



M E M O R A N D U M

Agenda Item 15(D)1

TO: Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez and
Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: March 3, 2026

FROM: Honorable Juan Fernandez-Barquin
Clerk of the Court and Comptroller

SUBJECT: Appointment to the Land Acquisition
Selection Committee

Basia Pruna, Director
Clerk of the Board

The following candidates have been recommended by Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, pursuant to Section 24-50.6(2)(a) and (b) of the County Code, for appointment to the Land Acquisition Selection Committee (LASC):

1. **Dr. Cristina A. Ugarte Whelan**
2. **Mr. Eduardo M. Varona**

This appointment will fill a vacancy resulting from the term expiration of committee member Patricia "Patti" L. Phares. Attached for the Board's review are Mayor Daniella Levine Cava's memorandum, the nominees' resumes, and letters of recommendation. The Board is requested to select one (1) nominee from the distributed ballot.

Attachment

Memorandum



Date:

To: Honorable Juan Fernandez-Barquin
Clerk of the Court and Comptroller

From: Daniella Levine Cava *Daniella Levine Cava*
Mayor

Subject: Candidates for Appointment to the Environmentally Endangered Land Acquisition Selection Committee

Please find attached the resumes of Eduardo Varona and Cristina A. Ugarte Whelan for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners for appointment to the Land Acquisition Selection Committee (LASC). Members of the LASC are appointed by the Board pursuant to section 24-50.6 of the Code of Miami-Dade County (Code).

The LASC was established by section 24-50.6 of the Code of Miami-Dade County (Code) to make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (Board) regarding land acquisitions for the Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program, propose expenditures from the EEL Trust Funds, and provide additional guidance to fulfill the purposes of the EEL Program.

The LASC is composed of seven regular members and one alternate member. The term of one committee member, Patti Phares, has ended per section 24-50.6(2)(b) of the Code thereby creating a vacancy. Pursuant to section 24-50.6 of the Code, when a vacancy occurs, the Mayor shall recommend to the Board two candidates who meet the required qualifications to fill that vacancy, and the Board shall vote to appoint a candidate to serve on the Committee as a regular member. Accordingly, I am hereby submitting two candidates that meet the required qualifications.

The candidates for the member vacancy are:

1. Eduardo Varona, 8861 SW 196 Drive, Cutler Bay, Florida 33157
2. Cristina A. Ugarte Whelan, PhD, 12875 SW 192 Street, Miami, Florida 33177

Section 24-50.6 of the Code also provides that preference be given to candidates that have a record of service in environmental or civic affairs in Miami-Dade County and have been recommended by one or more bona fide environmental, civic, or professional organizations. Both candidates satisfy these criteria:

- Mr. Varona is the Chair of the Cutler Bay Environmental Task Force and has been recommended by Tim Meerbot, Mayor, Town of Cutler Bay.
- Dr. Whelan has been recommended by Jamie Anderson, Magnet School Program Coordinator for Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, and Dr. Whelan has been an environmental educator at BioTECH for many years.

The candidates' resumes and letters of recommendation are attached. Please schedule this selection and appointment before the Board as soon as possible. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

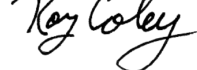
Attachments

MDC002

- c: Geri Bonzon-Keenan, County Attorney
- Jess M. McCarty, First Assistant County Attorney
- Office of the Mayor Senior Staff
- Lourdes M. Gomez, Director, Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources
- Marina Blanco-Pape, Deputy Director, Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources
- Loren Parra, Director, Department of Environmental Resources Management
- Basia Pruna, Director, Clerk of the Board
- Yinka Majekodunmi, Commission Auditor
- Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs
- Eugene Love, Agenda Coordinator

Date:

To: Daniella Levine Cava
Mayor

From: Roy Coley, Chief, Utilities and Regulatory Services Officer 
Miami-Dade County

Subject: Candidates for Appointment to the Environmentally Endangered Land Acquisition Selection Committee

Please find attached the resumes of Mr. Eduardo Varona and Dr. Cristina A. Ugarte Whelan for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners (Board) for appointment to the Miami-Dade County Land Acquisition Selection Committee Board (LASC). Members of the LASC are appointed by the Board pursuant to section 24-50.6 of the Code of Miami-Dade County (Code).

