



An ecologist studies the dynamics and interactions between the environment and its organisms. I conduct research on tropical forests, watersheds, and streams.

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Important Scientist Characteristics

- ★ Being curious.
- ★ Thinking from different perspectives

Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer: Is rainfall changed or affected by the forest canopy that the rain falls through before it reaches the forest floor? If so, how?

Technology or equipment used in research:

For the fieldwork sampling shrimp population dynamics, we use minnow traps and boxed mesh traps. These are tied to tree trunks out of the stream, in the riparian zone. We place the traps in pools deep enough to cover the whole trap and let water flow through.

: Most Exciting Discovery

- It was great to see how resilient some forests can be to natural disturbances such as hurricanes.
- Under natural conditions, recovery of tree biomass can happen in as quickly as 5 years. This is because tree species composition changes after the hurricane, with more trees that do well in the new environmental conditions.

- **When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?** As a volunteer at El Verde Field Station, I met researchers working in various areas of ecology (plants, fungi, bats, insects). Talking to the researchers showed me that I could also do this work.

<https://www.fs.fed.us/research/people/profile.php?alias=theartsill>