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2-17-2023

### The Fierce Green Fire: Vol. 13 Issue 12

Wofford College. Department of Environmental Studies

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#### Recommended Citation

Wofford College. Department of Environmental Studies, "The Fierce Green Fire: Vol. 13 Issue 12" (2023).  
*The Fierce Green Fire*. 298.

<https://digitalcommons.wofford.edu/fiercegreenfire/298>

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# The Fierce Green Fire

A Newsletter of the Wofford College Environmental Studies Program

Volume 13, Issue 12



## *There's Nothing We Can't Do by Kennedy Smith '23*

If you're reading this and you have a fear of confined spaces, welcome to the club. I am the poster child of claustrophobia. When I've felt trapped in the past, I start to feel my heart pounding, my body starts to shake, and for lack of a better term, panic ensues. So much so, that I once walked up 15 flights of stairs to avoid an elevator ride. Don't judge me... we all have our struggles. So let me tell you about the time I spent 35 minutes with 11 people in an enclosed cement igloo! Obviously, that's an oversimplification, and spoiler alert I survived, but it was a pretty big deal for me. This interim I had the amazing opportunity to go to Nicaragua with Dr. Bradham and Dr. Valde (shoutout). And let me tell you, it was beautiful. I can go on and on about all the fun things we did. However, I've found that most of the time I bask in life's fun moments, but I grow in the challenging ones. The Temazcal ceremony was a moment of challenge in my life, and I grew. Your first thought when you hear the word "Temazcal" might be Mexican food in downtown Spartanburg, but I can assure you this was very different. A Temazcal ceremony is a traditional sweat lodge ceremony that includes pouring water over extremely hot rocks while you're in a concealed space. The water/rock combo produces a thick cloud of steam, increasing the temperature aka the amount you sweat. So get this: not only is this ceremony in an igloo-shaped/sized contraption

with a thick door, but it's HOT, dark, and hard to breathe. It was kind of the perfect anxiety-producing storm for me. However, as Dr. Bradham says, "there's nothing you can't do." So I entered the Temazcal last, closest to the door of course, but when our guide Tara shut the door, panic settled in. Dr. Bradham's motherly instincts kicked in as she rushed to sit next to me and proceeded to help me focus on pressing the tips of my middle fingers into the tips of my thumbs and slowly taking the "cooling breaths" that Tara taught us. There were moments the panic would start to bubble back up inside me, but then I would look at my friends around me, feel the embrace of a reassuring glance, and take another cooling breath. So here I am, a girl who avoided 2-minute elevator rides, 33 minutes deep into the most confining experience of my life. Once we finished our 35-minute Temazcal ceremony, I semi-crawled out of the tiny door and felt empowered. As a group, we sprinted to the ocean (Dr. Valde leading the pack), which was a little more than a stones-throw away, and we dove into the cold water. The world has never seemed as open to me as it did at that moment. How expansive the sunset was. How the ocean went on farther than our eyes could see. It was refreshing, it was eye-opening, and most importantly it showed me that fear doesn't get to limit my life because there's nothing I can't do. The same is true for you, there's nothing we can't do.



*Pictures from January 2023 Interim in Nicaragua*

## Upcoming Events and Opportunities

February 17<sup>th</sup>

1:00-1:50pm

Chandler Center, Room  
214

***Speaker Yvonne Dalschen:*** Join us for Visiting Goodall Fellow and photographer Yvonne Dalschen's talk in Dr. Whitmarsh's ENVS 202 class.

February 28<sup>th</sup>

6:00-7:30pm

Spartanburg Community  
College, 220 E Kennedy St,  
29302

***The Future of Black Farming:*** Hub City Farmers Market is hosting a talk by Dr. Louis Whitesides of the 1890 Land Grants Program at SC State University. Learn about the 1890 land-grant institutions, which are historically black universities that were established under the Second Morrill Act of 1890. [Register for this event.](#)

March 2<sup>nd</sup>

7:00pm

Via Zoom

***A Chicana Eco-Genealogy: Searching for My Environmental Foremothers:*** Dr. Priscilla Ybarra, associate professor at University of North Texas will give a virtual talk. This talk traces the history of little-known Mexican American and Chicana ecological knowledge caretakers as a way to find her own place in the world and in relationship to her mother's life story. Registration link:

[https://wofford.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_FoV2xT3XSCCKjwC4Ei1h8Q](https://wofford.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FoV2xT3XSCCKjwC4Ei1h8Q)

March 11<sup>th</sup>

9:00-11:00am

Goodall Center, 351  
Broadway St, Glendale, SC  
29346

***Second Saturdays Volunteer Day in Glendale:*** Join us on the second Saturday of the month to help beautify the garden and surrounding areas at the Goodall Center.

[Register here to let us know you're coming.](#)

March 25<sup>th</sup>

9:00am-2:00pm

366 N Church Street,  
Spartanburg, SC 29303

***15<sup>th</sup> Annual Hazardous Household Waste Collection & Rain Barrel Sale:*** Rain or shine, all Spartanburg County residents can bring their hazardous household waste to be disposed (excluding electronics). Rain barrels will be available for purchase. [See the list of acceptable and unacceptable items.](#)

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## PROFILE OF THE WEEK:

### *Nova Southeastern University – MPS in Marine Environmental Science*

The Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography at Nova Southeastern offers four degree options including the Master of Professional Science in Marine Environmental Science and is located on a 10-acre campus near Port Everglades, FL. The property also has three other buildings and modular space for labs, classrooms, and offices, as well as a marina. The campus' proximity to the oceans is ideal for launching field studies.

*“The Marine Environmental Sciences master's degree program results from the need to educate professionals*

*beyond the bachelor's degree in synthesis of diverse disciplines, each of which views the marine environment in disparate ways.”* The degree track options include a capstone or thesis and can include elective courses in Marine Biology, Coastal Zone Management, Environmental Science, or Computational Molecular Biology. Graduates of the program generally find employment in environmentally oriented agencies, organizations, and government.

[NSU – MPS in Marine Environmental Science](#)

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