The LASC is an advisory board that holds at least four (4) regular meetings each year to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners a semi-annual acquisition list pursuant to section 24-50.6. The LASC may, from time to time, recommend to the Board (or to the Mayor, as appropriate) proposed expenditures from the EEL Trust Funds; additional selection or acquisition policies, procedures, standards, criteria, strategies, schedules, and programs; and other such matters as may be necessary to fulfill the purposes of the EEL Program. The membership, terms of office, organization, duties, and powers, and procedures that govern the LASC are set forth in chapter 24 of the Code.

The LASC is composed of seven regular members and one alternate member appointed by the Board. The required quorum of the Committee shall be five persons. The term of one committee member, Patti Phares, has ended per section 24-50.6(2)(b) of the Code thereby creating a vacancy. Pursuant to section 24-50.6 of the Code, when a vacancy occurs, the Mayor shall recommend to the Board two candidates who meet the required qualifications to fill that vacancy, and the Board shall vote to appoint a candidate to serve on the Committee as a regular member. Accordingly, I am hereby submitting two candidates that meet the required qualifications.

The candidates for the member vacancy are:

1. Eduardo Varona, 8861 SW 196 Drive, Cutler Bay, Florida 33157
2. Cristina A. Ugarte Whelan, PhD, 12875 SW 192 Street, Miami, Florida 33177

Section 24-50.6 of the Code also provides that preference be given to candidates that have a record of service in environmental or civic affairs in Miami-Dade County and have been recommended by one or more bona fide environmental, civic, or professional organizations. Both candidates satisfy these criteria:

- Mr. Varona is the Chair of the Cutler Bay Environmental Task Force and has been recommended by Tim Meerbot, Mayor, Town of Cutler Bay.

- Dr. Whelan has been recommended by Jamie Anderson, Magnet School Program Coordinator for Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, and Dr. Whelan has been an environmental educator at BioTECH for many years.

The letters of recommendation and resumes for both candidates are attached.

Due to the timeframes outlined in section 24-50.11 for placing acquisition proposals on the acquisition list, the prompt appointment of Mr. Eduardo Varona or Dr. Cristina A. Ugarte Whelan is essential to prevent delays.

Please sign the attached memo to Juan Fernandez-Barquin, Clerk, regarding this selection process. If you need additional information, please contact Loren Parra, Director of the Department of Environmental Resources Management, at 305-375-1880 or email at Loren.Parra@miamidade.gov.

Attachment

Eduardo M. Varona

Resume of 4/2021 – for LASC

- Education
 - BS in Biology, University of Central Florida
 - Post graduate courses in Landscape Architecture
 - course work to include, Ecosystems of S FL
- Presently employed with USDA: 2003 to present
- Extensive knowledge of the major ecosystems found in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties
- Extensive knowledge of both native and non-native plant species commonly present in the S FL landscape both in natural areas and in developed areas
- Extensive knowledge of invasive species issues and common problematic species affecting the S FL environment
- Extensive work and hands on experience with what works and what doesn't on degraded lands in process of restoration to more natural conditions
- Familiar with tree and landscape codes and regulations for MDC
- Familiar with zoning designations of MDC
- Understanding of the underlying aquifers and impacts to them from development/habitation/SLR, and some knowledge of MDC geology and soil types both natural and disturbed
- Extensive knowledge of BBCW and BBSEER projects
- Familiar with Back Bay Study and recommendations
- Familiar with S FL Resiliency initiatives, Topographic maps, sea level rise present and future impacts
- Extensive work in grass roots activism on land development and land preservation issues in South Dade
- Extensive experience motivating a volunteer work force for hands on work
- Good understanding of the complex and changing demographics of MDC
- Developed a good network within the South Dade enviro-community at the grass roots level
- Experience with grass roots fundraising
- Extensive knowledge and experience in membership and leading committees such as:
 - Biological Threat Advisory Group (USDA/CBP)
 - Outreach Committee
 - Civil Rights Committee
- Familiar with virtual meetings such as Zoom and Teams
- Extensive knowledge how to write and edit SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) and related documents, as well as reviews of Cooperative Agreements
- Extensive experience with public speaking and presentations by PowerPoint on complex biological and/or environmental topics
- Experience in co-authoring and submitting an EEL application.
- Experience in writing a variety of reports, including technical reports.
- 2016 Finalist for Miami Herald, Miami Visionary Award in the Environment category
- Proclamation Awarded by the Town of Cutler Bay on February, 17, 2021 for leadership, passion, and continued commitment to safeguarding the natural heritage of the community.
- Chair of Cutler Bay Environmental Task Force



