Hispanic-Serving Institutions Collaboration Graduate Yearbook
Spring 2013
The Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program Collaboration Projects 2013 Yearbook

The Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) Education Grants Program, administered by the USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and authorized by section 815 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform (FAIR) Act of 1996 (7 USC 3241), is a competitive grants program designed to promote and strengthen the ability of HSI carry out education programs that attract, retain, and graduate outstanding students capable of enhancing the Nation’s food and agricultural scientific and professional work force. Projects may involve individual institutions or collaboration initiatives between two or more HSIs or with other colleges and universities, units of government, or the private sector.

The 2013 Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program Collaboration 2013 Yearbook showcases the students participating in seven collaboration projects from twenty-seven institutions. Eighty-three percent of the students were Hispanic and fifty-five percent were female. Regarding their grades, about eight percent reported a perfect 4.0, nearly 40 percent (39.9 percent) of the students indicated a GPA greater than 3.50 but less than 4.0. A similar proportion (38.8 percent) reported a GPA between 3.00 and 3.50. and about five percent (5.2 percent) entered a GPA below 2.51. Together, participant students speak 17 languages in addition to English.

These collaboration projects focus on:

- Increasing the number of underrepresented groups to reflect the nation’s population demographics and to attain post-secondary and post graduate degrees in the food, agricultural, and natural resource sciences;

- Enhancing the quality of postsecondary instruction within these disciplines;

- Facilitating the skill and competency development of Hispanic students in order to be competitive for jobs in the food and agriculture sector and at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other federal agencies;

- Providing opportunities and access to food and agricultural careers in the civil service; and;

- Aligning the efforts of HSIs and other non-profit organizations in support of the academic development and career attainment of underrepresented groups.

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Florida-Caribbean Consortium for Agriculture Education and Hispanic Workforce Development (FCCAgE)

Award: 2011-38422-30804

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Inter-American University of Puerto Rico:

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The Florida-Caribbean Consortium for Agriculture Education & Hispanic Workforce Development (FCCAgE) is a multi-institutional consortium funded by the USDA Hispanic Serving Institutions Grants Program. The Agroecology Program at Florida International University (FIU) works with Miami-Dade College-North, St. Thomas University, and Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, San German, Puerto Rico. The goal of the program is to provide students with a holistic, multidisciplinary, and problem-based approach necessary for tackling tomorrow’s agro-ecological challenges. The FCCAgE is a program that recruits and trains Hispanic students from communities under-represented in agriculture sciences and natural resource management. It offers training in the agriculture and natural resources sciences, through coursework, such an 18-credit hour Agroecology Certificate Program, travel and research, Agroecology related and professional development workshops, summer internships, field tours, and job placement assistance. Students receive up to $24,000 in funding throughout their scholarship term to support for time spent in experiential and experimental based learning.

Majors: Environmental Studies  Biology  Chemistry  Criminal Justice
NAME: Jonathan Javier Otero Ramos  
INSTITUTION: Interamerican University of Puerto Rico, San German Campus  
MAJOR: Environmental Sciences: Environmental Biology  
RANK: Second Year Master Degree  
HOMETOWN: San German, Puerto Rico  
EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE: December 2013  
USDA AGENCY YOU ARE INTERESTED IN: ARS, FNS, FSIS, NIFA  
EMAIL ADDRESS: jonathan.otero.ramos@gmail.com  

DEGREE: Environmental Sciences: Environmental Biology  

SKILLS:  
- Excellent computer skills  
- Bilingual: Spanish and English  
- Abilities in different microbiological techniques:  
  - Environmental sampling  
  - Membrane filtration  
  - Aseptic techniques  
  - Analytical Profile Index  
  - Bacterial staining  
  - Disk diffusion test  
  - Media Preparation  
  - Knowledge in the use of autoclave, incubators and microscopes.

NAME: Miles Medina  
INSTITUTION: Florida International University  
MAJOR: M.S. Environmental Studies (Concentration in Agroecology)  
RANK: 2nd year graduate student  
HOMETOWN: Miami, FL  
USDA AGENCY YOU ARE INTERESTED IN: ARS  
EMAIL ADDRESS: mmedi066@fiu.edu  
EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE: Dec 2012  
DEGREE: M.S. Environmental Studies (concentration in agroecology)

RESEARCH: My research topic is aquaponics.

SKILLS: Logical and analytical skills  
Excellent attention and concentration skills  
Good methodological and research skills  
Bilingual: English and Spanish (fluent)  
Organic gardening management  
Leadership and student management
The New Mexico/Puerto Rico Natural Resource Career Track (NRCT) Program

- Dr. Martha Desmond, Project Director, Professor, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM Email: mdesmond@nmsu.edu
- Dr. Jess Zimmerman, Co Project Director, Professor, Institute for Tropical Ecosystem Studies and Program in Environmental Studies, University of Puerto Rico - Rio Piedras, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico Email: jesskz@ites.upr.edu
- MS. Berlinda Baca Sanchez, Co Project Director, US Forest Service, WO Civil Rights, Multicultural Workforce Strategic Initiatives (MWSI), Branch Chief, 4000 Masthead, NE, Albuquerque, NM Email: bbacasanchez@fs.fed.us
- Dr. Skip VanLoem, Co Project Director, USDA Forest Service, Institute of Tropical Studies and Professor, Dept Agronomy and Soils, University of Puerto Rico –Mayquez, Mayquez, PR Email: svanbloem@uprm.edu
- Dr. Jennifer Frey, Education Coordinator- New Mexico, College Associate Professor, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM 88003 Email: jfrey@nmsu.edu
- MS. Erika Concepcion, Education Coordinator – Puerto Rico, Department of Natural Sciences, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Email: erilyn23@gmail.com
- MS Jenna Padilla: Project Recorder, Geology Undergraduate, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM, Email: Jpad92@nmsu.edu

The New Mexico/Puerto Rico Natural Resource Career Track (NRCT) Program is collaboration among 14 Hispanic Serving Institutions in New Mexico and Puerto Rico focusing on Climate Change and Forest Service (FS) Labor Force Track. Our main objectives center on identifying and mentoring cohorts of students to prepare them for careers in Natural Resource Management. Students are placed in cohorts according to their academic standing (year 1, year 2, year 3 and graduate). These students are provided a series of experiential learning opportunities appropriate for their academic level that engage them in resource management. Annual programs include agency internships; semester research mentorships; graduate student mentoring/assistantships; 3 field courses; a semester exchange program between New Mexico and Puerto Rico; a series of workshops, field days, and trainings to prepare and excite students about natural resource careers; Spring Visitors Day for 2 yr institutions; high school and entry level college field trips, and an advising and tutoring program to help students academically. Program students are placed on internships with the USDA FS, other natural resource agencies or in research mentorship positions. We are working hard to make our program students competitive for the new PATHWAYS Program. We believe the NRCT program will result in improved student recruitment, retention, academic performance and graduation rates; a greater number of students transitioning from 2 to 4 yr institutions; and more students moving directly to careers with the FS or other USDA agencies. Students apply to participate in programs and selection is determined by committees from collaborating institutions. Program oversight is provided by Project Directors and 2 Education Coordinators. The NRCT Program mentors a minimum of 50 students annually. We strive to maintain the USDA’s goal of retaining 90% of program students annually and eventually moving them to USDA, other agency career pathways or careers in academia.
New Mexico State University Graduate Students

Name: Danielle (Dani) Cedillo
Campus: New Mexico Highlands University
Rank: Graduate Student (MS)
Major: Natural Science with a concentration in Geology
Internship: Recreation Forestry Technician for the USFS in Minturn, CO
Graduation Date: May 2014
Email: dcedillo_615@hotmail.com

I grew up in Kansas and moved to New Mexico for college. I was intrigued with the mountains and overall landscape, so within one month of the move I changed my major to Environmental Geology. I received my Bachelor's degree in the spring of 2012 and began my masters the following fall. I have too many interests and hobbies to list, but the main ones consist of yoga, object manipulation and fire object manipulation, snowboarding, mountain biking, triathlons, and hiking. I have enjoyed all of my internships because they taught me many important skills, expanded my network, took me to new and exciting places, and were always an adventure. Most importantly, internships are great because they provide the opportunity to experience the work environment, and get a sample of some potential careers in your field so that you have a chance to decide what may or may not be for you before you make a commitment. There are so many career options in Geology that I haven't been able to choose one yet, but have been slowly narrowing down my options. For the NRCT program, I am funded as a graduate assistant and I also participated in the Sevilleta fall field trip.

