Welcome to the School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE) Spring 2024 newsletter - SNRE niche. This newsletter highlights our undergraduate program in Environmental Science and graduate programs in Interdisciplinary Ecology (IEC). SNRE is home to 200 Environmental Science undergraduate students, with 60% in BS and 40% in BA degrees. Congratulations to all SNRE students who graduated during the Spring 2024 semester. This includes 35 undergraduate and 11 IEC graduate students (2 MS and 9 PhD). Each of you is the lifeblood of SNRE’s academic program, and we are very proud of your accomplishments during your time at UF. We wish you all the best.

SNRE welcomes 20 PhD and 14 MS students to start during the summer and fall 2024 semesters. The IEC program will have 141 graduate students (75% PhD and 25% MS students) at the beginning of the fall semester. These students are supported by faculty from 21 academic departments across the UF campus.

The SNRE 2024 Research Symposium will be held on October 15, 2024, in the Reitz Union on the UF campus. We are excited to have Dr. Sonia Altizer, Martha Odum Distinguished Professor of Ecology from the University of Georgia, as the keynote speaker at the symposium. We hope to see many of you at this event.

We are incredibly grateful for the continued support of our alumni, affiliate faculty, partner department chairs, directors of research centers and institutes, SNRE Faculty Advisory Council, and IFAS administration. Thank you.

We wish you all a productive and restful summer semester. Go Gators!

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

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**Save the Date!**

**2024 SNRE Research Symposium**

**J. WAYNE REITZ UNION GRAND BALLROOM**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2024**

**8:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

More details: [https://snre.ifas.ufl.edu/news-and-events/research-symposium/](https://snre.ifas.ufl.edu/news-and-events/research-symposium/)

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**Keynote Speaker:**

**Dr. Sonia Altizer**
As my career developed, I knew Extension would be the place for me. I have always loved education, public speaking and communicating science, specifically environmental science. So when, many years ago, there was a position for the Florida Friendly Landscaping Agent in Seminole County, I knew it would be a perfect fit. Since then I have learned the importance of encouraging and tracking behavior changes among clients. Therefore the topic of my research is “Behavior Changes Related To Non-Point Source Pollution,” specifically fertilizer and reclaimed water. If other students are interested in a career in Extension, look for internships and contact the office where you would like to work and see what their big programs are. With an office in all 67 counties, there are always opportunities for employment!

In Extension, every day is different. Because Extension activities are based on the needs of the community and stakeholders, you can make a difference and build relationships that last long after a particular activity. I truly feel like I make a difference and enact positive change in my community. Another benefit of Extension is the collaboration with other Extension agents, specialists, and community partners and members to successfully move projects forward.

My graduate research will involve continuing my community work specifically on climate change resiliency and policy making. If students are interested in Extension I recommend reaching out to your local Extension office and ask to intern for a semester or summer. There are so many different subject areas in Extension, from youth programming, natural resources, agriculture, horticulture, nutrition, and coastal resources. Extension is a welcoming place overall.

What drew me to Extension was a desire to serve my community and my fascination with plant-human interactions. As a graduate student, I’m interested in the social and ecological systems within our dynamic urban forests. Specifically, how policy development, personal preference, professional credentialing, etc. impact tree species selection, planting and ultimately tree survivability.

Extension agents are bridge builders, we connect the research with the people who need it; we are applied science in action. One of the most important skills an Extension agent can grow is relationship building. Without human relationships, Extension is just science without a purpose. I feel lucky to have found a career that can so seamlessly integrate complex human systems, service and research.
Spring 2024 New Graduate Students

Jazymn Broxton, MS student
Chair: Dr/ Ray Carthy, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
Jazymn is researching the effects of beach alteration on gas exchange and sea turtle egg incubation.

Phillip Rodgers, PhD student
Chair: Dr. Rae Crandall, Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences
Phillip’s research is focused on the human dimensions of decision-making in prescribed burning.

Autumn Taylor, MS student
Chair: Dr. Dail Laughinghouse, Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center
Autumn’s research focuses on the response of algal biomass and microcystin persistence following treatment of five USEPA registered algaecides at different temperatures and doses.

Isaac Coleman, MS student
Chair: Dr. Vanessa Hull, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
Isaac’s research uses technological advancements and open-sourced data to benefit biodiversity assessments within the Gulf of Mexico, in relation to the application of future offshore wind energy development.