April 16, 2021

Ms. Janet Gil
Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources
Environmentally Endangered Lands Program
701 NW 1 Court, 5th Floor, Miami, FL 33136

Re: Candidate Recommendation to the Land Acquisition Selection Committee

Dear Members of the Selection Committee:

I am pleased to offer this letter of recommendation of Mr. Eduardo M. Varona to the Land Acquisition Selection Committee (LASC). We strongly support the objectives of the LASC and have worked with the committee to protect and enhance the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (BBCW) located within the Town of Cutler Bay (the "Town").

Mr. Varona has been fully engaged in environmental advocacy through grassroots mobilization for over fifteen years, and has applied his vast knowledge helping to bring greater resiliency through environmental preservation and restoration to the Cutler Bay community. While working with a small group of committed residents in South Dade, he advocated to save 130-acres of coastal wetlands in the footprint of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan from being developed. Due to his dedication and leadership, these lands were purchased for Everglades and BBCW restoration.

As an environmental activist, Mr. Varona has taken on an active role as a member of the Livablecutler where he advocates for the continued acquisition, protection, and restoration of the BBCW and adjacent lands. He has committed himself to educating residents and the community on the importance of preserving our endangered lands and natural habitats, and protecting rare and precious coastal wetlands and native ecosystems of Cutler Bay and Miami-Dade County.

Mr. Varona continues to strongly influence local governments, state and federal partners to bring greater resiliency through environmental preservation and restoration to our natural areas and coastal communities. It is my belief that Mr. Varona's experience and skills will be a great asset to LASC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tim Meerbott
Mayor



Curriculum Vitae

CRISTINA A. UGARTE WHELAN PHD

Email: cristinawhelan@dadeschools.net•Phone (305)-978-3680

TEACHING GOALS

My teaching goals are to make learning fun and to engage students through practical field hands on experience, thereby instilling a passion in the natural sciences. As a teacher, I want to let the biology of organisms, current issues, and latest technology take the lead in inspiring students. I will encourage field projects and reading material (outside of text books) that explore current topics to students. I will promote active learning, thoughtful discussions, and learning through debate. I also believe in encouraging students to aim high and present themselves and material in a professional manner. Students will rise to the challenge and will be better prepared for college and technical.

EDUCATION

2004 PhD., Department of Biological Sciences, Florida International University. Graduate advisor: Maureen Donnelly, PhD. **Dissertation: Human Impacts on Pig Frog (*Rana grylio*) Populations in South Florida Wetlands: Harvest, Water Management, and Mercury Contamination**

1997 MS., Department of Biological Sciences, Florida International University. Graduate advisor: Bradley Bennett PhD. **Thesis: The Ethnopharmacology of Plants Used as Both Food and Medicine in a Totonac Community of Mexico**

