

## Manja Holland-Smith

Senior Consultant

## **Position with Firm**

2025-present Senior Consultant. Manages projects for clients from a variety of entities and organizations, including nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, state resource agencies, local and regional governments, and universities. Develops client relationships, conducts research and analysis, and crafts high-quality project deliverables. Facilitates group discussions aimed at developing strategies and solutions for addressing complex issues.

## **Previous Professional Experience**

2024-2025

Senior Director of Community Engagement, National Wildlife Federation (NWF)— Great Lakes Regional Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Led the visioning and strategic planning for NWF's Great Lakes Regional Center Community Engagement team. Designed and implemented an innovative program, Healthy Habitats, focused on supporting anchor institutions in climate-vulnerable and marginalized communities to carry out on the ground intersectional native plant projects through a healing lens. Led grant-writing efforts, growing and managing a \$900k annual budget. Successfully sustained the work in Toledo, Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Cleveland, with continuous funding and support since launch in each city.

2021-2024

Director of Community Engagement, National Wildlife Federation—Great Lakes Regional Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Led the continued growth and expansion of work in Toledo, Detroit, and Grand Rapids and launched work in Cleveland. Co-led webinars to connect Sacred Grounds participants across the four cities, providing opportunities for network and community-building among diverse faith communities. Collaborated with NWF's Colorado-based Early Childhood Health Outdoors team to bring nature-based play design and installations and professional development training to 13 early childhood centers in Detroit's Brightmoor neighborhood. Supported the development of green stormwater infrastructure projects at Sacred Grounds sites in Detroit, including a focus on water affordability and local flooding in some of the hardest hit neighborhoods.

2018-2021

Senior Manager of Habitat and Education, National Wildlife Federation—Great Lakes Regional Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Designed and built a broad, transferable community-based model based on the work pioneered alongside community partners in Toledo. Centered environmental justice, and community in the model and program design, focusing work on the most historically marginalized and climate-vulnerable communities. Supported the development of authentic local partnerships and both led and oversaw the securing of grant funding to support

the work. Led a cross-organization and cross-department team in the development of community engagement principles and practices for her team, the regional office, and beyond. Supported staff across NWF in integrating equity and justice and environmental justice into their programmatic work.

2016-2018

Manager of Habitat and Education, National Wildlife Federation—Great Lakes Regional Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Designed and launched Sacred Grounds Toledo, a program focused on supporting faith communities in designing and installing native plant gardens and habitats, alongside a team of Toledo-based organizations and entities. Led the transformation of NWF's Sacred Grounds program from a traditional conservation program to one that centered people, communities, equity, and justice. Secured grant funding to pilot the project at eight houses of worship. Worked with Oakland County staff to support the county in achieving NWF's Community Wildlife Habitat certification.

2015-2016

Academic Advisor, University of Michigan (U-M), Ann Arbor, Michigan. Served as primary academic advisor for approximately 550 undergraduate students. Cochaired the Student Consulting Group, a group of 15 undergraduate students selected to act as consultants for the Literature, Science, and the Arts Newnan Advising Center operations and programming. Served as liaison for three U-M units: Science Learning Center, Women in Science and Engineering, and the Multidisciplinary Design Program.

2011-2015

Research Programs Officer University of Michigan Grahan Institute, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Participated in the design, development, and implementation of the Dow Postdoctoral Fellowships in Sustainability program, modeled after the Michigan Society of Fellows. Assisted with the development of the new U-M Water Center, including strategic planning, request for proposals development, proposal review, program management for funded projects, and proposal development. Designed and conducted updates to track U-M sustainability research funding trends.

Education

Carleton College, BA in Biology

Cornell University, MS in Environmental Toxicology

Yale University, PhD in Ecology