FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Lissa Widoff, Executive Director, Robert & Patricia Switzer Foundation

 (207) 338-5654 / lissa@switzernetwork.org / [www.switzernetwork.org](http://www.switzernetwork.org)

 Lauren Hertel, Communications Manager, Robert & Patricia Switzer Foundation

 lauren@switzernetwork.org

**ROBERT AND PATRICIA SWITZER FOUNDATION selects 2017 SWITZER ENVIRONMENTAL FELLOWS**

BELFAST, Maine, July 14, 2017 – Twenty environmental scholars were chosen as 2017 recipients of the [**Switzer Environmental Fellowship**](http://www.switzernetwork.org/grant-programs/fellowship-program)**,** a program of the Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation. The Switzer Fellowship Program recognizes the achievements of environmental leaders and their potential to drive positive change. The 20 Fellowships total $300,000 in awards, with each Fellow awarded $15,000 for academic expenses. The Switzer Environmental Fellowship is the hallmark of Switzer Foundation programs and this year’s Fellows represent bring an impressive diversity of backgrounds and expertise. In addition to these Fellowships, over $70,000 has been awarded in 2017 under other related Switzer grant programs, including our [Leadership Grant Program](http://www.switzernetwork.org/grant-programs/leadership-grants/recent-recipients) and [Network Innovation Grant program](http://www.switzernetwork.org/grant-programs/network-innovation-grants), which support the environmental leadership careers of Switzer Fellows.

**2017 SWITZER FELLOWSHIPS**

Each year, 20 promising environmental leaders are awarded $15,000 each to complete masters and doctoral degrees in New England and California to advance their skills and develop their expertise to address critical environmental challenges. Over $15 million in grants has been invested in Switzer Fellows over the past 31 years. The Switzer Foundation identifies, supports and nurtures emerging environmental leaders through academic funding, leadership training and preparation for policy impact.

“We are proud to be selecting our thirty-first cohort of Switzer Fellows this year. The 2017 Fellows represent the diversity of environmental issues, leadership approaches and backgrounds that are essential to face today’s environmental problems,” said Lissa Widoff, Switzer Foundation Executive Director. “Increasingly, we see that environmental problems are also social problems. Switzer Fellows share a passion and commitment to improving environmental conditions and reflect diverse communities concerned about environmental impacts. We must learn to work together for positive change, and our Fellows are doing just that.”

The 2017 Switzer Fellows hail from a variety of schools and professional fields of study across many academic institutions. Fellows are supported in their interdisciplinary and collaborative work, positioning them for leadership in the nonprofit, government, business and academic sectors. Fellowships are merit-based and rigorously competitive. Candidates must be recognized for their leadership capacity by their academic institution or by environmental experts.

**The 2017 Switzer Fellows are:**

**Samantha Alger (Ph.D) –University of Vermont – Biology**

 *Improving the health of managed and wild bees through research, education and outreach*

**Olivia Bartlett (Ph.D) – University of New Hampshire – Forest Ecology**

 *Understanding the links between soil chemistry and forest productivity in managed forests*

**Daisy Benitez (MS) –University of Southern California – Green Technologies**

*Developing technologies for safe, sustainable, and reliable energy generation*

**Eugenia (Genie) Bey (MA) – California State University at Long Beach – Geography**

 *Finding community-based solutions to climate adaptation and resilience planning*

**Zineb Bouzoubaa (MPP) – UC Berkeley – Public Policy**

 *Reaching our nation’s climate change goals through environmental justice and clean energy initiatives*

**Jolisa Brooks (MESc) –Yale University – Global Environmental Policy & International Development**

 *Environmental peace-building in international development*

**Mia Dawson (MA) –UC Davis – Environmental Justice**

 *Using geographic technology to bring equity and justice to environmental decision-making*

**Joan Dudney (Ph.D) – UC Berkeley – Ecosystem Science**

 *Using ecosystem science to facilitate effective management in a changing climate*

**Natalya Gallo (Ph.D) –Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego – Oceanography**

 *Using low-oxygen marine environments as proxies to predict future climate change impacts to oceans* **David Gonzalez (Ph.D) –UCLA – Atmospheric Chemistry**

 *Providing metrics for the regulation of particulates that contribute to air pollution*

**Adam Hasz (MCP) –MIT –City Planning**

 *Advancing democratized energy systems and urban-scale renewable technologies*

**Douglas McPherson (MCP) –MIT – Urban Studies and Planning**

 *Promoting the development of urban open space and mitigating the effects of gentrification*

**Jonathan Moch (Ph.D) –Harvard University – Earth and Planetary Sciences**

 *Understanding the relationship between climate and regional air pollution, particularly in China*

**Brunilda Pizarro (MESc) –Yale University –Environmental Science/Food Justice**

 *Bringing cultural, social and political dimensions to food security problem-solving*

**Jeremy Poindexter (Ph.D) –MIT – Materials Science and Engineering**

 *Minimizing the technological and sociopolitical barriers to solar power as a widely used energy source*

**Lauren Richter (Ph.D) – Northeastern University – Sociology**

 *Understanding the scientific controversies around chemical exposure and human health effects*

**Aisha Saad (JD) –Yale University – Environmental Law**

 *Documenting corporate human rights abuses and environmental liability*

**Miriam Solis (Ph.D) – UC Berkeley – City and Regional Planning**

 *Bringing social justice, infrastructure and sustainability themes into urban environmental planning*

**Devesh Vashishtha (MD) – UC San Diego School of Medicine – Environmental and Public Health**

 *Examining the public health impacts of increased heat waves and pesticide exposure*

**Irene Vasquez (MS) –Humboldt University– Natural Resource Management**

 *Restoring and conserving traditionally used medicinal plants in indigenous communities*

More information on the 2017 class of Switzer Fellows, and the Fellowship program, is available on the Foundation website at <http://www.switzernetwork.org/become-fellow/2016-switzer-fellows>.

**The deadline for 2017 Switzer Environmental Fellowship Applications is January 8, 2018.**

**2017 SWITZER LEADERSHIP GRANTS**

The Switzer Leadership Grant program provides grants of up to $40,000 to organizations which partner with a Switzer Fellow on a project that elevates the Fellow’s environmental leadership career and directly improves environmental quality. Switzer Leadership Grantees for 2017 are:

* **Manomet**, Brunswick, Maine, to support Switzer Fellow Marissa McMahan in a [new staff position of Senior Scientist](http://www.switzernetwork.org/grants/putting-science-work-rapidly-warming-gulf-maine), leading initiatives to help Maine coastal communities adapt to a rapidly warming Gulf of Maine;
* **Environmental Health Coalition**, National City, California, to support Switzer Fellow Carolina Prado in a [new staff position as Senior Research Scientist](http://www.switzernetwork.org/grants/air-quality-and-environmental-justice-usmexico-border), developing and leading programs focused on environmental justice in the U.S./Mexico border region.

More information on the Switzer Leadership Grant program is available on the Foundation website at <http://www.switzernetwork.org/grant-programs/leadership-grants>.

More information on the Switzer Network Innovation Grant program is available on the Foundation website at <http://www.switzernetwork.org/grant-programs/network-innovation-grants>.

The Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation is a results-driven family foundation that invests in individuals and organizations that drive positive environmental change. Founded in 1986 the Foundation is a grantmaking organization that mobilizes leaders from diverse disciplines who focus on integrated solutions to environmental problems. Over 15 million dollars has been given through the Switzer Environmental Fellowship Program and related grant programs, the Foundation supports a network of over 600 Fellows who are leaders in nonprofit, public policy, business, academic and government sectors working to solve today’s environmental challenges.

# # #