1993 BA., Department of Anthropology, University of New Mexico

TEACHING SKILLS AND CERTIFICATIONS

I have been a High school science teacher at Biotech@ Richmond Heights since Fall 2017 to present. Prior to this, I was a professional academic advisor Level 2 at Florida International University serving both Departments of Biological Sciences and Earth and Environment (2014-2017). I have a diverse background of teaching experiences ranging from graduate and undergraduate classroom instructor to public outreach. Currently I teach research and experimentation to 12th grade students, Honors Genetics to 11th graders, and AP Environmental Science to 10th, 11th and 12th graders at Biotech. We are actively involved in citizen science projects and students develop independent projects and present at the end of their freshman year. I have also taught undergraduate laboratory courses at Florida International University: General Biology 1 BSC 1010L (1999);

General Biology 2 BSC 1011L (1994-1999, 2014); Introduction to Botany BOT 1010 L (2000) and Human Biology BSC 2023L (1994-1996 and 1999, 2000). I have given lectures to undergraduates 2003 (General Biology 2 BSC 1011) and advanced courses 2001 (Herpetology ZOO4472 and Ecology of South Florida EVR 3013). I have worked as an invited resource teacher for the Organization for Tropical Studies- 2002 (OTS-An Ecological Approach). This entailed teaching over 20 graduate students from throughout the United States in Palo Verde National Park, and other natural areas in Costa Rica. I lectured on amphibians and reptiles and facilitated students in developing research questions and projects in the adjacent wetlands and upland communities. I was an invited lecturer/researcher to take part in a resource management workshop for students and field personnel in Sian Ka'an Biosphere Preserve, Mexico 2002 (University of Florida and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). I lectured in Spanish regarding vegetation sampling and monitoring. I also have experience teaching the public with limited science backgrounds. I was a naturalist for Miami-Dade County Parks and Recreation, leading environmental trips for children 6 years to adults (1997-8) and outreach presentations. I also directed summer camp for children up to 12 years old where I planned activities, day to day supervision and operations.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Full-Time Professional Experience

2017-present. High School Science teacher Biotech@Richmond Heights. Duties: Teaching research and experimentation to 9th grade students, and AP Environmental Science to 11 and 12th graders. We are actively involved in citizen science projects and students develop independent projects involving animal behavior, decomposition, pollinator studies and distribution of invasive species at ZooMiami. Research is presented in a research symposium at the end of their freshman year.

2014-2017. Professional Academic Advisor II, College of Arts, Sciences and Education, Florida International University

Duties: Advising for the Departments of Biological Sciences and Earth and Environment. Meeting with undergraduate students helping them graduate and develop professionally. Encouraging and linking students to campus resources to enhance their academic portfolios/experiences. Working with students (over 700), faculty, and administrators from both the departments and the College to help student be successful and graduate.

2004-2006 Critical Ecosystem Initiative (CESI) Post-Doctoral Fellow, School of Natural Resources and the Environment, University of Florida

Duties: Analysis of Everglades National Park American alligator monitoring program investigating 21 years of nesting count and nest fate data. Two years of visiting alligator nests and collecting egg data during nesting season, as well as analyzing nest success to examine relationships between nesting and hydrology.

2003-2004 Dissertation Year Fellow, Florida International University

2000-2003 United States Environmental Protection Agency Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Fellow, Department of Biological Sciences, Florida International University

Duties: Surveyed *Rana grylio* populations in both harvested and protected south Florida wetlands. Work involved night surveys and capture-recapture of *R. grylio* by airboat. Diet, total mercury and reproductive status also assessed.

1999-2000 Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of Biological Sciences, Florida International University

Duties: Laboratory instructor for approximately thirty students per class. Responsibilities include organizing lectures, grading, and scheduling for General Biology1 and 2 Laboratory.

1997 Research Technician, Southeast Environmental Research Program, Florida International University

Duties: Identifying a vegetation/plant community classification system for use in the Florida Environments Thesaurus and the South Florida Ecosystems Thesaurus. I also performed wetland vegetation surveys throughout remote areas of South Florida for the Restudy Project/United States Environmental Protection Agency.

