Natural Resources and the Environment
Strategic Vision

UCONN | COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Advance landscape sustainability, resilience, and adaptation to climate change

Goal 1: Develop innovative approaches to assess changes in landscapes, climate impacts, and ecosystem services

- **Action 1:** Foster research that spans experimental, observational, and modeling approaches, connecting laboratory, and field, and remotely sensed data to quantitative methods
- **Action 2:** Integrate biophysical and social sciences approaches to assess socio-environmental systems using multi- and inter-disciplinary collaborations
- **Action 3:** Use leading-edge sensor technology across scales and disciplines and quantitative approaches to interpret sensor datasets

Goal 2: Expand and strengthen research on urban, suburban, exurban, and rural landscapes and the interfaces among them

- **Action 1:** Advance urban and community forestry research to guide equitable resilience planning and management
- **Action 2:** Enhance and expand research focused on forest, fish and wildlife populations, water resources and wildlife-human interactions across landscape gradients

Goal 3: Expand and strengthen research on inland and coastal aquatic ecosystems

- **Action 1:** Advance research that addresses current issues of water quality impairment and identifies future threats to inland and coastal surface and ground water resources
- **Action 2:** Enhance and expand research that evaluates current and future threats to aquatic habitat and fisheries
- **Action 3:** Enhance and expand research that evaluates current management and restoration strategies for aquatic ecosystems

Generate scientific knowledge to guide problem solving and decision-making from local to global scales

Goal 1: Serve as a hub for research on environmental change

- **Action 1:** Increase support from and expand partnerships with a diversity of agencies and organizations at the local, state, regional, national, and international levels
- **Action 2:** Enhance research areas that have direct implications for decision-making and environmental management outcomes
- **Action 3:** Make geospatial and environmental data available and accessible for municipalities, state agencies, tribal authorities, communities, and other stakeholders
- **Action 4:** Leverage activities of the Connecticut Institute of Water Resources to connect with agencies, non-profits, and local organizations

Goal 2: Develop strategies for effective climate mitigation and adaptation in Connecticut and beyond

- **Action 1:** Develop decision support systems that translate existing data sets for scenario-based planning
- **Action 2:** Advance research that contributes to evidence-based and equitable management decisions and solutions
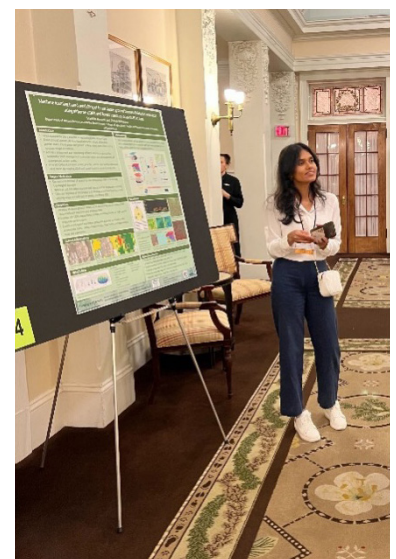

Demonstrate and apply innovative best practices in integrated research, teaching, and extension activities

Goal 1: Position NRE within UConn as a model of integrated activities

- **Action 1:** Increase visibility of NRE extension programs within the university to facilitate collaborations across colleges and departments, especially with CLEAR faculty
- **Action 2:** Make E-Corps model of service learning more visible to students and more sustainable within existing teaching FTE
- **Action 3:** Intentionally transfer findings and approaches from leading-edge NRE research into UConn classrooms

Goal 2: Continue to grow and strengthen existing partnerships

- **Action 1:** Continue to participate, support and provide leadership for the Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies interdisciplinary majors
- **Action 2:** Develop a graduate assistantship in partnership with the Dept. of Extension to support graduate students participating in extension projects and programming

Prepare a global workforce to solve environmental and societal challenges facing natural resources and the environment

Goal 1: Improve student learning outcomes in science and technology

- **Action 1:** Promote decision-making, remote sensing, analytical, and problem-solving skills
- **Action 2:** Provide leadership and life-transformative experiential education experiences in science and management of natural resources and the environment

Goal 2: Increase access to higher education through on-campus and in-the-field, in-person and online, and part-time to full-time learning opportunities

- **Action 1:** Enhance existing graduate certificate and master's programs
- **Action 2:** Develop a 4+1 program linking the Natural Resources major with the MEEM online MS degree

Proactively address environmental and social inequalities

Goal 1: Center DEIJ principles in NRE research, education, and extension

- **Action 1:** Incorporate community stakeholders in the development of grants and programs early for projects and programs to reflect community needs, and concerns
- **Action 2:** Provide resources to instructors to examine current course offerings through an equity and justice lens

Goal 2: Recruit, develop, and retain diverse faculty, professional staff, and graduate students

- **Action 1:** Identify, develop, and apply best practices in inclusive educational pathway development
- **Action 2:** Provide ongoing professional development and training opportunities

Goal 3: Diversify environmental decision-makers and professionals

- **Action 1:** Provide all students and participants career awareness and career development content within all NRE-affiliated programs
- **Action 2:** Recruit and train the next generation of environmental stewards through place-based environmental action programs statewide

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