

Q&A

- How do you balance life/take care of your emotional health while dedicating your life to your passion? <3
 - Balancing self-care is CRUCIAL to keep the fire burning. Hence why I'm in Costa Rica right now as traveling abroad is one way I feed my soul. As well, doing what I love for work also helps keep me going strong. Finally, I make sure to create space for my needs such as going for meditational jogs during lunch breaks and practicing yoga before bed. I am also a certified yoga instructor so that is another way to help me remember self care. Take home message is to PLAN FOR YOU TIME! Soaking in a bath, going on a road trip, trying new things during your time off to keep your mind engaged, etc... - Sarah
 - Having connections with family and friends, and people you can decompress with is great. It's also great to hang out with people who aren't so tied to fire (my profession), just to talk about normal everyday things like Netflix. Making sure that you're taking care of your mental health is crucial. - Hannah
- What's your quick take on climate change? Like what do you think will be a big thing that will make people take action? For both
 - Quick take on it, it's overwhelming and daunting but finding areas that call out to you to dig in, do it and make a difference and contribute how YOU can. I know I easily become overwhelmed when I look at CC from a global standpoint so it's best to narrow in on what you can do locally and grow/go from there. What will make people take action... hmmm I would've assumed catastrophic wildfires every year, severe droughts, and intense weather patterns around the world but alas... I see the change that we need happening and innovations being developed to help battle the impacts of CC. I'm keeping the faith! - Sarah
 - From a fire perspective, over the past 10 years, we've all experienced harsh fires in California and sometimes in traumatic and devastating days. Seeing a community come together to take action in their own backyards is definitely motivating, and a big part of that is building community and building trust, and building a healthier relation with fire to build resilience to wildfires and to use it in stewardship in the land. When we work together, we can achieve really great results and put our best foot forward - hannah
- I just graduated in Dec. The last 2 years were on zoom and most of the projects we did were not hands-on. I wasn't able to get an internship while I was in school and I am now applying to entry level jobs and internships that take recent grads. How do I make myself hireable with such limited experience?
 - First off, my heart goes out to you. I've often felt for those wrapping up school during the pandemic and the impacts that come along with it. I'd like to think (and hope) that employers will keep that in mind when hiring as you're not alone. See what online programs you can take to learn more and once Omicron settles down, there should be some hands-on opportunities coming up again. - Sarah
 - I really feel for you. I graduated in May of 2020, so my last semester of college was on Zoom. One thing I would recommend is take a look at the work you did on Zoom, and if you see opportunities to expand on those experiences/skills, feel

free to do that. I would encourage you to just apply. DON't feel like you can't apply for something just because you can't check every single box all the way. Just put yourself out there and you might be surprised. Coming to interviews prepared is also really crucial. Make sure you do your research!- Hannah

- Sarah Phillips, what was your experience at Sonoma State and why are you glad you chose this college over others. Did the environment feel too competitive and overwhelming?
 - I was moving around pretty nomadically in my earlier time in California, and I loved Sonoma County. It felt like home more than anywhere else. Specifically, when I saw that they had an environmental science and planning program with a focus on restoration, I knew I would be getting a more hands-on learning experience. - Sarah
- For both - do you guys see a lot of overlap between environmental fields? I am interested in marine sciences but am worried that I will get “stuck” there and won't be able to explore anything else once I get my degree
 - Personally, I would be happy to be stuck in this field. There's so much to learn and so many different ways to contribute to different communities. I look forward to where my career can grow. The fire field is pretty small, but it's a great close-knit community. - Hannah
 - For the marine sciences, the ocean is vast! There are lots of internships, opportunities and ways to go in different directions. Personally, I'm really stoked about doing watershed work. - Sarah
- Did any of your jobs include input from Native Americans/ awareness of Indigenous practices?
 - Yes, absolutely. It's important to acknowledge that fire is a tool that has been used by indigenous people, and Audubon Canyon is working on strengthening relationships with local tribes to ensure that indigenous people's involvement at the table is crucial - Hannah
 - Yes, but it is interchangeable mainly because of various jobs depending on which indigenous people I'm working with. There were ceremonies called “calling back the Salmon”, which was a really touching ceremony to be a part of. In Marin, we are also working with public money and grant money, and we're required by the state to be consulting with local tribes. We like to go above and beyond what's just required and meet with the tribes and work with them and be cultural monitors and hear their feedback and collaborate on different projects. - Sarah
- To Hannah, you said that you changed your major from Environmental Science to Forestry correct? If so, is it difficult to change majors from one environmental type degree to another?
 - In terms of majors, a lot of the coursework has a lot of overlap. There's a base foundation you need before you get into your specialization. By having GIS skills, it's a really broad field that is applicable in a lot of fields. Skills like GIS allowed me to transfer to a lot of different careers because of its flexibility. It can be a little difficult to figure out what you want to study, but I would say talk to folks who are

further along in their course pathways and talk to your school counselors for advice. - Hannah

- Given how both of you mentioned that your careers involve work behind a computer (as well as work on the field) would you encourage people pursuing careers in Environmental Science or Environmental Studies to study programming or scripting languages like R, Python, or JavaScript?
 - I don't know much about tech, but there's definitely a niche to be filled there. If you can handle sitting at the screen for so long, the pay is great, and the benefits too! - Sarah
 - R is the language of the natural resources world, so I would say focus on that. It's also an open source software, so if you're interested in programming, I would say download it. You can also find a lot of online Youtube tutorials and start seeing what you can do. If you're going into GIS, programming is helpful, but not crucial. Having some understanding of python could help you troubleshoot some things if you're getting really into the nitty gritty. GIS is definitely a highly-demanded skill so it could be beneficial! - Hannah
- Sarah, something I've been curious about for a while is if any of these small streams in contra costa and marin that flow out to the bay used to anadromous salmonid runs?
 - Anadromous means the ability of a fish to transition between freshwater and saltwater. Steelhead trout can actually go back and forth. To answer the question, yes. They still have anadromous fish going through there and those streams still support those populations. Marin still has these species; Steelhead, chinook salmon - Sarah
- Hannah, what is covered in forestry? I'm thinking about studying it and am curious what will be covered
 - Forestry is a really wide field, and I would say that you jith want to look at the courses that are offered at the school you're at right now. A lot of schools have different tracks in forestry. Some have to do more with timber harvest and timber production, and some deal with ecological forestry, some with fire sciences, etc. There's also a lot of different types of forests. There is components of forestry across all forestry majors: learning about different plant species, and how things grow, etc. But the other things like prescribed fires are almost like different concentrations within forestry majors. - hannah
- Would you encourage us (or think it is necessary) to pursue a Master's or Phd in environmental science or studies?
 - So many times, I've had moments where I have wanted to go to grad school, but something always happens, like moving or getting my dream job, or something else. If you're looking to be a professor or researcher, go pursue grad school. A master's degree is great. If you really know what you want to be doing, keep going to get your masters and go from there. But, not having a masters degree has never kept me from getting any of the jobs I've wanted. - Sarah
 - I agree with Sarah. If you know you want to be in the research world and really enjoy academia, I think a phD is pretty crucial to staying in that environment and world. I do know a lot of people who got a masters degree, and a lot of the jobs I

see are masters requiring or strongly preferred. Personally, I felt like I wanted some job experience after graduating before I went back to school. Some job programs do value experience over having gone to grad school right after college. I wouldn't discount the importance of having job experience, as it's important as well. - Hannah