Name: Armando De La Cruz
Campus: NMSU-Las Cruces Main Campus
Rank: Graduate (MS)
Major: Civil Engineering
Internship: Civil Engineer in Dubois, WY, Long-term Pathways Student
Graduation Date: May 2014
Email: delacruz@nmsu.edu

After entering the NRCT program in spring 2012 I was selected as a SCEP student and converted to the long-term PATHWAYS program. Upon graduating, I will begin full time employment with the US Forest Service in Dubois, WY. I am excited about my career opportunity with the Forest Service look forward to moving to various regions and experiencing what the Forest Service has to offer. I plan on traveling the world someday.
Name: Eboni S. Duke  
Campus: New Mexico State University- Main  
Rank: Graduate (MS)  
Major: Wildlife Sciences – Long-term Pathways Student  
Graduation Date:  
Email: eboni.duke@yahoo.com  

Internship: I have interned with the U.S. Forest Service in California and New Mexico since 2008. During the summers of 2008-2010, I worked as a biological technician, for Sierra National Forest, surveying for threatened, endangered and forest sensitive species. During the summers of 2011 & 2012, I worked as a wildlife biologist trainee, for Lincoln National Forest, surveying for threatened, endangered, and forest sensitive species.

I grew up in Oakland, CA and as a child I was always interested in the outdoors and animals. Following my passion I enrolled, as an undergraduate student, at Tuskegee University and majored in forestry with a minor in wildlife. After five years in the south I was ready for a change and I also wanted to further my knowledge about wildlife. As a result, I applied to New Mexico State University and was accepted into the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation Ecology. Currently, I have a year remaining in my graduate program. After I graduate, I will work for the U.S. Forest Service as a wildlife biologist.

Name: Rene Galindo  
Campus: NMSU - Las Cruces, NM Main Campus  
Rank: Graduate Student (MS)  
Major: Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Ecology- Fishery Sciences, Long-term Pathways Student  
Internship: USDA Forest Service Santa Fe National Forest, Santa Fe S.O. Fish Biologist SCEP  
Graduation Date: Dec 2012  
Email: reneg@nmsu.edu  

Born and raised in the El Paso, TX, I have always enjoyed being outdoors. I enjoy going fishing, hunting, hiking, camping, and pretty much everything dealing with the outdoors. I especially fascinated and enjoy working with fish. The NRCT has given me the opportunity to work and be guided by a Fish Biologist from the Santa Fe National Forest. The NRCT has allowed me to peruse my Master’s degree in Fisheries and make a career in the Forest Service as a Fish Biologist. I started my permanent position as a Forest Service biologist on the Siuslaw National Forest in Oregon in fall 2012.
Name: Gizelle Hurtado
Campus: NMSU Main Campus
Rank: Graduate Student (PhD)
Major: Biology
Graduation Date: May 2014
Email: gmh11@nmsu.edu

Position: NRCT Fellow and RISE to the Postdoctoral Fellow: My research focuses on the behavior, genetics and zoonotic potential of Peromyscus (deermice) in the urban-wildland interface. As a NRCT fellow the NRCT program expands my professional network and provides me with mentoring opportunities and undergraduate summer field assistance/interns.

I earned my bachelors in Wildlife Management and Conservation from Humboldt State University; at Humboldt I focused on mammal management and upland habitat management and wildlife human-interactions. I then attended San Jose State University where I focused my Masters research on Human Dimensions and Natural Resource management. While attending Humboldt State and San Jose State, I worked for the Forest Service, where I gained professional and leadership experience.

Name: Stephanie C. Lopez
Campus: New Mexico State University- Main
Rank: Graduate Student (MS)
Major: M.S. Range Science
Graduation Date: August 201
Email: lopez@nmsu.edu

Internship: Range Technician, Lincoln National Forest

I am interested in pursuing a career as a rangeland specialist or working for a USDA cooperative extension program in natural resources. Currently, I am following my passion by continuing my education in range science. I have had the opportunity to work for the USDA Forest Service as a range technician and biological science technician for three seasons. My course work has covered a wide range of topics in wildlife and animal and range sciences. Throughout my academic career I have taken a number of job-related training courses such as measuring and monitoring plant populations, GIS for the natural resource scientist, rangeland plants, wildland fire behavior, advanced rangeland ecology, soil morphology, natural history of vertebrates, and zoology. As an undergraduate, I was selected to participate in the Ronald E. McNair Post baccalaureate Achievement Program at New Mexico State University. I consider this experience a stepping-stone, which has led me in the direction to pursue a Master’s degree. I am a member of the Natural Resource Career Track Program at New Mexico State University; this is an organization for Hispanic students interested in careers in the natural resource fields. I believe that my education and work experiences have made me a strong candidate for the kind of work I am seeking.
New Mexico State University Graduate Students

University of Puerto Rico Graduate Students

Name:  
Natalia B. Álvarez Negrón

Campus:  
University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus

Rank:  
Graduate Student (MS)

Major:  
Environmental Sciences (Multidisciplinary)

Graduation Date:  
May 2014

Email:  
natalia.alvarez78@gmail.com

I obtained a Bachelor’s degree in General Sciences from the University of Puerto Rico, Cayey Campus in 2005. At present I am completing a master’s degree in the Environmental Sciences Program in the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus in the multidisciplinary option. This allows for the integration of a social component into my research interests. I am currently a participant in the USDA Natural Resource Career Tracks program where I am developing my thesis research focusing on the potential for the development of urban agriculture initiatives in the San Juan Metropolitan area in Puerto Rico. My thesis goals include a survey of current urban agriculture programs in San Juan, a GIS study of potential land areas for agriculture in the metropolitan area, and resident survey to determine attitudes and perceptions of food production and security in an urban context.

Name:  
Carlos A. Ortiz-Alvarado

Campus:  
Inter American University of Puerto Rico, Bayamón Campus

Rank:  
Graduate Student (MS)

Major:  
Biology, with a major in Ecology and Environmental Sciences

Internship:  
Summers 2011 and 2012 Internship with Alliance for Minority Participation (AMP) working with the relationship between genetic expression and defensive behavior in ants.

Graduation Date:  
May 2014

Email:  
cortiz3515@gmail.com

Having an undergraduate research experience and obtaining a BS degree in Biology, I am eager to continue my studies on environmental biology with the aspiration of eventually pass my knowledge and experience unto others as a professor. Currently, I am interested in biological evolution and how it relates to molecular aspects of communities and populations, with the purpose of acquiring new insights into environmental-genetic interactions and their role on the conservation and management of species. I would like to continue on this track and contribute whatever I can to the environmental studies, species conservation, and the evolutionary theory.
**Name:** Yamilis Ocasio-Rodriguez  
**Campus:** University of Puerto Rico – Río Piedras  
**Rank:** Graduate Student (PhD)  
**Major:** Environmental Sciences  
**Graduation Date:** May 2015  
**Email:** yamilis.ocasio1@upr.edu

I have always wanted to be an environmental scientist, which led me to study chemistry for my bachelor’s degree at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) – Río Piedras Campus. In order to apply my knowledge of chemistry to the improvement of the environment, I studied my master’s degree in soils at the UPR – Mayaguez Campus. For the master’s degree I evaluated the water quality of streams in small agricultural and non-agricultural watersheds, focusing on the potential for soils to be a direct contributor to surface water contamination. In order to achieve my childhood dream to become a faculty researcher, I started to study my doctorate degree in Environmental Sciences at the UPR- Río Piedras. My participation in the New Mexico-Puerto Rico Natural Resources Career Track Program (NRCT) has been filled with enriching experiences and personal growth. As a graduate student in the program, I have participated in activities involving both undergraduate and high school students. I was the teaching assistant for the NRCT field course at UPR, assisting with logistics and leading the instruction in water sampling methods. Also, I led a soil workshop during a weekend internship for high school students in the Luquillo Schoolyard Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) Program. NRCT contributes to this program by having graduate and undergraduate students interact with high school students interested in natural resource fields.

**Name:** Betzy G. Rossi  
**Campus:** University of Puerto Rico, Medical Sciences Campus  
**Rank:** Graduate Student (MS)  
**Major:** Environmental Health  
**Internship:** Forest Service. Hell Canyon Ranger District of the Black Hills National Forest, South Dakota  
**Graduation Date:** May 2015  
**Email:** betzy.rossi@upr.edu

In the summer of 2012 I worked as a Forestry Technician in the timber sale prep crew. My job consisted of marking trees with mostly orange paint, with an ultimate goal in preparing them for future timber sale. This required a lot of walking on rough terrain, long days in the field and carrying the equipment and paint needed to complete the tasks at hand. We also painted and marked with a GPS the boundaries of several units. This experience has been a great one, helping me on my personal and professional growth. It opened the possibilities to have a new experience that I never dreamed I would have. I really enjoyed working for a federal agency. I know this experience will be an advantage to my future plans.
Texas A&M University-Kingsville Project Page

STEP UP to USDA Career Success; Science, Technology and Environmental Programs for Undergraduate Preparation to USDA Career Success

USDA-NIFA Award Number: 2011-38422-30826 (2012-02298)

Project Director:
- Shad D. Nelson, shad.nelson@tamuk.edu Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK)

Co-PDs:
- Randy L. Stanko, randy.stanko@tamuk.edu (TAMUK);
- Michael Persans, University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA), Edinburg, TX;
- Debora Villalon, dvillalon@southtexascollege.edu So. Texas College (STC), Weslaco, TX;
- Armando Duarte; Armando.Duarte@harlingen.tstc.edu Texas State Technical College (TSTC), Harlingen, TX;
- Jonda Halcomb, jhalcomb@delmar.edu Del Mar College (DMC), Corpus Christi, TX.

