

# Meet the Nature Education Team!



## Hi, I'm Chrissy! (Nature Name: Balsam)

I have been with Portland Parks since 2007. I coordinate nature programs for children ages 0-10 and their families. While getting my Masters in Environmental Education from the University of Minnesota - Duluth, I researched how children's play behavior changed when they moved from a structured playground to a forested natural area. I wonder a lot about the connection between humans and nature. Watching how young children observe and describe what they see, hear, and feel while out in nature always makes me think (and often smile!) I especially love watching my own little person experience the world as he moves through his toddler years. One of my favorite parks to explore in Portland is the Columbia Children's Arboretum. When I'm not at work, I like to do crafts, play the guitar, cook tasty meals, and explore by bike.



## Hi, I'm Kevin! (Nature Name: Madrone)

I have been an educator in different roles with Portland Parks & Recreation for almost three years. I like working for the city and take seriously what it means to be a public servant. I have a Master's degree from Portland State University in Educational Leadership & Policy with a specialization in Leadership for Sustainability Education. I am really interested in place-based learning, sensory learning, and garden education. My favorite topics to teach students about include trees, pollination, and biodiversity. I love springtime when Portland is full of color, flowers, and pollinators! So if I had to choose a favorite Portland park, it would be Powell Butte when the native lupine and camas are in bloom. In my free time, I like learning more about weather and our changing climate, watersheds, and hiking around Oregon's different ecoregions.



## Hi, I'm Yael! (Nature Name: Owl)

I have been working with the Environmental Education team since 2018. I began as a crew leader for the Youth Conservation Crew, then continued on as a Field Trip Naturalist and Summer Coordinator for the Jr Naturalist program. For the past ten years, I have enjoyed connecting with children and volunteers of all ages through my work in youth education. My interest in ecology and social-emotional learning led me to complete a master's degree in Leadership for Sustainability Education at Portland State University. I think teaching and learning outdoors is an incredible way to explore relationships with self, others, and the natural world. One of my favorite parks in Portland is Columbia Park. I love to read there in the sunny field while surrounded by towering Douglas Fir trees. In my free time, I like to drink tea, make up-cycled crafts, swim, and eat pickles.