



Research Abstract

Ryleigh's work focuses on elucidating the effects of landscape context on native bee communities and populations. Specifically, her research focuses on how ecological disturbance, including wildfire and forest management methods, influences native bee community composition, plant-pollinator networks, and bee population dynamics across forested landscapes of the Front Range of Colorado.

Biography

Ryleigh Gelles is a Ph.D. candidate in the Graduate Degree Program in Ecology and Department of Forest & Rangeland Stewardship at Colorado State University. Born and raised in Colorado, Ryleigh's curiosity for ecology was sparked by her childhood experiences watching *Animal Planet* and reading the *Warrior Cats* book series and *Dune* by Frank Herbert. Her personal observations of and experiences with the flora and fauna of Colorado further fueled her interest in the natural world.

Ryleigh earned her Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources Management & Conservation Biology in 2019 and her Master's in Forest Sciences in 2021 at CSU. She intends to graduate in the summer of 2025 with her Ph.D. in Ecology.

Throughout her academic journey, Ryleigh has worked closely with the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, promoted undergraduate participation in STEM, and served in various leadership roles including organizing the annual Front Range Student Ecology Symposium.

Ryleigh hopes to continue her work with a federal or local government agency after graduation to further contribute to her field. Her dedication to advancing ecological research has earned her the Outstanding Undergraduate Award, Outstanding Student Award in Forestry, and various other recognitions from CSU and scientific conferences.

Outside of her academic pursuits, Ryleigh enjoys fishing, live music, hiking, tabletop games, and collecting insects.