



SNRE niche

From the Director

Welcome to the School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE) Fall 2024 newsletter - the SNRE niche. The purpose of this newsletter is to inform about SNRE activities and to stay connected with alumni, SNRE faculty and students, our UF partners, and external stakeholders. In this newsletter, we celebrate the accomplishments of our undergraduate and graduate students, as evidenced by fellowship awards and recognition of their high-quality research outcomes.

This newsletter highlights our undergraduate program in Environmental Science and graduate programs in Interdisciplinary Ecology (IEC). Congratulations to all SNRE students who graduated during the Summer and Fall 2024 semesters. This includes 9 undergraduate Environmental Science students and 21 IEC graduate students (5 M.S. and 16 Ph.D.). Each of you is the lifeblood of SNRE's academic program, and we are very proud of your accomplishments during your stay at UF. We wish you all the best.

SNRE welcomes 48 Environmental Science BA/BS students, 12 M.S., and 23 Ph.D. students to start during the 2024 Summer and Fall semesters. The total enrollment in the Environmental Science undergraduate program is 190 students. The IEC graduate program has 122 graduate students (24% M.S. and 76% Ph.D. students) during the Fall 2024 semester. Currently, SNRE affiliate faculty from 24 academic units across the UF campus and six research centers off-campus served as chairs of 93 doctoral students, while faculty from 9 academic units served as chairs of 29 M.S. students.

Stay tuned about offering an online M.S. in Interdisciplinary Ecology degree program to support place-bound professionals in ecology and environmental sciences.

SNRE's 2024 Research Symposium was a great success, with approximately 300+ attendees at the event. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Sonia Altizer, Martha Odum Distinguished Professor of Ecology from the University of Georgia, presented an exciting talk at the symposium about the "Animal migrations in a changing world: what will the new normal look like?" which was well received by the attendees.

Thank you, Dean Turner, we cannot thank you enough for your vision and leadership as the CALS Dean and for your extraordinary support of interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs offered by SNRE. It has been a great honor for us to work with you, and we wish you all the best. We are incredibly grateful for the continued support of our alumni, affiliate faculty, partner department chairs and directors of research centers and institutes, SNRE Faculty Advisory Council, and IFAS administration.

To our alumni, please tell us your stories. We want to know how SNRE academic programs influenced your professional career and development.

We wish you all a safe and restful holiday break at the end of the Fall 2024 semester. Go Gators!

K. Ramesh Reddy,
Director, School of Natural Resources and Environment

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Save the Date!

SNRE
Research
Symposium

Tuesday
October 14, 2025

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2024 SNRE Research Symposium

The 2024 SNRE Research Symposium was held on October 15, 2024, and hosted over 300 attendees, faculty, and students. The goals of this symposium were to provide graduate and undergraduate students a framework to showcase their interdisciplinary research, enhance interaction among students and faculty with participants from state and federal agencies, and private consulting firms and industry. This year, out of dozens of participants, a few were recognized for their innovative research and communicating it effectively.



Best Oral Presentation:

Savannah Troy (Chair: Dr. Robert Fletcher and Co-Chair: Dr. Benjamin Baiser, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation)

Honorable Mention Oral Presentation :

Sarah Steele Cabrera (Chair: Dr. Jaret Daniels, Natural History)

Best Poster Presentation, B.S./B.A. student:

Hannah Bokor

Honorable Mention Poster Presentation, B.S./B.A. student:

Miranda Mays

Best Poster Presentation, M.S. student:

Andrew Cinquini (Chair: Dr. William Hammond, Agronomy)

Honorable Mention Poster Presentation, M.S. student:

Isaac Coleman (Chair: Dr. Vanessa Hull, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation)

Best Poster Presentation, Ph.D. student:

Orlando Acevedo-Charry (Chair: Dr. Miguel Acevedo, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation; Co-Chair: Dr. Scott Robinson, Natural History)

