

2016 Conservation Filmmaker Workshop Presenter Bios



Stephanie Atlas | Stephanie Atlas is the Senior Producer of Specials for National Geographic Digital Video. In this role, Stephanie spearheads the video strategy for emerging digital platforms including launching National Geographic's channel on Snapchat's Discover, developing Nat Geo's Facebook native video programming, and producing WILD's first omni-platform digital hosted series. Before moving into the digital realm, Stephanie was a television writer and producer specializing in natural history, including the Emmy-award winning series *Great Migrations*. Stephanie is excited to explore innovative ways to tell stories and experimenting with new experiences for the National Geographic audience.



David Elisco | David Elisco has been writing and producing award-winning science and natural history documentaries for more than 20 years. He has worked for and with Sea Studios Foundation, National Geographic Television and Film, Discovery Channel, and PBS, among others. Elisco has produced a number of critically acclaimed and award-winning films, including National Geographic's *Strange Days on Planet Earth*, which aired on PBS and was hosted by Academy-Award nominee Edward Norton; *The Shape of Life*, an eight-hour series for PBS; *Oceans in Glass*, for WNET's *Nature*; and *Web of Life*, a two-hour, Emmy-nominated special that aired on PBS.



Joe Evans | Joe earned a B.S. in Animal Sciences from the University of Maryland College Park and a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction from Loyola College. He has taught science for 20 years on Maryland's Eastern Shore; seven years at Rock Hall Middle and most recently at Kent County High where he teaches AP Biology, Biology, and Forensics. In 2010 he was named Kent County's Teacher of the Year. He attained National Board Certification in 2013 and has been a presenter at science workshops at both the national and local level



Jeff Hertrick | Jeff Hertrick, Director, News & Documentary Digital Video, National Geographic Partners. Jeff has over 30 years of award-winning video production experience, including the last 15 years at National Geographic. Currently responsible for video production - National Geographic news and magazine digital publishing that appears on its website, YouTube and re-versioned for other platforms. He also hires freelancers around the world for short-form video storytelling. Past work has included day-to-day managing of National Geographic's YouTube publishing at its inception 10 years ago, producing for the Nat Geo Channel, Senior Producer for Discovery Science Channel, and news reporting/producing/editing at several TV stations in Washington, DC, Georgia, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, where he resides in Shepherdstown with his partner/husband.



Neil Losin | is the co-founder with Nate Dappen of Day's Edge Productions, which produces films about science, nature, conservation, and adventure for broadcasters, NGOs, and universities. Neil and Nate also teach video production and science communication skills to fellow scientists through immersive workshops at universities and research centers. Neil holds a Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from UCLA.



Su Rynard | Su Rynard’s interest in science, ecology and the human relationship with the natural history has informed and inspired her projects. Her work has screened in festivals around the world including the Toronto International Film Festival and the Rotterdam International Film Festival. Rynard’s most recent film, *The Messenger*, has received nine awards notably Best Conservation Documentary at Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival and a Top Ten Audience Choice Award at Hot Docs. Her fiction film *KARDIA* was awarded the prestigious Alfred P. Sloan Feature Film Prize at the Hamptons Film Festival. Rynard was a Director Resident at the Canadian Film Centre and is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art.



Vanessa Serrao | Vanessa Serrao is the Director of the Science and Exploration Media team at National Geographic, where she and her team create videos that bring the work of Nat Geo and its grantees to the public. An award-winning filmmaker, producer and communications strategist, Vanessa specializes in results-oriented media that furthers the missions of conservation organizations. She has her B.S. in Entomology with a concentration in Wildlife Conservation, and her MFA in Science and Natural History Filmmaking. When she’s not making media, Vanessa spends as much time as she can screen-free and outdoors with her husband and two children, and blogs about her family’s adventures in nature at www.NatureBreak.org.



Katie Schuler | Katie works at the nexus between art, entrepreneurship, community development and conservation, and has traveled to over 22 countries while documenting wildlife and their habitats. As an artist and producer, she has led outreach efforts to vulnerable communities and undereducated youth at home and abroad. Katie is the Co-Founder and Head of Production of Coral & Oak Studios. As recipient of the Henry Luce Fellowship, Katie spent more than a year in Southeast Asia, where she collaborated with scientists and conservation organizations on various art and storytelling projects. Katie is a graduate of the Corcoran College of Art and Design, and a recipient of the prestigious Koenig Trust Scholarship. Her clients include National Geographic, The Smithsonian Institute, Conservation International, Woods Hole Oceanographic and PBS. She currently lives and works in Washington DC.



Liz Smith | Liz is Director & COO of Conservation Media Group, where she supports filmmakers & activists who are using video to create measurable impact in ocean conservation and sustainable energy. She has over a decade of experience helping scientists & activists share their stories more effectively. She spent six years working as a science communications director aboard various research vessels around the world; and she has explored 2,000-year-old Roman shipwrecks, searched for Amelia Earhart and assisted with search & recovery operations off the coast of Syria. Liz has also been a Fulbright Specialist in science communications and produced films at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center. She has an MFA in Science and Natural History Filmmaking from Montana State University and an Astronomy degree from Whitman College.



Graham Townsley | Over the last 15 years, Graham has established himself as one of the leading makers of high-end TV documentaries in the USA. He is Emmy-nominated and has made films for PBS, National Geographic and the Discovery Channel. With a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Cambridge, he started his career working as an anthropologist on ethnographic films for the BBC. He has gone on to produce, write and direct over 20 documentaries. In 2013 he directed “Landfillharmonic,” a feature length documentary about the children of the recycled orchestra of Paraguay. He is currently (2015) making “Naturalist,” a two-hour special for PBS about the life and work of Harvard Biologist EO Wilson and “Dawn of Humanity,” a documentary about Human Origins for PBS and National Geographic TV. Graham also writes screenplays and speaks five languages.