1998-1997 Recreation Specialist, Miami-Dade County Department of Parks and Recreation

Duties: Naturalist activities, included coordinating environmental education and awareness activities for all ages. Environmental education programs were designed for preschool to University level. Organized and led public adult canoe trips and hikes throughout Big Cypress Preserve, Everglades National Park, and other areas throughout South Florida. Responsibilities included supervision of six to fourteen adults on trips. Associate Editor for Tropical Trails magazine, a quarterly South Florida natural history magazine, with over 1000 subscriptions.

1997 Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Biological Sciences, Florida International University

Duties: Researcher on Hurricane Andrew effects on forest structure on near shore islands of Biscayne National Park Project for Dr. Bradley Bennett. The focus of the field work was the collection of diameter measurements, mortality and seedling recruitment. Canoeing, ability to identify subtropical hardwood hammock trees, and working under adverse conditions.

1994-1996 Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of Biological Sciences, Florida International University

Duties: Laboratory instructor for approximately thirty students per class. Responsibilities included organizing lectures, grading, and scheduling for General Biology 1 Laboratory, General Biology 2 Laboratory, Human Biology Laboratory, and Introductory Botany.

1996 Graduate Research: In Zapotitlán de Mendez, Mexico. Partial support through the McKnight Foundation Collaborative Crop Research Program, Dr. Robert Bye director of the Jardín Botánico, Universidad Nacional Autónoma México

Duties: Living in a rural Totonac community of the Northern Sierra of Puebla for five months. Responsibilities included interviewing local people, market interviews, surveys and collecting wild and edible food plants also used medicinally. Phytochemical qualitative testing for cyanogenic glycosides, alkaloids, and phenolics was done in the field and lab. Antifungal and antibacterial assays using crude ethanol extracts were done at Florida International University.

Part-Time Professional and Research Experience

2019-2023-Research Experience for Teachers (RET) with NSF FCE-LTER, Florida International University.

Duties: Worked with high school students and LTER researchers throughout the Florida Everglades, and at the Deering Estate. Mentored six high school students in their project, examining decomposition rates of tea bags along a hydrologic gradient in a restored wetland. Students presented at MDCPS Science Fair and at the all -Scientists meeting at Fairchild Tropical Gardens.

2006-2013. Part-time Staff. CrocDocs, University of Florida.

Duties: Translated English to Spanish public fact sheets regarding the American Crocodile; Worked on publishing papers (see peer reviewed article section).

2002 Field Technician/Translator, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Duties: Translated a chapter in a book regarding monitoring of amphibians and reptiles in this reserve and lectured on vegetation monitoring techniques. Helped setup permanent monitoring drift fences for fish within the reserve and helped mediate between Mexican and American personnel.

2002 Resource Person, Organization for Tropical Studies, Costa Rica

Duties: Helped lead a group project of graduate students from throughout the United States in multiple National Parks, primarily Palo Verde National Park, a

large wetland, and adjacent dry forest. Advised graduate students in various independent projects pertaining to tropical herpetology.

2001 Biological Consultant: Botanist, Kissimmee River Restoration, Lowe Engineering, US Army Corps of Engineers

Duties: Assessed vegetation community composition in over 50 wetland sites along the restored Kissimmee River as ground truthing to assess Hyperspectral ability to detect vegetation communities.

1999-2000 Botanist, USEPA ReMAP project Greater Everglades Area

Duties: Performed wetland vegetation surveys throughout remote areas of South Florida from Loxahatchee to the southern Everglades for the Restudy Project/United States Environmental Protection Agency.

1997-1999 Biological Illustrator, J. Savage, The Reptiles and Amphibians of Costa Rica M.A. Donnelly and C. Guyer Amphibians and Reptiles of La Selva, Costa Rica

Duties: Illustrations of preserved Costa Rican herpetofauna using the camera lucida and free hand for publication.

BIOLOGICAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Identify tropical and subtropical (Caribbean) plants and wetland plants to family genus and species.
- Identify aquatic insects to order.
- Identify amphibians and reptiles in Florida, Costa Rica, Yucatán, Mexico.
- Use of DMA-80 Mercury Analyzer.
- Scientific Illustrator
- Catching, pit-tag, toe-clipping frogs.
- Mist netting migratory birds.
- Experience catching, counting and measuring alligators and their nests.
- Proficient airboat experience night and day.

Languages: Spanish (written and spoken), Portuguese (Passable spoken)

Computer skills: IBM and Apple, MS Word, Excel, Power Point, Access, ArcGIS, STATISTICA, SAS, Matlab, SPSS, CAPTURE, SURVIV, and MARK.

Certifications:

Department of Interior Motorboat Operator Certification course (2000); Department of Interior B-3 Aviation Safety (1999, 2004); Airboat Certification (2000); American Red Cross Basic Canoeing; Hunter Education Program-Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission.

Mentoring and Volunteer Service: Linked many undergraduate students at FIU to internships both through county and federal agencies. Overseen multiple undergraduate and graduate student volunteers, requiring training and managing in the field in South Florida. Assist graduate students to develop field research projects in Costa Rica. Elementary School Lectures: Science as a career: Sunset Elementary, Frank C. Martin Elementary School Miami, FL, St Mary Gosety Catholic School, Downers Grove, IL. Herpetology Club president, 2003-2004.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (ASIH)-moderator 2000-2006
ASIH student presentation judge 2006
ASIH assist business meetings

AFFILIATIONS

American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists
Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles
Society of Economic Botany
South Florida Plant Biologists

MEDIA APPEARANCES

2004 PBS-WILD TV/Nature "Wildlife in the City"
<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/vtl07.la.rv.text.everglades/everglades-pig-frog-wild-tv/#.WZDsJVWGMnQ>
2005 NBC Evening News In depth (Florida Alligators)

REVIEWER

Wetlands (2005)
Journal of Herpetology (2006)

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed Articles

Herman, J.E., W. Brosse, Z.S. Stone**, M. Wolok, **C.U. Whelan**, K.R.T. Whelan, S. Clem, and M. Rumbach. 2015. Predation on *Amphiuma means* (Two-toed Amphiuma) and *Siren lacertina* (Greater Siren) by *Buteo lineatus* (Red-shouldered Hawk). Herpetological Review (submitted)

Savage, J., **Ugarte C.A.**, and Donnelly M.A. 2013. A New Species of Earless Toad (Bufonidae: *Incilius*) from Western Panama. Copeia. (1):8-12

Ugarte, C.A., Bass O.L., Nuttle W., Mazzotti F., Rice K.G., Fujisaki I, and K.R.T. Whelan. 2013. The influence of regional hydrology on nesting behavior and nest fate of the American alligator in Everglades National Park, USA. Journal of Wildlife. 77(1):192-199.

Ugarte, C.A., Rice K.G., and Donnelly M.A. 2007. Comparison of Diet, Reproductive Biology, and Growth of the Pig Frog (*Rana grylio*) from Harvested and Protected Areas of the Florida Everglades. *Copeia*.2:436-448.

Ugarte, C.A., and Briggs V. 2007. Natural History Note: *Hyla loquax* (Swamp tree frog) Predation. *Herpetological Review*. 38(2):186.

Donnelly, M.A., MacCulloch R.D., **Ugarte C.A.**, and Kizirian D.. 2006. A New Riparian Gymnophthalmid (Squamata) from Guyana. *Copeia* 3: 396–403.

Ugarte, C.A., Brandt L.A., Melvin S, Mazzotti F.J., and Rice K.G. 2006. Hurricane Impacts to Tree Islands in Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Florida. *Southeastern Naturalist* 5(4):737-746.

