

MEREDITH CORNETT (she/her)

SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

- Project management
- Writing and communications
- Stakeholder relationships
- Team coordination and management
- Software proficiency: spreadsheet, database, mapping, etc.
- Knowledge of Minnesota ecosystems: e.g., peatlands, forests, grasslands
- Habitat restoration and monitoring
- Facilitation and conflict resolution
- Statistical analysis
- Climate change mitigation/adaptation

EDUCATION

- **PhD (2000)** and **MS (1996)** in Forestry (Forest Ecology), University of Minnesota
- **BA (1990)** in Biology, Oberlin College

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Peatland Resilience Project Manager. January 2024-present. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources—Saint Paul, Minnesota.

- Manage Peatland Protection and Restoration Demonstration Project
 - Update peatland inventory and develop criteria for prioritization
 - Design and implement restoration project(s) at Winter Road Peatland Scientific and Natural Area
 - Identify ~500 acres of peatland for protection in collaboration with the Office of School Trust Lands
- Develop and lead multidisciplinary teams of internal and external collaborators
- Document and communicate project accomplishments and results

Senior Faculty Member/Adjunct Assistant Professor. September 2005-present. Unpaid affiliation at the University of Minnesota, Department of Forest Resources and Conservation Sciences Program—Saint Paul, Minnesota.

- Co-advise graduate students and postdoctoral researchers (to date – 7 MS students, 7 PhD students, 3 Postdocs)
- Serve on written and oral examination committees for MS and PhD candidates
- Guest lecture in graduate and undergraduate courses on natural resources management
- Co-author publications as appropriate, promote dissemination of results and champion applied research relevant to adaptive management and habitat conservation

Program Development Specialist. September 2023-January 2024. University of Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership (MCAP)—St. Paul, Minnesota.

- Reviewed MCAP strategic planning documents and interviewed staff
- Conducted review of climate adaptation literature and synthesized results
- Assessed climate adaptation networks and extension programs in other geographies
- Developed an action plan and report with recommendations to advance MCAP's new Climate and Weather Ready Extension Program

Climate Change Director. September 2021-May 2023. The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota—Duluth, Minnesota.

- Initiated and project managed three inaugural carbon projects on natural and working lands: peatland protection/restoration (Peatland Playbook), forest management (Family Forest Carbon Program) and reforestation (Minnesota Million)
- Coordinated interdisciplinary teams to achieve programmatic goals and project results (e.g., [Accelerating State Trust Lands: Accelerating Improved Forest Management to Increase Forest Carbon Storage in the United States](#))
- Provided decision-making support to senior leaders regarding climate change strategies for conservation programs
- Planned, launched and managed a new climate change program including hiring, onboarding and supervising staff to meet program goals
- Secured funding and managed annual budget in excess of \$1 million
- Implemented contracts to enhance organizational capacity

Director of Science. August 2004-August 2021. The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota—Minneapolis, Minnesota.

- Oversaw inventory and monitoring work in support of adaptive management for Conservancy lands and collaborative work with federal, state and county agencies, universities and other non-governmental organizations
- Developed monitoring and evaluation methodologies for large-scale restoration projects (e.g., [Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge](#)) and managed data collection
- Analyzed data (plot-based and geospatial) and co-authored reports
- Advised senior leadership on conservation investments, providing scientific review of proposed protection projects
- Initiated and managed multiple interagency scientific partnerships (e.g., [Resilient and Connected Networks](#), [Conifer Strongholds](#))
- Communicated scientific results through peer-reviewed articles, reports, blog posts and presentations
- Wrote successful grant proposals to address conservation planning, monitoring and applied research needs
- Supervised a team of five scientists and developed annual objectives and workplans

Conservation Ecologist. February 2001- July 2004. The Nature Conservancy of Minnesota—Duluth, Minnesota.