This is a ‘Regional Collaboration’ [ROCN] project located in South Texas involving five educational, primarily Hispanic Serving Institutions, and multiple USDA research or service centers and agencies (primarily USDA-NRCS (NRNR Track), but also preparing employees for the USDA-AMS, -ARS, and-APHIS) aimed at providing student experiential learning and student recruitment and retention through agricultural- and natural resources-oriented research or career training. The lead institution, Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK) in collaboration with an additional 4-year institution, University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA), and three 2-year community colleges (DelMar College, South Texas College (STC), and Texas State Technical College (TSTC) will be the academic institutions involved in this project. The purpose is to build a bridge between regional community colleges and continue students after obtaining a 2-year Associates degree to continue onto a four-year degree to obtain the necessary skills and academic training to qualify for hire in the USDA upon graduation with a Bachelor of Science degree.

The STEPUP objectives are: 1) To form a collaborative effort to provide undergraduate education and hands-on training to a minimum of 50 underrepresented Hispanic south Texas students. 2) To better prepare students for opportunities in agricultural- or natural resource sciences-related internships within USDA (STEP UP), targeted summer camps and short-courses for skills training in the soil-, animal-, or natural resource- sciences. Objective 3) To provide an underserved student population with the opportunity to experience firsthand exposure to research in agricultural or natural resource sciences through faculty-mentored projects, or the opportunity to have a USDA career training experience during a 10-wk summer internship.

The STEP UP grant proposed to serve a minimum of 50 undergraduate and 5 graduate Hispanic students annually and surpassed that in Year 1 by serving 60 students who participated in and received stipends from the STEP UP grant. The participants were 57 percent male and 43 percent female and 70 percent Hispanic.
Name:     Luis Ayala  
Campus:  Texas A&M University-Kingsville  
Rank: MS 
Major: Animal Science  
Expected Graduation: May 2014 
Email:  ayalaluis1@live.com 

I was born in Weslaco, TX. I like to fish, hunt, and like to ride horses. The title of my thesis is: The age dependent effect of 17beta-estradiol on estrogen receptor alpha and beta and the leptin receptor in the choroid plexus. My career aspiration is to earn a PhD in animal science more specifically in the area of reproduction.

Name: Maria Consuelo Donato Molina  
Campus: Texas A&M University Kingsville  
Rank: PhD  
Major: Hispanic Studies  
Internship: Step Up Project Manager at Texas A&M Kingsville.  
Expected Graduation: May 2015  
Email: consudonato@gmail.com 

I was born in Colombia, South America. I am Agronomist Engineer and also did a Master’s degree in Rural Development and a Specialization in Conflict Analysis and Management. I completed all of them in my country. Also, while living in Brazil, I did a Specialization in Agri-Business. Currently I’m doing a PhD in Hispanic Studies learning about socio-cultural, politics, economics issues related to Latinos living in Latin American and United States. I am enjoying my courses because one of my passions is to read books and since my program belongs to Liberal Arts Department, we must read mountains of books. The program is very interesting and my emphasis will be studies in rural areas, my specialty.

I have passion for Latin music, arts and crafts. I have visited several countries in Latino America and one of my favorite things to do when I am visiting a country, is to visit its “Mercados”, food market or fair, and try the different kind of fruits and foods, take pictures, and find regional dolls for my personal collection.
Name:  Amanda Garcia  
Campus:  Texas A&M University Kingsville  
Rank:  MS  
Major:  Plant and Soil Sciences  
Expected Graduation:  December 2012  
Email:  amanda1322@gmail.com

Science has always been my passion and I enjoy the research I have conducted and plan to continue broadening my experiences and knowledge in my field. I enjoy exploring the outdoors, traveling to new places, and trying new things. I love spending time with my family and enjoy sharing my passion of science with them. I spend my free time inventing creative ways to repurpose (recycle) items and create them into art pieces. I am working on my thesis: Over expression of a Calcium Signal Modifier Gene (CSM-1) in Sweet Orange Cultivars and Molecular Characterization of Transgenic Plants.

Name:  Francis J. Melgoza  
Campus:  Texas A&M Kingsville  
Rank:  MS  
Major:  Plant and Soil Science  
Expected Graduation:  May 2013  
Email:  melgozaswimmer07@aol.com

Currently I am working on finishing up my thesis project to graduate in May 2013. I live in Mission, TX and I travel every day to Weslaco, TX to the Citrus Center. My time at the center is very fulfilling I get to work on things I enjoy. In July of 2012 I traveled to Miami for the ASHS conference and it was a great experience where I was able to present some of my experiments. The experience I have gained is practical and I will eventually put it to use in my career. Besides working on my research (Understanding and improving freeze tolerance in citrus) and school I also enjoy to ride my road bike on the weekends. After receiving my degree I will pursue an agriculture specialist position with CBP.
Name: **Raul Cesar Rivas-Cantu**  
Campus:  Texas A & M University Kingsville  
Rank:  Graduate Student  
Major:  Environmental Engineering  
Expected Graduation: May-2013  
Email: raul.rivas_cantu@students.tamuk.edu  

I am originally from Mexico and I moved to Texas almost 9 years ago for becoming a US permanent resident. After 20 years of industrial and environmental experience in Mexico, I decided to come back to school to study a PhD in Environmental Engineering to improve my academic background. That has taken a great effort for learning new theoretical concepts and to reinforce my practical knowledge in Environmental Engineering, Green Chemistry, and Biochemical Engineering. I like to develop new chemical and biochemical processes at laboratory and plant level, and I think that with the acquired knowledge it is possible to improve the relationship between industrial processes and environmental protection. Preventing the degradation of the environment, and improving the application of renewable resources to produce energy and bio- products without affect the food-chain are the most important topics for the development of my future career.

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Name: **Jennifer Nichole Trevino**  
Campus:  Texas A&M University Kingsville  
Rank:  MS  
Major:  Plant and Soil Sciences  
Internship:  Monsanto, Bishop, TX  
Expected Graduation: May 2013  
Email: horse_n_rabbit@yahoo.com  

My hometown is San Benito, TX. I enjoy Volunteering and serving in my church, making handmade jewelry, and reading. Currently I am working on my thesis evaluating the Impact of Planting Dates on Psyllid Populations and ZC Disease Incidence in Pearsall, TX. I’m interested to build a career working within the USDA-NRCS.

My aspiration is to build a career working within the USDA-NRCS.
Name:  Alinna M. Umphres-Lopez  
Campus:  Texas A&M University-Kingsville  
Rank:  MS  
Major:  Plant and Soil Science  
Expected Graduation:  May 2013  
Email:  alinnalopez@yahoo.com

My hometown is Zapata, Texas. During my leisure time I enjoy hiking, fishing, camping, hunting, traveling, cooking, reading, and spending time with my family. The title of my thesis is: Agronomic factors affecting grain and forage sorghum production in south Texas. My aspirations are to continue in a research oriented career that facilitates the growing challenges in agriculture.

NAME:  Yessica Cerino  
INSTITUTION: University of Texas-Pan American  
RANK:  MS  
MAJOR: Biology  
EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE: December 2013  
Email:  yecerino@broncs.utpa.edu

My graduate research project in plant biotechnology has provided me with a different approach as to how I can positively impact the environment. Some of my future career plans include working in research, ideally in conservation or preservation of native plants and animal species.

Growing up in Edinburg, in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, I was witness to how quickly a small semi-rural town can change into a big commercial hotspot. I always knew I wanted to work to conserve the environment, as most of my interests lie outdoors. Hiking, fishing, and camping are a few of my favorite pastimes. However while indoors’, I can just as easily find solace within books. Luckily I have been able to travel the United States, and volunteer at the Chicago Brookfield zoo.

I am interested in working for the ARS, APHIS or USFS.
Name: Eliza A. Sebastian
Hometown: India
Institution: UTPA (University of Texas-Pan American)
Major: MS in Biology
Rank: Graduate student
Expected Graduation Date: May 2014
Degree: MS
Email: easebastian@broncs.utpa.edu

Career and Research Aspirations: After doing my internship with USDA for more than half a year and working with erudite professors like Dr. Erin Schuenzel and Dr. Michael Persans, I started to develop a passion towards agriculture and plant research.

USDA agency you are interested in: ARS, APHIS

About my summer 2012 Internship: Location: Edinburg, TX
Employer: UTPA Biology Department

What I learned: My research project focused on determining the origin and population structure of the bacteria Pseudomonas syringae pv. actinidiae (Psa), a pathogen of kiwi fruit. I also had the privilege of presenting my Psa poster at one of the USDA conferences during summer 2012.
FATE Food Safety and Agroterrorism Training: Educating Our Future Workforce

The USDA FATE Grant’s objectives include creation and implementation a Joint Admissions Agreement with Texas State University and Laredo Community College / Palo Alto College / Northwest Vista College to increase the transfer rate of Hispanic students to a 4 year university.