Allison Cauvin (Chair: Dr. Julie Meyer, Soil, Water and Ecosystem Sciences; Co-Chair: Dr. Andrew Altieri, Environmental Engineering Sciences)

Po-An Chen (Chair: Dr. Kathryn Sieving, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation)

Emily Perry (Chair: Dr. William Hammond, Agronomy)

Suyash Sawant (Chair: Dr. Kathryn Sieving, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation)

Kaitlyn Tucker (Chair: Dr. William Patterson, Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences)

Honorable Mention Poster Presentation, Ph.D. student:

Natalia Teryda (Chair: Dr. Raymond Carthy, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation)

Congratulations to all the awardees!



Keynote Speaker: Dr. Sonia Altizer

Martha Odum Distinguished Professor, Odum School of Ecology, University of Georgia

Keynote Address: animal migrations in a changing world: what will the new normal look like?

Dr. Altizer's research interests center on animal behavior, environmental change, and pathogen transmission. For the past 30 years, she has studied monarch butterflies and a debilitating disease that infects them, to better understand how animal migration affects the spread of pathogens, and to investigate how migrations are changing in response to environmental change.

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Summer and Fall 2024 New M.S. Students



Madyson D'Espies

Chair: Dr. Iske Larkin,
Large Animal Clinical
Sciences

Research: Bottlenose
Dolphin population
dynamics and feeding
behavior in Cedar Key, FL



Patricia Escobar Torres

Chair: Dr. Jamie Loizzo,
Agricultural Education
and Communication

Research: Community
perspectives on climate
resiliency within Pine
Island



Jelvi Fika

Chair: Dr. K. Ramesh
Reddy, School of Natural
Resources and
Environment and Soil,
Water, and Ecosystem
Sciences

Research: Nutrient
loading in aquatic
ecosystems and
environmental changes



Harrison Hobbs

Chair: Dr. Todd Osborne,
Whitney Laboratory for
Marine Science

Research: Understanding
and restoring Florida's
dwindling seagrass
populations through the
lenses of biogeochemical
cycling and subaqueous
sediment geomorphology



Nicole Luchau

Chair: Dr. David Chagaris,
Nature Coast Biological
Station

Research: Climate
impacts on economically
important fisheries in the
Gulf of Mexico



Wistride Lumas

Chair: Dr. Jessica Kahler,
Sociology and
Criminology & Law

Research: How climate
change affects
gentrification in Little
Haiti, Miami

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Summer and Fall 2024 New M.S. Students



Kelsey McDaid

Chair: Dr. Christa Court,
Food and Resource
Economics

Research: Decision
frameworks for disaster
management



Stephanie Medo

Chair: Dr. Daniel Smith,
Landscape Architecture

Research: Dispersal
patterns of juvenile black
bears



Taylor Pierson

Chair: Dr. Jaret Daniels,
Natural History

Research: Insect ecology,
conservation, population
genetics and genomics



Stasia Pietraszun

Chair: Dr. Carrie Adams,
Environmental
Horticulture, Co-Chair: Dr.
Laura Reynolds, Soil,
Water, and Ecosystem
Sciences

Research: Restoration
ecology and GIS



Tabitha Samuels

Chair: Dr. Deborah Miller,
West Florida Research
and Education Center

Research: Coastal
Restoration

Not pictured:

Sarah Daly

Advisor: Dr. Jasmeet Judge, Agricultural and
Biological Engineering

Research: Decision frameworks for disaster
management.

