

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

RIVER BASIN CENTER



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA
River Basin Center

8 new
faculty
members

95 total
faculty
members

Across
23
UGA units

\$8.15M in active grants

with **57** RBC-affiliated grants and contracts



Red eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*) by
Gabriel Stephenson

2022 by the numbers

This year we welcomed

Sechindra Vallury, Director of Policy

Social scientist Sechindra Vallury earned a doctoral degree with a focus on water institutions and policy from Arizona State University's School of Sustainability in 2019. Since then, Vallury has published on water and land resource management, mostly in southern India and the western U.S., as a postdoctoral associate at Duke University and more recently at the W.A. Franke College of Forestry & Conservation at University of Montana. Vallury stepped into the Director of Policy role in August.

Cheryth Youngmann, Communications Coordinator

Youngmann earned her bachelor's in English Writing Arts, English Literature, and Professional Writing from SUNY Plattsburgh. She worked for Vermont News & Media as community news editor and general assignment reporter before joining the River Basin Center and Odum School of Ecology in May of 2022.

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2022 John Spencer Fellow: Jasmine Longmire



Provided photo

Longmire, who is pursuing a MS in Integrative Conservation and Sustainability, plans to work in freshwater conservation science, addressing current and past ecological injustices.

The John Spencer Fellowship fund honors the legacy of John Kyle Spencer, a master's student at the Odum School of Ecology who passed away in 2016. The fellowship was first established through the generosity of his friends and family.

2022 James E. Butler Fellow: Carleisha Hanns



Provided photo

Hanns, who comes to UGA from The Nature Conservancy, is pursuing a MS degree in Integrative Conservation and Sustainability with a focus on the aquatic invertebrates of the Conasauga River.

Columbus attorney James E. Butler, Jr. established the Butler Fellowships with a \$1 million gift to the Institute of Ecology in 2006. A lifetime of experiences beginning with a love of fishing in Georgia's rivers instilled in James Butler a deep regard for the environment.

The Okefenokee Rollout

Image by Sallie Gentry

In 2022 the River Basin Center launched an online resource on North America's largest intact blackwater wetland, the Okefenokee Swamp. The project, led by affiliate Rhett Jackson with contributions from affiliate Charles Van Rees and experts around the state, was initiated in response to a proposed mining operation that would occur adjacent to the swamp. The web site includes sections on Natural History, Human History, Conservation, and Frequently Asked Questions, serving as a living resource for the public to learn more about one of Georgia's natural wonders.

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John Spencer Research Grant Recipients

These grants were inaugurated in 2016 with a generous donation from Kathleen Amos, John Spencer's mother. Ongoing support for the annual awards comes from donations.



Provided photo

Ali Moss, a master's student at the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, was awarded partial funding for her research, which investigates the impact of prescribed fire on soil carbon cycling.

Laura Naslund's winning proposal was on greenhouse gas emissions from small impoundments. Naslund, who is pursuing her PhD at the Odum School of Ecology, hopes to apply her findings to the management of aging dams while aligning infrastructure and climate goals.

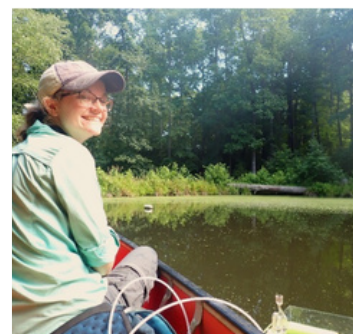


Photo by Olivia Allen



Provided photo

Cydney Seigerman, the first two-time recipient of the grant, is a PhD candidate in Anthropology and Integrative Conservation (ICON.) Their research proposal focused on water insecurities in the semi-arid region of Sertão Central, Ceará, Brazil.

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Year highlights

The Research Slam



The River Basin Center partnered with The Office of Sustainability and the Georgia Initiative for Climate and Society to host the Climate and Water Research Slam on May 12, 2022 at the Delta Innovation Hub.

Twenty-two speakers—including lawyers, engineers, ecologists and social scientists—from organizations across the University of Georgia campus gathered to present lightning presentations in their areas of expertise. The event featured talks from students and faculty alike.

Presenters distilled years of research into bite-sized pieces: talks lasted five minutes, with time for a handful of questions after each. Topics ranged widely, from melting Antarctic ice sheets to economics and irrigation, to hydrosocial concerns, to the impact of policy on Georgian wetland.

The Policy Symposium & Celebration

From Sept. 16 to 17, over 100 people gathered in person and online to hear from experts in water policy, to celebrate the career of Laurie Fowler—former River Basin Center director of policy—and to brainstorm the future of UGA's Environmental Practicum. Na'Taki Osborne Jelks of Spelman College, Linda Mendez-Barrientos of the University of Denver and Josiah Watts of One Hundred Miles shared their expertise throughout the morning on Sept. 16. Hal Robinson, Georgia-Alabama Land Trust and John Sheesley, Region 4 of the Environmental Protection Agency led an ethics- and law-focused session in the afternoon. The two-day event was co-sponsored by the Odum School of Ecology, the School of Public and International Affairs and the School of Law. View talk recordings [here](#).



Connecting freshwater science
to management and policy