

# Challenging Preconceived Notions

Catie DeMets, Montana Afoot and Afloat '12



“WRFI taught me what being an environmental steward looks like, and that environmental leadership can mean many different things. Before my course, I was stuck in the "echo chamber" of folks like me with similar perspectives, but **WRFI presented the powerful and challenging opportunity for me to hear and seek to understand myriad perspectives on human-land relations.**

I remember talking to a guy who worked at an oil refinery, but he was also an avid outdoorsman who, as a father, spent his free time bringing his kids into nature. **For me, this challenged my binary beliefs about right and wrong and instilled a deep sense of empathy.** This, along with many such experiences on my WRFI course, has inspired me to always seek connection and common ground with people who are different from myself in pursuit of collective impact solutions to environmental problems. In fact, **this insight has translated to my lifelong commitment to promoting environmental stewardship.”**



Since her WRFI course, Catie completed an MS in Environmental Studies at the University of Montana, worked as a community agriculture coordinator and now is completing a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning. Her research lies at the confluence of agriculture, conservation, entrepreneurship, and access.