



ECOLOGY PROJECT
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EPI TEACHER FELLOWSHIP

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



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2021 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



COSTA RICA FELLOW BIOGRAPHIES

JUNE 21-28, 2021



Becky Alberts

Becky lives and teaches in Washington, D.C. She grew up outside New York City in a family of politically active artists. Her summers were spent on a small island in Maine—full of art, natural beauty and entertaining individuals. She considers herself lucky; through her life she has been able to pursue the arts and sciences and has kept herself immersed in the natural world. Becky has three reptiles (who live in her classroom), four cats and two chickens (at home). If she had more space and time, she would also have a dog.



Victoria Jones

Victoria has been teaching high school science for 18 years and is currently teaching Biology, AP Biology, Entomology, and Chemistry at Ivy Academy in Chattanooga, Tennessee. She studied at the University of South Carolina Upstate and has a Bachelor of Science in Biology. She also holds an M.Ed. in Secondary Education with a concentration in life sciences, as well as an M.A.Ed. in School Leadership. Her work experiences include working as a veterinary technician, dairy farm manager, zookeeper, and property manager. Victoria has served as a STEM Fellow and a Policy Fellow through the Public Education Foundation of Chattanooga.



Jonathan Pazol

Jon has been teaching science at West Leyden High School in Northlake, Illinois for the past 30+ years. He is a true “science geek,” having engaged in research on a polar icebreaker in the Arctic Ocean, as well as in endocrinology, organic chemistry, field ecology, nanotechnology, and immunology. Since participating in the Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms Program in 2012, he has focused on incorporating global education into the science curriculum throughout the state and country through his work on the Illinois Global Scholar Certificate. He has a bachelor’s degree in biology from Northwestern University and masters’ degrees in environmental studies from Bard College and educational administration from Northeastern Illinois University. He and his wife Naomi live in Northbrook and have two college-age children and a variety of pets.



Rajammah L. Bhandari

Raja has been an educator in Tennessee and Georgia public schools for over 19 years. She is certified in Biology (7-12) and Exceptional Ed. Gifted/Talented (K-12). She has taught a variety of courses during her tenure, including honors reading, honors psychology, scientific research, middle school life science and physical science, biology, ecology, environmental science, and anatomy & physiology. She is currently serving as a high school college/career counselor and STEM Director at Ivy Academy Charter School in Chattanooga, Tennessee, while also adjunct teaching at Chattanooga State Community College. Raja formerly served active duty in Space Operations in the USAF.

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Patricia Brunet

Patty has taught chemistry, biology, and physical science for over 30 years. At Cypress High School in Southern California, she teaches all levels of chemistry from AP to Collaboration Chemistry. She is passionate about science literacy for all students and really enjoys interacting with students at different levels on a daily basis. Patty enjoys learning new ways of integrating curriculum for her classes by attending amazing professional development all over the world. When she is not teaching, she enjoys playing with her Great Danes, gardening, and crafting.



Nichole Werbin

Nichole is an avid book lover who majored in biology & chemistry at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. She now has the fortunate pleasure of imparting the JOY of science to teenagers as a science teacher. Nichole currently teaches Physical Science, Biology, and Anatomy & Physiology in high school, and has also taught Chemistry, Health, and ACT Prep. She coaches Scholars' Bowl and coordinates various school events throughout the year. She happily shares her home with her three fur babies—greyhound Kale, and two cats, Roz & Deo.



Savannah Hollis

Savannah is an AP Environmental Science teacher and sponsor of the STEAM program at the Allen ISD STEAM Center in Allen, Texas. Originally from Louisiana, she moved to Texas and began teaching AP Biology and Anatomy & Physiology in 2012. She appreciates the importance of making content relevant by connecting academic material to real world applications. She believes that it is crucial that students are equipped with the knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary to serve as environmental stewards and contribute as global citizens. She recently completed her M.A. in Educational Leadership and began the Johns Hopkins' Mind, Brain, Teaching graduate program this past fall. She looks forward to this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and sharing what she has learned with her students.



Sherie Lo Giudice

Sherie is a high school teacher at Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory in San Francisco, California. She teaches AP Biology and Marine Biology, is the Associate Director of Community Life, and coaches cross-country as well as track and field. She is passionate about running, loves to cook Italian food, and travels whenever she gets the opportunity. She loves immersing herself in new cultures and learning new languages. She speaks English, Spanish, and is currently learning French.



Becca Carson

Becca lives in Missoula, Montana where she teaches Introductory Creative Writing at Big Sky High School and leads their Aerie Magazine Program, which publishes two student-produced, literary arts magazines annually. She believes in offering an interdisciplinary education rooted in inquiry-driven, experiential learning, and she believes writing-intensive programs foster empathy and connection. In the face of climate change, Becca looks forward to building upon her strengths as a poetry teacher to help students become environmentally literate beyond simply writing nature poems. She is excited to learn more about the environment by getting her hands dirty alongside scientists and engage students in some of the same questions, practices, and reflections.



