

2019 Annual Report
of the Robert & Patricia
Switzer Foundation

The Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation was formed in 1985 in Cleveland, Ohio. Its core giving program is the Switzer Environmental Fellowship program, which supports talented graduate students who are dedicated to environmental problem solving. Beyond the Fellowship program, the Foundation offers a variety of professional and leadership development grants and resources to Fellows throughout their careers. The Foundation intends its grantmaking to be instrumental in creating a cadre of highly motivated, trained, and committed individuals who will be the environmental leaders of tomorrow. All grant programs are administered through the Foundation's office in Belfast, Maine.



Joe Aldy

From the Board Chair:

In July, 2019, the Switzer Foundation welcomed Dr. Sarah Reed as its new Executive Director, and bid a fond farewell to its previous long-time director, Lissa Widoff. Sarah is a Switzer Fellow from 2006, when she was a Ph.D. student at UC Berkeley in Environmental Science, Policy and Management. Throughout her career, she has balanced science with policy, also maintaining a commitment to social justice issues. As she explained in her **first On Leadership post**, Sarah ultimately joined the Switzer Foundation because she believes she

can make the biggest difference by supporting others “to develop the skills and relationships they need to connect research to decision-making, balance science and policy advocacy, and become effective environmental leaders.”

Sarah is leading the foundation through its next phase of growth as it continues to support and nurture new generations of environmental leaders. The foundation is undertaking a strategic review of all aspects of our work, starting with the Board of Trustees and expanding to include Switzer Fellow participation and feedback over the next year.



Sarah Reed

Under Sarah's leadership, the foundation **expanded eligibility requirements** with the launch of the 2020 Switzer Fellowship application to include U.S. permanent residents (“green card” holders) and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients. The fellowship was previously limited to U.S. citizens.

The board is excited about these first steps into the foundation's future under its second Executive Director. We welcome Sarah and look forward to supporting her vision for the foundation in the years to come.

2019 Highlights

FOUNDATION NEWS:

OUR VALUES

Belief in Individuals

Environmental Stewardship

Sustainability

Social equity and diversity

Systems thinking and problem-solving

Maximizing impact

■ Improving engagement on energy pipeline permitting



Through a \$15,000 Switzer Network Innovation Grant, five Switzer Fellows collaborated on a project to assist states and Tribes to better assess the potential impacts of new energy pipelines on aquatic resources. Through this collaboration, technical resources and guidance documents were distributed through the networks of the Association of State Wetland Managers to help state government and Tribal employees better understand, provide critical feedback on, and make environmentally sound decisions with regard to complex pipeline development proposals. [Read more.](#)

Switzer Foundation grant programs making a difference

In 2019, Fellows shared the results of their work that was supported by Switzer grant programs:

■ Conserving southern California's native flora



California Native Plant Society created the new position of Southern California Conservation Analyst for fellow Nick Jensen with the aid of a \$25,000 Switzer Leadership Grant in November, 2017. Since that time, Nick has worked with environmental activists and volunteers to address significant threats to California's native flora and to better understand environmental policy so their advocacy (such as letter-writing and speaking at public meetings) can be more informed and effective. Nick's work has been featured in The Sacramento Bee and L.A. Times. [Read more.](#)

■ Facilitating local energy solutions in New Hampshire

Switzer Fellow Henry Herndon began a new staff position as Director of Local Energy Solutions at Clean Energy NH, with assistance from a \$25,000 Switzer Leadership Grant. Henry provides support to numerous local energy committees and municipalities on issues such as LED streetlight conversions, solar bidding and procurement, public education, solar zoning, and more. [Read more.](#)



■ Guiding community-based action on drinking water contamination in New England



Through a \$22,000 Switzer Leadership Grant, Lauren Richter worked as Research Scientist with Silent Spring Institute as a key member of the PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) research team. Lauren worked with communities affected by PFAS chemical contamination, educating them on health threats, guiding them to available resources, and conducting in-depth qualitative research. She also provided expert testimony at state legislative hearings in Rhode Island and authored a peer-reviewed article detailing the public costs of PFAS contamination on Cape Cod. [Read more.](#)

■ Controlling avian malaria

A \$5,000 Switzer Network Innovation Grant supported three Switzer Fellows to jointly develop a community engagement plan in Hawai'i to enable the fair and transparent consideration of a biotechnology approach to minimizing avian malaria that is devastating Hawaiian forest bird communities. [Read more.](#)



Switzer program news and highlights:

OUR VISION

By 2026, Switzer Fellows will be recognized leaders driving positive environmental change for the benefit of natural and human communities.



