

Heather N. Brannan

Heather is the Outdoor Adventure Center Program Manager at the Biltmore, her work includes bird programs, preservation, special events and management skills.

Heather Brannan is an experienced outdoor programs, special events, and volunteer manager with over 20 years of experience in program development, leadership, volunteer recruitment and training, and event planning and execution, in both corporate and non-profit organizations. As a passionate supporter of all things outdoors, including wildlife, birds, and habitat preservation, she brings a balanced blend of enthusiasm and experience to the Blue Ridge Audubon Chapter.

Her current role as the Outdoor Programs Manager at Biltmore provides many opportunities for the support, development, and hands-on work with local birds and their preservation. She oversees the Biltmore Bluebird Trail of 100+ houses, including data tracking, volunteer management, house monitoring and repairs, and serves as the liaison between departments in regards to the program. She developed and leads Bluebird Walks to guests and provides presentations to corporate groups. She also serves as the resident Purple Martin “landlord” to the thriving Biltmore population and was instrumental in the placement of a Chimney Swift tower and educational sign near Biltmore House. She is the primary contact for the partners in other bird programs offered on the Estate—Falconry (Jeff Curtis) and Guided Bird Walks (Ventures Birding). With her initiative, multiple unique experiences were created at the Outdoor Center for bird enthusiasts, from River Birding Tours to Feathered Friends Tours, and more.

In the literal wake of Hurricane Helene and with the increasing challenges to the preservation and protection of outdoor spaces, Heather felt compelled to increase her personal time and energy commitments to advocacy for the things she believes in strongly, including doing all she can for the wildlife and birds in her region and beyond. She is excited to bring her experience and drive to the Blue Ridge Audubon Chapter and hopes to make a positive difference and impact.

In all of her “spare” time, Heather enjoys personal outdoor adventures with her two dogs, Anderson and Fitch. She can frequently be found hiking or near bird feeders, participating in Project FeederWatch counts or just enjoying personal birding time. She also travels across the country and internationally as a certified off-road driving instructor and enjoys cycling, classic literature, music, and a mean game of Croquet.

Heather loves to speak and spend time with others who share her love for all things outdoors. Reach out to her at heathernbrannan@gmail.com to connect.

Anne Keller

Anne Keller is an active player in our community and a birdier. With her expertise in science and government, she's interested in taking part in serving on several committees.

Anne Keller has been bird-watching since she got hooked at 16. After teaching high school for several years, Anne earned a doctorate in Environmental Engineering Sciences from the University of Florida and worked for several federal agencies during her 23-year career as a researcher and planner. She advanced knowledge on the sensitivity of endangered freshwater mussels to pollutants, which resulted in changes to some water quality criteria. Anne has served on the RiverLink Board for six years, two as Chair, the City's Sustainability Advisory Committee for six years, and now is Chair of the Asheville-Buncombe Riverfront Commission. Anne also played a key role in the establishment and development of the French Broad River Partnership, a volunteer organization started in 2018, that focuses on supporting the environmental and economic vitality of the FBR in North Carolina. She loves to travel. She hopes to share her planning skills, help with education and meet new people as a member of the BRAC

Andrew Loughlin

Andrew Laughlin teaches Principles of Ecology and Field Biology, Avian Ecology and Conservation, Wildlife Ecology and Management, Urban Ecology, and Global Change Ecology at UNCa. His research interests include animal responses to environmental change, with a focus on birds.

Andrew Laughlin is an associate professor at UNC Asheville where he has taught since 2015. He, his wife Laura, and their three kids have lived in Asheville on and off for nearly 15 years, with stints in Johnson City, TN, and New Orleans, LA, in between. Andrew teaches in the Ecology curriculum in the Environmental Science department, focusing on avian, wildlife, urban, and global change ecology.

Charlotte Moon

Charlotte is a birder active in the WNC birding community and works at Biltmore. She has set up birding events at Biltmore as well. She has lots of experience with nonprofits and is interested in getting involved at the intersection of education/outreach and underserved communities.

