

Cynthia Barnett

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Education

2004-2005: Knight-Wallace Fellow, University of Michigan, year-long journalism fellowship in freshwater resources.
2003: Master of Arts, American History, University of Florida, specialization in environmental history.
1989: Bachelor of Science, Journalism, University of Florida, with honors.

Academic

2017-present: Environmental Journalist in Residence, UF College of Journalism and Communications.
2018-2020: Environmental Fellow, The Bob Graham Center for Public Service.
2015-2016: Hearst Visiting Professional, UF College of Journalism and Communications.

Courses developed and taught: Environmental Journalism; Nature & Adventure Journalism; Science, Narrative and the Greater Good (with Ann Christiano); Civic Engagement/Environmental Justice; Environmental & Sustainability Leadership; and Viral Rhetoric, a skills course in op-ed writing, viral video and developing a TED talk.

Affiliate Faculty Member: Florida Climate Institute; Graham Center for Public Service; UF Water Institute.

Special PhD Advisor: {Current} Michael Munroe, Mass Communications, *Translating the story of Arctic change to distant audiences*. {Past} Jennifer Adler, Interdisciplinary Ecology, 2018, *Visual Ecology: Communicating springs science through conservation photography and environmental education*.

Professional practice

2005-present: Independent environmental journalist and author specializing in water and climate: Publishing popular books, and articles in *National Geographic*, the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Atlantic*, *Politico*, *The Tampa Bay Times*, *Orion* and others.

Books

In Progress: *The Sea Beneath Us: The Secret History and Coming Crisis of Groundwater*.

2021: *The Sound of the Sea: Seashells and the Fate of the Oceans* (W.W. Norton, New York) Nature's most-beloved object tells the story of our imperiled oceans in this natural and cultural history of seashells. Named a best science book of the year by the *Library Journal* and NPR's *Science Friday* and a best nonfiction book of the year by *Kirkus Reviews* and the *Tampa Bay Times*.

2015: *Rain: A Natural & Cultural History* (Crown-Random House, New York) The first history of rain. Longlisted, 2015 National Book Award. Finalist, 2016 PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award. Named a best science book of the year by NPR's *Science Friday* and a best book of the year by *Kirkus Reviews* and others.

2011: *Blue Revolution: Unmaking America's Water Crisis* (Beacon Press, Boston) Articulates a water ethic for America. A *Boston Globe* best science book of the year.

2007: *Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S.* (University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor) An environmental history of freshwater in Florida. Gold medal for best nonfiction, Florida Book Awards. Named by the *Tampa Bay Times* one of the top 10 books every Floridian should read.

Previous positions

1998-2012: Senior writer, *Florida Trend* magazine, St. Petersburg, Florida.

1996-1998: Senior reporter, *The News & Observer*, Raleigh, North Carolina

1988-1996: Reporter, columnist, metro editor, *The Gainesville Sun*, Gainesville, Florida

Selected student projects and awards

- **2022:** [Watershed](#), A special, Pulitzer Center-funded Environmental Journalism class series published on UF's public media WUFT investigating statewide water quality for the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Clean Water Act.
- **2021:** [Forever in Florida?](#) Environmental Journalism class series published on WUFT investigating so-called "Forever Chemicals" in Florida's freshwaters. **Awards:** (National) Student Marlowe Starling placed in the Hearst explanatory writing contest for her story "Indestructible" on PFAS and landfills.
- **2020:** [Barometer Florida](#), Bob Graham Center Civic Scholars project: Conceived and led the pilot year of this Knight Foundation-funded i-civics tool to benchmark key Florida issues. Oversaw 67 undergraduates' qualitative and quantitative research on the community impacts of climate change in Florida's 67 counties and its publication as an interactive public portal.
- **2020** [The Human Hazard](#), Environmental Journalism class series published on WUFT investigating public health and climate change in Florida. **Awards:** (National) Honorable mention, Outstanding Student Reporting, the Society of Environmental Journalists annual awards. (State, professional category) 2nd Place, best online package, SPJ's Sunshine State Awards. (State, college category) 3rd Place, best multimedia feature.
- **2018:** [Peak Florida](#), Environmental Journalism class series published on WUFT investigating the intersection of accelerating population growth and weakened growth-management laws in Florida. **Awards:** (National) 3rd Place, Society of Environmental Journalists Ray Reece Excellence in Environmental Journalism Student Awards; (Regional) 1st Place, in-depth reporting, Society of Professional Journalists Region 3 Mark of Excellence Awards; (State) Finalist, best video, student division, SPJ Sunshine State Awards.
- **2017:** [Energy Burden](#), Environmental Journalism class series investigating the intersection of poverty and energy in Gainesville, which has among the widest racial and economic inequity gaps among U.S. college towns. **Awards:** (Regional) Finalist, Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence Award for Online Depth Reporting; (State) 3rd Place, SPJ Sunshine State Award for digital package in the professional division.
- **2016:** [Blue Ether](#), Environmental Journalism class series investigating freshwater supply and quality. **Awards:** (State, professional category) Winner, James Batten Award for Public Service, Society of Professional Journalists Sunshine State Awards.

