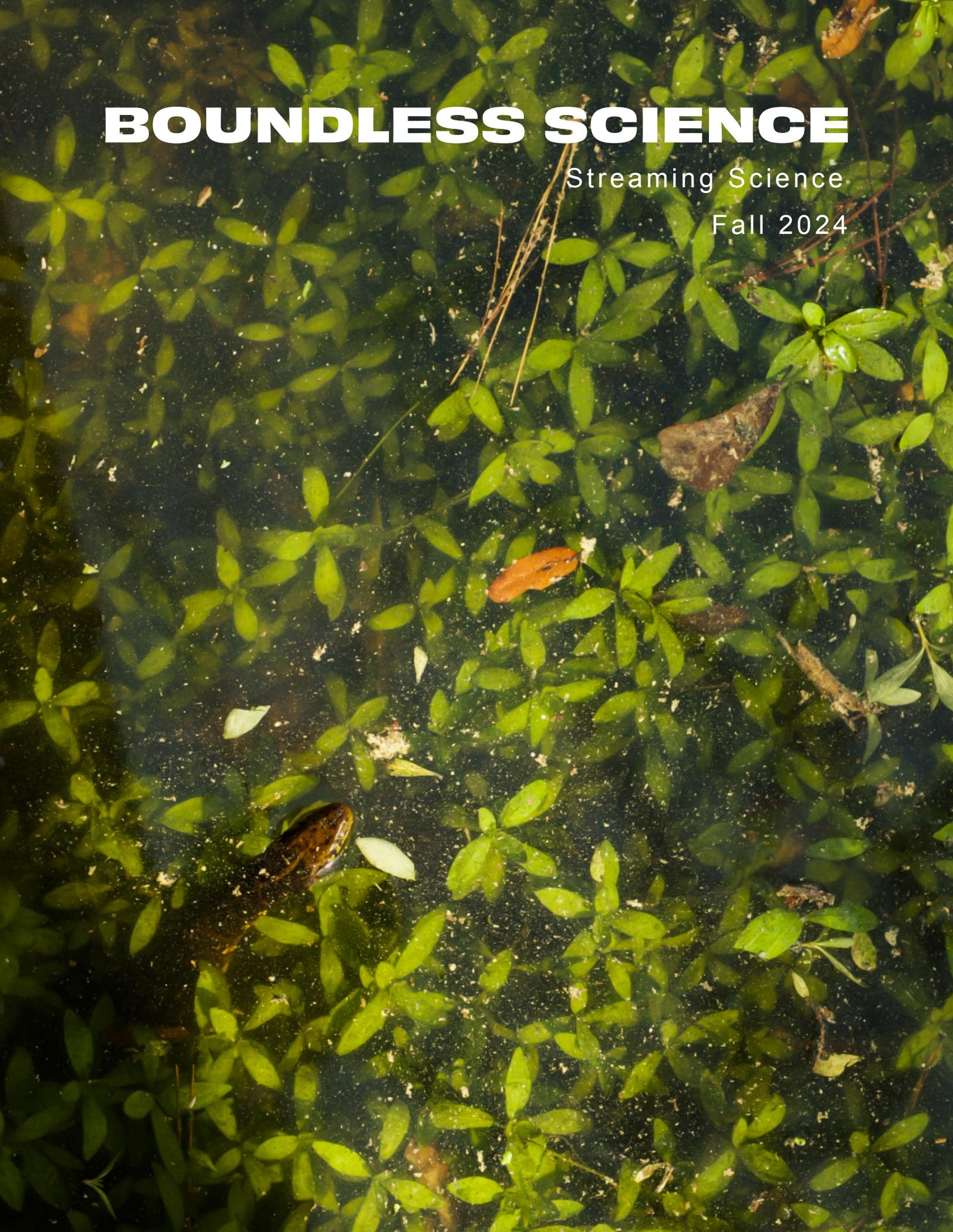# BOUNDLESS SCIENCE

Streaming Science

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CULTIVATING TOMORROW'S AGRICULTURALISTS

Noah Long

By: Jaley Moseley & Carson Willis

The interns at the University of Florida's (UF) Field and Fork Farm and Gardens are the backbone of the sustainable farming operation. As a way of addressing food insecurity on campus, the Field and Fork Farm and Gardens grow produce for the Alan and Cathy Hitchcock Field and Fork Pantry.

Noah Long, the farm manager, began his time at the farm as an intern. Joining the team in the Fall of 2022, Long found himself anticipating each shift more. In his current role, Long is working with the interns to share his excitement for the Field and Fork Farm and Gardens.

As farm manager, Long is responsible for making decisions regarding the farming operation and overseeing the intern program. The intern program cycles each semester, with twelve interns being present on the farm staff. After the completion of a semester, veteran interns are provided the opportunity to become leaders, and new applicants are hired on. Each semester, approximately three to four interns return, providing guidance to eight or nine new students.

A day at the farm starts at 8:30am when the morning shift staff arrives to begin their daily tasks. The morning shift is when most of the work gets done, as it is cooler. The crops are harvested, seedlings are planted, the beds are tended to, and many other tasks are completed.

In the afternoon, interns are responsible for finishing any tasks that the morning shift was unable to get done. The afternoon crew also spends time in the harvesting shed, washing, sorting, and preparing food for the pantry.

> "The work is so diverse that it's never really boring. It can be frustrating but it's never boring," Long said.

Any UF student is eligible to apply for a farm internship position. This semester the farm interns are from diverse backgrounds including journalism, horticultural sciences, and computer science majors. As farm manager, Long is hoping to maintain the diversity of the farm internship program, by spreading awareness of the farm internships across the university.

> "I want more non-CALS (College of Agricultural and Life Sciences) people to know this exists, to get involved, to see a farm," Long said.

Interns are a crucial aspect of the farm's innovations. An intern developed the method of using guano from the bat houses to make compost. This innovation led to the farm being more self-sufficient and sustainable. Combining the variety of interests and specialties that UF students have enables the farm to continually display cutting edge techniques.

Long suggests the lessons learned on the farm are valuable for everyone. He believes that the farm does a great job of establishing appreciation for the work that goes into producing food and teaching respect for the agricultural industry.

"Being able to work here at this little, small urban farm gives everyone a new perspective on things," Long said.

Long views his job as being the motivation for the interns. While anyone is capable of completing these tasks, it is often hard to get people excited. Long shared that inspiring the students at the beginning is a challenge; however, when they become invested they love the work.

Additionally, Long hopes there will be a second Field and Fork location closer to the student population. This farm would be focused on demonstration and food insecurity.

The farm is always looking to grow and involve new interns. Any UF student interested in pursuing an internship should visit the Field and Fork website at https://fieldandfork.ufl.edu/. Visiting the farm is always encouraged for both students and community members. Anyone with questions regarding the farm should contact Kelli Brew at kelliabrew@ufl.edu.

The Field and Fork Farm and Gardens provide an unmatched opportunity to become involved on campus. Joining the farm is a positive way to give back to the UF community. Please consider taking the time to participate in this one-of-a-kind experience.