**Riley Pizza**

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**Professional Appointments**

Sept. 2025-Present **Postdoctoral Research Associate** – Arizona State University (ASU)

An Exploration of Science Faculty Motivation in Providing Student Disability Accommodations

*PI:* Dr. Sara Brownell

April-Sept. 2025 **Postdoctoral Research Associate** – Michigan State University (MSU)

Management factors influencing the natural recolonization of pine savanna indicator species into restored landscapes

*PI:* Dr. Lars Brudvig

**Education**

2020 - 2025 **Doctor of Philosophy** – Michigan State University

*Department:* Plant Biology & Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior (dual degree)

*Thesis:* Testing if Non-local Seed Provenancing Strategies can Meet Restoration Goals

*Advisor:* Dr. Lars Brudvig

2017 - 2020 **Master of Science** – University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD)

*Department:* Integrative Biosciences

*Thesis:* The Effects of Cultivation on Seed for Restoration

*Advisor:* Dr. Julie Etterson

2012 - 2016 **Bachelor of Arts** – Kalamazoo College

*Department:* Biology (major) and English (minor)

*Thesis:* Microclimate effects of the Germination of Pitchers Thistle

*Advisor:* Dr. Binney Girdler

**Publications**

**Published/ In press**

Pizza, R., Turley, N., Brudvig, L. (2025) Relative effects of seed mix design, consumer pressure, and edge proximity on community structure in restored prairies. *Ecological applications,* 35(1), e3083.

Etterson, J., Fliehr, P., Pizza, R., Gross., B. (2025) “Domestication during restoration: Unintentional selection during eight generations of wild seed propagation reduces herkogamy, dichogamy, and genetic diversity in *Clarkia pulchella*. *Molecular ecology,* e17655.

Smith, O., Davis, K., Waterman, R., Pizza, R., Dobson, K., Foster, B., ... & Davis, C. (2024). Journals must expand access to peer review data. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution.*

Smith, O., Davis, K., Pizza, R., Waterman, R., Dobson, K., Foster, B., ... & Davis, C. (2023). Peer review perpetuates barriers for historically excluded groups. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, 1-12.

Pizza, R., Foster, J., & Brudvig, L. (2023). Where should they come from? Where should they go? Several measures of seed source locality fail to predict plant establishment in early prairie restorations. *Ecological Solutions and Evidence,* 4(2), e12223.

Pizza, R., Espeland, E., & Etterson, J. (2021). Eight generations of native seed cultivation reduces plant fitness relative to the wild progenitor population. *Evolutionary applications*, 14(7), 1816-1829.

**Teaching Experience**

Summer 2025 Graduate Teaching Assistant- Field Ecology Lab (UM)

Fall 2024 Instructor of Record-Ecology Lecture (MSU)

Spring 2024 Graduate Teaching Assistant–Organismal and Population Biology (MSU)

Fall 2023 Graduate Teaching Assistant- Honors Organismal Biology Laboratory (MSU)

Summer 2023 Graduate Teaching Assistant-Field Ecology Lab (University of Michigan; UM)

Spring 2023 Graduate Teaching Assistant–Organismal and Population Biology (MSU)

Fall 2022 Graduate Teaching Assistant–Plants of Michigan (MSU)

Summer 2022 Graduate Teaching Assistant –Plant Systematics (MSU)

2021-2022 Graduate Teaching Assistant – Organismal Biology Laboratory (MSU)

2019-2020 Graduate Teaching Coordinator – Biology in Society (UMD)

Fall 2019 Graduate Teaching Assistant – Ecology Laboratory (UMD)

2017-2019 Graduate Teaching Assistant – Biology in Society (UMD)

