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Education

University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

Doctoral Studies in Plant & Microbial Biology, September 2013 - Present

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Bachelor of Arts with Distinction, Anthropology, December 2010

Minor in Environmental Science and Studies

Funding & Honors

- 2016-2017 **NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant**
Charles J. Brand Fellowship, Univ. of Minnesota
- 2015-2016 **Alexander & Lydia Anderson Grant**, Univ. of Minnesota
Thesis Research Travel Grant, Univ. of Minnesota
Graduate Student Research Grant, Southern California Botanists
Outstanding Performance Award for Teaching Assistants, Univ. of Minnesota
- 2014-2015 **Carolyn Crosby Grant**, Univ. of Minnesota
Dayton Natural History Grant, Univ. of Minnesota
Rosemary Grant Award, Society for the Study of Evolution
Doc Burr Grant, California Native Plant Society
- 2013-2014 **Graduate Excellence Fellowship**, CBS, Univ. of Minnesota

Publications & Presentations

Benning, JW. 2015. "Odd for an ericad: nocturnal pollination of *Lyonia lucida* (Ericaceae)." *The American Midland Naturalist*, 174(2), 204-217.

- “Biotic interactions and climate change.” Invited lecture, Carleton College. 2 November 2017.
- “Microbes, lagomorphs, and the geographic range limit of a California endemic wildflower.” Presentation, Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Evolution, Portland, OR. 27 June 2017.
- “Why do species stay still? Range limits in *Clarkia xantiana*.” Presentation, UMN Plant Biological Sciences Seminar, St. Paul, MN. 2 October 2015.

- “Trapped! A SoCal species border.” Presentation, UMN Plant Biology Seminar, St. Paul, MN. 2 September 2015.
- “Exploring the pollination ecology of a common ericad and its nocturnal visitors.” Poster, 98th Annual Meeting of the Ecological Society of America, Minneapolis, MN. 9 August 2013.

Pending Publications

Benning, JW, Geber, MA, Eckhart, VM, and Moeller, DM. “Herbivory contributes to the geographic range limit of *Clarkia xantiana* and is mediated by plant phenology” *Ecology Letters*. In review.

Bolin, LG, **Benning, JW**, and Moeller, DM. “Mycorrhizal interactions do not influence plant-herbivore interactions in populations of *Clarkia xantiana* ssp. *xantiana* spanning from center to margin of the geographic range.” *Ecology & Evolution*. In review.

Hargreaves, AL, Suárez, E, Mehltreter, K, Myers-Smith, I, Vanderplank, SE, Slinn, HL, Vargas, Y, Haeussler, S, David, S, Muñoz, J, Almazán-Núñez, RC, Loughnan, D, **Benning, JW**, Moeller, DA, Brodie, JF, Morales, PA. “Seed predation increases toward the tropics and low elevations.” *Science*. In prep.

Outreach, Service, & Professional Development

- **Market Science** - Board Member

marketsci.org

This science outreach initiative engages the public about topical science issues, promotes diversity in STEM fields, and provides interactive science activities for adults and children. Each Saturday from May through October, we work with volunteer graduate students, post-docs, faculty, and agency researchers to lead “science discovery” sessions at farmers markets, fairs, and other informal public venues around Minnesota. We cover a range of topics from entomology to geology and reach more than 4,000 visitors each year. I serve as a project lead, logistical manager, and volunteer coordinator, and am a founding board member.

- **Minnesota Science Olympiad** - Judge (Spring, 2014-2016)

I helped design and judge an Olympiad event that engages young students in the use of chemistry and biology by using these tools to solve a “murder mystery” in this statewide event.

- **Reviewer for:** *Northeastern Naturalist*; *Journal of the Torrey Botanical Society*; *Ecology & Evolution*; *Journal of Tropical Ecology*

- **Society Memberships:** *American Society of Naturalists*; *Society of the Study of Evolution*; *Ecological Society of America*