It will encourage Hispanic community college students to develop early linkages with Texas State University through the newly established University Transfer Centers, mentorship websites, summer camps, faculty networking, and experiential learning fieldtrips and have a retention rate at or higher than that of the University. The grant will train 50 scholar Hispanic students in the course “Preparing Communities for Agroterrorism”.

The goal will be to retain and place 90 percent of the student participants in job shadowing and internship opportunities within USDA agencies; graduate 50 Hispanic students who are well trained and ready to enter employment in the food safety / inspection areas with APHIS, FSIS, or another USDA agency.

This grant is the first one awarded to Texas State University since it achieved the status of a “Hispanic Serving Institution”, it is housed in the Department of Agriculture and directed by Dr. Douglas Morrish and Dr. Ryan Saucier.

Four Collaborating HSI Institutions

Texas State University – San Marcos, Texas - Lead Institution(TSU)
Co PIs: Doug Morrish dm43@txstate.edu 512-245-3321
& Ryan Saucier ps51@txstate.edu 512-245-3325

Laredo Community College, Laredo, Texas
Nora Garza nrgarza@LAREDO.EDU 956-721-5337

Northwest Vista Community College*, San Antonio, Texas
Carlos Aguirre caguirre57@alamo.edu 210-485-0300

Palo Alto Community College*, San Antonio, Texas
Gary Shelman jshelman@alamo.edu 210-486-3920

* Part of the Alamo Community College District
Name: Juan Garcia  
E-mail: jg1572@txstate.edu  
Hometown: Eagle Pass  
Institution: Texas State University – San Marcos  
Rank: Graduate Student  
Major: Agriculture  
Expected date of graduation: August 2013

As an undergraduate I worked for a graduate student on his study of composting invasive plant species. I am a teaching assistant for college agriculture undergraduate classes such as Agricultural Engineering (AG 2373), and other agriculture systems courses. My interests include participating in FFA related activities, being active in my departmental clubs, and volunteering in the San Antonio Livestock Exposition. I enjoy outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, kayaking, etc.

Short-term goals: includes graduating from Texas State University with a Masters degree in Education and becoming an agriculture science education teacher in Eagle Pass.

Long-term goals: includes building my community agriculturally and pursue a Ph. D in Agriculture.

Name: Diana Morales  
E-mail: dm1434@txstate.edu  
Hometown: Castroville, TX  
Institution: Texas State University – San Marcos  
Rank: Graduate Student  
Major: Agriculture  
Expected date of graduation: May 2014

My interests include participating in FFA related activities, being active in the agricultural department clubs, and volunteering in the community.

Short-term goals: includes graduating from Texas State University with a Masters degree in Agriculture Education and becoming an agriculture science education teacher.

Long-term goals: includes pursuing a Ph. D in Agriculture where I could teach at a university one day.

Research/Outreach: My research includes Hispanic/Latino Student Perceptions of Agricultural and their Knowledge Levels of the Different Agencies within the USDA.
SUMMARY FOR FIRST YEAR

CETARS is 800K/year project funded by USDA-NIFA-HSI program including matching support from the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez (UPRM) to provide 55 undergraduate and graduate students from agriculture, engineering and other related disciplines with meaningful research training and outreach activities. This project is an interdisciplinary and collaborative effort between five Hispanic serving institutions aimed to provide innovative, high impact research training related to agriculture and related sciences and to establish and consolidate a pipeline by attracting, retaining and graduating talented individuals from K-12 to the PhD, while supporting their actual placement in Agriculture-related positions. The outcomes during the first year include the constructions of school gardens at 10 participating K-6 public schools and weekly follow-up visits to provide educative lectures. The CETARS project also hosted a Globe Program component which included 12 additional public schools. The Globe Program activities included the training of 12 UPRM CETARS students and 20 K-12 teachers in hand-on measurements of soil and water quality and monthly visits to public schools for hands on training of students. Also as part of the Globe Program, CETARS students provided Science on Wheels Chemistry shows impacting over 500 K-12 students. These shows consisted in visits to participating schools using a university van equipped with all necessary materials to provide a spectacular show in which K-12 students experienced the magic of chemistry. Forty undergraduate and graduate students participated in research projects leading to 12 publications in peer review journals including several cover pages. Eighteen CETARS students participated in paid internships at USDA and related agencies. Two courses were offered on line, Chem 6007 Food and Agricultural Applications of Nanotechnology, a graduate course team taught by Oscar Perales, Marco de Jesus and Martha L. Lopez, all CETARS Co-PDs and the other at the University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla (Agro 4035, Introduction to Conservation of Natural Resources). Chem 6007 course was offered on site at UPRM and online for other students at IAUPR and UTEP. During the first year, three CETARS students graduated with B.S. in Chemistry and one with BS in Agriculture. Dissemination activities included 60 oral or poster presentations at the first year CETARS symposia and six outreach activities about agricultural nanotechnology impacting 600 K-12 students. These activities reach the media by radio and TV reports including two on the UPRM campus webpage.
University of Puerto Rico Graduate Students

Name:  
Campus:  UPR- Medical Sciences Campus  
Rank:  1st year Graduate Student 
Major:  Environmental Health  
Expected date of graduation:  Dec 2014  
Email:  nancy.cardona@upr.edu

Internship:  I worked for PRENRD (Puerto Rico Natural and Environmental Resources) as wildlife biologist doing predator control and invasive species control; and winter 2012, I worked at the US Fish and Wildlife Services promoting the planting of shade coffee plants.

Skills:  Problem solving, team player, planning and organizing, works under pressure, working with little or no supervision.

Short-term goals:  Finish my master’s on May 2014 and apply for a PhD in Environmental Science.

Long-term goals:  Finish my PhD and work as a professor so I can teach others the importance of having one world for billions of people, animals, and organisms.

Research and/or Outreach Project:  Managing Damage and Threats Associated with Invasive E. patas Monkeys in the Southwest Part of Puerto Rico.
The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) Program Page

BGREEN - BuildinG a Regional Energy and Educational Network: A Partnership to Integrate Efforts and Collaboration to Shape Tomorrow’s Hispanic Sustainable Energy Leaders

Project Director:
Heidi A. Taboada (UTEP)

Co-Project Directors:
Shad Nelson (TAMUK), Tongdan Jin (TXState), and Delia Valles (NMSU)

Table below shows complete list of PDs and Co-PDs:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>UTEP</th>
<th>TAMUK</th>
<th>TXState</th>
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<tr>
<td>Heidi A. Taboada</td>
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<td>Shad D. Nelson (PI)</td>
<td>Tongdan Jin (PI)</td>
<td>Delia Valles (PI)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:heataboada@utep.edu">heataboada@utep.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:kfsdn00@tamuk.edu">kfsdn00@tamuk.edu</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:dvalles@ag.nmsu.edu">dvalles@ag.nmsu.edu</a></td>
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<td>Jose F. Espiritu</td>
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<td>Greta Schuster</td>
<td>Luyi Sun</td>
<td>Hansuk Sohn</td>
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<td>William Hargrove</td>
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<td>Ram Acharya</td>
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<td>Salvador Hernandez</td>
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<td>Nirmala Khandan</td>
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<td>Shane Walker</td>
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Project Overview:
A consortium comprised of the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK), Texas State University-San Marcos (TXState), New Mexico State University (NMSU), and USDA-ARS proposes to establish an educational network to increase the number of Hispanic students enrolled in studies related to Sustainable Energy and facilitate the employment of Hispanics in critical occupations to USDA’s mission in renewable energy and rural development. The breadth and diversity of the faculty involved and the range of resources and activities that are available across the partner institutions and USDA and agricultural research partners provide unique opportunities for students to engage in interdisciplinary Sustainable Energy education, and cutting-edge research.

BGREEN adopts an integrated approach composed of four key components 1) Outreach & Recruitment, 2) Education, 3) Experiences, and 4) Dissemination directed to advance Sustainable Energy research and education which bases its strength in identified regional and national needs to educate and train future Hispanic sustainable energy leaders. This project is clearly aligned with the all university partners’ strategic missions and visions.
Name: **Olivia Moreno**  
Campus: The University of Texas at El Paso  
Rank: PhD  
Major: Environmental Science and Engineering  
Expected Graduation: December 2014  
Email: ocmoreno@miners.utep.edu  

**Internship:** During the summer of 2012, I worked in Washington D.C. with USDA-NIFA-Institute of Bioenergy, Climate and Environment.

**Skills:** Able to operate GaBi 4.0 and SimaPro softwares for life cycle impact assessment, HOBO Datalogger software for energy efficiency practices in buildings and Matlab programming software.

**Research Interests:** My research interests include sustainable/environmental engineering, renewable/alternative energy technologies, life cycle impact assessment, energy systems optimization, and energy efficiency management.