Fellowship eligibility criteria expanded

In 2019, the foundation made the decision to expand eligibility for the Switzer Fellowship to include U.S. citizens, U.S. permanent residents (“green card” holders), and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients. Expanding the pool of eligible applicants is an important step to advance the Switzer Foundation’s commitment to embedding equity and justice across our programs and allows us access to a wider pool of outstanding environmental leaders. This expanded eligibility is in place for the 2020 Fellowship applicant pool. [Read more.](#)

With over 650 Switzer Fellows across the country and around the world, we have awarded:

Over \$8,405,000 in Switzer Fellowships

\$6,500,000 in Leadership Grants

\$401,000 in Collaborative and Network Innovation Grants

Over \$118,000 in Professional Development Grants

All 2019 Fellows meet at fall retreat in California

For the first time in the history of the Switzer Fellowship, the foundation brought together Switzer Fellows from the east and west coasts at one fall retreat, with great success! This format replaced our past tradition of hosting separate fall retreats in New England and California. We saw friendships form across geography, life background, research topic, and career aspirations. This change in format will help build stronger fellowship cohorts that provide mutual support, inspiration and collaboration. The fall retreat training was led by our colleague, [Angela Park](#), and again focused on equity as a critical leadership competency.

Switzer Fellows participated in spring retreat Policy Communications training

The 2019 spring retreat was held in March in Washington, D.C. with a focus on policy engagement and communications. We continued our partnership with [COMPASS](#) for this training, where Switzer Fellows developed and improved policy engagement skills and met with U.S. Congressional legislative staff, federal agency staff, policy-oriented non-profits, and others. Fellows also made important connections in their home regions through their contacts in D.C., increasing their understanding of the federal budget process and how it impacts their issue area, cultivating new ideas for post-graduation work, learning about the culture of policymakers in D.C., and integrating this information to make their ongoing research more policy relevant.

New and re-energized networking opportunities

A vibrant network is dependent on ample opportunities to connect (whether in person or remotely) over common issue interests, for problem-solving, and socializing. In 2019, the foundation renewed important discussion groups and started new modes of connection based on feedback from fellows, including:

- The Switzer Fellows’ Race & Equity Reading Group, which offers space for all fellows to share resources and discuss issues of race and equity in environmental work, meets via video or phone conference for discussions, and communicates via a dedicated listserv. Plans are unfolding for readings and speakers for 2020.
- In response to suggestions from fellows, the foundation is now working with a consultant (Switzer Fellow Francisco Dóñez) to host a Slack space for fellows of color. This space is intended to create a safe place to talk about issues that pertain to environmental professionals of color, and for fellows to provide mutual support and to build connections that will sustain them throughout their professional lives.

A vibrant community of environmental leaders • www.switzernetwork.org

2019 Highlights:

OUR STRATEGIES

To accomplish our mission and carry out our vision, the Switzer Foundation awards academic fellowships and project grants, supporting a continuum of environmental leadership from graduate school through professional careers, and nurturing leaders who will be instrumental in driving environmental change. The foundation sponsors professional development activities, facilitates collaboration and communication among Switzer Fellows through the Switzer Network.

Grants awarded in 2019:

The Switzer Foundation awarded one **Leadership Grant** in Fiscal Year 2019. Leadership Grants bring a Switzer Fellow together with an organization to address a critical issue, elevate the fellow's leadership on the issue, and increase the organization's capacity to address the issue. The awarded grant was:

- **\$20,000** to **California Native Plant Society** (Claremont, CA) for a second year of funding in support of Nick Jensen's position as Southern California Conservation Analyst.

