The goal of the Center for Integrative Conservation Research (CICR) is to engage in research and teaching on conservation and sustainability. We promote an integrative approach that utilizes insights and methodologies from across the social and ecological sciences.

Through our research, teaching, and support of the Integrative Conservation PhD Program (ICON), we seek to emphasize the social and ecological trade-offs that are associated with managing complex systems and responding to contemporary environmental challenges, and to engage with policy and practitioner communities to support effective and equitable solutions to these trade-offs.

THE INTEGRATIVE CONSERVATION PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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THE INTEGRATIVE CONSERVATION PHD PROGRAM AT UGA

Training agile scientists to address 21st century socio-ecological challenges
Real-world environmental problems do not conform to the disciplines found in universities. As we increasingly face issues of climate change, resource degradation, and poverty, we need new approaches both inside and outside of the university.

The Integrative Conservation (ICON) PhD program at UGA trains the next generation of environmental researchers and practitioners, providing students the knowledge to confront complex environmental challenges and the management and communication skills to work effectively across disciplinary boundaries with practitioners and with stakeholders.

The ICON program focuses on mentoring students to develop deep expertise in a particular area, broad exposure to other disciplines, and the ability to think integratively, drawing on necessary resources and combining them in effective ways.

ICON includes four disciplinary focuses; each one ensures that students receive rigorous theoretical and methodological training in a traditional discipline, while also working integratively at the intersections of multiple disciplines. ICON students do not just take courses in different departments; we have a core curriculum that trains them how to understand and integrate diverse disciplinary approaches:

- Integrative Conservation and Anthropology
- Integrative Conservation and Ecology
- Integrative Conservation and Forestry and Natural Resources
- Integrative Conservation and Geography

Through mechanisms such as internships and collaborative community research, students work with community members and conservation practitioners as partners and colleagues. These experiences, along with training modules led by communications experts, ensure that students learn to communicate effectively with those from other backgrounds and disciplines as well as with non-specialist audiences.

Examples of ICON students' research include:

Karen Allen, ICON and Anthropology
Karen's research focuses on the role of landowner values and economic incentives on land use decisions affecting forest conservation in the Bellbird Biological Corridor of Costa Rica.

Shannon Bonney, ICON and Ecology
Shannon's research explores interstate water management, especially during conditions of water scarcity, in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin.

Ryan Unks, ICON and Forestry and Natural Resources
Ryan's research addresses how social and ecological factors interact to shape semi-arid rangelands and influence the livelihoods of herders in central Kenya.

Dean Hardy, ICON and Geography
Dean seeks to identify and map the political ecology of vulnerabilities to sea-level rise along the Georgia coast.