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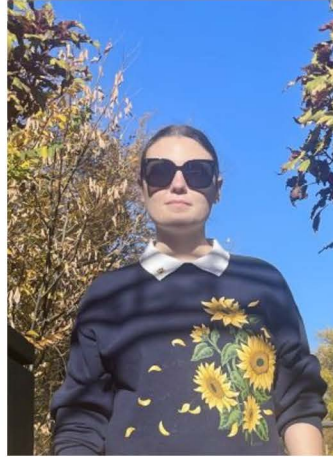
Summer and Fall 2024 New Ph.D. Students



Sylvia Adisa

Chair: Dr. Kai Lorenzen, Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences

Research: Socioecological impacts and sustainability of marine fisheries in the western Indian Ocean region; gender in billfish fisheries



Lexi Bolger

Chair: Dr. Jamie Loizzo, Agricultural Education and Communication

Research: STEM identity development within informal educational environments, arts-based research, and science communication



Jeff Greenspan

Chair: Dr. Stephen Perz, Sociology and Criminology & Law

Research: How can we motivate people to act in ways that support evidence-based sustainability?



Tori Guarino

Chair: Dr. Carrie Adams, Environmental Horticulture

Research topic: Evaluating major factors of Atlantic Coast living shorelines, such as plant sourcing, availability, germination, and revegetation, and effectiveness



TJ Hafliker

Chair: Dr. Samantha Wisely, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

Research: Wild turkey disease ecology



Levi Hoskins

Chair: Dr. Corey Callaghan, Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center Conservation, Co-Chair: Dr. Chang Zhao, Agronomy

Research: Urban ecology and conservation

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Summer and Fall 2024 New Ph.D. Students



Aleida Iriarte

Chair: Dr. David Blackburn,
Natural History

Research: Diversity,
evolution, and natural
history of amphibians and
reptiles



Coral Keegan

Chair: Dr. Robert McCleery,
Wildlife Ecology and
Conservation

Research: Examining how
multiple-use landscapes in
Sub-Saharan Africa can be
optimized to support
biodiversity conservation
and human well-being



Aline Kuzma

Chair: Dr. Andrew Koeser,
Environmental
Horticulture

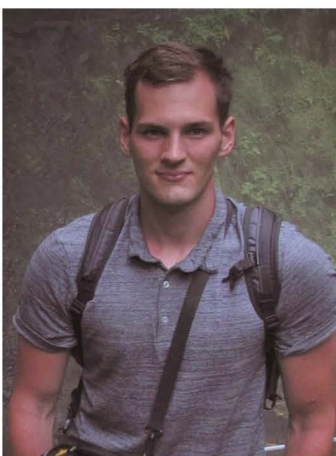
Research: Greening
development II: working
with communities to
identify incentives for
development projects
and low-income
neighborhoods



Emily Lang

Chair: Dr. Laura Warner,
Agricultural Education and
Communication

Research: Behavior
change related to
sustainable urban
landscaping



Jan Lenc

Chair: Dr. Brett Scheffers,
Wildlife Ecology and
Conservation

Research: The influence
of microgeographic
processes on the
community composition
and distribution of
tropical ectotherm
species at different
temporal and spatial
scales



Rajani Maharjan

Chair: Dr. Bron Taylor,
Religion

Research: The role of
traditional ecological
knowledge for climate
change adaptation

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Summer and Fall 2024 New Ph.D. Students



Tiffany Moore

Chair: Dr. Jaret Daniels,
Natural History

Research: Diversity,
evolution, and natural
history of amphibians and
reptiles



Monica Mora

Chair: Dr. Nia Morales,
Wildlife Ecology and
Conservation

Research: Human
dimensions in
conservation biology



Oluwasegun Olubisi

Chair: Dr. Mary Lusk, Gulf
Coast Research and
Education Center, Co-
Chair: Dr. Davie
Kadyampakeni, Citrus
Research and Education
Center

Research: Beneficial reuse
of wastewater for
agricultural production



Emily Perry

Chair: William Hammond,
Agronomy

Research: Understanding
the relationship between
soil microbial
communities and tree
physiology



Katharine Schlachter

Chair: Dr. Laura Reynolds,
Soil, Water, and Ecosystem
Sciences, Co-Chair: Dr.
Marc Hensel, Nature Coast
Biological Station

Research: Benthic
community ecology of
coastal marine systems



Jiayi Song

Chair: Dr. Chang Zhao,
Agronomy, Co-Chair: Dr.
Corey Callaghan, Fort
Lauderdale Research and
Education Center

