

## 2016 At-Large Board nominees

**Jamie Harrelson** served as EMAS Treasurer from 2010 to 2013 and previously helped manage the EMAS website. She recently finished a Master's degree in Biology at Western Carolina University and conducted thesis research on Golden-winged Warblers. Jamie is an avid birder and nature photographer, and she is passionate about conservation of southern Appalachian wildlife and ecosystems.

**Cherie Pitillo** grew up on a dairy farm in Henderson County which instilled in her an appreciation and awe of nature. She earned her BA and MS degrees in Biology from East Carolina University, with a concentration on African mammals. Cherie served as the first Executive Director of the Balsam Mountain Trust which protects the Balsam Mountain Preserve. As Zoo Education Coordinator for the NC Zoological Park, she served as the zoo's educational consultant to the local school system. Cherie lived in Namibia, Africa for 15 months and in Merida, Yucatan for eight years where she wrote a column, *Backyard Birding in Merida, Yucatan and Beyond*, for a Mexican online, daily. Cherie returned to the US in April, 2015.

**Monica Schwalbach** works as an Assistant Director with the U.S. Forest Service, Southern Research Station, in Asheville, NC, where she has responsibility for planning, budgets, science communications, legislative affairs and tribal relations. Prior experience includes serving as forest supervisor on the Wallowa Whitman national forest in Oregon, deputy supervisor on the National Forests in North Carolina, and assistant director for wildlife conservation in Washington, D.C. Monica earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resources from Cornell University, and Master of Science from South Dakota State University. Her graduate research focused on least terns and piping plovers in the upper Missouri River basin. Monica enjoys bird watching, especially shorebirds, and participates in various citizen science birding efforts.

**Aaron Steed** has been passionate about birds and wildlife his entire life. Originally from Wilmington, NC, Aaron studied General Biology at UNC-Asheville and has worked on numerous avian research projects in Kansas, Texas, Arizona and California, primarily focusing on endangered and threatened species. He currently works as a guide for Ventures Birding Tours (based in Asheville), designing and leading birding trips throughout the Carolinas, the USA, and Central America. Though Aaron loves traveling and birding new places, he'll always be drawn back to the wonderful biodiversity of the Southern Appalachians.

**Jay Wherley** is originally from Ohio, where he graduated from the University of Akron with a degree in Electrical Engineering. After nearly 30 years in Florida, he arrived in Asheville in 2014 where he runs his own software development business, JRW Data Inc. He was a founding member and Treasurer for Brevard Aiding Shelter Animals Project, a Florida non-profit/501c3 that began in 2010. As a Florida Master Naturalist, he volunteered at Viera Wetlands for several years. He's hoping this will be the year he adds Black-billed Cuckoo to his life list!