

Michael K. Schwartz, Ph.D.

Dr. Michael K. Schwartz is an internationally recognized scientist and research leader dedicated to advancing interdisciplinary environmental science, biodiversity conservation, and institutional innovation. With over two decades of experience spanning academia, federal agencies, and international research collaborations, he has successfully built and led programs that integrate molecular ecology, conservation genomics, and applied policy to address global conservation challenges. His leadership philosophy is centered on collaboration, strategic vision, and the transformative power of science to drive actionable solutions.

Currently serving as both Director of the National Genomics Center for Wildlife and Fish Conservation, and Program Manager for the Wildlife Ecology Program at the USDA Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station, Dr. Schwartz leads teams of scientists and oversees a large research portfolio. He has founded and directed two internationally recognized research centers: the National Genomics Center for Wildlife and Fish Conservation and the Biodiversity Research and Policy Center. These institutions have significantly advanced the fields of conservation genetics and genomics, environmental DNA applications, and species management, directly influencing national and international conservation policies.

Dr. Schwartz has authored over 200 peer-reviewed publications in top-tier journals such as *Nature*, *Ecology*, *American Naturalist*, and *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* with his work being cited over 22,000 times. His research on landscape genetics, species connectivity, and environmental DNA (eDNA) has led to groundbreaking advancements in wildlife biology, invasive species detection, and endangered species management. His ability to secure large-scale funding—ranging from U.S. federal agencies like the Department of Defense and the National Park Service to international grants like the European Union's LIFE program—demonstrates his strategic expertise in sustaining high-impact research initiatives.

Beyond his scientific achievements, Dr. Schwartz is deeply committed to mentorship, institutional leadership, and fostering inclusive research environments. As an Adjunct Research Professor and Distinguished Faculty Affiliate at the University of Montana for over 20 years, he has advised graduate students, co-developed strategic research initiatives, and cultivated a new generation of conservation scientists. He has worked closely with Native American and Indigenous communities to support collaborative research efforts, and he has secured funding for Native American student mentorship programs.

Dr. Schwartz earned his Ph.D. in Wildlife Biology from the University of Montana, an M.S. in Biology from American University, and a B.A. in Psychology from Colby College. Bringing this extensive experience to SOEST, Dr. Schwartz is excited to contribute his leadership and expertise to advance interdisciplinary research, expand global partnerships, and ensure that scientific discovery directly benefits both local and global communities.