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Name: **Karla Gutierrez**  
Campus: The University of Texas at El Paso  
Rank: PhD  
Major: Environmental Science and Engineering  
Expected Graduation: Spring 2014  
Email: krgutierrez@miners.utep.edu  

Karla Gutierrez obtained a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science in Industrial Engineering at UTEP where she gained experience teaching in the Industrial Layout and Industrial Methods and Ergonomics Labs. As an undergraduate, Gutierrez was recognized as an outstanding peer mentor and while in graduate school, she was recognized as an outstanding Industrial Engineering Graduate Student. Karla Gutierrez is currently a Research Associate while also pursuing a PhD in Environmental Sciences and Engineering at The University of Texas at El Paso.

**Research Interests:** Her research interests are in renewable energy optimization and biofuels and she is investigating technologies to commercialize in these fields. Her Ph.D Dissertation work focuses on Feedstock Logistics. Gutierrez’s expertise lays in the investigation, generation and implementation of the state of the art optimization techniques in Industrial and manufacturing engineering such as genetic algorithms, tabu search and the newly developed evolutionary algorithm based on adaptive echolocation.
Julio Eduardo Padilla  
**Campus:** The University of Texas at El Paso  
**Rank:** PhD  
**Major:** Chemistry  
**Expected Graduation:** Fall 2013  
**Email:** jepadilla@miners.utep.edu

**Internship:** I spent the summer of 2012 working at the USDA-Agricultural Research Service in Lubbock, Texas. While in Lubbock I worked on a few projects related to soil microbiology and erosion. First, I took part in the field sampling of dozens of agricultural fields under the conservation reserve program in order to analyze the effect of perpetual farming on soil health. The main project, which will lead to a publication, focused on analyzing, with Mid-Infrared Spectroscopy, the effects of erosion on farmlands from Akron, Colorado. Over a hundred dust samples collected over USDA research fields in Akron, CO, were analyzed in order to determine the nutrients and microbes being eroded from farmlands and the differences between different types of crop rotations and tilling practices.

**Research Interests:** My research interests have always been in environmental science. I believe a major concern for our planet is the rapid consumption of its natural resources and the pollution that results from it. In order for human kind to have a future, we must find a way to change the way we live. From developing renewable energy to the rapid depletion of our water sources, these are important concerns that scientists must address. I am currently developing new methods and materials for the desalination of water. My career goals are to continue to improve our quality of life and the conservation of our environment by continuing my research within a government agency.

Rodney Vance  
**Campus:** The University of Texas at El Paso  
**Rank:** PhD  
**Major:** Environmental Science and Engineering  
**Expected Graduation:** Fall 2013  
**Email:** rvance@miners.utep.edu

**Internship:** USDA-NIFA-IBCE Over the summer I had the opportunity to intern with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture where I received valuable experience on grant proposal and funding processes, as well as recognizing the importance of HSI’s and the opportunities they offer for Hispanic students to access higher education.

**Research Interests:** I believe it is important to increase research on renewable energy systems and energy sustainability, as well as promote good land management. I feel it is equally important to improve environmental quality while conserving the natural resources that agriculture depends on.
The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) Graduate Students
New Mexico State University (NMSU)

Name: Arturo Del Valle
Campus: New Mexico State University
Rank: PhD
Major: Industrial Engineering
Expected Graduation: Summer 2014
Email: arturodelvalle@me.com

I was raised in the city of Torreon, Mexico and moved to El Paso when I was 18; I attended the University of Texas at El Paso were I obtained a B.S. and later on I also completed an M.S. in pure Mathematics by May of 2007. Upon graduation I realized many of the skills as a Mathematician could be applied in the world by becoming an Engineer and thus I decided to start a PhD in Industrial Engineering at the New Mexico State University which I hope to finish by the summer of 2014.

Research Interests: My career and research aspirations are to study and research the topics that encourage environmental sustainability trends in the industry. Some important topics of great interest to me are the study of Combinatorial Materials Research with an application to environmentally friendly materials and, also a great concept that I enjoy researching is concerned with the design of sustainable supply chain networks which would potentially reduce future pollution output in our environment.

Name: Alejandro Bernal
Campus: New Mexico State University
Rank: Ph.D
Major: Economic Development
Summer Internship 2012: N/A
Expected Graduation: December 2014
Email: abernal@nmsu.edu

Narrative of Research: Renewable resources such as wind can provide sustainable options for generating power in rural areas particularly in New Mexico. Most communities in New Mexico are classified as areas with high potential for wind as well as solar energy production. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to develop cost estimates for producing wind energy using available data for the price of turbines, other installation and maintenance costs, and historical wind speed data for rural communities in New Mexico.

Skills: Bilingual – Spanish/English

Research Interests: Economics, Renewable and Sustainable Energy, Food Safety and Security.
Name:  German Reyes  
Campus:  New Mexico State University  
Rank:  PhD  
Major:  Industrial Engineering  
Expected Graduation:  December 2014  
Email:  greyes@nmsu.edu

My research project basically deals with the distribution of fuels in the United States in a sustainable manner. The purpose of the research is to find optimal or near optimal ways of distributing fuels. A heuristic algorithm such as the Ant Colony Optimization (ACO) algorithm is being adapted in order find the best routes for distribution.

Skills: Development of mathematical and simulation models for optimization.

Research Interests: My career and research interests lie in the area of transportation and logistics. In general, I believe that good and efficient transportation and distribution systems are imperative in a sustainable world. Furthermore, my interests include developing mathematical models and simulation models in order to improve existing systems.

Name:  John W. Schutte  
Campus:  New Mexico State University  
Rank:  PhD  
Major:  Chemical Engineering  
Summer Internship 2012: None  
Expected Graduation: May 2015  
Email:  jwschutt@nmsu.edu

Research project: Chemical Recycling of Plastic Solid Waste for the Production of Transportation Fuels. Since the first industrial scale production of synthetic polymers (plastics) took place in the 1940s, the production, consumption and waste generation rate of plastic solid waste (PSW) has increased considerably. Plastics are used in our daily lives in a number of applications, from greenhouses, mulches, coating and wiring, building materials to packaging, films, covers, bags and containers.

Skills: 10+ years of chemical engineering experience, AutoCAD, Microsoft Office, Canvas, SAS, ASPEN Plus, MathCAD, PLC background, strong communication skills, strong management skills

Research Interests: Working on means of reducing plastic waste while showing an economic profit.
Name: **Hector Hernandez**  
Campus: New Mexico State University  
Rank: MS  
Major: Agricultural Economics  
Summer Internship 2012: N/A  
Expected Graduation: May 2014  
Email: hlhernan@nmsu.edu

I am a graduate student in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business at New Mexico State University. I have a Bachelor’s degree in Economics from the University of Chicago and am currently studying for a Master's degree in Agricultural Economics at NMSU. I have served in the Peace Corps in Mauritania, West Africa and as a Fellow with International Justice Mission in Rwanda, East Africa. My research interests are in the areas of food security, cooperative management, international development, international trade, microfinance and renewable energy.

**Research Interests:** Currently I am working on an economic study of solar energy and the factors that lead households in New Mexico, Arizona and California to install solar panels on residential homes. Other research interests are in food security, cooperative management, international development, international trade, microfinance and renewable energy.

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Name: **Bridgette Quintero**  
Campus: New Mexico State University  
Rank: MS  
Major: Civil Engineering  
Summer Internship 2012: n/a  
Expected Graduation: May 2012  
Email: bridgegrace10@aol.com

**Research project:** Biodiesel produced from microalgae is identified as a possible replacement for fossil fuel and jet fuels as the growth of algae is C neutral and there will not be any harmful emissions to the environment during production. Once the algae are grown, 40-60% lipids are available to harvest for biodiesel the process produces useful organic matter as a byproduct.

**Skills:** I am a professional Ballet Folklorico Dancer. I have obtained a variety of engineering skills throughout my college experience such as math, science, attention to detail research, computer software programs and writing research papers.

**Research Interests:** My research interests include; Green innovations, growth and development of new fuels, water resources, and sustainability.
Name: Jody Lynn Elias
Campus: New Mexico State University, Las Cruces
Rank: MS
Expected Graduation date: May 2013
Email: jlstice@nmsu.edu

Skills: I received my BSEE at NMSU where I also received a minor in Environmental Management. It was through those classes that I developed a great interest in alternative resources in power generation and materials. This led me to pursue a higher education in Industrial Engineering Management and Grad Certificate in Systems Engineering, where I am able to conduct research in manufacturing techniques and materials such as wood plastic composites.

Research Interest: Research in alternative processing methods and materials testing that can replace products and materials already in practice. This will lead to a more durable and less expensive alternatives to current practices. I am currently working to determine a viable replacement for drying tables in use by a local Chile company. This consists of combining and testing wood plastic composite samples implementing physical and computational methods.

Name: Clarissa Gonzales
Campus: New Mexico State University
Rank: MS
Major: Industrial Engineering
Expected Graduation: May 2013
Email: clg@nmsu.edu

Internship: During the summer of 2012, I worked at Intel in Rio Rancho NM. I worked with core processor chips.