Research: Geospatial
artificial intelligence for
biodiversity and ecosystem
services modeling

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Summer and Fall 2024 New Ph.D. Students



Alyssa Vinson

Chair: Dr. Andrew Koeser, Environmental Horticulture

Research: Socioecological drivers of tree survival in new housing developments



Alexandria Walus

Chair: Dr. Marc Hensel, Nature Coast Biological Station

Research: Impacts of climate change on coastal fisheries



Ruoyu Wu

Chair: Dr. Jiangxiao Qiu, Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center

Research: Global change ecology, ecosystem services, and sustainability science

Not pictured:

Rachel Morgan

Chair: Dr. Joshua Patterson, School of Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences

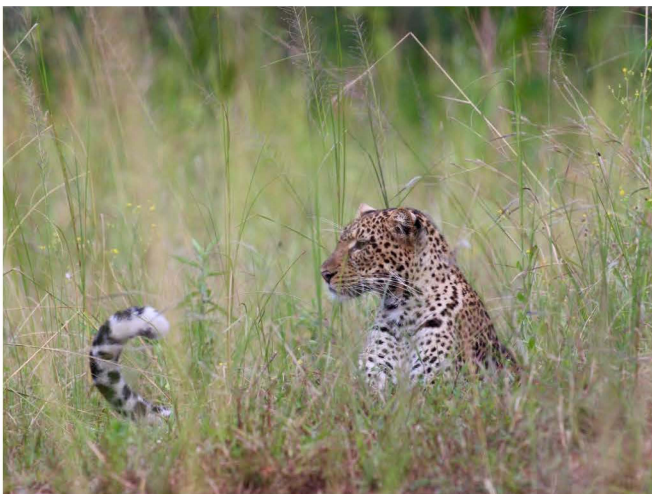
Research: Western Atlantic Coral and Coral Conservation

Ajit Williams

Chair: Dr. Zachary Brym, Tropical Research and Education Center

Research: Mapping and Evaluation of Agroecosystems in the Southeastern US

Photo credit from left: Coral Keegan, IEC Ph.D. student; Paula Davo, Environmental Science Student; and UF/IFAS



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Summer 2024 Graduates Ph.D. and M.S., Interdisciplinary Ecology

Photo credits: UF/IFAS.



Patricia Dumandan, Ph.D.
Chair: Dr. Morgan Ernest, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation



Robert Horton, Ph.D.
Chair: Dr. Greg Kiker, Agricultural and Biological Engineering



Elizabeth Martin, Ph.D.
Chair: Dr. Larry Page, Natural History



Angela Melidosian, Ph.D.
Chair: Dr. Les Thiele, Political Science



Justin Pitts, Ph.D.
Chair: Dr. William Hammond, Agronomy



Yuseung Shin, Ph.D.
Chair: Dr. Matthew Cohen, Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences

Not pictured:

J. Alex Baecher, Ph.D.
Chair: Dr. Brett Scheffers, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

David Klinges, Ph.D.
Chair: Dr. Brett Scheffers, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

Matyas Prommer, Ph.D.
Chair: Dr. Madan Oli, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

Seth Robinson, Ph.D.
Chair: Dr. Jeremy Lichstein, Biology

Ashlynn Smith, Ph.D.
Chair: Dr. Deborah Miller, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

Rock Aboujaoude Jr., M.S.
Chair: Dr. Les Thiele, Political Science

Stephanie Castellano, M.S.
Chair: Dr. Mysha Clark, Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences

Arti Chequer, M.S.
Chair: Dr. Vincent Lecours, Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatic Sciences

Allison Schmidt, M.S.
Chair: Dr. Gabriel Maltais-Landry, Soil, Water and Ecosystem Sciences

B.S. and B.A. Graduates

Tori Grambo, B.S.
Anna Mavrodieva, B.A.