Ugarte, C.A., Rice K.G., and Donnelly M.A. 2005. Variation of Total Mercury Concentrations in Pig Frogs (*Rana grylio*) across the Florida Everglades, USA. *Science of the Total Environment*. 345:51-59.

Boback, S., Burroughs E., **Ugarte C.A.**, Watling J. 2000. Natural History Note: Boa constrictor diet. *Herpetological Review*. 31(4):275-276.

Proceedings

Ugarte, C.A. 1999. South Florida weeds and Mexican plants-friends or foes? In D.T. Jones and B.W. Gamble (Eds.) *Proceedings of a joint conference of the Florida exotic pest plant council and the Florida native plant society*. SFWMD, West Palm Beach Florida.

Technical Reports

Ugarte, C.A. 2007. Everglades National Park- Critical Ecosystem Studies Initiative (CESI) Report. Long-term (1985-2005) spatial and temporal patterns of American alligator nesting in Everglades National Park, Florida USA.

Ugarte, C.A., and Rice, K.G. 2000. Everglades National Park Annual Report. The ecology and mercury contamination of the pig frog, *Rana grylio*.

Book Reviews

Ugarte, C.A. 1998. Book review: Catálogo de plantas útiles de la Sierra Norte de Puebla, Mexico. Alfaro et al. Cuadernos 27. UNAM Mexico, D.F. *In Economic Botany*. vol. 52:432

Ugarte, C.A. 1997. Book review: Medical ethnobiology of the Highland Maya of Chiapas, Mexico. The Gastrointestinal Diseases. Eloise A. Berlin and Brent Berlin. *In Economic Botany*. Vol. 51:189

Ugarte, C.A., 1996. Book review: Ethnobotany: Evolution of a Discipline, edited by Richard E. Schultes and Siri Von Reis *In Economic Botany*. vol. 50:121.

Popular Literature

Ugarte, C.A., 1997. Purslane: an edible weed and Mexican tradition. *In Tropical Trails*. Miami Dade County Parks and Recreation. Miami, Florida

SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

Invited Speaker

Ugarte, C.A.. South Florida Reptiles and Amphibians. Florida International University. Invited speaker for Ecology of South Florida course: (EVR 3013). February, 2013.

Ugarte, C.A.. Twenty-one years of long-term monitoring (1985-2005) of the American alligator in Everglades National Park, Florida USA. NOVA Southeastern University, FL. Invited seminar speaker for Wetlands Ecology course (MEVS 5011). May, 2008.

Ugarte, C.A.. Gators and Hurricanes (not just football rivals) 21 years of long-term monitoring (1985-2005) of the American alligator in Everglades National Park, Florida USA. Invited speaker: University of Florida: The School for Natural Resources and the Environment Seminar Series. Gainesville, FL. February, 2006.

Poster and Oral Presentations

Ugarte, C.A., O.L. Bass Jr., F.J. Mazzotti, and K.G. Rice. 21 years of long-term monitoring (1985-2005) of the American alligator in Everglades National Park, Florida USA. Joint meeting of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. New Orleans, L.A. July 2006.

Ugarte, C.A., L.A. Brandt, S.Melvin, F.J. Mazzotti, D.Ogurcek, and K.G. Rice. Hurricane Impacts to Tree Islands in Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Florida. Greater Everglades Restoration Meeting. Lake Buena Vista, FL. June 2006.

Ugarte, C.A., O.L. Bass Jr., F.J. Mazzotti, and K.G. Rice. Long-term (1985-2005) temporal and spatial patterns of American alligator nesting in Everglades

National Park, Florida USA. Everglades National Park Seminar, South Florida Natural Resource Center, Homestead, FL. June, 2006.

Ugarte, C.A. and K.G. Rice. Using a Double Observer Method and Capture Recapture to Estimate the Abundance of *Rana grylio* Across South Florida Wetlands. 82nd annual Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. Manaus, Brazil. June, 2003.

Ugarte, C.A. and K.G. Rice. Abundance and Diet of *Rana grylio* Across South Florida Wetlands. Joint Conference on the Science and Restoration of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem and Florida Bay Ecosystem. Palm Harbor, Florida. April, 2003.