Selected fellowships, grants, and residencies

- 2022: Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting award to lead a statewide student water project spinning off the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act of 1972.
- 2020-2021 Florida Climate Institute Distinguished Faculty Fellow.
- 2020-present. National Science Foundation grant, "Significance of Ice-Loss to Landscapes in the Arctic: SILA (Inuit concept of the physical world and weather)." Member of the UF team researching arctic hydrology and climate change and how to translate its relevance to audiences at the mid-latitudes.
- 2019-present: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, "Coasts, Climates, the Humanities, and the Environment Consortium": Member of the UF team exploring the coasts and climate change via the environmental humanities.
- MTSU Free Speech Center 1 For All First Amendment grant, 2019: Won grant to develop [Science: Unsilenced](#), a campus-wide series of events highlighting free speech and censorship issues in climate and other sciences.
- McCormick Specialized Reporting grant, 2016: Won grant to train 30 professional journalists in freshwater and climate change reporting at the University of Florida.
- 2015-2016: Online News Association Challenge Grant: Member of UF team developing new engagement models for reporting on freshwater.

- Escape to Create Artist-in-Residence, 2014: One of ten U.S. artists and writers chosen for this mid-career residency in Seaside, Florida, to complete *Rain* manuscript.
- Florida Earth Foundation Holland Connection, 2010: Chosen as the journalist member to accompany a team of Southeastern U.S. scientists studying climate change and water issues in the Netherlands.
- Collins Center for Public Policy journalist's travel grant, 2010: Awarded a travel grant to Australia and Singapore to report for *Blue Revolution* and write the white paper "A Water Ethic for Florida."
- Knight-Wallace Fellow, University of Michigan, 2004-2005: One of 12 journalists selected for a year of intensive study, travel and research at U of M in Ann Arbor. Concentration in freshwater resources.

Professional memberships

- The Society of Environmental Journalists: Long-time volunteer, peer mentor program; conference panel organizer and speaker on freshwater issues and books; Everglades tour leader, SEJ annual conference.
- The National Association of Science Writers: NASW author panels. NASW annual conference tour leader, "Diving into North Florida's Springs and U.S. Water Issues."

Other selected service

- Co-founder and organizer, UF's annual campus-wide [Climate Communications Summit](#), 2015-present.
- Faculty Advisory Board, University Press of Florida. (UF's appointee to the State University System's u-press board)
- Chair, UF's Science Journalist in Residence Committee.
- Member, CJC Faculty Senate.
- Environmental Civics advisor, [UF Water Institute Graduate Fellows](#) cohort focused on global change in Greenland.
- Member, UF Water Institute Symposium Program Committee, 2018.
- Jurist, 2017 Society of Environmental Journalists' Rachel Carson Book Award.
- Jurist, 2016 National Book Awards, nonfiction category.
- National Board Member of the Earth Ethics Institute devoted to environmental literacy in higher education.
- Environmental storytelling instructor for numerous youth, college and teacher programs including: Summer 2021 and 2022 Gainesville Environmental Ambassadors; Summer 2021 CJC Summer Media Institute; 2020 National Endowment for the Humanities program for southwest Florida professors, teachers & museum directors on teaching water via the humanities; 2018 and 2017 Humanities and the Sunshine State Teaching Florida's Climate program (teachers); 2017 UF CJC Cuba study-abroad program (undergraduates); 2017 Humanities and the Sunshine State Florida Water Stories program (high schoolers); 2017 National Geographic Walking on Water project (elementary schoolers); 2016 Springs Ambassadors Camp (middle schoolers).

