

## Congratulations to our 2023



**Environmental Professionals**  
*of Arizona*

**Student Scholars**

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### Graduate Student Scholars

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#### **KRISTIN PEARTREE**

Kristin is a graduate student in the Water, Society, and Policy Master's (MS) Program in the School of Natural Resources and the Environment at the University of Arizona (UA). Kristin comes from a background in the earth sciences, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Geology from Oberlin College and an MS in Earth and Planetary Sciences from the University of New Mexico. Before returning to school to pursue water policy, Kristin was a Research Scientist and Hydrogeology Technician at the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, where her work focused on surficial geologic mapping, managing a statewide groundwater monitoring network, and science outreach. Originally from Tucson, Kristin is passionate about sustainable water resources for Arizona. She currently works on a project investigating the potential for enhanced groundwater recharge in the state. Once she completes her degree, she plans to work professionally in the water industry, supporting water resources for communities and environmental use.



### **KYLE REEP**

Kyle is a third-year Environmental Engineering Ph.D. student and Dean's Fellow recipient at Arizona State University (ASU). He completed his Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering at ASU in 2020 and was named "Outstanding Graduate" of his class. He currently holds a position as a Graduate Research Associate, where his research focuses on microbiological remediation of contaminated wastewater for valuable metals recovery and

improved water quality. He is also a registered Engineer in Training in the state of Arizona. His hope is to translate his research and technical experience into actionable improvements in water treatment technologies to protect human and ecological health.



### **RANEE DEECHILLY**

Ranee is of the Red House People Clan, Born for the Ute People Clan. Her maternal grandfather is of the Red Running into Water Clan and her paternal grandfather is of the Folded Arms People Clan. She was born and raised on the Navajo Nation. Ranee earned her undergraduate degree in environmental earth science from Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. Upon graduation she began her career interning for a federal agency and eventually

transitioned into environmental consulting. Currently, she is employed at an environmental consulting company while also pursuing a Master's degree from Arizona State University (ASU) with focus on environmental and resource management. She is passionate about being an advocate for Mother Earth and underrepresented communities. She aims to help indigenous nations preserve and protect the environment and natural resources. She also aims to help build and restore relationships between agencies and indigenous communities.

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## Undergraduate Student Scholars

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### **ELISHKA PIERCE**

Elishka is a junior at Northern Arizona University (NAU). She is a double major in Environmental Sustainability Studies and Psychology, and currently works at NAU Center for Ecosystem Science and Society as a research laboratory technician. Once she graduates, she will continue to pursue her passion in regenerative agriculture, soil science, sustainable food systems, and improved farmer communication. Other than studying and science, Elishka loves to

travel, hike big mountains, read, and spend time with family.



### **KRISTEN KELLER**

Kristen is a junior at Arizona State University (ASU) pursuing a major in Environmental and Resource Management and a minor in Sustainability. As part of ASU's Next Generation Service Corps, she is also achieving a certificate in cross-sector leadership, aspiring to lead change in environmental conservation and land management. Kristen is currently a manager at Harkins Theatre and interns for the City of Mesa's Environmental and Sustainability Department.

Throughout her past internship with GreenLight Solutions, a nonprofit organization, Kristen volunteered as a team member and worked her way up to a project lead and eventually became the Vice President of five projects. She conducted a waste audit, proposed actions to divert over half of their waste, helped write and publish a booklet on sustainable event planning, and dedicated eight hours at the 2021 Mesa Marathon to divert 1.2 tons of materials from the landfill.

Volunteering in her spare time at many nonprofits such as Keep Tempe Beautiful, Arizona Sustainability Alliance, and Sierra Club, Kristen strives to bring nonprofit, private, and public organizations together to pursue extraordinary achievements in her future environmental career.



## **MADISON NIFFENEGGER**

Madison was born and raised in Arizona, today she is a Junior at the University of Arizona (UA) in Tucson. She dedicates her undergraduate studies to her two majors, Environmental Studies and Geography. Having received awards of Academic Distinction each semester, she will graduate in May 2024 with a Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts degree. Madison also works as a Butterfly Exhibit Interpreter at the Tucson Botanical Gardens. There, she supervises non-native butterfly species that are bred in tropical locations around the world. It is her job to manage the health of over two hundred butterflies within the exhibit and record chrysalis data for the USDA. Madison is inspired by the highly ethical and environmentally-just trade system of tropical butterfly farming, and strives to become a leader in environmental policy in the future. After she graduates from the UA her goal is to attend a Master's Program in the Baltimore-D.C. area. A fun fact about her is that she enjoys backpacking and is a dancer of nearly 20 years!

**Our 2023 Scholars are in attendance at this Annual Conference. Please take a moment to meet with them if you have the opportunity.**