Stanford



Mele Wheaton

Associate Director of Program Strategy, Emmett Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and Resources

Bio

BIO

Dr. Mele Wheaton is Associate Director of Program Strategy for the Emmett Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and Resources (E-IPER). Prior to her position in E-IPER Mele was a research scholar in the Social Ecology Lab at Stanford University. Her research interests include behavior change, environmental learning, and equity and inclusion in conservation education. Mele managed projects including exploring the various pathways to environmental literacy, examining how social sciences are integrated into sustainability research, and connecting research and practice both in education and in conservation land management. Mele has studied environmental behavior change in nature-based tourism, with research sites in Galapagos and California, and examined the development of environmental identity. Prior to academia, Mele taught in a variety of outdoor education settings and worked as a field biologist.

CURRENT ROLE AT STANFORD

Associate Director of Program Strategy (E-IPER)

INSTITUTE AFFILIATIONS

- Academic Research Staff, Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Chancellor’s Dissertation Year Fellowship, University of California, Santa Cruz (2009-2010)
- Fellowship, Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation (2008)
- Graduate Research Fellowship, Center for Informal Learning and Schools (2004-2008)

BOARDS, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Board Member, Oceanic Society (2025 - present)
- Board Member, California Environmental Education Foundation (2013 - 2016)

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- BA, University of California, Santa Cruz , Environmental Studies (1996)
- BA, University of California, Santa Cruz , Biology (1996)
- PhD, University of California, Santa Cruz , Education (Emphasis in Science and Math) (2011)

Teaching

COURSES

2026-27

- Introduction to Interdisciplinary Environmental Research: ENVRES 310 (Aut)

2025-26

- E-IPER PhD Writing Seminar: ENVRES 340 (Win)
- Graduate Practicum in Environment and Resources: ENVRES 270 (Win)
- Introduction to Interdisciplinary Environmental Research: ENVRES 310 (Aut)
- Research Approaches for Environmental Problem Solving: ENVRES 330 (Spr)

2024-25

- E-IPER Current Topics Seminar: ENVRES 225 (Aut, Win, Spr)
- Graduate Practicum in Environment and Resources: ENVRES 270 (Aut, Win)
- Introduction to Interdisciplinary Environmental Research and Practice: ENVRES 310 (Aut)

2023-24

- E-IPER Current Topics Seminar: ENVRES 225 (Aut, Win, Spr)
- Graduate Practicum in Environment and Resources: ENVRES 270 (Aut)
- Introduction to Interdisciplinary Environmental Research and Practice: ENVRES 310 (Aut)

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Complementary interactional contexts facilitate learning about the environment in everyday life** *SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCE*
  Ardoin, N. M., Gould, R. K., Wojcik, D., Wheaton, M.
  2026

- **Sociocultural learning theories for social-ecological change** *ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION RESEARCH*
  Wheaton, M., Ardoin, N. M., Bowers, A. W., Kannan, A.
  2024

- **Incorporating justice, equity, and access priorities into land trusts' conservation efforts** *BIOLOGICAL CONSERVATION*
  Beckman, C. M., Wheaton, M., Sawe, N., Ardoin, N. M.
  2023; 279

- **Leveraging collective action and environmental literacy to address complex sustainability challenges.** *Ambio*
  Ardoin, N. M., Bowers, A. W., Wheaton, M.
  2022

- **What is community-level environmental literacy, and how can we measure it? A report of a convening to conceptualize and operationalize CLEL** *ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION RESEARCH*
  Gibson, L. M., Busch, K. C., Stevenson, K. T., Cutts, B. B., DeMattia, E. A., Aguilar, O. M., Ardoin, N. M., Carrier, S. J., Clark, C. R., Cooper, C. B., Feinstein, N., Goodwin, J., Peterson, et al
  2022

- **Understanding teacher instructional change: the case of integrating NGSS and stewardship in professional development** *ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION RESEARCH*
  Hayes, K. N., Wheaton, M., Tucker, D.
  2019; 25 (1): 115–34

- **Using web and mobile technology to motivate pro-environmental action after a nature-based tourism experience** *JOURNAL OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM*
  Wheaton, M., Ardoin, N. M., Hunt, C., Schuh, J. S., Kresse, M., Menke, C., Durham, W.
  2016; 24 (4): 594-615
- **Post-trip philanthropic intentions of nature-based tourists in Galapagos** *Journal of Ecotourism*
  Ardoin, N., Wheaton, M., Hunt, C., Schuh, J., Durham, W.
  2016; 15 (1): 21-35
- **Nature-based tourism's impact on environmental knowledge, attitudes, and behavior: a review and analysis of the literature and potential future research** *JOURNAL OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM*
  Ardoin, N. M., Wheaton, M., Bowers, A. W., Hunt, C. A., Durham, W. H.
  2015; 23 (6): 838-858
- **Building A Scientific Community: An Inquiry-Based Biology Short Course for the 2009 Hartnell SUMS Program**
  Yuh, P., Wheaton, M., Wright, A., Contreras, L., McCann, S.
  edited by Hunter, L., Metevier, A. J.
  ASTRONOMICAL SOC PACIFIC.2010: 211-+
- **Exploring Middle School Girls' Ideas about Science at a Bilingual Marine Science Camp** *JOURNAL OF MUSEUM EDUCATION*
  Wheaton, M., Ash, D.
  2008; 33 (2): 131-141
- **Talk, tools, and tensions: Observing biological talk over time** *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE EDUCATION*
  Ash, D., Crain, R., Brandt, C., Loomis, M., Wheaton, M., Bennett, C.
  2007; 29 (12): 1581-1602