- Coordinated restoration designs and management plans for natural and working lands
- Designed and implemented monitoring protocols to evaluate effectiveness of restoration and management actions
- Used GPS to map preserve boundaries and plot locations
- Implemented contracts for forest management and ecological assessments
- Facilitated relationships and planning processes with various types of landowners, stakeholders and partners toward common management objectives
- Mapped forest stands, developed databases and performed statistical analyses
- Wrote management plans and monitoring reports
- Wrote research articles, presented priorities and results to diverse audiences and led educational field trips to demonstration sites
- Developed successful funding proposals for implementation of terrestrial and aquatic restoration activities
- Hired and supervised forestry staff and seasonal technicians

Community Forest Ecologist. January 1998- January 2001. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry—Saint Paul, Minnesota.

- Designed and implemented inventory and monitoring methodologies for habitat restoration projects across the Twin Cities Metro Area
- Provided technical assistance to private landowners, municipalities and counties
- Communicated scientific results through written materials and oral presentations to landowner, agency, academic, and legislative audiences
- Conducted plot-based inventories, relevés, and rare plant searches on state lands
- Developed successful funding proposal for landowner habitat restoration program (Neighborhood Wilds) funded through the LCCMR

Peace Corps Campus Representative. September 1996- July 1997. University of Minnesota, Department of Forest Resources and U.S. Peace Corps—Saint Paul, Minnesota.

- Managed Peace Corps campus office and met with prospective applicants
- Tabled at outreach events, such as job fairs and career days
- Presented on Peace Corps opportunities and benefits to undergraduate classes
- Entered applicant data into Peace Corps database
- Developed work plans and coordinated outreach activities with Peace Corps supervisor.

Graduate Research Assistant. January 1994- August 1996. University of Minnesota, Department of Forest Resources—Saint Paul, Minnesota.

- Designed and managed research projects investigating the conservation and ecology of white pine, balsam fir and white cedar in conifer-hardwood forests of northern Minnesota
- Wrote grant proposals and raised funds for conducting research activities
- Collected data from field and greenhouse experiments
- Used spreadsheets and relational databases to manage field data
- Performed statistical analyses and published reports and peer-reviewed articles
- Made forest management recommendations to agency partners based on results
- Presented research results to technical and academic audiences

Community Forestry Extensionist. March 1991- June 1993. U.S. Peace Corps—Republic of Panama.

- Managed conservation activities in a subsistence farming community within Chagres National Park (Panama Canal watershed)
- Coordinated with multiple agencies and non-governmental organizations to meet the needs of the community
- Organized interagency seminars on income-generating activities compatible with forest conservation
- Taught environmental education in local primary school
- Created quarterly work plans and reports for Peace Corps supervisor and sponsor agency (Institute of Natural and Renewable Resources)
- Planned and evaluated success of small tree nurseries and conservation demonstration plots

HONORS AND AWARDS (LAST TEN YEARS)

- Regional Sustainable Development Program - Environmental Initiative Award (2024)
- Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership - [Individual Achievement Award](#) (2021)
- Forester of the Year. University of Minnesota Forestry Club (2018)
- TED-style Talk. Top 3, TNC's Science Impact Project, World Office (2017)
- Postcard Underground. Recognition for Conifer Strongholds (2017)
- Ethical Hero. The Nature Conservancy (2014, 2015)

VOLUNTEER SERVICE (LAST TEN YEARS)

- [Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership](#) – Advisory Committee (Sept. 2021-pres.)
- [Duluth Branch NAACP](#) – Health and Environmental Equity Committee (Jan. 2023-pres.)
- [Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Duluth](#) – Racial Justice Team Liaison and Outreach Program Coordinator, Adult Forums Committee (May 2022-pres.)
- [RiverFront Community Development](#) – Climate-resilient housing/neighborhood infill project (Aug. 2021-Dec. 2022)
- [Citizens Climate Lobby](#) – Congressional Liaison (Jan. 2019- July 2020)
- [Minnesota Native Bee Atlas](#) – Community Scientist (May 2018-Sep. 2022)
- [Many Rivers Montessori](#) – Founding Member of Launch Board and Chair of Capital Campaign (2014); Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Committee member (2017-2020)