Photo credit: UF/IFAS

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Meet Ali Goetz, the new SNRE Undergraduate Advisor

The School of Natural Resources and Environment is pleased to announce that Alexandra Goetz has joined its staff as the undergraduate student academic advisor. Ali's background is in higher education and community outreach. Most recently she worked for UF/IFAS Extension Broward County as a 4-H Agent. Welcome, Ali!

Ali's favorite part of working with students is building a relationship that allows her to help students identify and accomplish their goals; educational, professional, and personal!

Visit her in her office in McCarty Hall D Suite 2035 or make an advising appointment with her [here](#)!



Advice for Students from Ali

“Say yes to the opportunities that excite you, even if they don't seem to fit perfectly into your path! This was a combination of advice from my undergraduate advisors and mentors while I was trying to identify what came after graduation.”



Congratulations to the Fall 2024 SNRE Photo Contest winner, Jan Lenc, IEC PhD student. The picture above is from Jan's fieldwork in Papua, New Guinea.

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Photo credit: Coral Keegan, IEC Ph.D. student

Meet the Environmental Science Alliance

The Environmental Science Alliance is the official undergraduate student organization for current and prospective Environmental Science majors and minors at the University of Florida. The organization is led by the following elected officers:

- **Tyler Hall, President**
- **Paula Davo, Internal Vice President**
- **Miranda Millard Bruzos, External Vice President**
- **Emily Reid, Secretary**
- **Joey Dyson, Secretary**
- **Adrianna Loper, Media Manager**

To get involved, please contact Faculty Advisor Dr. Danny Coenen at dcoenen@ufl.edu.



Photo credit: Paula Davo, Environmental Science student

Meet our Undergraduate Liaisons

SNRE Liaisons are upper-class Environmental Science students who assist the Environmental Science Alliance and SNRE with prospective student visits, recruitment, and acclimating new students to our school. They also offer drop-in mentoring services for fellow undergraduate students. Learn more about our [SNRE Liaisons](#).



Navya Natarajan



Brynn Fricke



Jax Mendelsohn



Zoe Richter



Tyler Hall

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Meet our IEC Connectors

IEC Connectors are a select, small group of diverse Interdisciplinary Ecology graduate students who help new graduate students become acclimated to the School of Natural Resources and Environment.



Ana Yoko Ykeuti Meiga



Isaac Coleman



Silvia de Melo Futada



Akshay Vinod Anand



Sarah Steele Cabrera



Orlando Acevedo-Charry



Hernan Alvarez

Meet our Graduate Student Council

The SNRE Graduate Student Council exists to promote interaction among graduate students. Join the Council's Microsoft Teams page for more information, or contact Katie Schoenberger at kschoenberger@ufl.edu.



Katie Schoenberger
President



Savannah Troy
Vice President



Varshitha Prasanna
Treasurer

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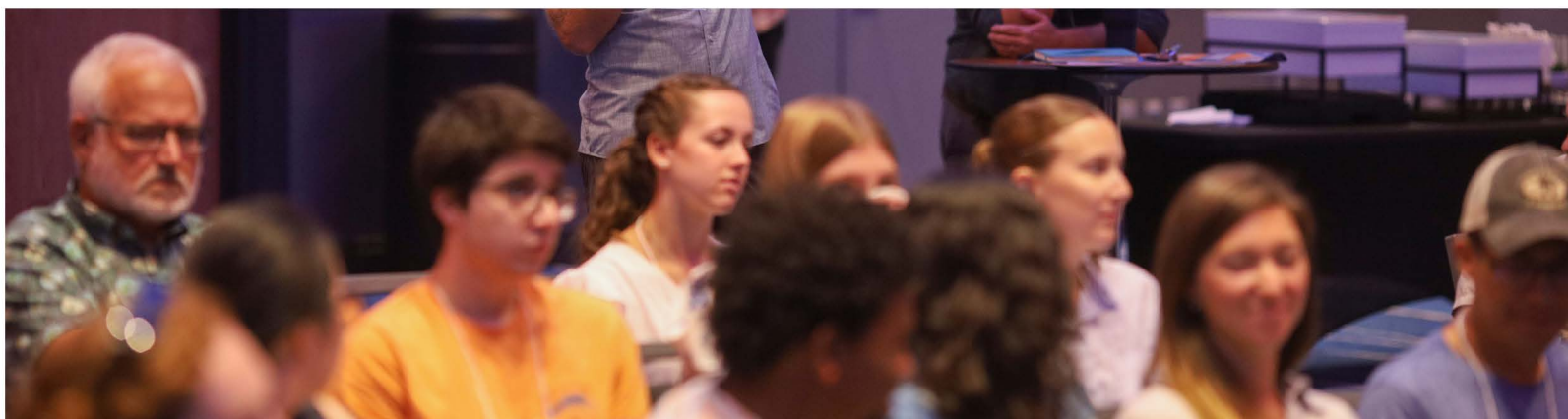


