

Dynamic Trainee Engagement Enriching Community Outreach

Authors: Jaclyn Witterschein, Coastal Institute at the University of Rhode Island; Amber Neville, Coastal Institute at University of Rhode Island; with assistance from Laurel Schaidler, Silent Spring Institute; Emily Diamond, Departments of Communication Studies and Marine Affairs, University of Rhode Island



Sources, Transport, Exposure & Effects of PFAS
UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND SUPERFUND RESEARCH PROGRAM



STEEP Research Translation (RT) and Community Engagement Core (CEC) have broadly involved trainees in activities **beyond research**, seeking assistance with a wide range of STEEP **communications** as well as **ongoing engagement** with stakeholders, thus promoting **interdisciplinary experiences** and further encouraging solid **connections** and **community understanding** founded on **relationships** and **best available science**.



TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT



STEEP trainees worked closely with CEC to support community engagement with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe on Cape Cod, MA. The Tribe is located close to a military base with PFAS contamination of groundwater, raising concerns about PFAS exposures related tribal fishing and shellfishing practices.

- STEEP trainees led a half-day educational program as part of the Tribe's science summer camp, *Preserving Our Homeland*, for middle-school age Tribal youth. Trainees worked closely with CEC co-leads and members of the Tribe's Natural Resources Department to develop the program, which featured an overview of everyday exposures to PFAS and hands-on dynamic activities on topics such as PFAS fate and transport, bioaccumulation, and toxicity.
- A trainee also attended the Tribe's annual powwow to share resources and discuss concerns about PFAS contamination and exposures.



Justin Sankey, PhD student (URI) and trainee joined René LaPointe Jameson, research assistant at Silent Spring Institute, for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe's powwow on Cape Cod, MA. Pictured here with Jason Steiding, the Tribe's Natural Resource Director (center).

STEEP trainees introduced campers to the science of PFAS and chemicals in our everyday lives and environment, as part of *Preserving Our Homeland*, in Mashpee, MA.