Selected professional awards and honors

- 2021: *The Sound of the Sea* named a best science book of the year by *Library Journal* and NPR's *Science Friday*, and a best nonfiction book of the year by *Kirkus Reviews* and *The Tampa Bay Times*.
- 2016: *Rain* named a finalist for the 2016 PEN/E.O. Wilson Literary Science Writing Award.
- 2015: *Rain* named a best science book of 2015 by NPR's *Science Friday*; a best book of 2015 by the *Boston Globe* and *Kirkus Reviews*; and a favorite book of 2015 by the *Miami Herald* and *Tampa Bay Times*.
- 2015: *Rain* longlisted for the 2015 National Book Award.
- 2015: *Rain* awarded the Gold medal in the Florida Book Awards for best general nonfiction.
- 2015: Named to Alumni Hall of Fame, UF College of Journalism and Communications.
- 2013: George M. Barley Award for reporting on Florida's environment.
- 2012: Marjory Stoneman Douglas Award for reporting on water issues.
- 2012: Awarded an honorary doctorate in Sustainability Studies, Unity College, Maine.
- 2011: *Blue Revolution* named a "Top 10 Science Book of 2011" by *The Boston Globe*.
- 2011: Sierra Club Indigo Award for reporting on Florida's environment.
- 2010: *Mirage* named one of the "Top 10 Books every Floridian should read" by *The St. Pete Times*.

- 2009: National Sigma Delta Chi Award: Investigative Magazine Reporting, for expose' on inspectors general firings.
- 2000-2009: Numerous Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Green Eyeshade Awards, which recognize outstanding journalism in the Southeastern states, and SPJ Sunshine State Awards, for outstanding Florida journalism, for investigative reporting; enterprise reporting; public affairs reporting; magazine writing
- National recognition, the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information, for one of the "Top 30 Freedom of Information stories of the past 30 years," for the 2000 highway contracting investigation *Road Racket*.

Selected popular articles on water and climate change:

- "Europe's Water Crisis is Much Worse Than We Thought," *National Geographic*, December 2022.
- "Why Seashells Are Getting Harder to Find on the Seashore," *National Geographic*, July 2022.
- "The Queen Conch's Gambit," *Hakai*, also published in *Wired* magazine, April 2022.
- "One of the World's Biggest Sea Snails at Risk of Extinction," *National Geographic*, April 2022.
- "Will Shell Oil's Future Outlast its Ocean Namesakes?" *The Los Angeles Times*, Dec 2021.
- "The History, Myth and Future of Giant Clams," *Atlas Obscura*, July 2021.
- "Why America's Water Wars are Futile," *The Tampa Bay Times*, April 2021.
- "The Nasty Political Fight Over the First Weather Forecasts," *Politico*, Sept 2019.
- "What Dorian Could Do: Hurricanes Galvanize Us to Action. Climate Change Can Too," *The Atlantic*, Aug 2019.
- "The Environmental Issue Republicans Can't Ignore," *The Atlantic*, Jan 2019.
- "Candidates short-sighted on climate change's long-term impacts," *Columbia Journalism Review*, Oct 2018.
- "Mysterious Glowing Clams Could Help Save the Planet," *The Atlantic*, feature on materials science research into the giant clams of Palau, Sept 2018.
- "Can the Caring Middle Save the Environment?" *The Los Angeles Times* Sunday Op-Ed, Aug 2018.
- "Can we engineer a way to stop a hurricane?" *National Geographic*, Oct 2017.
- "Nature isn't on a rampage. That would be us," *The Los Angeles Times* Sunday Op-Ed, Sept 2017.
- "Saving Our Seas," Feb 2017 cover story, *National Geographic*.
- "We may live in a post-truth era, but nature does not," *The Los Angeles Times* Sunday Op-Ed, Feb 2017.
- "Obama Creates Connecticut-Sized Ocean Park, Largest in the Atlantic," *National Geographic*, Sept 2016.
- "Hawaii is Now Home to an Ocean Reserve the Size of Texas," *National Geographic*, Aug 2016.
- "The Magic of Squeezing Water Out of the Sky, Zocalo Public Square, Feb 2016.
- "The Toil and Trouble of Climate Denial," *The Los Angeles Times* Sunday Op-Ed, Jan 2016.
- *The Weather Experiment* by Peter Moore, cover review, *The New York Times Sunday Book Review*, July 2015.
- "It's Not Just a 'California Drought,'" *The Los Angeles Times* Sunday Op-Ed, May 2015.
- "To Fight the Drought, L.A. Needs a Rain Revolution," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 2015.
- "Making Perfume from the Rain," *The Atlantic*, April 2015.
- Congress's Hare-Brained Scheme to Shoot Rain from the Skies, *Politico*, April 2015.
- "Clarity for Florida's Springs," *Discover* magazine, Feb 2015.
- "Hey, America: It's time to talk about the price of water," *Ensisia* magazine, Fall 2014.
- "Groundwater Wake-Up: A new view of global groundwater reveals urgent need to reverse depletion," *Ensisia*, Fall 2013.
- "Water Works: Communities Reimagine Ways of Making Every Drop Count," Summer 2013 cover story, *Orion*.
- America's Illusion of Water Abundance, *The Los Angeles Times* Sunday Op-Ed, Nov 2012.
- "Toward A Water Ethic," cover story, *Tampa Bay Times* Sunday Perspective section, June 2011.
- "A Water Ethic for Florida," white paper, first printing (10,000 copies) in 2010 by the Collins Center for Public Policy, second printing (16,000 copies) in 2014 by Barry University Center for Earth's Jurisprudence.

