

Natalie Howe  
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Natalie Howe recently completed her doctoral studies in Ecology and Evolution at Rutgers University, where she studied how lichens change forest soil moisture, chemistry and belowground microbial and arthropod communities. As lichens are sensitive to air pollution and mechanical disturbance, Natalie is broadly interested in how natural systems respond to anthropogenic disturbances. Prior to attending Rutgers, she completed a M.E.S at the University of Pennsylvania, studying the natural revegetation of lichens at the former zinc smelter site in Palmerton PA, and she also worked with the National Park Service's Inventory and Monitoring Program, coordinating volunteers for early detection of invasive plants at Point Reyes National Seashore in California. She has taught at the University of Rhode Island W. Alton Jones Campus, at Rutgers, and at NJ state prisons in the Scholarship and Transformative Education in Prisons program.

In her work this summer as a fellow with the Center for Resilient Landscapes at the USFS Philadelphia Field Station, Natalie will begin a long-term study of how the Emerald Ash Borer will change the vegetation and epiphyte communities in Philadelphia's urban forests. This study will examine how deer herbivory changes the trajectory of forest recovery after the death of the ash trees. It will also describe the plant community effects of treating individual ash trees with insecticide to protect them from the ash borer. These findings may provide information to Philadelphia Parks and Recreation department about the ecological outcomes of their management decisions, which may help inform their future actions in the parks.