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Amanda Sorensen is a doctoral candidate in the Graduate Program in Ecology and Evolution working with Dr. Rebecca Jordan. Amanda's broader research interests include public perceptions of science, the role of citizen science in shaping public understanding of science, and epistemic and scientific practices of scientists and the public. She is particularly interested in the role of individual beliefs about science in citizen science research and informal learning through cooperative research projects. Her dissertation research investigates the effect of framing in various public participatory platforms (citizen science and crowdsourcing) on participant outcomes in these scientific projects in terms of public perceptions of and interactions with authentic science. Particularly, how, why, and when individuals of various backgrounds participate and meaningfully contribute to scientific projects. Additionally, the outcomes of these mutually beneficial partnerships between the public and scientists are particularly interesting.

This summer Amanda will be working as a Center for Resilient Landscapes Fellow in partnership with the USDA Forest Service and Rutgers University. This project seeks to understand how can an ecological restoration experiment be a catalyst for new forms of civic engagement and co-production of knowledge? This project proposes a social science research study that builds upon a current ecological restoration experiment in the Jamaica Bay region of New York City. We will seek to better understand the existing barriers to installing experimental designs of native maritime plantings planted further inland on public parkland, as well as future opportunities to expand or enhance this work. We also ask how knowledge about these plantings and this assisted migration approach is diffused and incorporated into park manager and private landowner knowledge and behaviors through different acts of civic engagement (e.g. signage, workshops).