I have knowledge and experience in working with nonprofits in several different roles, including as founder and Executive Director of a 501(c)(3) organization. I understand the vital role of an active and diverse board of directors in sustaining the mission and vision of the organization.

Specific to Blue Ridge Audubon, I have interests in supporting the roles of education, outreach, and inclusion to fulfill the mission of protecting birds and the places they depend on. I believe strongly in the deliberate inclusion of underserved and marginalized groups, as well as younger generations. Fundraising is another area of experience and interest where I would be willing to participate.

I have seen the good work of BRAC over the years and would be honored to join you in moving forward with the vision of seeing the natural world valued by everyone.

Shane Myers

Shane Meyers is a wildlife biologist new to Asheville from Ohio. He is teaching entomology classes at the NC Arboretum.

I began an interest in nature as a child, as may do with love of dinosaurs. This quickly grew to include fossils, insects, and reptiles, and my grandparents kept notes of the birds that came to our feeders in Toledo, Ohio. I got a Bachelors in wildlife biology and did most of my undergrad work on dragonflies and damselflies. I helped coordinate an Ohio-wide survey of dragonflies that culminated in a publication in 2024. I've sat on many boards over the years including plant conservation groups, Odonata and bird groups, and local parks. I've assisted in outreach and education for all groups, done fundraising work, and edited newsletters. I would love to continue this work in my new home while meeting more people and learning as much as I can.

Kitti Reynolds

Barbara Reynolds, or "Kitti" has volunteered for us in different levels, including bird walks at BLBS. She is a retired Avian ecology professor from UNCA.

I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, where my first bird memories are meadowlarks in the fields where our new houses were being built and wood thrushes singing in the park my Mom took us to when we were kids. I went to college at Earlham, in Richmond, Indiana, majoring in biology and becoming a life-long birder.

I worked as an analytical chemist at the Coweeta Hydrologic Lab (USFS), in Macon County, NC, before starting graduate school at University of Georgia. I obtained a M.S. in insect ecology and then a Ph. D. in ecosystem ecology and was a member of the Georgia Ornithological Society (GOS). I also was a teaching assistant in the ornithology course there.

In 2000 I was hired by the Environmental Science Department at UNC-Asheville, where I taught ecology courses, including a course in avian ecology, which I designed to emphasize conservation issues related to birds. I've been a member of BRAC since 2000, and am a lifetime member of Carolina Bird Club. I'm also a member of Cornell Ornithology, American Bird Conservancy, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and other conservation organizations.

I believe the greatest threat to birds and to all life on our planet is climate change.

Erika Wagner

Erika handles most of the outreach coordination for the North Carolina Institute for Climate Studies (where she, Douglas, and Kate work). She is excited to be our next Events Coordinator if approved. She is also an avid birder.

Erika Wagner was born and raised in upstate NY. After graduating from high school, she relocated to Atlanta, where she pursued a bachelor's degree in elementary education. Erika spent 14 years as a classroom educator, particularly enjoying curriculum development, finding ways to inspire her students, and spending time outside with her students doing nature studies.

Because of her love for curriculum, books, research, and libraries, Erika later completed a master's degree in library and information science. Though never having worked as a librarian, Erika gained a great deal of library experience prior to her degree completion and considers herself "an expert Googler" due to her library training.

Erika spent several years trying to "escape" from Atlanta, and in 2017 she succeeded – finding herself in an administrative position in Asheville. One of the first things she did upon relocating she immersed herself in new activities – one of which was birding. Having been a backyard birder for many years, it seemed a natural interest to follow and grow in.

As an offshoot to her interest in birding, Erika took up photography as well. With photography, she found a way to capture the beauty of the birds she was viewing and learn more about them later, even after they had flown away.

After 7+ years in Asheville, Erika's birding adventures continue to be a source of enjoyment for her and are effectively becoming a lifelong love.