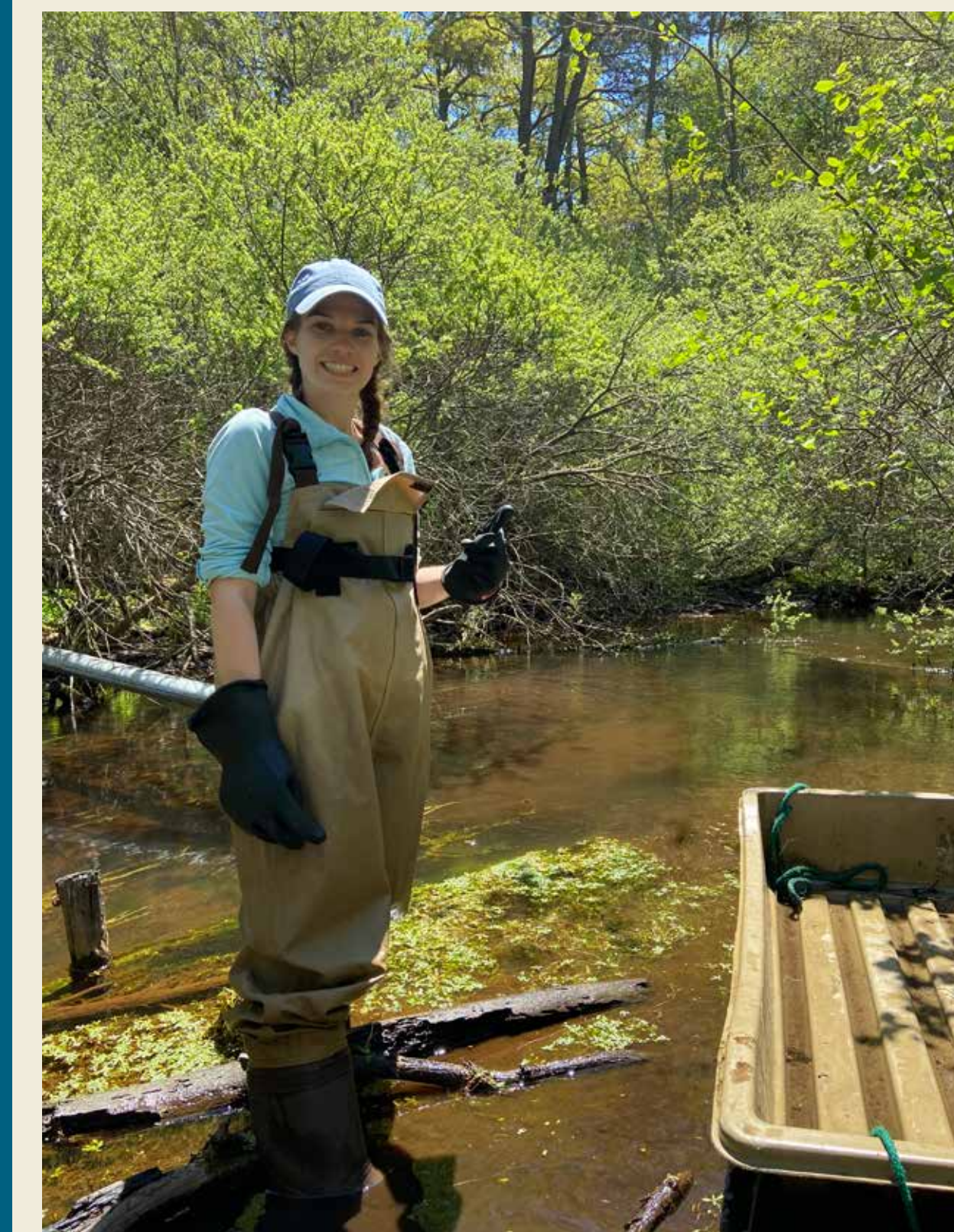


RESEARCH & SOCIAL MEDIA



In order to build trust and open space in which to develop comprehensive and interesting communications, STEEP RT has aligned with trainees to create products to educate, engage, and thoughtfully communicate research and activities.

