

Media Relations

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UNH Graduate Student Receives Switzer Environmental Fellowship



Caption: Jessica Veysey, a student in the University of New Hampshire's natural resources and Earth system science Ph.D. program, received the Switzer Environmental Fellowship. Credit: Courtesy of Jessica Veysey.

DURHAM, N.H. – University of New Hampshire graduate student Jessica Veysey has received the [Switzer Environmental Fellowship](#), a program of the Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation that recognizes the achievements of environmental leaders and their potential to drive positive change.

Vesey, from Pepperell, Mass. and Newmarket, is a doctoral candidate in the natural resources and Earth system science Ph.D. program. She was one of 22 scholars nationwide to receive the fellowship, which awards \$15,000 each to complete masters and doctoral degrees to advance their skills and develop their expertise to address critical environmental challenges.

[Veysey's research](#) uses wildlife ecology and social science techniques to produce holistic datasets that express the systematic interactions between wildlife, humans, and the policies

governing both. For her doctoral research, under advisor [Kim Babbitt](#), professor of natural resources and associate dean of academic affairs in the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture, she is engaged in two complementary, cutting-edge projects designed to identify the factors fueling wetland loss and wetland-policy effectiveness in New England.

“As part of my research, I am comparing how towns in New Hampshire and Massachusetts balance construction and development with wetland protection. For this work, I need to travel to the towns to collect public records and interview key stakeholders. I will use some of the fellowship funds to cover travel costs to the towns,” Veysey says.

In collaboration with Babbitt, Veysey also uses a large-scale ecological experiment to test how forested buffers of different widths impact the population viability of two wetland-dependent amphibian species native to the eastern United States. She will use the results from both projects to help municipalities and management institutions formulate wetland policies that better balance resource development and the biological needs of wetland communities.

Veysey has been working to increase the ecological literacy and decision-making capacity of local communities for nearly 15 years, first as an environmental consultant and, more recently, leading conservation initiatives as a researcher for UNH Cooperative Extension and as a volunteer at the state and local levels. She holds a master's in wildlife ecology from UNH and a bachelor's. with high honors in biology from Dartmouth College.

While she's grateful for the financial assistance provided by the Switzer Fellowship, Veysey says the connections she's made with current and past fellows, all environmental leaders, is perhaps more valuable.

“Being part of this network connects me to many talented and inspirational people. I hope to draw upon this network to build collaborative career ties and to improve my own capacity as an environmental leader,” she says. “Even this early in my award year, it is clear that the Switzer Foundation is committed to nurturing its

fellows so that it can contribute to its broader goals of environmental problem-solving, conservation, and justice. I am thrilled to be part of this community.”

The [Robert and Patricia Switzer Foundation](#) is a results-driven family foundation that invests in individuals and organizations that drive positive environmental change. Founded in 1986 the foundation is a grant-making organization that mobilizes leaders from diverse disciplines who focus on integrated solutions to environmental problems. More than 13 million dollars has been given through the Switzer Environmental Fellowship Program and related grants, the foundation supports a network of over 500 Fellows who are leaders in nonprofit, public policy, business, academic and government sectors working to solve today’s environmental challenges.

The [University of New Hampshire](#), founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

Photograph available to download:

http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2013/09/images/veysey-jessica_profile-photo-3-9170.png

Caption: Jessica Veysey, a student in the University of New Hampshire’s natural resources and Earth system science Ph.D. program, received the Switzer Environmental Fellowship.

Credit: Courtesy of Jessica Veysey.

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