

Abigail Needles

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Education

- Pursuing a B.S. in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at the University of Florida with a current GPA of 4.0, expected graduation April 30th, 2026.

Experience

August 2022 – Present

Undergraduate Research Assistant | University of Florida

- Assisted a PhD candidate at the Center for Environmental and Human Toxicology.
- Conducted research on brevetoxins exposure in pinfish to examine environmental implications of red tide events.
- Used biology techniques such as PCR, qPCR, DNA extraction, DNA Gel Electrophoresis, and Qubit analysis to collect sample data.
- Led a team of other undergraduates by training them in microbiome and sterile techniques and developing timelines with specific and practical goals.

August 2025 – December 2025

Natural Resource Management Intern | Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT)

- Supported native ecosystem restoration efforts by employing techniques such as prescribed fire, manual removal of hardwoods from pine habitats, and herbicide treatment of invasive species.
- Exhibited safe and effective use of power tools including chainsaws, hedge trimmers, and brush cutters.
- Collaborated with employees of other organizations to evaluate and develop management plans for properties with conservation easements.

July 2024 – August 2024

Marine Protected Area Student Intern | Sant'Anna Institute

- Monitored people and boats entering the Marine Protected Area of Ieranto Bay with attentive recordkeeping.
- Collected population data on fish in the family Blenniidae as indicators of ecosystem biodiversity.
- Demonstrated accurate and engaging communication with the public about the mission of Ieranto Bay through an information stand at the bay entrance.
- Assisted with the monitoring and protection of sea turtle hatchlings in Southern Italy by barricading nests from human disturbances and releasing hatchlings on dark, quiet beaches.

May 2023 – August 2023

Freshwater Fisheries Research Intern | Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

- Worked as a field technician for population-monitoring projects at Garcon Point Aquatic Research Center.
- Conducted electrofishing studies for community samples of freshwater ecosystems and targeting specific species such as the Bluenose Shiner.
- Harvested and tagged alligator gar and Gulf sturgeon using gill nets and acoustic telemetry tags.
- Assisted with roving creels, data entry, and composing social media posts.
- Identified and recorded native fish species using a dichotomous key.

Awards & Acknowledgements

- Biotechnician Assistant Credentialing Exam (BACE) Certified.
- Highest National BACE Score (2021).

References

- Professor of Veterinary Medicine and Laboratory PI, Dr. Christopher Martyniuk (352) 294-4636, cmartyn@ufl.edu.
- ACT Internship Supervisor, Amy Compare (772) 323-4869, amy@alachuaconservationtrust.org.
- FWC Internship Supervisor, Kallie Thornhill (252) 571-0680, kallie.thornhill@myfwc.com.