Photo credit: UF/IFAS

Meet Our Faculty Advisory Council

The School of Natural Resources and Environment's Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) is made up of 15 affiliate faculty members who serve three-year staggered terms. The FAC advises the SNRE Director and staff on the formulation and execution of SNRE academic programs, plans, and policies. Learn more about the [Faculty Advisory Council](#).

Our current members are:

- Dr. Bette Loiselle (Chair), Director and Professor, Tropical Conservation and Development Program and Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
- Dr. Mike Allen, Director and Professor, Nature Coast Biological Station
- Dr. Anita Anantharam, Associate Professor, Religion
- Dr. Ben Baiser, Associate Professor, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
- Dr. Luke Flory, Professor, Agronomy
- Dr. Basil Iannone, Associate Professor, School of Forest, Fisheries, & Geomatics Sciences
- Dr. James Jawitz, Professor, Soil, Water, and Ecosystem Sciences
- Dr. David Kaplan, Professor, Engineering School of Sustainable Infrastructure and Environment
- Dr. Jeremy Lichstein, Professor, Biology
- Dr. Jamie Loizzo, Associate Professor, Agricultural Education and Communication
- Dr. Jiangxiao Qiu, Associate Professor, Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center
- Dr. Scott Robinson, Professor, Florida Museum of Natural History
- Dr. Dorota Porazinska, Associate Professor, Entomology and Nematology
- Dr. Sadie Ryan, Associate Professor, Geography
- Dr. Amanda Subalusky, Assistant Professor, Biology

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Acknowledgements



Dr. Ignacio Porzecanski was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, to Russian and Polish immigrants. He received a B.Sc. in Agriculture from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, in 1967, and in 1972, he obtained a Ph.D. in Genetics from Cambridge University in the United Kingdom.

In his 20 years as a lecturer at SNRE, he taught two courses: Critical Thinking in the Environmental Sciences, a capstone course for undergraduates, and Natural Resource Management and Innovation Systems for graduate students. During his stay at UF, he tirelessly supported the concept of interdisciplinary studies to address local and global issues related to the conservation of natural resources.

After 24 years of incredible service to SNRE, IFAS, and UF, he retired on December 31, 2024. Congratulations to Ignacio and we sincerely thank him for his outstanding service, and we wish him all the best during his retirement years.

Dr. Jaime Escobar has been elected to the Colombian Academy of Sciences. He will be inducted officially during a ceremony in 2025. As an Interdisciplinary Ecology Ph.D. student (2005-2010), advised by Dr. Mark Brenner, Professor in Geological Sciences and SNRE Affiliate Professor, Jaime used lake sediment cores to explore late Pleistocene and Holocene climate and environmental change in the Maya Lowlands of northern Guatemala. Since 2012, he has been a faculty member in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Universidad del Norte, in Barranquilla, Colombia. He is also an Associate Investigator at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (Panama) and a Courtesy Faculty Member in the UF Department of Geological Sciences.

