

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Commission Forum
Connecting Kids and Families to Parks and Wildlife

Thursday, March 19, 2020
The Summit Conference and Event Center
411 Sable Blvd, Aurora, CO

Panelists' Biographies



Amanda Jameson

Big City Mountaineers
Community Relations Director

Amanda Jameson learned about long-distance backpacking trails in 2013, and has centered her life around the outdoors – and issues of diversity, education, and access – ever since. She has degrees from Vassar (B.A.) and Oxford (M.Sc.), but believes that the experience of walking 3500-odd miles on long trails has been equally formative. While the outdoors is not an apolitical space, it provides a certain distance from the gendered, racialized, and othering expectations of the frontcountry – and that distance leaves space for the blossoming of possibility. It's in that space that Amanda found a balm for her spirit and her voice as a writer, and she is a firm believer in providing youth with similar outdoor experiences. Amanda's professional background with organizations like the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics and the American Long Distance Hiking Association West have given her a knack for translating deep experiences, passing on knowledge, and sharing the wealth.



Ernest House, Jr.

Keystone Policy Center
Senior Policy Director

Ernest served as Executive Director for the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs (CCIA) for over 11 years. He worked to maintain an intergovernmental relationship between the State of Colorado and tribal governments and represented Colorado and the CCIA at various federal and state public policy and community forums. Currently, as Senior Policy Director for the Keystone Policy Center, Ernest is working with various stakeholders in the areas of tribal consultation, energy, healthcare, and education. Ernest is an enrolled member and previous Executive Director of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe in Towaoc, Colorado. Ernest is a 2012 American Marshall Memorial Fellow, 2013 Denver Business Journal Forty under 40 awardee, 2015 President's Award recipient from History Colorado, and 2018 Gates Family Foundation Public Leadership Fellow. Ernest currently serves on the Fort Lewis College Board of Trustees and advisor to the Mesa Verde Foundation and Global Livingston Institute. He holds a rich tradition in his position as son of the late Ernest House, Sr., a long time tribal leader for the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and great-grandson of Chief Jack House, the last hereditary chief of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe.



Jessica Newton

Vibe Tribe Adventures
CEO & Founder

Jessica "Jess" Newton is the founder of Vibe Tribe Adventures (formally known as Black Girls Hike as seen on NBC Nightly News). Vibe Tribe Adventures (VTA) is a global outdoor adventure company that was created to encourage Black women to explore the great outdoors, practice conservation, educate on health and wellness and inspire authenticity. VTA teaches outdoor awareness, health and wellness, mindful practices and has a youth development program called Urban Trekker. VTA connects Black women who already love the outdoors with Black women who have lacked the opportunities to explore. She is also the CEO/ President of a Project Development firm called OBI Power, LLC. She serves as an Advisory Council woman for the City of Denver, Office of Sustainability and is a past executive board member with the Colorado Black Women for Political Action (CBWPA). Jess has received awards including Honoree of the President's Award 2017 for Colorado Black Women for Political Action, Class Engagement of The Year 2016 from the Urban Leadership Foundation and Project Manager of the year in 2010 for the Urban Green Jobs Initiative.

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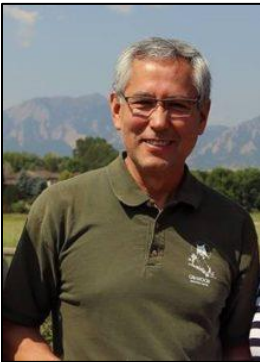


Jes Rau

cityWILD
Executive Director

Jes Rau (Ward) is the executive director of cityWILD, which works holistically to provide low income, culturally diverse youth with outdoor and environmental service learning opportunities that promote developmental themes of personal empowerment, leadership and community participation. While in high school, she participated in PeaceJam, a program in which Nobel Peace laureates nurture young peacemakers. She later served a one-year AmeriCorps term with PeaceJam before spending 13 years on PeaceJam's staff working with youths around the world and exploring social justice issues. Jes joined the cityWILD team in 2013 in her leadership role.

She has also served on the Colorado Service-Learning Council since 2011. Jes is a Denver native and attended the Women's College at the University of Denver where she studied Business and Corporate Communications.



Rafael Salgado

Cal-Wood
Executive Director

Rafael has served as Cal-Wood's Executive Director since 1999, which provides residential environmental education for schools, summer camps, and Latino family camps at its 1,200-acre classroom. Prior to Cal-Wood, Rafael worked as a range scientist and wildlife biologist in Mexico and as a professor at Antonio Narro University. Working for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, he trained volunteer instructors for Project Wild, hunter and angler education. As the state of Coahuila environmental education director, he developed one of the largest environmental education program in Mexico. Rafael has served in different boards and networks, such as the Bilingual ESL Network in Colorado, the international Project Learning Tree, and Thorne Nature Experience.

Rafael has been recognized through awards including North American Association for Environmental Education's Rosa Parks and Grace Lee Boggs Award, 2014 Daily Camera Pacesetters Award in Environment, Boulder Community Action Programs Multicultural Award, Thorne Nature Experience's Environmental Education Champion award and the Colorado Association of Environmental Education Enos Mills Lifetime Achievement Award.



Rico Munn

Aurora Public School
Superintendent

Rico Munn serves as the 16th superintendent of Aurora Public Schools. He served on the Board of Governors for the Colorado State University System where he was appointed by Governor Bill Ritter, and sat on the Colorado State Board of Education until 2007. In addition, he was a member of Governor Bill Ritter's Cabinet where he served as the executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education from 2009-2011 and executive director of the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies from 2007-2009. Munn has also been a successful attorney and practiced commercial litigation with a national law firm for over a decade. Munn is active in the metro area's non-profit community. He served on the Denver Foundation Board and was a founder of the Denver Urban Debate League. Currently, he sits on the board of Early Milestones Colorado, an early childhood education organization. Munn is a graduate of Midland Lutheran College where he received his B.A. in secondary education and was named Student Teacher of the Year in 1993. He received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Denver, Sturm College of Law. Munn has been married to his wife Kay since 1998, and he is the proud father of two middle school students.