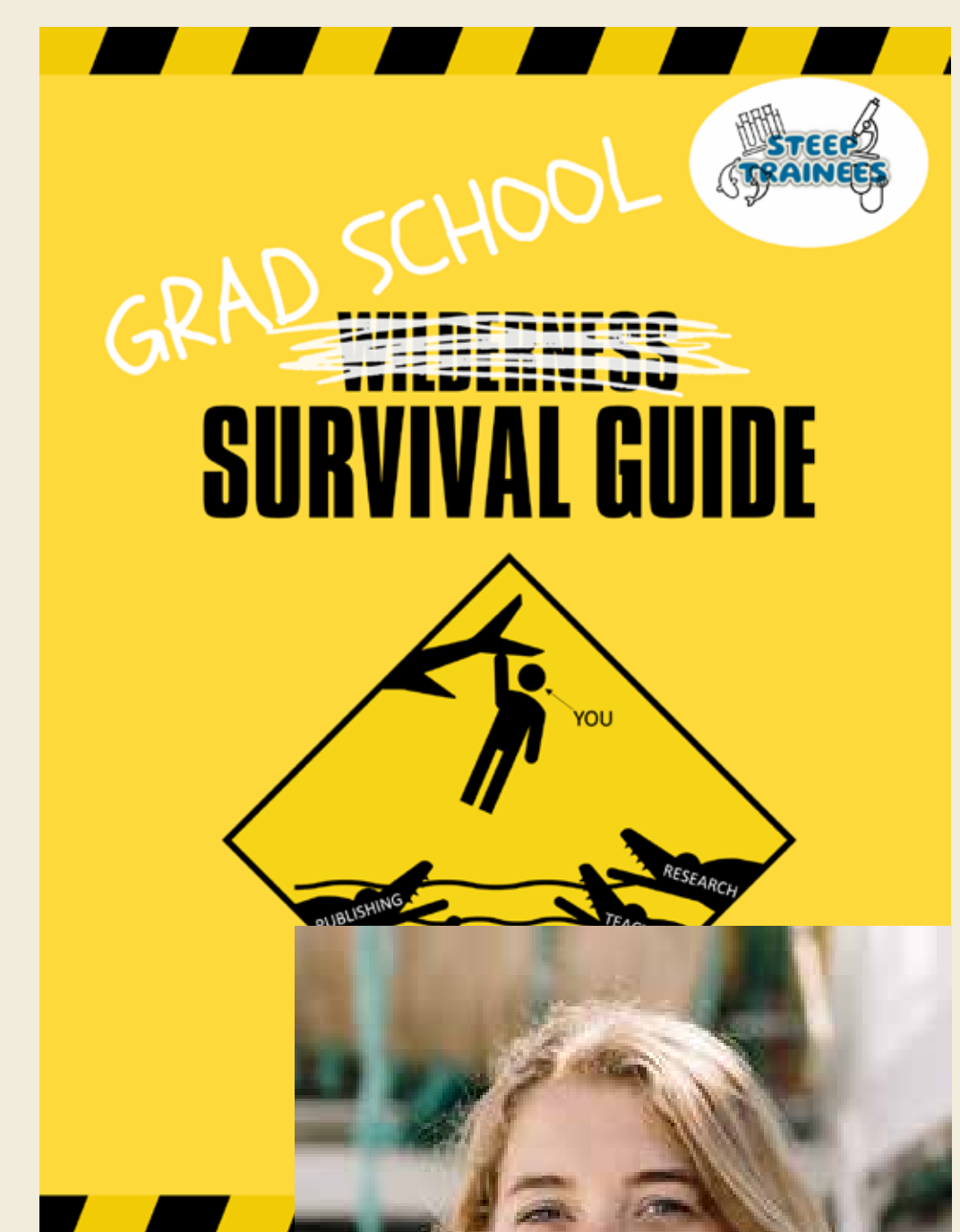
- Recently, trainee accomplishments have been the focus of STEEP features, newsletters, and other communications.
- Trainees have assisted with direct research translation of publications, written engaging op-eds around experiments and experiences, and created fresh content for STEEP social platforms.
- Establishing a formal partnership with the University of Rhode Island Harrington School of Communication and Media, CEC and RT co-organized innovative sci-comm training in augmented reality (DWELL Lab), risk communication, and visual rhetoric to help develop and expand messaging scope.



The social media prowess of Melissa Woodward, trainee and PhD candidate (URI), sparkles in witty social engagement as well as her writing. She recently launched *STEEP Trainee's Grad School Survival Guide*, a social media series that features funny anecdotes and practical tips for students.

Woodward also features STEEP research in *Trainee Tuesday*. Trainees like Jennifer Sun, PhD candidate (Harvard) introduce themselves, their research focus, and their path to the STEEP team.

Heidi Pickard, PhD candidate (Harvard) and STEEP trainee explained her research in an article featured in the STEEP newsletter: *Should we account for a broader range of PFAS in current fish consumption risk evaluations?*



STEEP RT and CEC continue to support trainee growth, strengthening their interdisciplinary skills as the future of science communication and outreach.

Trainees contribute significantly to the presence and character of STEEP in the world beyond the lab.



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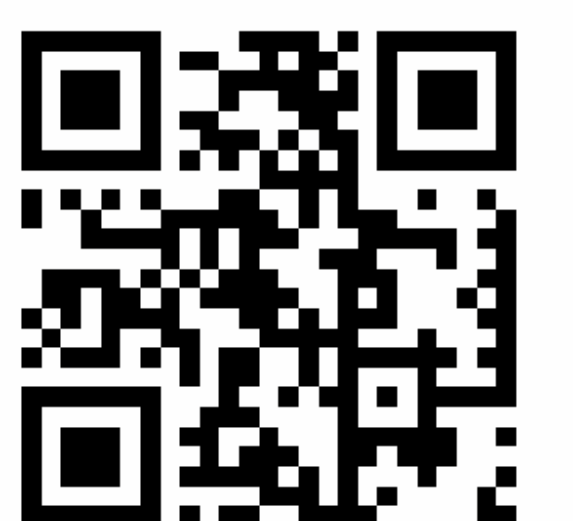
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