

Contact

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Top Skills

Public Policy
Economic Development
Policy

Languages

Spanish

Kathleen Williams

Montana State Director, USDA-Rural Development
Bozeman, Montana, United States

Summary

Skills: Leadership; organizational evaluation and strategy; policy development and advocacy; motivating diverse teams; commitment to and success in rural economic development; economic analysis; entrepreneurship; developing and delivering on a vision; inspiring staff and partners; collaboration/ facilitation; 37-year career in natural resources, policy, and economics.

Experience

USDA

Montana State Director for Rural Development
January 2022 - Present (1 year 8 months)
Montana, United States

Kathleen Williams for Montana

Candidate for U.S. Congress
October 2017 - November 2020 (3 years 2 months)
Montana, United States

Won six-way primary in 2018 and came the closest in over 20 years to unseating an incumbent in Montana's lone U.S. House seat. Ran again in 2020, earning 90% of the primary vote. Both times, received the most votes a Democrat has ever received in a Montana US House general election. Raised over \$10 million in campaign funds. Recruited and motivated top-notch teams that excelled in communication, fundraising, and outreach. Traveled 100,000 miles across the state discussing with Montanans and communities large and small their interests and concerns and how to address. Major themes were building on past experience helping Montana's economy recover after a crisis, as well as advancing solutions in rural Montana.

Western Landowners Alliance

Associate Director
June 2013 - February 2018 (4 years 9 months)
North American West

Helped build a new non-profit organization of farmers and ranchers in the North American West. Developed and ran the Alliance's Water Program and Film Program to tell of good work on private land in the rural West. Developed and led multi-organizational Toward a Productive and Healthy West, advocating for federal policies benefiting land stewardship and collaboration. Developed on-site demonstration tours to explore with diverse interests potential impacts of federal policy. Lead facilitator. Advanced membership, fundraising, board development, and organizational function.

State of Montana

State Representative, Montana Legislature

January 2011 - January 2017 (6 years 1 month)

Montana

Served three terms in the Montana House of Representatives. Elected just after Great Recession and worked hard to grow and diversify Montana's economy - created a new type of corporation attractive to millennials and entrepreneurs; solved burdensome regulatory issues for food businesses statewide; passed a local food law that created over 200 new businesses (many in rural areas) and over 3,000 new value-added Montana products in just three years; fought to retain business research grants, lower taxes for business, and to renew the film tax credit to bring more business to Montana; served as a lead negotiator for Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Water Compact, including its broad economic benefits to the region; and more.

- House Democratic delegate to the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER), a US/Canadian trade organization.
 - Vice Chaired - House Agriculture (2013), Taxation (2015), Water Policy Interim (2013-4), Council of State Governments-West (CSG-West) Water and Environment committees.
 - Committee Membership – the above committees, plus Natural Resources Committee, Environmental Quality Council, Select Committee on Efficiency in Government, Rules Committee, Revenue Estimate Subcommittee, Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Advisory Committee.
 - Honored by the Montana Chamber of Commerce for work with business.
- Earned a strong reputation for working with people of all political stripes to get practical and needed work done for the people of Montana.

Jetway Geographer LLC

Owner/Manager

1983 - 2017 (34 years)

USA

Author and publish natural history guides for commercial airline travelers.

Self-Employed

Contractor/Consultant

2012 - 2013 (1 year)

Montana, United States

Worked with various agencies and groups to assess and improve programs and planning.

- o Provided the Montana University System Water Center with tools and recommendations to rebuild its program after losing most of its funding and staff.
- o Helped the Montana Watershed Coordination Council successfully transition from informal, agency-led network to a successful and independent non-profit organization with a defined niche and strategy for the future.
- o Recruited a 22-member Advisory Council to assist with the State Water Plan update for the Upper Missouri Basin. Planned and implemented an agency/Council/public process to identify and prioritize issues for the Plan update and associated legislation

Instream Flow Council

Executive Director

2005 - 2011 (6 years)

US and Canada

Helped an association of fish and wildlife agencies in the US and Canada move in six years from an informal member network to internationally renowned public charity. Facilitated completion of organization's first Strategic Plan, operating documents (work plan, budget, accomplishments reports, etc.), and policies. Built board and fiscal capacity. Coordinated projects, translated complex scientific information into products for peers, public, and funders. Developed outcome-based criteria and methods for review of state and provincial instream flow programs and coordinated the review (50 states/6 provinces). Drafted and managed IRS status conversion from 501(c)(6) to (c)(3). Wrote sections and chapter of 2008 book. Planned organization's first (2008) international conference and capitalized on branding in follow-up conference in 2011. Brought in first private foundation funds, NGO partnerships, and commercial sponsorships, and built lasting relationships with donors, partners, and foundations. Supervised development of initial web presence, as well as later upgrade to online content management system (CMS). Recruited and supervised contractors and volunteers. Left organization

with sufficient cash reserves to operate existing programs for at least three years.

