

Adriana Garcia Rivera



Career goals:

I recognize the importance of science, community-based collaboration, and education in creating effective conservation efforts. I have made it my goal to work with a federal agency to help develop these initiatives. As I look toward the future, I am committed to continuing my work in conservation and pursuing opportunities to collaborate with other organizations and local communities to create innovative solutions to complex environmental challenges. As a first-generation university student from a Hispanic family, I have noticed a lack of diversity in the discipline. I plan to use my experiences to connect with students from diverse backgrounds. In alignment with my long-term goals, I seek to bring conservation awareness to underserved communities—working with young people from all backgrounds to empower the next generation of conservationists to become leaders in the field. I have

become a powerful advocate for diversity in conservation. I believe fostering a more diverse student, and workforce body can build a stronger, more resilient movement toward a sustainable future.

Biography:

I was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona. Growing up, I was surrounded by the natural beauty of the desert landscape but didn't have much exposure to the environment. My family didn't spend much time outdoors, and I rarely ventured beyond the city limits. Despite this, I tried to venture out and learn more about conservation, whether by reading books about wildlife and ecosystems or volunteering for local conservation groups.

To pursue a career in conservation, I attended Northern Arizona University (NAU) for my undergraduate studies, where I earned a B.S. in Environmental & Sustainability Studies. I learned much about conservation science through research opportunities. During my undergraduate studies, I interned for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which was a turning point in my dedication to conservation science. During my internship, I had the chance to assess the global conservation status of Sonoran Desert plant species, which allowed me to put my academic knowledge to practical use. This experience was an eye-opener for me as it helped me realize the impact of conservation efforts at a global level. I could see first-hand the critical need for conservation and the positive impact it could have on endangered species. This internship confirmed that I was on the right track toward pursuing a conservation career. It gave me a sense of direction and motivated me to continue learning and working towards creating positive environmental change.

My educational and professional experiences have motivated me to continue with conservation science through the M.S. Environmental Science and Policy program at NAU. My research focuses on how wildlife affects seedling recruitment in Emory oak, a cultural keystone species for the western Apache tribe. My research will contribute to conservation efforts on Emory oak landscapes and support collaboration between members of several Apache tribes with the U.S. Forest Service and researchers to preserve Emory oak trees.