Beijing, China, and Stockholm, Sweden. Among his current efforts, Levitt is advising colleagues in Chile on the expansion of private land conservation initiatives and enabling legal frameworks in that nation. He is also engaged in an effort to link land conservation innovators at universities, colleges and independent research institutions around the globe. Levitt is a graduate of Yale College and the Yale School of Management (Yale SOM). He was named as a member of the first class of Donaldson Fellow by Yale SOM for career achievements that

“exemplify the mission of the School”. Jim and his wife Jane have three children and live in Belmont, Massachusetts. The family loves to spend part of every summer on their forested land in Maine, most of which is permanently protected with a conservation easement.

Chandni Navalkha is the Associate Director for Sustainably Managed Land and Water Resources at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, where she works on projects to advance and accelerate the enduring protection of land and water resources worldwide. Prior to joining the Lincoln Institute, Chandni was a fellow with the Sri Lanka Program for Forest Conservation, conducting research on the impacts of conservation on local livelihoods near the Sinharaja World Heritage Site. Chandni has worked for organizations in North America, Latin America, and South Asia supporting urban, peri-urban, and rural communities involved in voluntary land and resource conservation, and earlier in her career worked in change management for private and public sector organizations as a consultant with Accenture. She holds a Master’s in Environmental Science from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and a dual Bachelor of Arts in English and Economics from Cornell University.



Shenmin Liu is a Research Analyst with the Land and Water Conservation Program and China Program at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. She is currently supporting the Institute's efforts in promoting land conservation in China and assisting China Program with the project of designing property taxation system for Beijing municipality. She is also doing research on China’s intergovernmental relations and municipal fiscal status. She holds a master’s degree in public policy from the University of Chicago, and a bachelor’s degree in finance from Renmin University of China.

Robin Austin is the Project Coordinator for the Land Conservation Team (LCT), where her work is focused on the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN). Previously, Robin was an Americorps Terracorps Service Member, working for the North County Land Trust in North Central Massachusetts as a Land Stewardship and Community Engagement Coordinator. She recently graduated from Smith College with a degree in Geology, and has a passion for land stewardship and conservation. She is also a 2019 graduate of the ALPINE Summer Institute, a summer training program in large landscape conservation organized by the Lincoln Institute's ALPINE (Academics for Land Protection in New England) project and the Highstead Foundation.





Lily Robinson is a '22 graduate of UMass Amherst, where she studied journalism and public policy. She found her way into the field of land conservation through the ALPINE summer institute and is looking forward to continuing to learn about this space alongside the ILCN team. Before she came to Lincoln, she was a freelance reporter for the Harvard Press and spent a summer interning at CommonWealth Magazine.

After hours, Lily is an avid distance runner, outdoor enthusiast, and artist. She races for Battle Road Track Club, an elite post-collegiate running team in Cambridge, MA; enjoys getting out and about in nature; and often disappears into the creative ether of crafting, drawing, making, or pondering what to make. A few of her simple pleasures are cats, coffee, crosswords, and Oxford commas.

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