Since leaving UF, Jaime has expanded the geographic range of his studies to include Florida and the Mississippi Valley (USA), regions of the Andes Mountains, and the circum-Caribbean. With his expertise in biogeochemistry and micropaleontology, he continues to utilize lake sediment cores to investigate past climate and environmental changes and, in some cases, the impacts of such changes on ancient cultures.



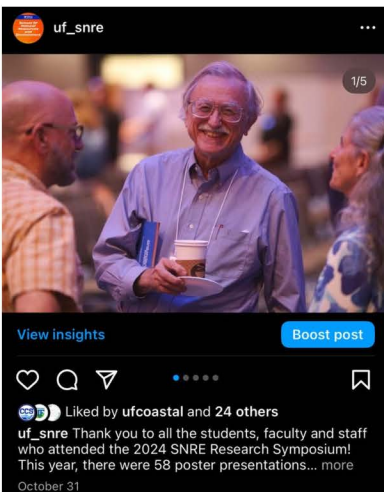
Photo credit: Jaime Escobar

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Follow us on Social Media!

In addition to Facebook and X (formerly Twitter), SNRE is now on Instagram and LinkedIn! As of December 2024, we have 148 followers on Instagram and 441 followers on LinkedIn. Follow the pages linked below for updates of all things SNRE, including our weekly seminars, annual research symposium, and more!

If you would like your research, achievements, or awards featured on our social media or blog posts, please email Lexi Bolger (abolger@ufl.edu) or Patricia Escobar Torres (patricia.escobar@ufl.edu). We look forward to hearing from you!



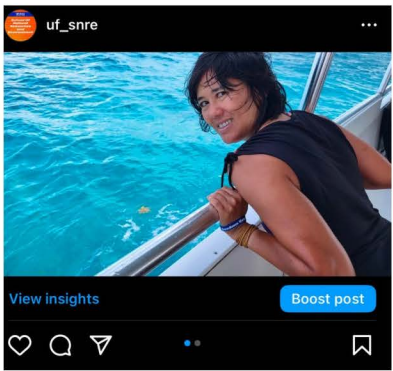
UF School of Natural Resources and Environment
October 14 · 🌐

! Countdown to the SNRE Research Symposium! Introducing three of our Interdisciplinary Ecology PhD students, Adam Searles, Sarah Steele Cabrera, and Savannah Troy. Adam's presentation is about how eutrophication-driven seagrass die-offs moderate the diets of resident and tropical herbivores. Sarah will discuss how hurricanes impact butterfly populations, and Savannah will talk about what role insects, rodents, and birds play as herbivores in Southern-African savanna communities.

Don't forget to register and join us TOMORROW on October 15th at the Reitz Union Grand Ballroom!

#UF #UFSNRE #UFResearch #Research

Link to register: lnk.bio/s/uf_snre/rs2024



YouTube



Instagram



Facebook



X



LinkedIn



Blogs

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SNRE ALUMNI

We want to keep in touch with SNRE alumni as they work toward sustainable environment and human solutions for today's complex challenges.

After much anticipation, there is now an [SNRE Alumni Group](#) on LinkedIn! It's open to all SNRE graduates from our B.S./B.A. and Ph.D./M.S. programs. Use this space to collaborate and connect with fellow SNRE alumni, share professional accomplishments, or just update us on your journey!

If you are an SNRE alum who is not on LinkedIn, please use the link below to fill out a short form with your current contact information. You can use the comment section to include any updates about your personal or professional life. We look forward to hearing from you!

[Connect With Us](#)

GIVING

Donor gifts from alumni and friends are a boost to our academic programs and without their support, we would not be able to maintain a high level of academic excellence. We sincerely thank our alumni and friends for their generous support of SNRE programs. [Please donate today.](#)

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is a biannual update from the School of Natural Resources and Environment. For questions, comments, or submissions, please send an email to SNRE@ifas.ufl.edu.

Thank you for reading!

