

EXPERIENCE SUMMARY NARRATIVE
2018 ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA'S 103rd ANNUAL MEETING
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From August 4th through August 9th, 2018, I attended the Ecological Society of America's (ESA) 103rd annual meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. This year's ESA conference was entitled extreme events, ecosystem resilience, and human well-being. Each year ESA holds one of the largest ecological conferences in the world and it includes ecologists and students from all over including China, India, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, United States, etc. This year's meeting included plenary sessions, symposia, organized oral sessions, organized poster sessions, contributed oral sessions, workshops, inspire talks, etc. Some of the major topics covered were: Agriculture, Aquatic Ecology, Behavior, Biodiversity, Biogeochemistry, Biological Control, Climate Change, Community Disturbance and Recovery, Competition, Conservation Management, Detritus and Decomposition, Ecosystem Function, Dispersal, Disease and Epidemiology, Ecosystem Management, Ecosystem Services Assessment, Environmental Gradients, Estuarine, Evolution, Food Webs, Invasion: Dynamics and Population Processes, Microbial Ecology, Modeling, Paleoecology, Physiological Ecology, Pollination, Predation and Predator Prey Interactions, Soil Ecology, Wetlands, etc.

Most of the sessions I attended were organized oral sessions, organized poster sessions, contributed oral sessions, inspire talks, and workshops that focused on research that was applicable to BIO202 (Ecology) and BIO127 (Biology of Environmental Concerns). Besides the amazing sessions attended I also participated by being a presider over an afternoon organized oral session and by being a judge again (Buell student award).

Just to mention two of my favorite sessions:

- 1) Workshop on Backward design in the ecological sciences by Nathan Emery (Post Doc. Michigan State) – In this workshop we were able to learn about backward design (1. Identify desired results, 2. Determine assessment evidence, 3. Plan learning experiences and instruction). There was a quick introduction into backward design then we did a gallery walk exercise and lastly broke up into pods. These pods we then worked with for the rest of the session. We then used my ecology course in my pod to implement backward design. This was an amazing workshop that really got me thinking of how I can design or alter my courses using this method.
- 2) Inspire session on the National Park Service; contributed session; presider: Tim Watkins of NPS Washington DC – In this session we explored the importance of national park research and civic engagement. We were exposed to five presenters that had all very different experiences working with the public and conducting their research. I found this session very useful due to my current and continued participation in Civic engagement fellowship and the Yellowstone Project. A big take home message I hope to share with

my Yellowstone peers is “story telling”. That was a major theme in the session. Each presenters talked, yes, about the importance of the research but that peoples minds and hearts are open when they are visiting a park and that storytelling is where we can make big impacts and changes.

Overall the ESA conference was a great professional development experience. It provided me with many new ideas and examples. The knowledge I gained over the past week was incredible. I have brushed up on many skills and techniques while learning about new research around the world. My hopes are to introduce new skills/techniques and acquired knowledge in the classroom and field. I hope to continue to attend this conference annually to further my professional development.