**Certifications**

June 2024 Certificate in College Teaching, MSU

**Students Mentored**

2023-2025 Sean Ward, MSU research student

2023-2024 Sara Moledor, MSU Plant Biology Peer Mentorship Program

2022- 2023 Lourdes Lopez, MSU Plant Biology Peer Mentorship Program

Summer 2022 Dani Gafford, MSU REU student

2021-2022 Maya Wilson Brown, MSU Plant Biology Peer Mentorship Program

2018-2019 Devon Theis, UMD BURST student

2018-2019 Anna Hall, UMD BURST student

Summer 2017 Sydni Farniok, UMD Research Assistant

**Awards and Fellowships**

2025 Department of Plant Biology Paul Taylor Travel Award $1,000

2025 Bessey Award for Best Publication $750

2025 MSU EEB Professional Horizons Fellowship $500

2025 Department of Plant Biology Fellowship $2,769

2025 MSU Ecology, Evolution and Behavior Immersion fellowship $15,000

2024 MSU College of Natural Science Excellence in Teaching Citation $1,000

2024 EEB Notable Dissertation Lecturer $500

2024 Department of Plant Biology Paul Taylor Travel Award $1,100

2024 MSU Outstanding Graduate Student award $7,500

2024 Department of Plant Biology Triemer fellowship *(declined)* $7,500

2024 Department of Plant Biology Fields teaching award $750

2024 EEB Symposium “best poster presentation” award $50

2024 MSU Excellence-in-Teaching citation $1,000

2023 MSU Graduate School KBS Summer Research Fellowship $1,300

2023 Don Hall Fellowship in Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior $4,750

2023 Bessey award for outstanding graduate researcher in plant biology $750

2023 EEB Professional Horizon Fellowship $500

2023 Department of Plant Biology Paul Taylor Travel Award $1,400

2022 ESA Restoration Poster Contest winner $300

2022 Department of Plant Biology Paul Taylor Travel Award $1,600

2022 Out to Innovate Graduate Research Fellowship $3,500

2022 Supplemental MSU Plant Science Fellowship $2,800

2022 Kellogg Biological Station George H. Lauff Scholarship Fund $1,250

2022 T. Wayne & Kathryn Porter Graduate Fellowship $1,000

2022-2023 MSU Future Academic Scholars in Teaching fellowship $5,000

2021 MSU Graduate School KBS Summer Research Fellowship $1,350

2021 Supplemental MSU Plant Science Fellowship $3,000

2020-2021 Michigan State University Plant Science Fellowship $30,000

2020 UMD Graduate Student Teaching Assistant Award $500

2018 Sigma Xi Grant in Aid of Research $1,000

2018 Garden Club of America Ecological Restoration Fellowship $8,500

**Presentations**

2025 Ecological Society of America conference, Baltimore MD.

2025 SABER conference, Minneapolis MN

2025 Dissertation Seminar, MSU

2024 Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Notable Dissertation Lecture, MSU

2024 SABER conference, Minneapolis MN.

2024 Botany Conference, Grand rapids MI.

2024 Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Symposium, MSU

2024 Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Colloquium Series, MSU

2023 Ecological Society of America conference, Portland OR.

2023 Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Symposium, MSU

2023 FAST fellows symposium, MSU

2022 Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Colloquium Series, MSU

2022 Ecological Society of America conference, Montreal, BC.

2022 Dissertation proposal seminar, MSU

2021 Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Colloquium Series, MSU

2021 Transgender Day of Visibility Research Symposium, MSU

2020 Swenson College of Science and Engineering Seminar Series, UMD

2019 Botany Conference, Tucson, AZ.

2019 Climate Futures Conference, UMD

2018 Botany Conference, Rochester MN.

2018 Midwest Ecology and Evolution Conference, Kalamazoo MI.

**Leadership and Department Service Work**

2023-2025 Plant Biology Graduate Student Organization Co-president

2023-2024 Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Program Symposium Co-Organizer

2022-2025 STEM Education Journal Club co-leader

2022-2023 Plant Biology Graduate Program Graduate Committee Representative

2021-2023 Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Program Recruitment Liaison

2021-2023 QT-Grad Secretary

2021-2024 Plant Biology Graduate Student Peer Mentor

Spring 2021 Ecology Evolution and Behavior Research Symposium Committee Member

2019-2020 Integrative Biosciences/ Water Resources Program Art Show Organizer

2019-2020 University of Minnesota Duluth STEM Discovery Day Planning Committee

**Educational Outreach Activities**

Oct. 2024 University of Michigan Restoration Club Seminar, Ann Arbor Mi

Aug. 2024 MSU Plant Biology Undergraduate colloquium

July 2023 Biology on Tap, Bath MI.

Mar. 2023 Trans & Gender-diverse patients’ panelist for MSU OM students

Feb. 2020 Northern Minnesota Regional science fair judge

Aug. 2020 Arrowhead Regional Corrections Outreach activities

May 2019 Lake Superior Research Symposium volunteer

May 2019 Swenson Science and Engineering Day volunteer

May 2019 Lakewood Elementary Environmental Education Day Volunteer

April 2019 University of Minnesota Duluth STEM Discovery Day Volunteer

March 2019 North Star Academy Science Fair Judge

Feb. 2019 Northern Minnesota Regional Science Fair Judge

Dec. 2018 Copper Elementary Outreach Activities

July 2018 Geology of Minnesota Lester Park Summer Camp Volunteer

May 2018 Duluth Elementary Schools Science on Deck Volunteer

May 2018 Lakewood Elementary Environmental Education Day Volunteer

Feb. 2018 Northern Minnesota Regional Science Fair Judge

Feb. 2018 Northern Minnesota Regional Science Fair Judge

**Professional Organizations**

2023-Present Society for the Advancement of Biological Education Research (SABER)

2021-Present Ecological Society of America

2017-Present Out to Innovate

2023-2024 British Ecological Society

2020-2024 Botanical Society of America

**Journals Reviewed For**

Restoration Ecology

The American Biology Teacher

Journal of Applied Ecology

Native Plants Journal