When I began my undergraduate career in civil engineering, I had the opportunity to be exposed to a full range of engineering courses, all of which tended to reinforce and solidify my strong interest in engineering. I have worked as an engineering intern for the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium in Anchorage, Alaska, traveling all over Alaska from Nome to Juno, above the Arctic Circle and Anchorage. I have worked as a Waste Water Operator Intern for the Jacob Hands Waste Water Treatment Plant in Las Cruces NM and Intel Corporation for the summer and fall semesters of 2012. In the field of engineering, I have developed a special interest in industrial engineering and the LEAN program and will complete my masters in May of 2013. I believe that my diverse background will bring a positive influence to my work and everything I do.

Skills: Auto-Cad, Microsoft products, JMP

Research Interests: TIMWOOD, LEAN and Six Sigma.
The University of Texas at El Paso Graduate Students
Texas State University - San Marcos (TSU)

Name: Ivan Zecena
Campus: Texas State University – San Marcos
Rank: M.S.
Major: Computer Science
Expected Graduation: July 2013
Email: ivan_zcl@txstate.edu

I'm originally from Guatemala but I've lived in Austin, Texas, for the last couple of years. I obtained my B.S. in Computer Science with a minor in Mathematics in 2011, and I'm currently working on my Master's in Computer Science at Texas State University. In my free time I like to play the drums, and listen to music while I lay with my cat and read a good science fiction book.

Research Interests: My current research focuses on High Performance Computing and the impact of parallel algorithms and task granularity on Energy Efficiency. In short, my goal is to design energy efficient software algorithms for computing clusters in a way that energy consumption is reduced. In addition to this, my thesis work is on the efficiency of running multiple virtual machines on GPUs.

Name: Brady Henry Bauer (no photo)
Campus: Texas State University – San Marcos
Rank: M.S.
Major: Agriculture
Expected Graduation: May 2012
Email: bb1246@txstate.edu

Research Interests: In regards to the renewable energy technology, I feel that I can bring my knowledge and educational experience in agriculture. Agriculture is the main front of the United States without it we might not be able to survive. Agriculture and renewable energy go together in that through agriculture many items grown or produced can be considered renewable energy. Also, through research on renewable energy technology I feel that if there are going to be new discoveries for it that agriculture and wildlife will be the main sources to start from since they impact the world the most. In my field of agriculture I have been working with many crops and environments, and also working with many aspects of the environmental wildlife. I feel that a step forward in order to help advance agriculture and the wildlife that thrives through many of the agriculture environments is to help improve the environment through advancements in agriculture. Through, this we must first educate others, by doing this renewable energy technology will help these advancements, and I would love to be at the forefront of this new advancement.
Name: Madahy Romero  
Campus: Texas A&M University College Station  
Rank: PhD  
Major: Soil Sciences  
Expected Graduation: December 2013  
Email: madahyromero@yahoo.com  

I’m currently a third-year Ph.D. student at Texas A&M University located in College Station, Texas. In May, 2010, I graduated from Texas A&M University - Kingsville with a M.S. in Plant and Soil Science. My undergraduate degree is from The University of Texas-Pan American, where I earned my BS in Biology in May 2007. In order for us to be able to excel in our careers, we need to have a healthy mind and body to be able to do so.

My career and research aspirations involve becoming an interdisciplinary research soil scientist. I want to have the opportunity to work with other research scientist on problems involving the conservation of systems involving plants, soils, and surface and groundwater sources. I would like to have a specific focus on agricultural chemicals, not only investigating their impacts on the environment, food safety, and human health but also discovering new herbicide active ingredients qualified for commercial development.

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Name: Krystal Montemayor  
Campus: Texas A&M University Kingsville  
Rank: M.S  
Major: Animal Science  
Expected Graduation: December 2014  
Email: krystal_sr_22@yahoo.com  

Internship: During the summer of 2012, I worked in different regions across Texas working with USDA & APHIS Veterinary Services and Plant Protection Quarantine.

I always had an interest in livestock. My bachelor’s degree is in agriculture science with a minor in plant and soil science. I am now working on my master’s degree in animal science. I plan to one day be employed by USDA APHIS where I would be able to contribute to the agency and also educate the general public on what APHIS has to offer. My career and research aspirations are to extend my education on the process from when a certain commodity is planted to the actual consumption of cattle, which would then lead to determining carcass quality. I am very interested in the entire process.
Name: Rey Munoz III
Campus: Texas A&M University Kingsville
Rank: MS
Major: Plant and Soil Science
Expected Graduation: May 2014
Email: reynaldo.munoz@hotmail.com

Internship: Assistantship with USDA/NRCS- Kika Dela Garza- Plant Material Center Kingsville, Texas.

I was raised in Uvalde, Texas; I recently graduated with an Agribusiness Degree in May 2012. I was raised around agriculture all my life from riding pens at Driskill Feed yard Inc. to running produce lines. I’m pursuing a Master’s Degree in Plant and Soil Science to become diversified within my field of study. With this degree I can become familiar with the production of crops and alternative methods of producing Biofuels. My graduate project is Biofuels Research Project.

My career and research aspirations are to study and research the 5 species such as Prairie Acacia Lespedeza, Purple Bush Bean, Lab- Lab and Siratro in order to potentially use species in the development of Biofuels.
California State University San Bernardino Project Page

Watershed Management Experiential Learning for USDA Careers Internship Program

Award: 2011-38422-31204

PI: Julie Lappin, J.D.
Water Resources Institute, CSU San Bernardino
jlappin@csusb.edu
909-537-3687

Co-PI: Dr. David Zoldoske
Water Resources and Policy Initiatives, CSU Fresno
davidzo@csufresno.edu
559-278-2066

The primary objective of the Watershed Management Experiential Learning for USDA Careers project is to measurably increase the awareness, retention, and graduation rate of qualified underrepresented California State University (CSU) students, leading towards USDA career attainment. This USDA/NIFA Regional Collaboration project was awarded to CSU’s Water Resources and Policy Initiatives (WRPI) and is managed by the Water Resources Institute at California State University, San Bernardino. It is a collaboration between the fourteen Hispanic Serving Institution CSU campuses.

The strategic goal of this project is to measurably increase student research skills that ensure our national forests and private working lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to climate change, while simultaneously enhancing the sustainability of the Nation’s water resources.

This project provides funding for 50 paid Watershed Management Internships per year for a total of 200 internships over four years. The internships provide an experiential approach to learning in the field of watershed management, which helps students gain real-world experience in natural resource protection while developing new knowledge, skills, and abilities in problem-solving from a watershed perspective. The total salary paid to each Watershed Management Intern is $4,500. The project also provides up to $560 per student for the purchase of approved supplies and materials and mileage reimbursement. Competitive interns may be eligible for $40,000 scholarships in furtherance of their Doctorate-level degree in a natural resources or water related discipline.
Name:  
Walter Kyle Griffiths
Campus:  California State University Fresno
Rank:  First Year Graduate Student
Major(s)/Degree(s):  Biology  BA in Natural Sciences, MA in Creative Inquiry, MFA in Creative Inquiry
Expected Graduation Date:  06/2014

Internship:  San Joaquin River Invasive Predator Study:  My project will describe predation potential of invasive piscivores in an altered habitat in the San Joaquin River, CA.

Skill Sets:  Laboratory and Field Techniques, Literature Search, & Statistics.

Narrative:  I am interested in ichthyology and community ecology and I have extensive experience managing projects.

USDA Agency of Interest:  USFS
Contact Info:  wgriffiths@csufresno.edu

Name:  Elayna Ann Bryant
Campus:  California State University San Marcos
Rank:  Third year graduate student
Major(s)/Degree(s):  B.S. in Biology emphasis in Ecology, M.S. in Biology
Expected Graduation Date:  December/2013

Internship:  Characterization of urban runoff treatment ponds within San Dieguito River Park (SDRP).


I aspire to work with a USDA agency as a wildlife biologist. I am extremely passionate about wildlife monitoring, habitat restoration, and educational outreach programs.

USDA Agency of Interest:  Wildlife Biologist
Contact Info:  bryan011@csusm.edu
Name: Zarela R. Guerrero  
Campus: California State University-San Marcos  
Rank: Second Year Graduate Student  
Major(s)/Degree(s): A.A. in Chemistry, B.S. in Biology with a second major in Anthropology, M.S. in Biology  
Expected Graduation Date: December 2013  

Internship: From shrub lands to avocados: Effects of land use and land cover change on soil carbon storage and fertility in Southern California.

Skill Sets: I have ample experience in ecological research skills, like collecting samples in the field, processing and analyzing samples in lab using lab equipment as well as computers.

My sense of curiosity is really high. The area that interests me the most is the impact that human activities have on the environment. My plan is to find a job for the Forest Service, once I graduate. It is my desire to serve my country by researching environmental issues.

USDA Agency of Interest: USFS  
Contact Info: Zarela.Guerrero@gmail.com

Name: Shelley Mae Lawrence  
Campus: California State University-San Marcos  
Rank: Second Year Graduate Student  
Major(s)/Degree(s): M.S. in Biology B.S. Biology, concentration ecology  
Minor: Chemistry  
Expected Graduation Date: 05/2013  


Skill Sets: GIS, advance statistics using R, Microsoft Word and Excel, CHNS analyzer, California flora and fauna identification, soil, water and vegetation field sampling.  

