

KRISTYN GORTON

Fire Ecology | Herpetology | Conservation | GIS
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EDUCATION

University of Central Florida

Orlando, FL

Doctor of Philosophy in Integrative and Conservation Biology

Expected: May 2027

Dissertation: "Burning Bridges: Do Connectivity and Scale Moderate Herpetofaunal Responses to Prescribed Fire?"

GPA of 4.0 | Advisor: Dr. Joshua King

Rollins College

Winter Park, FL

Honors Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies

May 2017

Alfond Scholar, *magna cum laude* with Honors in the Major

Honors Thesis: "A Serengeti Land Ethic: Deconstructing Environmental Dualism in a Critical Ecosystem"

GPA of 3.84 | Advisors: Dr. Lee Lines and Dr. Gay Biery-Hamilton

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University of Central Florida, Department of Biology

Orlando, FL

Doctoral Researcher

2022 - present

- Influence of landscape heterogeneity and spatial burn characteristics on herpetofaunal responses to prescribed fire: behavior, mortality, and community composition
- Do arthropod pollinator assemblages respond to ecological restoration activities in a fire-adapted system? A case study at Econ River Wilderness Area, Seminole County, Florida
- Habitat associations of Florida's introduced ant species
- The role of tortoise burrows in fire evasion behavior of commensal species

University of Central Florida, Department of Biology

Orlando & Avon Park, FL

Graduate Research Associate

2023 - present

- Synergistic impacts of widespread stressors on threatened, endangered, and at-risk species on Department of Defense lands of the Southeastern US. Principal Investigators: Joshua King, Reed Bowman, Tiffany Doan, Reed Noss, Angela Tringali, Dave Breininger, Eric Stolen.

Rollins College, Departments of Environmental Studies & Anthropology

Florida, Tanzania, & Costa Rica

Undergraduate Researcher

2014 - 2017

- Western conservation philosophy and the exclusion of indigenous habitat management technologies from the Serengeti plain: consequences for biodiversity, landscape, and human welfare
- Disproportionate impacts of the proposed Sabal Trail pipeline to environmental justice communities
- The role of protected areas and private landownership in the conservation of Costa Rica's biodiversity
- The John Nolen Plan: ecological and historic significance of Venice, Florida's greenbelt design (exhibit developed for the Venice Museum & Archives)

The Genius Reserve, Rollins College & Audubon Florida

Winter Park, FL

Ecological Research Technician

2015 - 2016

- Effects of ecological remediation of a private urban nature preserve on migratory birds and other wildlife. Principal Investigator: Bruce Stephenson.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Central Florida, Department of Biology Orlando, FL
Graduate Teaching Associate 2023 - present

- Instructor of record for four sections of Principles of Ecology Laboratory
- Full responsibility for conducting hands-on field labs in on-campus Arboretum, preparing lecture materials, leading group discussions, and grading quizzes, essay assignments, and presentations for 80 students

University of Central Florida, Department of Biology Orlando, FL
Graduate Teaching Assistant 2022 - 2023

- Co-taught nine sections of Biology II Laboratory
- Oversaw and evaluated wet labs and led field excursions for ~380 students; independently lectured for half of all class meetings; contributed to development of laboratory manuals and assessments

Kinetic Arts & Theatrical Sciences LLC Oviedo, FL
Lead Instructor, "Mad Scientist" 2017 - 2018

- Led STEM classes and workshops for children aged 5-13 with emphasis in the physical and life sciences, hosted after-school programs for disadvantaged students through Boys & Girls Clubs and Title I programs

UNDERGRADUATE MENTORING

Do arthropod pollinator assemblages respond to ecological restoration activities in a fire-adapted system? A case study at Econ River Wilderness Area, Seminole County, Florida. *Sydney Chapman, Trace Thompson, Santiago Cadena-Ortiz, Julian Tredik, Sarah Ulrich, Dillan Quizhpi, Kenzie Occhino. (UCF, 2023 - present)*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Finca Mycol Ecological Preserve & Educational Outpost Brooker, FL
Restoration Ecologist, Volunteer Coordinator 2020 - present

- Coordinates reestablishment efforts of long-leaf pine savanna and prairie habitats through plantings, organic eradication of nuisance species, and application of prescribed fire
- Managed volunteers, harvested on-site timber to construct teaching facilities and volunteer housing, maintained trails, hosted guided hikes and edible ecology workshops, assisted horticultural projects

All You Need Institute, Experiential Learning & Retreat Center Lumberton, MS
Restoration Ecologist, Ranger 2021 - 2022

- Led habitat restoration initiatives, independently managed campground and retreat center, provided guided hikes and workshops, developed interpretive materials, and trained volunteers
- Spearheaded black pine snake and gopher tortoise monitoring projects, managed cogongrass invasions

AECOM Engineering Orlando, FL & Rocky Hill, CT
Ecologist, Consultant 2017 - 2020

- Designed and oversaw sustainable transportation programs for 18 of the state's largest employers on behalf of the Department of Transportation, worked with the Governor and various local agencies to organize 94 green commuter events and promote the CT2030 Transportation Plan and Hartford Line rail extension
- Played key role in launch of FEMA's US Virgin Islands hurricane response project, supervised mainland application center operations and staff of 30

Inwood Consulting Engineers Oviedo, FL
Ecological Technician 2016 - 2017

- Investigated potential environmental impact of Polk Parkway expansion by conducting listed species surveys