Gulchiroy Mirzajonova, PhD student
Chair: Dr. Sarah McKune, Environmental and Global Health
Gulchiroy’s research explores the impact of environmental issues on maternity and child development.

Not pictured:

William Anderson, PhD student
Chair: Dr. Oscar Liburd, Entomology & Nematology
William’s research is on stakeholder perceptions and experiences related to regional climate change impacts, within relevant spheres-of-interest in tropical cropping livelihoods.

Samantha Howley, PhD student
Chair: Dr. Matt Cohen, Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences
Samantha’s research looks at biogeochemistry and the role of anthropogenic drivers in wetlands and streams.

Madison Self, MS student
Chair: Dr. Lyn Gettys, Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center
Madison is experimenting with biological control of water hyacinth using Megamelus scutellaris.
Fall 2023 Graduates
PhD and MS, Interdisciplinary Ecology

Diane Episcopio-Sturgeon, PhD
Chair: Dr. Vanessa Hull, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

Muzi Sibiya, PhD
Chair: Dr. Robert Fletcher, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

Marcel Talla Kouete, PhD
Chair: Dr. David Blackburn, Florida Museum of Natural History

Not pictured:
Samantha Howley, MS
Chair: Dr. Matt Cohen, Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences

Lucinda Fisher, MS
Chair: Dr. Eban Bean, Agricultural and Biological Engineering

Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 Graduates
B.A. and B.S., Environmental Science

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<tr>
<th>Fall 2023</th>
<th>Spring 2024</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emily Bays, BA</td>
<td>Corinne Griffin, BS</td>
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<td>Austin Hubsch, BS</td>
<td>Allison Helms, BS</td>
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<td>Emily Juriga, BS</td>
<td>Kylie Hollis, BS</td>
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<td>Christian Landaeta, BS</td>
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<td>Walker Bensch, BS</td>
<td>Lyna Le, BS</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Black, BS</td>
<td>Francesca Linares, BS</td>
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<td>Justin Brock, BA</td>
<td>Alejandro Lopez, BS</td>
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<td>Taylor DiPietro, BA</td>
<td>Zachary Loveland, BA</td>
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<td>Naiyla Durand, BS</td>
<td>Amber Maier, BS</td>
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<td>Kayla Ehrlich, BS</td>
<td>Colleen McDonough, BS</td>
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<td>Grace Elwell, BS</td>
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<td>Patricia Escobar-Torres, BS</td>
<td>Taite Miller, BA</td>
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<td>Gianna Fernandez, BS</td>
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<td>Diego Rivera, BS</td>
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<td>Seanna Ryan, BA</td>
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<td>Annabel Schreiber, BS</td>
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<td>Anna Sheridan, BA</td>
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<td>Lauren St. Clair, BA</td>
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<td>Alexandra Teems, BA</td>
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<td>Isabel Yianilos, BS</td>
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Spring 2024 Graduates
PhD and MS, Interdisciplinary Ecology

**Fernando Noriega Betancourt, PhD**
Chair: Chair: Dr. Vince Lecours, Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences

**Natalia Uribe Castañeda, PhD**
Chair: Dr. Martin Main, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

**Deisi Vanessa Luna Celino, PhD**
Chair: Dr. Karen Kainer, Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatic Sciences

**Sinomar Ferriera Da Fonsea Junior, PhD**
Chair: Dr. Stephen Perz, Sociology and Criminology & Law

**Amanda Muni-Morgan, PhD**
Chair: Dr. Mary Lusk, Gulf Coast Research and Education Center

**Matthew Richardson, PhD**
Chair: Dr. Bill Pine, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

**Hui Zhao, PhD**
Chair: Dr. Jiangxiao Qiu, Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center

**Xiaoxing Bian, PhD**
Chair: Dr. Vanessa Hull, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

Not pictured:

**Ashpreet Kaur, PhD**
Chair: Dr. Christine Overdevest, Sociology and Criminology & Law

**Shelby LeClare, MS**
Chair: Dr. Benjamin Baiser, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

**Natalie Salman, MS**
Chair: Dr. Carrie Reinhardt Adams, Environmental Horticulture
Graduate Student Awards

**MS student Zoë Stroobosscher**
Accepted into the American Geophysical Union (AGU) Voices for Science 2024 Policy Cohort.

**PhD student Shelby Kucharski**
Received the Gerald O. Mott Award from the Crop Science Society of America (CSSA).

**PhD student Haojie Cao**
Received the NASA–MSU Professional Enhancement Award from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and Michigan State University (MSU).