John Drew Groves

John is a science teacher from New Hampshire. As an environmentalist, former soil scientist, and amateur photographer, Groves has been exploring the natural world for many years. He has further pursued his interest in conservation by serving at the local, state, and national levels. Additionally, Groves has guided several student groups through international, ecology-based, extended learning opportunities, and local New Hampshire outdoor adventures. He believes that engaging learners in experiential, discovery-based learning activities will enhance student curiosity, creativity, and innovation and will create a better understanding of the balance needed in a changing planet.

EPI TEACHER FELLOWSHIPS

2021 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



YELLOWSTONE FELLOW BIOGRAPHIES

JUNE 26 - JULY 3, 2021



Robin Shemesh

Robin Shemesh was born in Brooklyn, New York, raised on suburban Long Island, and currently resides in Newtown, Pennsylvania with her family. A 20-year veteran science teacher at Truman High School in Levittown, Pennsylvania, Robin is involved as the March of Dimes Science Club faculty mentor, as well as the Assistant Yearbook Advisor. She received her B.A. from SUNY Albany and her M.Ed. from LaSalle University. Robin is a workshop enthusiast and proud participant in the Franklin Institute Master Educator program, as well as Penn State's Astrophysics/ NASA courses. In her spare time, Robin likes to travel, read, and eat chocolate.



Hallie Eichen

Hallie Eichen is a fifth-year science teacher in Washington, D.C. Her undergraduate degree was in Chemistry from the University of Houston and she has an M.Ed. in STEM education. Before moving to D.C., Hallie served as a team lead and science teacher in Houston, Texas. She currently teaches Honors Biology and Honors Chemistry at Woodrow Wilson High School. She is a PADI dive master and in her free time can usually be found doing yoga or reading.



Monro Obenauer

Monro is a second-year biology teacher at Mesa High School in Arizona. Prior to teaching biology, she taught outdoor education to elementary and middle-school students in California. She believes that experiential learning is the best way for students to make lasting connections to content and become lifelong learners. She is currently halfway through her master's degree in secondary education. She is excited to participate in the fellowship to continue improving as a teacher so that she can provide a quality education for her students.



Catie Mino

Catie is a science teacher at the Marlborough School in Los Angeles, California. Originally from the Catskill Mountains in New York, she recently moved to the West Coast. Catie has been teaching high school science for the past eight years. Prior to starting her career in teaching, she worked as a geologist at an environmental consulting firm. She loves to be outdoors and participate in fieldwork.

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Kathy Hockman

Originally from Vermont and Maine, Kathy has been an educator for several decades in a wide variety of settings—public, private, informal, and primitive outdoor sites with the goal to always learn more and share it! She currently teaches AP Environmental Science and Earth-Space Science at Middleton High School in Tampa, Florida. She has traveled extensively for the love of adventure—including leading a student trip to Costa Rica. Kathy is a Registered Maine Guide and Wilderness First Responder with years of outdoor experience hiking, camping, paddling, and other outdoor fun, all geared toward appreciation of Mother Earth.



Lyanne Abreu

Lyanne is the Environmental Academy Lead Teacher at TERRA Environmental Research Institute in Miami, Florida and a National Geographic Grosvenor Teacher Fellow. With a degree in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, she strives to impart her fondness for wild spaces through exploration. She engages students by taking them outside, giving them a greater level of connectivity with the planet while empowering them to become active environmental stewards. Whether taking students kayaking through the mangroves or learning about coral reef restoration, she encourages them to question the world while assimilating data to gain honest answers.



Jerry Citron

Jerry Citron is a biology teacher at Stuyvesant High School in New York City where he currently teaches biology and AP environmental science as well as two biology electives he designed himself; Human Infectious Diseases and Pathophysiology. Jerry strives to provide his students with a variety of problem-solving skills using hands-on approaches that they can apply to the different science disciplines and in their lives in general. He is an avid biker and fix-it upper who loves to teach the virtues of environmental stewardship.



Jordan Dischinger-Smedes

Jordan is a human anatomy and environmental science teacher originally from Holland, Michigan and now teaches in nearby Grand Rapids. He is passionate about bringing field research opportunities to his students and helping them live more sustainably. When he is not lesson planning or grading, he enjoys cooking plant-based meals, reading, biking, playing basketball, and hiking or paddling through America's great landscapes. However, he is a teacher, so he does not do any of these things without a cup (or two) of coffee first; find him in the morning if you want a fresh pour-over, even on the trail.

INTERESTED IN STUDENT GROUP TRAVEL WITH EPI?

Once you've identified the program(s) that interest you for 2022 or beyond, here's what our process looks like:

Get in Touch

We're always happy to help answer your questions and provide additional information.

Select Dates

Your EPI contact will help you choose the right time to travel, depending on your school schedule and our field site availability.