My main career goal is to conduct ecological research.

USDA Agency of Interest: ARS and USFS  
Contact Info: Lawre018@cougars.csusm.edu
California State University Graduate Students
Coastal and Watershed Science and Policy

Name: Emily C. Beck
Campus: California State University Monterey Bay
Rank: First year graduate
Major(s)/Degree(s): M.S. in Coastal Watershed Science and Policy
Expected Graduation Date: 5/2014

Internship: Tidal marsh restoration through the beneficial reuse of sediment.

Skill Sets: Wetland science, wetland delineation, R, GIS, water quality testing, plant propagation.

I hope to build a career in coastal ecosystem policy, management and conservation. I would like to work with either the Natural Resource Conservation Service or the Forest Service.

USDA Agency of Interest: NRCS, USFS
Contact Info: ebeck@csumb.edu

Name: Scott G. Blanco
Campus: California State University, Monterey Bay
Rank: Second year graduate student
Major(s)/Degree(s): M.S. in Coastal Watershed Science and Policy, B.S. in Molecular Environmental Biology
Expected Graduation Date: 06/2014

Internship: Monitoring cyanobacterial harmful algal blooms and toxic potential in Pinto Lake using molecular biology methods.

Skill Sets: Software: ArcGIS, ERDAS, R, HEC-RAS/HMS, MS Office Laboratory: Flow injection analysis, total organic carbon, pathogen enumeration, microscopy, polymerase chain reaction, chlorophyll, ELISA toxin determination

I aim to apply environmental science and policy education and experience to effectively produce high quality, policy-relevant research.

USDA Agency of Interest: USFS
Contact Info: sblanco@csumb.edu
Name:  Brittani Diane Bohlke  
Campus:  California State University Monterey Bay  
Rank:  Second Year Graduate Student  
Major(s)/Degree(s):  B.S. in Environmental Biology (University of Wisconsin) M.S. in Coastal and Watershed Science and Policy  
Expected Graduation Date:  05/2013  

Internship:  Environmental Compliance Tasks and Management Plan Preparation for Marina Coast Water District.  

Skill Sets:  Microsoft Word/Excel/PowerPoint, GPS unit, ArcGIS 10.0 software, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), R programming language, LaTeX document preparation system, STELLA Modeling and Simulation Software, Hydrologic Engineering Centers Hydrologic Modeling System (HEC-HMS) and River Analysis System (HEC-RAS), High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), Gas Chromatography, Spectrophotometry, Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR).  

A potential career track through the USDA involves protection of water resources and water quality through a scientific position with the Natural Resources Conservation Service or the Forest Service.  

USDA Agency of Interest:  NRCS  
Contact Info:  Brittani488@gmail.com  

Name:  Cherie Nicole Crawford  
Campus:  California State University Monterey Bay  
Rank:  Second year graduate student  
Major(s)/Degree(s):  B.S. in Marine Biology; M.S. Coastal and Watershed Science and Policy, watershed emphasis  
Expected Graduation Date:  05/2013  

Internship:  Applied science to inform conservation and restoration of a threatened habitat type, the ecotone between salt marshes and adjacent uplands.  

Skill Sets:  Soil sample analysis, plant propagation, GIS, Word, Excel, various statistical programs  

After I graduate from my program at CSUMB, I would like to obtain a job with the NRCS.  

USDA Agency of Interest:  NRCS  
Contact Info:  ccrawford@csumb.edu
Name: Christina Michelle David  
Campus: California State University Monterey Bay  
Rank: Graduate student, 2nd year  
Major(s)/Degree(s): Coastal and Watershed Science & Policy Master’s  
Expected Graduation Date: 12/2013  

Internship: Woodchip bioreactors as an agricultural BMP for nitrate removal: Monitoring internal dynamics for optimization of this tool.  

Skill Sets: GIS, R Statistical Package, grant writing, running specialized lab machinery (Total Carbon Analyzer, Shimadzu Gas Chromatograph), lots of field work experience including with endangered species.  

After acquiring my Master’s degree, I hope to find work that relates to such pressing local and regional environmental issues as groundwater depletion and contamination from practices such as fracking and agricultural pollutants. I am most interested in working for the NRCS, of the USDA agencies. I enjoy trying new things, spending time with loved ones, reading, anything involving the outdoors, and most sports.  

USDA Agency of Interest: NRCS  
Contact Info: cdavid@csumb.edu

Name: Megan Elizabeth Gehrke  
Campus: California State University Monterey Bay  
Rank: Graduate Student – First Year  
Major(s)/Degree(s): Coastal & Watershed Science and Policy (M.S.) – Watershed Science Emphasis  
Expected Graduation Date: 05/2014  

Internship: Data analysis for Central Coast Water Quality Preservation, Inc.  

Skill Sets: R, GIS, field experience (field measurements, sampling, quality assurance, data entry, calibration and use of water quality monitoring equipment), lab experience (data analysis, sample preparation, basic chemistry, Kjeldahl digestions).  

I am most interested in working on land use and water quality issues throughout my future career, especially issues related to agriculture.  

USDA Agency of Interest: NRCS, USFS  
Contact Info: megangehrke@gmail.com
Name: Shaelyn Marion Hession  
Campus: California State University Monterey Bay  
Rank: Third Year Graduate Student  
Major(s)/Degree(s): B.S. in Environmental Science, Technology and Policy, December 2009  
M.S. in Coastal and Watershed Science & Policy, Watershed Science Emphasis  
Expected Graduation Date: 05/2013

Internship: Nitrous Oxide Emissions from Aquatic Systems.

Skill Sets: Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, ArcMap, and R. Experienced with ERDAS Imagine, HEC-RAS, and HEC-HMS. Practical field experience, including operation of a variety of technical equipment. Applied laboratory skills, including good laboratory practices.

My professional interests are in natural resource conservation and water quality. When I graduate I will be seeking a position with government agencies, including the USDA. I value public service and a holistic approach that integrates multiple methodologies for addressing social and environmental issues.

USDA Agency of Interest: USFS, NRCS  
Contact Info: shession@csumb.edu

Name: Gwen Joelle Miller  
Campus: California State University Monterey Bay  
Rank: Second Year Graduate Student  
Major(s)/Degree(s): M.S. in Coastal & Watershed Science and Policy  
Expected Graduation Date: June 2014

Internship: Analyzing nitrate removal from agriculturally polluted water using the Molera Treatment Wetland.


I am interested in habitat restoration and use of treatment wetlands to improve water quality. I am particularly interested in the land/ocean interface and finding ways to reduce pollution runoff into the ocean.

USDA Agency of Interest: USFS NRCS  
Contact Info: gmiller@csumb.edu
Name: Colin Lawrence Nicol  
Campus: California State University Monterey Bay  
Rank: Third Year Grad Student  
Major(s)/Degree(s): M.S. Coastal and Watershed Science and Policy  
Expected Graduation Date: December 2012  

Internship: Steelhead habitat improvement project.


I am working to complete my Masters in Watershed Science, with hopes of moving on to a job as a hydrologist or geomorphologist.

USDA Agency of Interest: NRCS  
Contact Info: colinlnicol@gmail.com  

Name: Pauline Frances Perkins  
Campus: California State University Monterey Bay  
Rank: Second Year Graduate  
Major(s)/Degree(s): M.S.-Coastal and Watershed Science & Policy  
Expected Graduation Date: 5/2013  

Internship: Best Management Practices in a small urban watershed, Pacific Grove, CA.

Skill Sets: Experienced with computer programs such as Excel, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, ArcGIS, Stella, HEC-RAS/HMS and R Statistical Software. Stream flow monitoring (flow measurements with FlowMate, suspended sediment, and bed load) Surveying with prism and total station. Data management and organization Environmental education Certified intermediate mapping and GIS coursework by Trimble. Professional background in various outdoor skills (orienteering, canoeing, fishing, firearm safety, etc.).

My career objective is to understand human impacts well enough to assess and improve conditions in impaired watersheds, while sharing knowledge gained with the surrounding community.

USDA Agency of Interest: NRCS, USFS  
Contact Info: pfperkin@gmail.com
Name: Kirk Matthew Post  
Campus: California State University Monterey Bay  
Rank: Second year graduate student  
Major(s)/Degree(s): M.S. in Coastal and Watershed Science and Policy; Undergraduate: Environmental Science and Policy (CSU Long Beach)  
Minor: Geology  
Expected Graduation Date: 05/18/2013  

Internship: Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA).  


I am currently pursuing a career in agriculture related applied sciences including irrigation management, groundwater contamination and biophysical modeling.  