Selected invited lectures and keynotes

- July 2022, "Water Ethics and Challenges to Water Conservation," Jockey Club International Symposium on Water Sustainability 2022, University of Hong Kong. (Virtual.)

- June 2022, “Connected Coastlines: Bringing Stories Home,” Pulitzer Center 2022 Annual Conference, Washington D.C. Led the local climate change reporting panel at this year’s Pulitzer conference, built around reporting the climate crisis.
- April 2022, “The Sound of the Sea: Seashells and the Fate of the Oceans,” University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, “Sea Secrets,” lecture series, Key Biscayne, Florida.
- March 2022, “The Urgency of Water: Women, Climate and Sustaining the World,” Special World Water Day Program for Barnard College, New York.
- March 2022, “Listening to Lead Ethically: The Power of Listening in Environmental Change,” Clemson University, South Carolina.
- October 2021, “The Nature Conservancy: Women in Climate,” national webinar with Dr. Katharine Hayhoe, Nadege Green and Alex Harris, virtual.
- July 2021, “The Sound of the Sea: What seashells can tell us about the changing oceans and ourselves,” special community program for ReMAIN Nantucket’s Envision Resilience project, 1st Congregational Church of Nantucket.
- Feb 2020: “Water as a Bond, in the Humanities and Beyond,” NEH program on teaching water through the humanities, South Florida State College, Sebring.
- Nov 2019, “Rain: A History for Stormy Times,” keynote address, AWWA Water Quality Technology Conference, Ross Perot Museum of Nature and Science, Dallas.
- April 2019, “Blue Revolution: A Water Ethic for Florida and America,” Florida Humanities Council speakers’ series, WSRE Public Square, Pensacola State College.
- March 2019, “Can We Handle the Truth?” Journalists Panel, 10-X Water Summit, Arizona State University.
- March 2019, “Practicing the Craft: Covering Water and Public Awareness About Land and Water Connections,” Lincoln Land Institute 2019 Journalists Forum, “The Future of Water: Lessons from the Colorado River Basin,” Phoenix.
- March 2018, “Telling Earth’s Story: How can the visual arts, journalism and scientific practice intersect to tackle environmental issues?” Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas.
- Feb 2018: “Rain: A History for Stormy Times,” Seattle University Search for Meaning Festival, Seattle.
- Nov 2017, Community and Campus One-Book Program: “Blue Revolution: A water ethic for America and Kansas,” Hesston College and Hesston Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kansas.
- Oct 2017, [TED talk](#), TEDx Jacksonville, “Rain: A history for stormy times.”
- June 2017, “Understanding the Environmental Stakes,” National Press Foundation, Washington, D.C.
- April 2017, “Nature as Truth in a Post-Truth World,” Earth Day keynote, Cal State Northridge, Los Angeles.
- Feb 2017, “Rain: A Natural & Cultural History,” NASA Earth Sciences Division speaker series, Washington D.C.
- Nov 2016, Featured speaker, Baruch College Climate Change Seminar Series, New York, NY.
- Oct 2016, Keynote speaker, Kent State University, 4th Annual Kent State Water and Land Symposium, Ohio.
- Jan 2016, Keynote speaker, California Irrigation Association, Sacramento.
- Oct 2015, organizer and moderator, “Climate Literature and Lessons from the Great Plains,” Society of Environmental Journalists’ 25th annual conference, National Weather Center, Norman, OK.
- Sept 2015, Featured speaker, “Escape to the Clouds,” The Royal Geographical Society, London.
- Sept 2015, Keynote speaker, the International RiverSymposium, Brisbane, Australia.
- April 2015, Keynote speaker, Water Ethics: An Interdisciplinary Conference, Viterbo University, La Crosse, Wisconsin.
- Oct 2014, Keynote speaker, Xavier University Campus Sustainability Day, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- May 2014, Featured presentation, “Freshwater Literacy for Florida K-12 STEM teachers,” FSU Florida Center for Research in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics annual STEM Conference.
- Feb 2014, Keynote, “Drought as Opportunity for Change,” Xeriscape Council of New Mexico.
- Feb 2014, closing plenary, “The Role of Political Leadership in Fostering a FL Water Ethic,” UF Water Institute Symposium.
- Feb 2014, speaker, “Putting Faith in a Water Ethic,” UF frank gathering for public-interest communications.
- Jan 2014, Wallace Stegner Lecture, S.J. Quinney College of Law, University of Utah.
- Nov 2013, Tour leader, “Diving into North Florida’s Springs and U.S. Water Issues,” National Association of Science Writers annual meeting, University of Florida.
- Oct 2013, Water book authors panel, NAWC Water Summit, San Diego, California.
- Sept 2013, Panelist, “Disrupt Florida: Water,” Sayfie Review Florida Leaders Summit, Orlando.
- May 2013, Keynote speaker, SRCAP “Water is Life Conference 2013,” Roanoke, Virginia.