Rollins College, Office of Residential Life

Resident Advisor

Winter Park, FL

2014 - 2015

- Served as mentor and Code of Conduct enforcement for the largest campus housing wing of 70 first-year students, collaborated with on- and off-campus organizations to develop hall programming and host events

HONORS, AWARDS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- ~Association for Commuter Transportation's National Award for Excellence in Research (*to project team, 2019*)
- ~Outstanding Senior in Environmental Studies, Rollins College, \$200 award (*2017*)
- ~Archibald Granville Bush Award for Excellence in Academic Pursuit, Rollins College (*2017, 2016 & 2015*)
- ~Outstanding Student in Environmental Studies, Rollins College, \$200 award (*2015*)
- ~Alfond Scholarship, Harold Alfond Foundation, one of five recipients, \$225,000 over four years (*2013*)
- ~1st Place, Samuel Beauchamp Crowe American Citizenship Essay Contest, Kiwanis Club, \$1000 scholarship (*2013*)

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Experienced in ArcGIS Pro & Field Maps, R, Microsoft Office, prescribed fire applications, scientific & procedural writing, species & habitat identification/delineation, wildlife management, various wilderness skills, towing, permaculture & off-grid living, general construction, visual & theatrical arts, community & stakeholder engagement, Exceptional Student Education (ESE), interpretive hikes & experiential learning, event planning

TRAININGS AND CERTIFICATIONS

S-130/S-190 Firefighter Training & Wildland Fire Behavior, FEMA's ICS-100 Incident Command System, CITI Biomedical Responsible Conduct of Research (online course), CITI Responsible Conduct of Research Academic Integrity trainings (4 in-person workshops), CITI Field Animal Researcher, CITI Lab Animal Researcher, UCF's Teaching Associate Training, UCF's EHS 102/103 Biological Safety Orientation/Practical, UCF's EHS 201 Laboratory Safety Orientation, UCF's Institutional Review Board and Human Research Protection Program

LANGUAGES

Fluent in English, proficient in Spanish (CEFR Level C2)

INVITED TALKS, NOTABLE EVENTS, AND MEDIA COVERAGE

- "Florida's Snakes and You: Safety, Appreciation, Conservation" (2022, 2023 & 2024). Invited talk and guided hike, 70th, 71st & 72nd Annual Florida Folk Festival, Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park, White Springs, FL.
- "Your Classroom Philosophy as a Graduate Student Teacher" (2023). Invited talk, Professional Development in Biology course, UCF Department of Biology, Orlando, FL.
- "Good Guy Fire" (2023, 2024). Summer camp workshops, Rockledge Gardens, Rockledge, FL.
- Conducted GIS analysis of City-wide greenspace access and organized initiative to prevent the sale of an underserved neighborhood's largest park to developers, which succeeded following a 3+ year battle: https://www.newhavenindependent.org/article/park_saved_new_housing_plan_dropped
- Launched Sikorsky Aircraft's sustainable transportation program by initiating a partnership with Lockheed Martin and organizing "Sikorsky Bike to Work Day" (2019). Fairfield County, CT.
News coverage: <https://bronx.news12.com/sikorsky-hosts-first-bike-to-work-day-41007320>
- "Sustainable Transportation Success Stories" (2019). Sustainable CT Municipality Workshop, Mill River Park Carousel Pavilion, Stamford, Connecticut.

Partnered with Mayor Joseph Ganim to develop the City's "Annual Bike to Work Day" (2018). Bridgeport, CT.

News coverage: <https://bronx.news12.com/bridgeport-city-employees-commute-to-work-on-2-wheels-39320579>

"A Serengeti Land Ethic: Deconstructing Environmental Dualism in a Critical Ecosystem" (2017). Presentation, Winter Park Public Library, Winter Park, Florida.

SERVICE AND OUTREACH

<p>SnakeWalk Tours <i>Founder, Guide</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides guided hikes and workshops aimed to increase environmental literacy and reduce human-wildlife conflicts, acquaints a variety of audiences (from children to land managers) with the region's diversity of snakes and their ecological importance, maintains quarterly email newsletter to expand impact 	<p>Multiple Locations 2022 - present</p>
<p>Fire Ecology and Foraging Classes <i>Educator</i></p>	<p>Multiple Locations 2020 - present</p>
<p>Seminole County Public Schools <i>Guest Speaker</i></p>	<p>Oviedo, FL 2013 - present</p>
<p>Environmental Advisory Council <i>Chairwoman, Parks & Transportation Committees</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised the Mayor and Board of Alders regarding City's environmental challenges, regularly testified at City Hall, organized children's annual native plant and animal art contest, designed public outreach campaigns 	<p>New Haven, CT 2018 - 2022</p>
<p>USDA Farmers to Families <i>Delivery Coordinator</i></p>	<p>New Haven, CT 2020</p>
<p>Rollins Order for Animal Rights (ROAR!) <i>Founding President</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed campaigns, secured institutional funding and external grants to support advocacy efforts 	<p>Winter Park, FL 2014 - 2017</p>
<p>EcoRollins <i>Volunteer, Recycling & Organic Gardening programs</i></p>	<p>Winter Park, FL 2013 - 2017</p>
<p>Habitat for Humanity <i>Volunteer</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built homes for program participants, performed as scare actor in annual Halloween fundraiser events 	<p>Seminole-Apopka region, FL 2010 - 2017</p>