



## Arial Shogren

### Researcher Background:

Arial Shogren is a stream ecosystem ecologist at The University of Alabama. Her lab studies the integrated “signals” that flowing waters carry as they move from land to water, and from upstream to downstream. Her lab uses perspectives and methods from stream ecology, biogeochemistry, and hydrology to address questions about the abiotic and biotic conditions that control how material is transported into and processed within freshwater networks.

### Q: How would you describe your science to a 5th grader?

A: Water that falls on the land as rain or snow flows downhill, and eventually can collect into streams and rivers. As it travels, it carries with it chemistry that it picks up as it moves through the landscape. My lab uses this unseen chemistry in stream water - things like dissolved nutrients and carbon - to tell a story about what is happening to the watershed upstream.



### Q: Why did you become a biologist?

A: I always loved being and working outside, and knew I wanted to have a career in some type of environmental science. I chose aquatic ecology because I had a great experience as an undergraduate research technician in a lab that studied stream biogeochemistry. That experience inspired me to go to graduate school for aquatic ecology.



### Q: What obstacles have you overcome to get where you are?

A: I'm the daughter of an immigrant (mom from Colombia), the first person in my family to pursue a

PhD and career in science. I am also part of a dual career couple - my partner is also in academia. If I am being honest, one of the most challenging obstacles that I faced was when I was starting out my undergraduate biology degree. While the professors at my college were absolutely wonderful and encouraging, the majority were white. I am Hispanic, so I did not see other professors that looked like me. I found it very challenging to "see" myself being successful in science. Thankfully, I was able to join the Instars program through The Society for Freshwater Sciences, which helped connect me to other underrepresented individuals that were pursuing careers in aquatic ecology! This helped reinforce my sense of belonging within a STEM field, and gave me more confidence in my ability to pursue a professorship after graduate school.



**Q: What are hobbies and/or interests that you have outside of your research?**

A: Outside of research, I love any activity that gets me outside - I especially love hiking, biking, camping, long-distance running, and paddling! I also love reading (mostly fiction), going to concerts, and spending time with my dogs and partner, Jamie.

**Q: Why is it important for scientists to have hobbies?**

A: I love my identity as a scientist, and a good deal of my research is reflected in my list of hobbies - especially my love for being outdoors. That being said, having hobbies outside of "work" is very grounding. It's too easy for your identity to get wrapped up in the cycles of academic success (winning grants, getting papers published, getting recognition) and failure (grant and paper rejections, failed experiments) that we experience as scientists, and take those personally. I try to think I'm more than just my productivity.



**Q: What advice do you have for aspiring biologists?**

A: If you're an aspiring biologist, even if you take on a research opportunity or class and you decide that topic is not for you, you likely still learned something that can be transferable to your next opportunity, and that's important. After my first research internship, I learned pretty quickly that I didn't want to be a soil scientist -- that experience proved my love for environmental science, taught me the importance of careful lab technique, and pushed me to explore more field research experience!