**PhD student Ana Yoko Ykeuti Meiga**
Won First Prize for poster presentation at the Latin American Studies Fieldwork Festival, hosted by the Tropical Conservation and Development Program and the UF Center for Latin American Studies. She also was recognized for best oral presentation at the Forest Graduate Student Symposium in the Spring 2024 semester, and received a travel grant from The Wildlife Society (TWS).

**PhD student Lydia Soifer**
Received the Botany in Action Fellowship from Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Garden.

**PhD student Orlando Acevedo-Charry**
Received the 2024 Graduate Student Teaching Award from the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA), and the 2023-2024 Graduate Student Mentor Award from UF.

**UF Biodiversity Institute Fellows, 2023-2024:**
Sinomar Ferreira Da Fonseca Junior, D. Vanessa Luna-Celino, Akshay Vinod Anand

Congratulations to all the awardees!
The Robin E. Nadeau Fund was established to support and promote research and education in SNRE. Funds can be used by Interdisciplinary Ecology graduate students to conduct research, purchase equipment, or travel to meetings or conferences. For information on how to apply, please contact Christy LaPlante at christyn@ufl.edu.

Ana Yoko Ykeuti Meiga
Second-year IEC PhD student
Chair: Dr. Denis Valle, Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences
Ana plans to use this award to visit an internationally recognized institution, the School at the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior in Radolfzell, Germany. This institution organizes a highly competitive training called AniMove, a collective of international researchers with extensive experience in animal movement analysis, remote sensing, and conservation.

Silvia de Melo Futada
Second-year IEC PhD student
Chair: Dr. Karen Kainer, Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences
Silvia’s research will inform how the Waimiri Atroari Indigenous People in the Brazilian Amazon are essential in understanding Indigenous autonomies and ethical conservation practices necessary to meet the unfolding climate and biodiversity crises. Silvia will use the Nadeau Award to support on-site research with the Waimiri Atroari people in the Brazilian Amazon.

Lydia Soifer
Second-year IEC PhD student
Chair: Dr. Brett Scheffers, Wildlife Ecology and Conservation
Lydia’s dissertation is focused on the impacts of microclimates on the distribution and diversity of epiphytes. Her surveys aim to inform research objectives that meet the interests of ADOPTA while simultaneously informing ecological theory. The Nadeau Award funds will contribute to continuing her fieldwork at the site to collect much-needed data for her dissertation research.

Orlando Acevedo-Charry
Third-year IEC PhD candidate
Chair: Dr. Miguel Acevedo, Wildlife Ecology and Conversation
Orlando’s research aims to unravel the mechanisms underlying changes in the distribution of tropical avian communities and the functional adaptations in response to various ecological gradients. He plans to use Nadeau Award funds to conduct fieldwork in the Colombian Amazonia and present a paper at the 142nd American Ornithological Society conference.
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.

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, Grace Elwell, Zachary Loveland, Anna Mavrodieva
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
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 Natalia Uribe-Castañeda at nuribecastaneda@ufl.edu.

Natalia Uribe-Castañeda, President
Shelby Kucharski, Vice President
Silvia de Melo Futada, Treasurer
This year, six SNRE affiliate faculty members were named Lifetime Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, one the most distinctive honors in academia. The award recognizes extraordinary achievement and impact across disciplines. Congratulations to the following faculty members:

- Dr. John Davis, Interim Dean for UF/IFAS Research and Professor, Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences
- Dr. Kai Lorenzen, Professor, Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences
- Dr. Lynn Sollenberger, Distinguished Professor, Agronomy
- Dr. Karen Bjorndal, Distinguished Professor, Biology
- Dr. David Blackburn, Curator, Florida Museum of Natural History
- Dr. Robert Guralnick, Curator, Florida Museum of Natural History

The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) elected Dr. Jules Bruck as a Fellow in 2024. ASLA Fellows are recognized for their exceptional contributions to the landscape architecture profession and society at large, and election to the ASLA Council of Fellows is among the highest honors the ASLA bestows on members for their professional accomplishments. Dr. Bruck is Chair of the UF Department of Landscape Architecture and an Affiliate Faculty in SNRE. Congratulations to Dr. Bruck for the well-deserved recognition.
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, Assistant Professor, Entomology and Nematology
- Dr. Sadie Ryan, Associate Professor, Geography
- Dr. Amanda Subalusky, Assistant Professor, Biology
**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](mailto:SNRE@ifas.ufl.edu).

Thank you for reading!