- March 2013, Author keynote, “Summit County Reads!” Community-wide read of *Blue Revolution*, Summit County, Colorado.
- March 2013, Keynote, “Water and Florida’s Future,” Lou Frey Institute Spring Symposium, UCF, Orlando.
- Feb 2013, Featured speaker, Horizons 2013 Spring Lecture Series, Tallahassee Scientific Society.
- Jan 2013, Featured speaker, Florida Lecture Series, Lawton M. Chiles Jr. Center for FL History, Florida Southern.
- Dec 2012, Featured speaker, Environmental Science Lecture Series, University of Michigan-Dearborn.
- Nov 2012, Visiting lecturer at the University of Oklahoma in Norman and Oklahoma State University in Stillwater.
- Nov 2012, Keynote speaker, Oklahoma Governor’s Water Conference, Tulsa, Oklahoma.
- Sept 2012, Keynote speaker, Palouse Basin Water Summit, Moscow, Idaho.
- June 2012, Featured speaker, Unitarian Universalist General Assembly 2012, Phoenix, Arizona.
- May 2012, [Commencement address on the Caring Middle](#), Unity College, Unity, Maine.
- March 2012, Featured speaker, Charlottesville World Water Day 2012, Charlottesville, Virginia.
- March 2012, Unitarian Universalist Get Together, launching national faith-based read of *Blue Revolution*, Boston.
- Feb 2012: [William J. Clinton Distinguished Lecture](#), Clinton School of Public Service, University of Arkansas.
- Feb 2012, Keynote speech, “The Secret Watershed: Restoring History and Nature in a Lost Landscape,” Sarasota Bay Watershed Symposium, New College, Sarasota.
- Feb 2012, TED Talk, “The Hypertext of Water,” TEDxUF 2012, University of Florida.

Selected radio interviews and podcasts

(Additional interviews and podcasts, book reviews and other press coverage available [at this link.](#))

- [With Ira Flatow on Science Friday](#), July 2021.
- [With Benji Jones on Vox Conversations](#), July 2021.
- [With Alexis Madrigal on San Francisco’s KQED Forum](#), July 2021.
- [With Michael Kransy on San Francisco’s KQED Forum](#), January 2016.
- [With Tom Ashcroft on Boston’s WBUR](#), April 2015.

Selected stories about my work

- [“The Water Whisperer,”](#) by Barbara Drake, *UF Today*, Fall 2021. (UF’s alumni magazine.)
- [“In Days of Social Distancing, Getting the Goods Virtually,”](#) by Cynthia Barnett, *The Society of Environmental Journalists’ EJ Academy*, April 15th 2020.
- [“Environment Writer Interviews: Cynthia Barnett,”](#) By Sarah Boon, *Watershed Moments*, August 2015.
- [“Between the Lines: Making Rain for the Caring Middle,”](#) by Tom Henry, *The Journal of the Society of Environmental Journalists*, June 2015.