

## August 2018 Featured Expert: *Mark A. Dilley*



**Background:** Mark came to us from the MAD Scientist Associates (Westerville, OH) where he's worked for the past 20 years which he is the Chief Scientist (<https://www.madscientistassociates.net/>), Take a look at their website and welcome him to The People and Nature Connection. -- *Kirsten*

### **TPNC: What does a typical work day look like for someone in your position?**

**Dilley:** Imagine popcorn. The "typical day" in environmental consulting is kind of like that: bouncing all over the place! As Chief Scientist, I must manage projects, participate in field work, write and review reports, design restoration projects, train and assist staff, coordinate

with regulatory agencies, attract new clients and write proposals. It can be hectic, but I love the work we do and the results we can deliver.

### **TPNC: What do you like about your job?**

**Dilley:** Problem solving, helping people and improving the environment. As an ecological and wetland consulting firm, MAD Scientist Associates is focused on doing the right thing for the environment and sharing our love of and commitment to nature through outreach and education.

### **TPNC: What do you find challenging about your job?**

**Dilley:** Two challenges immediately come to mind: 1) Time management (there is a lot of juggling and prioritization required when you work in the consulting field) and 2) Garnering support for environmental projects. Not every project we take on has the support or funding necessary for successful completion, so it can take a lot of work to get people on your side and find the money to implement an environmental project such as a wetland restoration.

## August 2018 Featured Expert: *Mark A. Dilley*



**TPNC: What types of classes did you have to take in college to get your position?**

**Dilley:** I took a lot of biology, ecology and natural resources classes, as well as basic chemistry, statistics, English composition, etc. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Natural Resources (Fisheries Management) and a Master's Degree in Environmental Science with a specialization in wetlands.

**TPNC: What is your favorite aspect of nature?**

**Dilley:** My favorite aspect of nature is its complexity (followed closely by its beauty). I find the diversity of habitats and species exhilarating and fascinating, and I enjoy learning about unique and complicated ecological relationships, such as the relationship between the Karner Blue Butterfly and ants, which drag the Karner Blue caterpillars into their colony and care for it during its development (protecting it from predators and parasites in exchange for a sweet secretion emitted by the caterpillar).

## August 2018 Featured Expert: *Mark A. Dilley*



**TPNC:** What is the biggest misconception you would like the public to know about what you do?

**Dilley:** I would say one of the big misconceptions is that the work is always fun and pleasant. While I thoroughly enjoy being outdoors, I've experienced some pretty rough field days, with heat, humidity, tough walking conditions (deep muck or uneven terrain), thorns for miles, stinging/biting insects, you name it. I've also had those days where conditions were absolutely perfect and I felt blessed to be in my line of work. I think people who don't work in this field picture the latter type of day as "the norm," when it's really not. But when you have a passion for what you do, you will gladly accept the tough days in between the awesome ones.

*Thanks to Mark for sharing your work!*