

My name is Jessi Stack. Before coming to Louisiana, I lived in California, Illinois, and Hawaii. It was a bit of a culture shock to move here. I learned quickly that there is no place quite like the South.

My love of the outdoors didn't spontaneously appear one day. I have always known the general direction of where I wanted to take my life. If it was green, if it was wild, if it was outside; I needed to know more about it.

I went to a boarding school in Natchitoches, LA where I dabbled in Botany and Animal Behavior. One of my professors even let me keep a garden behind the dorm. At the time, I didn't plan on staying in Louisiana. My intention was to move back to Illinois. But the college credit that would transfer from the boarding school to Tech was just too tempting.



I started at Louisiana Tech Fall 2013 and I met Dr. Jeffery Yule. A lot of students avoided his classes. But I loved thinking critically. Environmental Literature really opened my eyes. And then I read Sand County Almanac for the first time. Aldo Leopold is a genius.

I moved to take more hands-on classes on Louisiana Tech's South Campus. Never had I imagined that I would be able to take classes outside. But I did. After my first forestry class I couldn't get enough. And the professors were ready to challenge me. It was interesting to take forestry classes as an environmental science student. I often had different perspectives than my peers. They called me a hippie and a tree-hugger. But it didn't bother me. I just wanted to learn.

I didn't expect to enjoy GIS so much. Who knew maps are so interesting and that you can do so much with them! Mr. Wesley Palmer is a great professor. Thanks to him I got to help map the ponds on South Campus and I was available to assist Dr. Terri Maness when she needed a student to manage her Henslow's Sparrow data. I have been working on the Henslow's Sparrow project for over a year now and I have learned so much. I am so grateful to be a part of it.

Now, I am about to graduate. I will leave Louisiana Tech in May 2017 with a B.S. in Environmental Science and a double minor in Wildlife Habitat Management and Geographic Information Science. This year I lead a group of students to compete for Louisiana Tech at the Southeastern Wildlife Conclave for the first time in over a decade. I am also an ambassador for the School of Agriculture and Forestry where I have been recruiting as best I can. And now I am ready for my next challenge in Seattle, WA where I will start my new job and continue to represent Louisiana Tech University as my alma mater.