The foundation also awarded one **Network Innovation Grant**. Network Innovation Grants provide the means (up to \$10,000) for Switzer Fellows to work together across sectors and expertise areas, focusing on a specific current issue. The awarded grant was:

- **\$10,000** to **Oikonos Ecosystem Knowledge** (Santa Cruz, CA) for two fellows, Ryan Carle and Margaret Rubega, to convene and lead an interdisciplinary, international working group of researchers and others to study two species of migratory birds, Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes, which depend on salt lakes in the western U.S. and South America, and whose population numbers are in decline. The working group developed a plan to fill in critical data gaps to inform next steps for conservation efforts.

In addition, we awarded **\$2,300** in **Professional Development Fund** grants, which provide direct support for professional development opportunities for Switzer Fellows. Fellows attended important conferences where they presented research, made critical networking connections, and increased their individual skill sets. In 2019, for example, one fellow attended the Ecological Society of America conference where, through the course of conference networking, she was approached about writing a book. Several fellows took part in a group training through The Goodman Center to increase their storytelling abilities so they can more widely share the impact of their work. A fellow attended an international ocean conference and met high-level decision makers and practitioners, relationships which will directly benefit her work on marine protected areas.

Switzer Fellows in Action

Here are just some of the highlights of Switzer Fellows' work in 2019. Please see the **News** page of the Switzer Foundation's website for more!

- **Amanda Beal** is now the **Commissioner of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.**



Amanda Beal

- **David Gonzalez and Teniope Adewumi-Gunn** were both **inducted into UCLA's Bouchet Graduate Honor Society** which recognizes outstanding scholarly achievement and promotes diversity and excellence in doctoral education.



David Gonzalez



Teniope Adewumi-Gunn

- **Sarah Myhre** was **quoted in Rolling Stone** about July 2019 being the hottest month on record.
- **Brett Thelen's** work with amphibian road crossings in New Hampshire was **featured in The Washington Post.**
- **Kimberly Rain Miner's** work on chemical pollution from melting glaciers in the Arctic received media attention, including from **The New York Times.**

Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation Annual Financial Report

(FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2019)

The following financial data is based on an annual compilation of financial statements.

SWITZER FOUNDATION MISSION

The Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation identifies and nurtures environmental leaders who have the ability and determination to make a significant impact, and supports initiatives that will have direct and measurable results to improve environmental quality. The Foundation accomplishes this by awarding academic fellowships and project grants, sponsoring professional development activities, and fostering a growing network of Switzer Fellows, environmental practitioners and organizations.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT	FY 2018	FY 2019
Assets (at market value)		
Common Stocks	\$ 10,419,925	\$ 12,373,388
Fixed Income & Alternatives	8,021,133	6,102,664
Liquidity	282,938	147,937
Other Assets (equipment)	445	27,640
Total Assets	\$ 18,724,441	\$ 18,651,629
Liabilities and Equity		
Liabilities	\$ 207,000	\$ 206,218
Equity (unrestricted net assets)	18,517,441	18,445,411
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 18,724,441	\$ 18,651,629

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND DISBURSEMENT		
Income From Investments		
Interest Income and Dividends	\$ 312,916	\$ 347,851
Capital gains distribution	0	0
Realized Gain/Loss	1,189,892	813,370
Other income	132	1,168
Total Operating Revenues	\$ 1,502,940	\$ 1,162,389
Disbursements From Income		
Grants Paid	\$ 396,833	\$ 336,000
Investment management expenses	119,945	78,720
Operating and Admin Expenses *	522,687	720,439
Total Expenses	\$ 1,039,465	\$ 1,135,159

* includes excise tax expense

2019 SWITZER FOUNDATION TRUSTEES:

Joe Aldy (Chair)
Linda Switzer Clopton
Scott Fruin
Bruce Kahn
Izzy Martin
Laura Meyerson
Rachel Morello-Frosch

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Lauren Hertel, Communications
Manager
Laine Kuehn, Administrative
Coordinator
Erin Lloyd, Program Director
Sarah Reed, Executive Director

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