USDA Agency of Interest: USFS  
Contact Info: kpost@csumb.edu  

Name: Julianne Rhodes  
Campus: California State University Monterey Bay  
Rank: Coastal and Watershed Science and Policy Masters Candidate  
Major(s)/Degree(s): M.S. in Coastal and Watershed  B.S. Geology San Diego State University, 1987  
Minor: German  
Expected Graduation Date: May 2014  

Internship: Carmel River Lagoon Water Quality Monitoring - Water Resources Assistant.  

Skill Sets: Experienced in obtaining water quality depth profiles via YSI meter and Hydrolab, measuring flow via a Sontek flowtracker, collecting grab samples and performing laboratory analyses, and for producing monthly reports with graphics and a qualitative summary to be released to stakeholders.  

My goal in pursuing a career with the USDA is to facilitate a two-way connection between science and policy.  

USDA Agency of Interest: FS & NRCS  
Contact Info: jrhodes@csumb.edu
Name:  **Amber Lee Schat**  
Campus:  California State University Monterey Bay  
Rank:  Graduate student  
Major(s)/Degree(s):  M.S. in Coastal and Watershed Science and Policy  
Expected Graduation Date:  06/2014  

**Internship:** The Project will refine critical conservation planning tools by defining metrics to measure and evaluate, and thereby reduce, the negative effects of storm water in a specific watershed.

**Skill Sets:** I have working knowledge of GIS, and GPS hardware and software, statistical computing and analysis in R, Excel, JEdit, and Komodo, and basic wet chemistry constituent sampling methods and processing skills. I am also comfortable analyzing sediment and water chemistry data and writing technical reports. I have strong verbal and written communication skills and pride myself on my ability to connect with people of different backgrounds and opinions.

**USDA Agency of Interest:** NRCS  
**Contact Info:** aschat@csumb.edu

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Name:  **Aimee Elizabeth Teaby**  
Campus:  California State University Monterey Bay  
Rank:  First year graduate  
Major(s)/Degree(s):  M.S.-Watershed Science and Policy  
Expected Graduation Date:  06/2014  

**Internship:** Using the NASA-CASA ecosystem model coupled with a hydrologic routing algorithm called HYDRA to support water management decision-making within Yosemite National Park.

**Skill Sets:** Hydrological and climate data processing and analysis; GIS; GPS (Garmin, Trimble, RTK); Microsoft Word & Excel; R (programming language); hydrological field equipment; maintenance of stream gages and weather stations; water quality sampling and processing; survey equipment (total station, level).

I would like to be a part of a cohesive and eclectic resource-based think tank focused on improving water resource management through innovative and sustainable methods.

**USDA Agency of Interest:** NRCS  
**Contact Info:** ateaby@csumb.edu
Name: John Urness
Campus: California State University Monterey Bay
Rank: First Year Graduate Student
Major(s)/Degree(s): M.S. in Coastal and Watershed Science and Policy B.A. Environmental Studies
Minor: Certificate in Energy Management and Design
Expected Graduation Date: 6/2014

Internship: Calfire Preplanning GIS Mapping Project.

Skill Sets: Computer related: R and Python programming, GIS. Advanced information technology experience including server virtualization and network design and configuration.

I am looking for long term employment with the forest service in the area of watershed management.

USDA Agency of Interest: USFS Contact Info: jurnes@gmail.com

California State University Graduate Students
Ecology and Sustainability

Name: Felicia Christina De La Torre
Campus: California State University, Stanislaus
Rank: Second Year Grad
Major(s)/Degree(s): M.S. in Ecology and Sustainability
Expected Graduation Date: 12/2013

Internship: Biodiversity, Abundance, and Breeding Success of Amphibians in San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties, California.

Skill Sets: GPS skills, fieldwork techniques and handling experience with some animals, Computer skills - webpage design, Some Java and HTML experience, GIS using ARCView, Microsoft programs (e.g. Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Access, and Publisher), Statistics Programs (e.g. PC-Ord, EcoMeth, Piface).

After I graduate with my Masters in Ecology and Sustainability, I hope to gain a career in which I will be able to work hands on with animals and contribute to research in areas within the United States that have gaps in data.

USDA Agency of Interest: USFS Contact Info: fdelatorre@csustan.edu
California State University Graduate Students ________________________________

Engineering

Name:  

Jaideep Chowdhury (no photo)
Campus:  California State University FRESNO
Rank:  Second Year Grad
Major(s)/Degree(s):  M.S. in Electrical Engineering
Expected Graduation Date:  05/2013

Internship:  USDA Water Management Internship Program.

Skill Sets:  MS Office, Programming Skills, Soil Testing Labs

USDA Agency of Interest:
Contact Info:  Jaideep10@mail.fresnostate.edu

California State University Graduate Students ________________________________

Environmental Science

Name:  

Sk Asad Al Mamun
Campus:  California State University LA
Rank:  Second year grad
Major(s)/Degree(s):  M.S-Environmental Science (Engineering Option)
Expected Graduation Date:  10/2013

Internship:  "Lower Santa Ana River Restoration with Enhanced Water Quality".

Skill Sets:  Laboratory analysis of water quality; ArcInfo; HEC-RAS simulation Model for surface water analysis; GMS for Ground water Analysis; Microsoft Office.

I want to devote myself in fresh water research. My hobby is traveling.

USDA Agency of Interest:  USFS
Contact Info:  asad_es@yahoo.com.com
Name: Shane Donovan Keefauver
Campus: California State University of Monterey Bay
Rank: 2nd year graduate student
Major(s)/Degree(s): M.S. in Environmental Science
Expected Graduation Date: 05/2013

Internship: Carmel River Lagoon Water Augmentation Project.

Skill Sets: GIS, modeling, proficient using Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, experience using survey equipment, data entry, remote sensing, and I type 84 words per minute.

I aspire to have a successful career in water quality management and/or GIS related fields.

USDA Agency of Interest: USFS, NRCS, and RMA
Contact Info: skeefauv@gmail.com

California State University Graduate Students
Geographic Information Systems/Geography

Name: Christopher Michael Diaz (no photo)
Campus: California State University, Northridge
Rank: First year Graduate Program
Major(s)/Degree(s): Geographic Information Systems/Geography A.A. in Geography, B.A. in Geography
Minor: Geographic Information Systems
Expected Graduation Date: 05/2014

Internship: Southern California Coastal Wetlands Research Project.

Skill Sets: Developed advanced skills in digitizing and the application of topology. Edited and error checked stream drainage networks for wetlands mapping project. Learned to delineate wetlands using the US Fish and Wildlife Service protocols. Developed skills in aerial photo interpretation. Applied database management protocol to newly created datasets. Performed basic editing tasks on ArcGIS databases.

USDA Agency of Interest: NRCS
Contact Info: Christopher.diaz.492@my.csun.edu
Name:  **Raymond Mark Lee**  
Campus:  San Diego State University  
Rank:  Second year M.S. student  
Major(s)/Degree(s):  M.S.-Geography, with a concentration in Watershed Science (hold B.S.-Managerial Economics, with a concentration in Environmental and Resource Economics; B.A. in Philosophy)  
Expected Graduation Date:  05/2013  

**Internship:**  Thermal dynamics in a chronically eutrophied drinking water reservoir.  

**Skill Sets:**  Computer programming using R, SAS and MS Excel; hydrological modeling, remote sensing analyses and map digitizing using CE-QUAL-W2, BASINS, ERDAS, ENVI and ArcGIS; field skills, such as land surveying, stream channel surveying and storm water sampling.  

My research objective is to contribute new insights to the cycling of nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, in terrestrial ecosystems as they are affected by human activities like motor vehicle usage, land management and climate warming.  

**USDA Agency of Interest:**  NRCS  
**Contact Info:**  ramalee420@gmail.com  

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California State University Graduate Students  
**Industrial Technology**  

| Name:  **My Viet Dang**  
Campus:  California State University Fresno  
Rank:  Second-year Graduate  
Major(s)/Degree(s):  Industrial Technology Master of Science  
Expected Graduation Date:  12/2012  |
|---|---|---|---|

**Internship:**  Automation of Micro-met systems to evaluate crop evapotranspiration: To fully automate micro-met stations measuring Evaporation and Transpiration (ET) by implementing techniques that will automatically post process ET data.  

**Skill Sets:**  Troubleshooting industrial electronic systems, managing Data Acquisition Systems, Visual Basic programming, Data collection, and Statistical analysis.  

**USDA Agency of Interest:**  ARS FS NRCS  
**Contact Info:**  mvdang@mail.fresnostate.edu  

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HSI Collaboration Graduate Student Yearbook
Name: Tiernan Zane Doyle
Campus: California State Polytechnic University Pomona
Rank: Third year graduate student
Major(s)/Degree(s): M.A. Landscape Architecture, M.A. Conservation Zoology, M.A. Classics, B.A. Classics
Expected Graduation Date: 06/2013

Internship: Watershed Management Intern for the US Forest Service.

Skill Sets: GIS, AutoCAD, 3D Studio Max, Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office

I am incredibly passionate about optimizing watershed health through conserving ecological networks and restoring hydrologic processes.

USDA Agency of Interest: USFA Contact Info: tiernan.doyle@gmail.com
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