RECENT TRAININGS

- Introduction to ArcPro | State of Minnesota
- Highly Effective Teams | Improving Project Management, Team Performance, and Culture
- Collaborating for Success | [Conversant Organizational Change and Leadership Consulting](#)
- Intercultural Development Inventory | [Intercultural Competence Edge](#)
- Practical Leadership: Supervising for Employee Engagement | MN Council of Nonprofits
- Engaging Across Differences | Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- Science Impact Project | Communication and Leadership for Scientists
 - Improv for Scientists | [Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science](#)
 - Media Interviews, Speaking with Authority | [Intermedia Communications Training](#)

WRITING SAMPLES

- [Reforesting Minnesota: building capacity in a changing climate](#) US Nature4Climate (Jan. 2022)
- Can we grow enough trees to reforest Minnesota? [Nature.org/MN](#) (May 2021)
- [Adaptation as acceptance: toward a new normal in the Northwoods](#) Agate Mag. (Sep. 2017)
- Blog posts [Cool Green Science](#)
- [Heart of Palms: My Peace Corps Years in Tranquilla](#). 2014. University of Alabama Press.
- See attached list of peer-reviewed publications.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS
[Meredith Cornett on Google Scholar](#)

Anderson, M., M. Clark, A. Olivero, A. Barnett, K. Hall, **M. Cornett**, M. Ahlering, M. Schindel, B. Unnasch, C. Schloss, D. Cameron. 2023. A resilient and connected network of sites to sustain biodiversity under a changing climate. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 120(7) e2204434119.

Karakka, L., **M. Cornett**, G. Domke, T. Ontl, L.E. Dee. Improved forest management as a natural climate solution: a review. 2021. *Ecological Solutions and Evidence* 2(3), e12090.

Sullivan-Wiley, K., **M. Cornett**, J. Musengezi, P. Shyamsundar. 2021. Climate-resilient forest restoration on public lands in Minnesota's Northwoods region: a behavior change case study. *Case Studies in the Environment* 5(1): 1265704.

Aherling, M. A., **M. Cornett**, K. Blann, M. White, C. Lenhart, C. Dixon, M. R. Dudash, L. Johnson, B. Keeler, B. Palik, J. Pastor, R.W. Sterner, D. Shaw, R. Biske, N. Feeken, J. Manolis, H. Possingham. 2020. A conservation science agenda for a changing Upper Midwest and Great Plains, United States. *Conservation Science and Practice*. 2(8), 236.

Etterson, J.R, **M.W. Cornett**, M.A. White and L.C. Kavajecz. 2020. Assisted migration across fixed seed zones detects adaptation lags in two major North American tree species. *Ecological Applications* 30:e02092.

White, M.A., **M.W. Cornett**, K. Frerker and J.R. Etterson. 2020. Partnerships to take on climate change: adaptation forestry and conifer strongholds in the Northwoods, Minnesota, USA. *Journal of Forestry* 118:219-232.

Ontl, T.A., M.K. Janowiak, C.W. Swanston, J. Daley, S. Handler, **M. Cornett**, S. Hagenbuch, C. Handrick, L. McCarthy, N. Patch. 2020. Forest management for carbon sequestration and climate adaptation. *Journal of Forestry*. 118: 86-101.

Etterson, J.R., M.A. White, L.C. Kavajecz, and **M.W. Cornett**. 2018. Embedding research into restoration. A case study illustrating the value of applied-academic partnerships. *Tree Planters Notes* 61:89-101.

Meissen, J.C., S.M. Galatowitsch, and **M.W. Cornett**. 2017. Meeting seed demand for landscape-scale restoration sustainably: the influence of seed harvest intensity and site management. *Écoscience* 24: 145-155.

Meissen, J.C., S.M. Galatowitsch, and **M.W. Cornett**. 2017. Assessing long-term risks of prairie seed harvest: what is the role of life history? *Botany* 95:1081-1092.

White, M.A., **M.W. Cornett**, and P.T. Wolter. 2017. Two scales are better than one: monitoring multiple-use northern temperate forests. *Forest Ecology and Management*. 384:44-53.

Meissen, J.C., S.M. Galatowitsch, and **M.W. Cornett**. 2015. Risks of overharvesting seed from native tallgrass prairies. *Restoration Ecology* 23:882-891.