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Water Resources Program Manager

1999 - 2004 (5 years)

Montana

Managed Department's statewide Water Resources Program (\$250,000 annual budget + \$450,000 trust fund). Responsibilities included: instream leasing; instream and diversionary water right administration (over 1,000); program input to statewide adjudication; flow need quantification; flow measurement and gauging; and coordination with water users, communities, agencies and watershed groups to resolve streamflow issues for priority fisheries. Recruited and supervised contractors. Served as Department liaison to: Governor's Drought Committee; Montana Reserved Water Right Compact Commission; US/Canada Instream Flow Council; Montana Watershed Coordination Council. Initiated Montana state/federal resource agency directors' Working Group. Developed marketing and educational materials. Facilitated development of FWP's drought-related fishing closure policy. Pursued resolution of surface/ground water issues with NRCS and others. Suggested, analyzed, and testified on Legislative proposals. Worked with Adjudication Advisory Committee and others to improve statewide adjudication. Assisted with Water Court and contested case hearing preparation and served as Department witness. Coordinated with water commissioners in administering FWP rights; served as instructor at their annual training. Researched and summarized water right, natural resource, and water use information for leases, changes, monitoring, objections, and ushered projects to resolution. Presentations upon request on water law/policy/conservation (audiences up to 400). Planned/Moderated conferences, symposia, and meetings. Beneficially converted confrontation to collaboration in many areas.

Montana Legislative Services Division

Resource Policy Analyst

1995 - 1999 (4 years)

Helena, MT

Wrote and analyzed natural resource policy for Montana Legislature and Legislative Environmental Quality Council (EQC). Served as lead Legislative policy staff for water quantity/quality, mining, and recreation policy. Staffed House Natural Resources Committee. Drafted bills, amendments, and

responses to Legislator information requests. Facilitated interim study processes and summarized EQC and Water Subcommittee findings and recommendations. Statewide MEPA (environmental review) instructor. Montana staff to Legislative Council on River Governance (4-state group representing legislative interests in Columbia Basin management).

Oregon Trout (now The Freshwater Trust)

Conservation Planner

1994 - 1995 (1 year)

Worked with timber, mining, railroad, agency and environmental interests to develop interest in and strategies for protecting healthy runs of salmon and steelhead in a forested watershed proposed for extensive logging. Developed intergravel dissolved oxygen (IGDO) monitoring protocol, adopted by the companies and agencies as one way to track spawning and incubation conditions. Developed relationships that endured and, in part, led to the development of a Habitat Conservation Plan for the drainage and statewide IGDO water quality standards. Helped develop Outstanding Resource Water designation criteria as a participant in Oregon's water quality Triennial Review process.

Draggoo & Associates

Project Manager

1992 - 1994 (2 years)

Managed and contributed to the development of recreation, trail, and open space plans for cities and counties throughout the West. Developed and managed a public involvement/focus group process related to boating safety issues on the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. Facilitated public meetings; analyzed survey data; prepared reports and recommendations.

US Forest Service

River/Recreation Planner

1990 - 1992 (2 years)

Mount St. Helens NVM, Mt. Hood National Forest

Served as interdisciplinary team leader and recreation specialist for Clackamas Wild and Scenic River Management Plan/Environmental Assessment. Provided review and recommendations related to hydro facility development, including securing mitigation funds. Developed design guidance and environmental review documents for capital recreation/interpretive facility development. Coordinated engineering, architectural, and interpreter input to planning and implementation.

Oregon State Parks

River Planner

1989 - 1990 (1 year)

Salem, Oregon

Wrote Management Plans for two State Scenic Waterways. Assisted landowners in compliance with rules related to Waterway corridors.

National Park Service

Outdoor Recreation Planner

1989 - 1990 (1 year)

Western Region

Primary author of Economics of River, Trail and Greenway Conservation – A Resource Book (now in multiple printings and distributed internationally). Assisted individuals and communities in river, trail, and greenway planning. Trainer for national course on hydropower relicensing.

various

Project Specialist

1987 - 1989 (2 years)

Colorado

Assisted with various projects while in graduate school, including review and analysis of proposed dam and hydro development on Cache La Poudre River. Served as Recreation Planner for ski area in summer 1988. Worked on erosion control plan and various expansion proposals and coordinated them with Forest Service Special Use Permit requirements.

Environmental Science Associates/LSA Associates

Associate/Assistant Project Manager

1983 - 1987 (4 years)

Prepared economic and environmental impact analyses for proposed projects. Managed projects and teams (largest = \$250,000). Wrote proposals. Marketed, managed, and contributed to a Resource Inventory for new State Park unit; product was used as model for other State Park Inventories across the state. Served as recreation specialist on hydro facility relicensing study.

Public Interest Economics Foundation

Intern/Research Associate

1983 - 1983 (less than a year)

Washington, DC

Contributed to studies of economic benefits of improved water quality.

various

Head Lifeguard/Swim Instructor/Camp Counselor

1979 - 1983 (4 years)

Lake Almanor, CA; Berkeley, CA; Pittsfield, MA

Scheduled and conducted swim lessons. Managed marina. Supervised other lifeguards. Assisted with evening and weekend recreation programs and trips.

Education

Colorado State University

Master's degree, Recreation Resources · (1987 - 1990)

UC Berkeley

Bachelor of Science (BS), Natural Resource Economics · (1979 - 1983)