

---

## **TOWARDS PROACTIVE WILDLIFE HEALTH – GLOBAL INSIGHTS ON CONSERVATION FROM THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONS SOCIETY’S WILDLIFE HEALTH & HEALTH POLICY PROGRAM**

\*Sarah Olson, Wildlife Conservations Society, 301 N. Wilson Ave., Bozeman, MT 59715

The Wildlife Conservation Society’s Wildlife Health & Health Policy Program, the first of its kind, evolved from the Field Veterinary Program begun in 1989. We work at the interface of wildlife health, domestic animal health, and human health and livelihoods, all as underpinned by the state of environmental stewardship. It is at this interface where the opportunities for infectious disease spread, environmental pollution and other disruptions to critical ecosystems are greatest, and where proactive approaches to ecosystem health can optimize benefits for all. Our program has grown to address important conservation issues impacting landscapes, seascapes and species around the world, including those related to Ebola virus disease, avian influenza, foot and mouth disease as it relates to cross-sectoral land-use planning, lead poisoning up food chains, canine distemper in Amur tigers, emerging zoonotic disease threats to human health, and policy-relevant quantification of relationships between environmental degradation and impacts on public health. As we try to work ‘upstream’ to address health-related challenges that limit conservation success, our toolbox includes research, training, education and outreach, the creation of enabling environments for addressing intersectoral conflicts, and sociopolitical engagement at a range of scales.