## Statement of Purpose Master of Environmental Studies Program

American sociologist Earl Babbie once said: "The basis of truth is agreement." As a professional field biologist, I have considered this quote when collaborating with various people about environmental issues. It has helped me maintain a sense of perspective since it can be easy to believe that scientific research comprises absolute and undeniable truth when what humans genuinely understand about the natural world is ever-changing and evolving. Earning a Bachelor of Science in Biology opened the door to many avenues. Still, I have learned that this degree encompasses just one stone of the path leading to my goal of becoming an influential environmental advocate and wildlife conservation manager.

My undergraduate studies at Sonoma State University (SSU) initially fueled my passion for field biology. Giving back to the community through volunteer work has also been a significant priority. I sought multiple opportunities and applied to volunteer on a collaborative project between SSU and Point Blue Conservation Science. The project studied avian diversity and distribution in Sonoma County, California. The work we did evolved into my senior research project. After graduating, Rose Snyder and the Soundscapes to Landscapes team hired me to continue working as a coordinator for the project. After two years, I and a team of incredible professors, scientists, and volunteers successfully published our manuscript in the Citizen Science Association scientific journal.

I have worked in my field for the past four years, providing multiple opportunities that have guided my decision to pursue graduate school. In the northern Sierra Nevada mountains, I studied the impact of wildfires on multiple wildlife populations, including the Sierra Nevada Yellow-legged Frog (Rana sierra), where I pit-tagged female frogs, collected anatomical measurements, and recorded their population density in alpine streams. A desire to further my understanding of how wildlife can survive and even thrive in fire-prone environments led me to pursue studies of wilderness conservation in Arizona. I learned about the abundance of wildlife diversity and resilience in Sonoran desert populations and the history of how humans' impact on the environment has been mitigated through establishing wilderness areas and other land management operations by various government agencies and organizations. From there, my heart carried me back to the northern Sierra, where we focused on restoration efforts of botanical populations through seed and herbarium specimen collection and population mapping. After extensive research on the West, I desired a drastic change and traveled east, where I studied shorebird migration along the peninsula of Virginia. However, soon after arriving in the East, my roots in the West remained deeply engrained in my mind. I decided to travel back to Washington, where I have been studying the effects of white-nose syndrome on bat populations and maintaining the delicate but resilient Island Marble Butterfly (Euchloe ausonides insulanus) population. I contribute to captive rearing efforts and habitat restoration on San Juan Island.

Multiple years of wildlife monitoring experience unveiled a strong sense of purpose within me to contribute to conservation and management on a broader and more impactful scale.

Temporary field jobs have left me with a lingering desire to understand more about the complex connections between wildlife monitoring efforts. I will need to further my education to understand better the natural world's entire system and how I can contribute to current research on restoring and conserving wildlife populations. Evergreen's experienced and knowledgeable staff will provide a well-rounded understanding of intricate ecological relationships in the multifaceted Master of Environmental Studies program. The interdisciplinary programs offered in the MES program will be able to guide me on my path to a deeper understanding of wildlife interactions, how humans impact the natural world, and how we can collaborate and incorporate traditional ecological knowledge into our decision-making processes to improve our impact on delicate but resilient ecosystems.