Ugarte, C.A. Fat body condition, diet variation and the reproductive cycle of the pig frog, *Rana grylio*, as a function of hydrology. Ecological Society of America. Tucson, Arizona. August, 2002.

Ugarte, C.A. Fat body condition, diet variation and the reproductive cycle of the pig frog, *Rana grylio*, as a function of hydrology. 81st annual Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. Kansas City, Missouri. July, 2002.

Ugarte, C.A. and K.G. Rice. Abundance estimation of Pig Frogs, *Rana grylio*, using a double observer approach. American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. College Park, Pennsylvania. July, 2001.

Ugarte, C.A. The effects of harvest and hydrology on pig frog populations from the south Florida wetlands. EPA STAR Fellowship annual conference. Washington D.C. July, 2001.

Ugarte, C.A. and K.G. Rice. The effects of harvest on pig frog populations from the Everglades. GEERS: Greater Everglades Ecosystem Restoration Meeting, Naples, FL. December, 2000.

AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND GRANTS

2024 -Teacher of the Year, at Biotech @Richmond Heights

2023-Costa Rica Teacher Experience with Fairchild Tropical Gardens

(2004-2006) 2-year Postdoctoral CESI Fellowship: National Park Service Science Fellowships in Everglades Restoration Ecology and the School of Natural Resources and the Environment, University of Florida. \$80,000

(2003) Florida International University Dissertation Year Fellowship. Florida International University. \$18,000

(2000-2003) Science to Achieve Results (STAR) MIA Fellowship #U91579701 United States Environmental Protection Agency. \$78,000

(1999) Organization for Tropical Studies/Peace Frogs. \$500.

(2000-1) Tropical Biology Program Grant, Florida International University. \$1000

(1995) Scholarship from the Pearce Memorial Fund, Florida International University, Department of Biological Sciences. \$500

(1993) Prince Fund Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.

REFERENCES

Nick Oehm
Associate Professor
STEM Transformation Institute
Florida International University
Tel:(305) 348-6839
Email:oehtm@fiu.edu

Jamie Anderson
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Gardens
Magnet Liason
Tel:(305) 669-4091
Email:Janderson@fairchildgarden.org

Hong Liu PhD
Assistant Professor,
Department of Earth and the Environment,
Florida International University and the
Center for Tropical Plant Conservation,
Fairchild Tropical Gardens
Tel: 305-348-6744
Email: hliu@fiu.edu



Exploring, Explaining and Conserving the World of Tropical Plants

February 21, 2024

Dear Selection Committee,

I am pleased to endorse Dr. Christina Whelan as a board member for the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program board. As an esteemed educator at BioTECH at Richmond Heights 9-12, Dr. Whelan brings an unparalleled depth of knowledge and a sincere dedication to the field of environmental education. Through her years of service, she has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to inspiring curiosity and fostering a deep appreciation for our natural world among her students.

Dr. Whelan's expertise in local ecosystems, coupled with her extensive background in education, uniquely positions her to make invaluable contributions to the discussions surrounding the purchasing of sensitive lands in Miami-Dade County. Her innovative teaching methods and hands-on approach have not only equipped her students with a comprehensive understanding of ecological systems but have also instilled in them a sense of responsibility for environmental stewardship.

Dr. Whelan's exceptional communication skills ensure that she will be a formidable asset to the board, facilitating inclusive and constructive dialogues around environmental conservation and sustainability. Her passion, expertise, and dedication to environmental education make her an exemplary candidate and this appointment would undoubtedly strengthen the board's capacity to safeguard and preserve our precious natural resources for future generations.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me should you require any further information or clarification regarding Dr. Whelan's qualifications or suitability for this esteemed position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Anderson".

Jamie Anderson
Magnet School Program Coordinator
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
P: 305.669.4091. E: Janderson@fairchildgarden