

# USE CIT SCI

*The latest news and updates from the USE Cit Sci Network.*



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## Research Coordination Network (RCN) Invitation

Citizen science (sometimes called community science) puts authentic research into the hands of the public.

- Do you currently use citizen science in your higher education courses?
- Do you want to give your students research opportunities but are not yet using citizen science?
- Are you looking for a community of educators innovating new student engagement techniques?

If you answered yes to any of those questions, the NSF-funded USE Cit Sci Research Coordination Network may be for you.

Check us out:  
[blog.ecu.edu/sites/use-cit-sci-network/](http://blog.ecu.edu/sites/use-cit-sci-network/)





## WEBINARS

Learn more about the USE Cit Sci Network at the following webinars:

**June 16 - 2:00 to 3:00 pm EST**

**June 23 - 2:00 to 3:00 pm EST**

Do you have questions about implementing citizen science in your class? We are holding a webinar to help. Feel free to share the news!

**July 14 - 2:00 to 3:30 pm EST**

## Recent RCN Activities

Although the funding is not yet finalized, NSF has recommended the USE Cit Sci Network for another 5 years of funding! Work on the new phase of the project titled "RCN-UBE: The Undergraduate Student Experiences with Citizen Science (USE Cit Sci) Network to transform learning and broaden participation in science" will hopefully begin this fall!

The Undergraduate Engagement session at the Citizen Science Association's CitSciVirtual event this past May featured many interesting projects, including work by many Network members and a poster about the Network!

Four RCN members (Colleen Hitchcock, Maria Aristeidou, Caren Cooper, and Heather Vance-Chalcraft) are helping to coordinate a Special Collection in the journal *Citizen Science: Theory and Practice* on the use of citizen science in higher education. The RCN is sponsoring the publication costs of up to ten papers in this special collection. Look for it to come out this fall or winter!

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Any member of the Citizen Science Association is welcome to join the Education Working Group. This group has members working with higher education, K-12 settings, and informal educational settings. You can join us in CSA Connect!





## Instructor Spotlight: Jennifer Styrsky

Dr. Jennifer Styrsky is from University of Lynchburg in Lynchburg, Virginia. Previously she has studied avian ecology, but currently explores local adaptation of milkweed plants. Dr. Styrsky has been teaching biology, ecology, and environmental science to undergraduate students for the past ten years.

Dr. Styrsky uses citizen science projects in her course Natural Resources Stewardship, which is an introductory class required to fulfill a Gen.Ed. science credit for students of the Honors College who are not majoring in life or physical sciences. The course is an integrated lecture and lab, with both face-to-face and online interaction. Dr. Styrsky involves several projects in different semesters of her course Natural Resources Stewardship, including *Hummingbirds at Home*, *Journey North*, and *Spring: Nature's Notebook/USA National Phenology Network*.

Students usually work on citizen science projects for an entire semester, with varying time each week to develop their own research questions, collect and analyze data, and submit data to the citizen science project. The students also present their results at an undergraduate research symposium at their university. Recently, three students from the past fall semester class also co-authored a poster for the CitSciVirtual 2021 conference.

### **Why did you decide to integrate citizen science into this course?**

"One of the primary goals of the USE CitSci network is to engage students in authentic science practices by involving them in projects that are much larger than a single class or campus community. I think it is important for students to realize that they can make valuable contributions to science as part of their educational experience. None of the students in my class will pursue a career in life/physical sciences, but all of them will come away from this class understanding how science works. As an ecologist, I also think it is important for students to make connections with the natural world. I chose these particular projects because they are at the right level for the students in my class, could be adapted to answer questions generated by the students, and are very relevant to our campus sustainability efforts."

### **How do you feel the involvement in this project has impacted your students' engagement and learning?**

"I think that the combination of participating in a project on our campus while also contributing data to a larger research effort had a positive effect on student engagement. Students learned a lot about science by participating in a project from the initial stages of generating research questions to finally presenting their research to a campus-wide audience. In fact, students applied what they were learning from these projects to their in-class discussions and responses to homework/exam questions throughout the semester."