

## 2018 BANFF MOUNTAIN PHOTO ESSAY COMPETITION



*Winter in the Afghan Pamirs © Beth Wald*

*Kyrgyz girls in traditional red robes brave frigid temperatures and icy winds as they fill plastic jugs with water at a stream near their family's winter camp (4,200 metres), and load them on to their donkeys – a cold but necessary daily outing. All women and girls wear red; after marrying, the red headdress is replaced with a white one.*

### ***Grand Prize: Winter in the Afghan Pamirs, Beth Wald***

"The Afghan Pamir is a high, remote and road-less region at the end of the Wakhan Corridor, where the Afghan Kyrgyz follow a nomadic life, intimately dependent on herds of sheep, yaks and camels for food, transport, fuel and shelter and as trade for other essentials. In winter, it is a harsh, windswept and mostly monochrome world, brightened by the bright red worn by the women and girls."

**Beth Wald** is a documentary photographer who creates compelling visual narratives that explore the rich diversity and beauty of natural environments and cultures under threat around the world and tells stories about struggles to save ecosystems, species, ancient knowledge and ways of being, and about our often conflicted relationship with the natural world. She thrives

far off the grid, immersed in a place and a culture. Her work has appeared in *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, *The New York Times*, *Outside* and many others and she has partnered with the Wildlife Conservation Society, Panthera, Tompkins Conservation, and many organizations. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Rowell Award and POY.

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**Jury Comment:**

"Beth's photos make the viewer pause, reflect, and ask questions. The power of her work comes through with careful use of color and composition - resulting in an essay that unfurls a rarely told story from a remote location. From the provocative synopsis, to each photo, Beth's work is thoughtful and technically precise. Our imagination was swept away by these wonderful images from the rarely visited Afghan Pamirs, and we were moved by Beth's ability to connect with these people who still live in a traditional way. "

– 2018 Banff Mountain Photo Essay Jury







*Special Jury Mention: Arctic Foxes - The Bold Ones, Matthew Polvorosa Kline*

"Observing three Arctic fox pups learn the ways of their kind while growing up fast in the Scandinavian Mountains was an endearing experience. These charismatic, curious and bold foxes are one of the most well adapted mammals to cold conditions on Earth. Nevertheless, this keystone species remains critically endangered throughout Scandinavia, despite over 75 years of protection. While hunting previously pushed Arctic foxes towards extinction in this region, intensifying threats like Climate Change are raising more concern. Today, only a couple hundred remain."

**Matthew Polvorosa Kline** is an American wildlife photographer and cameraman. The primary goal of his work is dedicated to in-depth visual storytelling projects focused on a unique range of wildlife found in their natural habitats. Essential to his craft is his ethical approach, respect for the wildlife he honors through his photography comes first and foremost. Matthew's work and credits have appeared through a variety of outlets from magazines, books, and exhibits to natural history productions and independent films.

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**Jury Comment:**

"The Arctic pups a wonderful species for a photo essay and we found the synopsis informative. This essay captured the playfulness of Arctic fox pups in the context of a difficult conservation challenge in this region of Scandinavia. We thought all the photos in the series were strong, and we loved the playful and unexpected parting shot. We particularly liked the moody cast of these photos captured in the low, cool rays of the northern dusk. Cold, stark beauty of a future generation in a critically threatened population."

– 2018 Banff Mountain Photo Essay Competition Jury