Spread the Word

Share the opportunity with your students. We have posters, videos, pre-departure lesson plans, and many other outreach materials available, and we can provide suggestions for after-school and parent meetings. Enrollment is easy through our website, and if six or more of your students enroll before our June 15th deadline, group scholarship funds are available to first-time schools.

A GAP YEAR IN COSTA RICA

For students seeking an extended connection to conservation and field-based work, we're excited to share the Costa Rica Gap Year program. EPI's Gap Year Program is designed to facilitate an exploratory and holistic approach to science and sustainability. By working directly with researchers, protecting wildlife, and conducting meaningful service work, Gap Year participants learn what captivates and inspires them to want to contribute to the world. The opportunity to extend their stay as a Research & Conservation Intern will allow them to build on those experiences and emerge prepared for any future. Join us for a journey of self discovery and open the door to future opportunities in the conservation field.

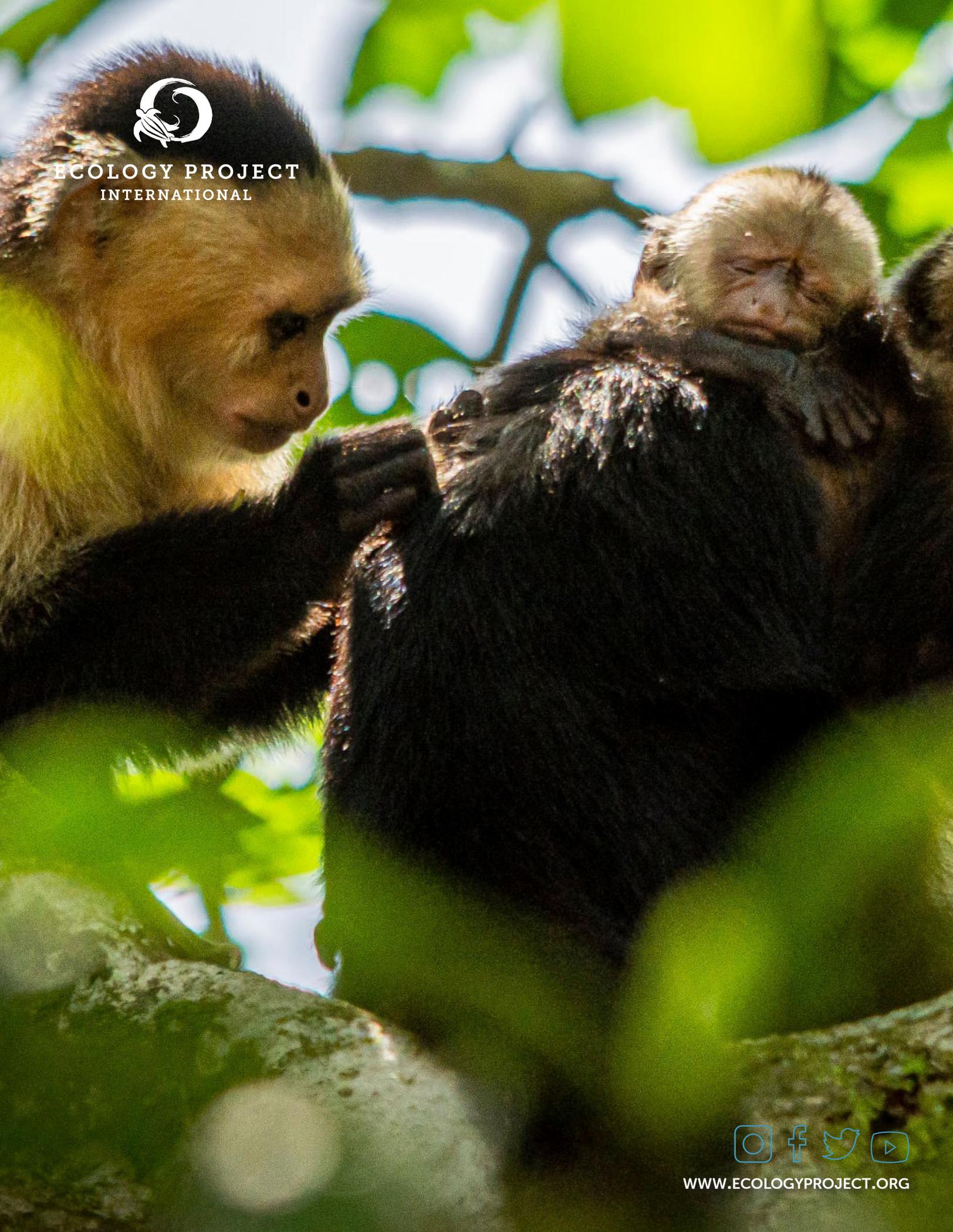
Open to graduating seniors or college students.

www.ecologyproject.org/costa-rica-gap-year





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