Cornett, M. and M. White. 2013. Forest restoration in a changing world: complexity and adaptation examples from the Great Lakes region of North America. In: Messier, C, K. Puettmann, and K. D. Coates (Eds.) *Managing forests as complex adaptive systems*. Routledge, 368 pp.

Gerla, P.J., **M.W. Cornett**, J.D. Ekstein, and M.A. Ahlering. 2012. Talking big: lessons learned from a 9,000- hectare restoration in the northern tallgrass prairie. *Sustainability* 4:3066-3087.

Shinneman, D.J., B.J. Palik and **M.W. Cornett**. 2012. Can landscape-level forest restoration influence fire risk? Comparing alternatives in the Border Lakes Region of northern Minnesota and northwestern Ontario. *Forest Ecology and Management* 274:126-135.

Shinneman, D.J., B.J. Palik, and **M.W. Cornett**. 2010. Simulating restoration strategies for a southern boreal forest landscape with complex land ownership patterns. *Forest Ecology and Management* 259:446-458.

Burton, J.I., E.K. Zenner, L.E. Frelich, and **M.W. Cornett**. 2009. Patterns of plant community structure within and among primary and second-growth northern hardwood forest stands. *Forest Ecology and Management* 258:2556-2568.

Cornett, M.W., P.J. Bauman, D.D. Breyfogle. 2006. Can we control leafy spurge? Adaptive management and the recovery of native vegetation. *Ecological Restoration* 24:145-150.

Lytle, D.E., **M.W. Cornett**, and M.S. Harkness. 2006. Transferring landscape ecological knowledge in a multipartnerr landscape: the Border Lakes region of Minnesota and Ontario. In: Perera, A.H., L.J. Buse, and T.R. Crow (eds). *Forest Landscape Ecology*. Springer, New York, NY. pp 97-128.

Frelich, L.E., **M.W. Cornett**, and M.A.White. 2005. Controls and references in forestry: the role of old growth and retrospective studies. *Journal of Forestry* 103:339-344.

Sarr D., K. Puettmann, R. Pabst, **M. Cornett**, and L. Arguello. 2004. Restoration ecology: new perspectives and opportunities for forestry. *Journal of Forestry* 102: 20-24.

Anderson C.E., K.A. Chapman, M.A. White, and **M.W. Cornett**. 2002. Effects of browsing control on establishment and recruitment of eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus* L.) at Cathedral Grove in the Lake Superior Highlands, Minnesota. *Natural Areas Journal* 22: 202-210.

Cornett, M.W., K.J. Puettmann, L.E. Frelich, and P.B. Reich. 2001. Comparing the importance of seedbed and canopy type in the restoration of upland *Thuja occidentalis* forests of northeastern Minnesota. *Restoration Ecology* 9:386-396.

Cornett, M.W. 2001. Malcolm L. Hunter, Jr. (ed.), *Maintaining biodiversity in forest ecosystems—a review*. *Ethics, Policy and Environment* 4:65-67.

Cornett, M.W., L.E. Frelich, K.J. Puettmann, and P.B. Reich. 2000. Conservation implications of browsing by *Odocoileus virginianus* in remnant upland *Thuja occidentalis* forests. *Biological Conservation* 93:359-369.

Cornett, M.W., P.B. Reich, K.J. Puettmann, and L.E. Frelich. 2000. Seedbed and moisture availability determine safe sites for *Thuja occidentalis* germination. *American Journal of Botany* 93:359-369.

Cornett, M. and C. Evenson. 1999. Direct seeding: a successful hardwood forest restoration strategy (Minnesota). *Ecological Restoration* 17:230-231.

Cornett, M.W., K.J. Puettmann, and P.B. Reich. 1998. Canopy type, leaf litter, predation, and competition influence seedling emergence and survival in two Minnesota conifer-deciduous forests. *Canadian Journal of Forest Research* 28:196-205.

Cornett, M.W., P.B. Reich, and K.J. Puettmann. 1997. Canopy feedbacks and microtopography regulate conifer seedling distribution in two Minnesota conifer-deciduous forests. *Canadian Journal of Forest Research* 4:353-364.