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To what do you attribute your interest in biology, and when did you first become aware of your interest in the discipline?

My interest in biology was established first by my grandfather who taught me at a young age how a tree seed would one day become a tree. But it was my grade 10 biology teacher who really put me on a path to become a biologist. Pretty much from the first day of classes in grade 10, Gerry Manuel made every biology class exciting and I knew then that I was destined for a career in biology.

What is your academic background?

My academic background began at University of New Brunswick in the Forestry program where I obtained a BScF with a major in wildlife management. On the advice of my lead professor Dan Keppie, I pursued an opportunity for postgraduate study with Fred Bunnell at the University of British Columbia. Fred took me under his wing, led me through the MSc program and even took steps to land me a research position with the Research Branch of the BC Forest Service. I managed to convince the Forest Service to sponsor my PhD studies which took place in part at Colorado State University, although the degree was again from UBC.

What do you do on the job and what are your favourite aspects of the work?

At this point in my career, most of my job (70%) is managing people, chasing funding, and writing project plans and final reports. I still enjoy this

part because it is rewarding to see a challenging plan come together— it's basically coaching a team of people, matching skills to the need, and winning the game. I'm lucky to be able to still engage in field work about 30% of the time, and there are really no words that can adequately characterize the variety of benefits and enjoyment that brings. Mentoring our younger staff is a big component of being on site in the field, but refining sampling designs/methods and understanding the sampling logistics are extremely important aspects of my work in the field. My favorite aspects of my work have to be the challenge of managing a successful project, attempting to address important questions of conservation management, and being able to meet and work with so many great professionals over the years.

Which practice area is beyond the scope of your current work that you would most like to become involved in or what would your ideal biology-related job or project be?

Living the dream! The work I am doing on wildlife-related projects is my "ideal" job. I have worked in wildlife biology for government, the oil and gas industry, mining, forestry, First Nations, and non-profit environmental organizations. As with any job there are downsides but, on balance.

“ I enjoy going to work each day. I've been humbled many times by the seemingly unpredictable nature of animal behavior — just when you think you have the answer it often slips away on you. That challenge alone makes the whole job worth getting up for. ” cmf

Call for Contributions

We invite members to contribute to *College Matters* by pitching us an article, sending in photos, artwork, or simply suggestions for content.

Submission Dates

Autumn issue: October 12, 2015

Annual Reports (AGM) issue: February 29, 2016

Peter S. Jalkotzy, PBIol, RPBio, EP(EM)



Technical Lead and Senior Environmental Planner,
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To what do you attribute your interest in biology and when did you first become aware of your interest in the discipline?

I love nature. I grew up in a small northern Ontario mining town and spent a lot of time in the bush. Hunting, fishing, paddling, swimming, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, berry picking, chopping wood, and many other outdoor activities were the daily norm in winter, spring, summer and fall. I found science intriguing and easy; by eliminating some paths, I chose wildlife biology. I loved (and still love) all animals, although my favorite(s) have become the mountain goat, and the wolf, two species I have worked very closely with. After almost ten years as a practicing biologist, my direct involvement in environmental law/regulation/policy came from a strong interest in contributing to and shaping practical, appropriate, adequate, and effective environmental management for industry.

What is your academic background?

I have a BSc (Wildlife Biology) from the University of Guelph (1980), and an Environmental Law Certificate from the University of Calgary (1992). I had been accepted to complete my Masters in Environmental Design at U of C (1985) and contemplated other advanced degrees (LLB, MBA, PhD) but have always made a different choice before proceeding. I continue to have a latent desire to complete a PhD.

What do you do on the job and what are your favourite aspects of the work?

My role is varied but focuses on the management of regulatory approvals for development. I am a leader, a mentor, a student, and a practitioner/technician. I might have responsibilities in some and/or all of a project's development progression: from the early strategic planning and concept development to the follow-up monitoring and post-closure reclamation certificate activities, and all the activities related to supporting biological data. All projects interact with their surrounding conditions, and I enjoy deciphering those interactions. I have a presentation that collectively sums up my last several decades in this role: "You want to build what? When? Where?" The intent is to highlight the five most common challenges to the regulatory approval process. I really enjoy the challenge of finding that unique set of values (i.e. technical, regulatory, environmental, social, economic)— the common ground upon which a project can advance.

Which practice area is beyond the scope of your current work that you would most like to become involved in or what would your ideal biology-related job or project be?

“Within the boundaries of certain realities, I have my ideal job at the moment. I like the people, the projects, and the genuine opportunity to contribute. It works.”

My long-term perspective has two paths. One involves expanding research and contributing to global wildlife conservation issues. The other is to further contribute to the education and experience of effective environmental assessment and monitoring through global reach and applying advanced technologies. The first involves the establishment of a wildlife conservation trust and the second, AECOM's Global Mobility Program and the advancement of the unmanned systems group, including its full integration with the biological sciences. 