

Thomas C. Gifford

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in LinkedIn

Education

Colorado State University <i>Ph.D. in Economics</i>	<i>Aug 2021 – May 2026 (expected)</i>
University of Denver <i>M.A. in Economics</i>	<i>Aug 2019 – May 2021</i>
Colorado College <i>B.A. in Economics</i>	<i>Aug 2014 – May 2018</i>

Research Areas

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- Primary: Applied Microeconomics, Environmental Economics, Behavioral Economics
 - Secondary: Clean Energy Policy, Public Policy, Regional Economic Development

Dissertation

Title: *Essays on Wildfires, Electric Vehicles, and Regional Economic Impacts*

Chapters:

- *Long-Term Effects of Large Wildfires on Tourism Spending in Colorado*
- *The Role of Charging Infrastructure and Income on Electric Vehicle Adoption*
- *Wildfire and Water Quality Violations in Colorado*

Committee: Edward B. Barbier (Chair), Jude Bayham, Anders Fremstad, Anita Pena

Expected Completion: May 2026

Professional Experience

2023–Present: Center for the New Energy Economy (CNEE) — Graduate Research Intern

- Assist in preparing, organizing, and running the Clean Energy Legislators Academy, an annual bipartisan forum for state legislators to share best practices on clean energy policy.
- Research state-level energy legislation and co-author policy briefs on topics including public safety power shutoffs, regional energy markets, and clean energy portfolios.
- Help maintain the SPOT and Tracker databases, public tools that monitor clean energy legislation across states.

2019–2021: Mindfish Test Prep, Denver, CO — SAT/ACT Tutor (Part-Time)

- Provided individualized instruction to high school students preparing for standardized tests, helping dozens achieve significant score improvements.
- Led small-group sessions and one-on-one tutoring in math, reading, and writing; also provided AP exam support in economics, literature, and chemistry.

2018–2019: OnDeck Capital, Denver, CO — Loan Operations Analyst

- Verified bank information, confirmed payoffs with other lenders, and managed administrative tasks.

Honors and Awards

2025: Recipient of the Stephan Weiler Award for Research Excellence in Regional and Rural Development, North American Regional Science Council

2025: Diana Wall Sustainability Leadership Fellowship, School of Global Environmental Sustainability, Colorado State University.


2024: Ozawa Graduate Scholarship - Department of Economics, Colorado State University
2021-2024: Graduate Teaching Assistant - Department of Economics, Colorado State University
2024-2026: Graduate Teaching Instructor - Department of Economics, Colorado State University
2019-2021: College of Liberal Arts Graduate Scholarship, University of Denver

Published Works

Refereed Journal Articles

Gifford, T.C. and Barbier, E.B. *Commuting time, charging infrastructure, and electric vehicle adoption for sustainable transportation: A case study of Washington State*. *Sustainability*, Accepted October 24, 2025.

Refereed Reports

Gifford, T.C. and Barbier, E.B. "Battle Scars: Trends in Wildfire Size and Impact across Colorado." *REDI Report*, Regional Economic Development Institute (REDI), Colorado State University, March 2025.
<https://csuredi.org/redi-reports/battle-scars-trends-in-wildfire-size-and-impact-across-colorado/> 

Submitted Journal Articles

Gifford, T.C. and Barbier, E.B. *The Role of Charging Infrastructure and Income on Electric Vehicle Adoption*. *Energy Policy*, R&R.

Working Papers

Long-Term Effects of Large Wildfires on Tourism Spending in Colorado (with Edward Barbier and Jude Bayham)
Fire and Water: Long-Term Economic Impacts of Wildfire on Local Drinking Water Quality
Effectiveness of State Incentive Programs at Increasing Electric Vehicle Adoption: A Behavioral Perspective
Understanding the Effects of Legalized Mobile Sports Betting on Mental Health (with Luke Maddock)

Invited Talks and Conference Presentations

2025

- *Long Term Effects of Large Wildfires on Tourism Spending in Colorado* (Winner, Stephan Weiler Award for Research Excellence in Regional and Rural Development) — 72nd Annual North American Meetings of the Regional Science Association International, Denver, CO, [November 13, 2025].
- *Long Term Effects of Large Wildfires on Tourism Spending in Colorado* — Department of Economics Seminar Series, Colorado State University, [October 24, 2025].
- *Long Term Effects of Large Wildfires on Tourism Spending in Colorado* — Western States Graduate Workshop, Fort Collins, CO, [October 4, 2025].
- *Electric Relaxation: Range Anxiety and EV Charging Infrastructure* — Front Range Energy Camp, Boulder, CO, [April 16, 2025].
- *Fire on the Mountain: Estimating the Impact of Wildfires on Tourism Spending in Colorado* — University of Wyoming and Colorado State University Joint PhD Research Seminar, Fort Collins, CO, [February 28, 2025].

2024

- *Spatial Determinants of EV Adoption in Washington* — 94th Annual Meeting of the Southern Economic Association, Washington, D.C., [November 25, 2024].
- *Economic Impact of Wildfire on Local Communities* — Brown Bag Seminar, Department of Economics, Colorado State University, [October 28, 2024].
- *Determinants of EV Demand in Washington* — Western States Graduate Workshop, Salt Lake City, UT, [September 28, 2024].

- *Determinants of EV Demand in Washington* — Center for the New Energy Economy Research Team Presentation, Denver, CO, [January 17, 2024].

2023

- *Cost Effectiveness of State Plug-in Electric Vehicle Incentives* — Western States Graduate Workshop, Fort Collins, CO, [October 4, 2023].
- *Behavior and the Evolution of Economic Thought: Implications for Environmental Sustainability* — Brown Bag Seminar, Department of Economics, Colorado State University, [March 6, 2023].

2022

- *An Investigation into the Role of Behavior in the History of Economic Thought and its Repercussions on Environmental Sustainability* — Western States Graduate Workshop, Salt Lake City, UT, [September 30, 2022].

Teaching Experience

Primary Instructor

- **2024–2026:** ECON 202: Principles of Microeconomics (x6); Colorado State University
 - Designed and delivered lectures, created assignments, and evaluated student performance.
 - Led multiple large sections of Principles courses, overseeing 200–350+ students while ensuring efficient, accessible, and equitable instruction.
 - Taught accelerated online sections of ECON 202 during the summers of 2024 and 2025, adapting course materials and engagement strategies for a condensed virtual format.

Teaching Assistant

- **2021–2024:** Principles of Microeconomics (x6), Behavioral Economics (x2); Colorado State University
 - Led recitation sessions, provided grading support, and assisted students during office hours.
 - Delivered guest lectures as needed and filled in for the primary instructor during scheduled absences.
 - Designed and facilitated in-class experiments in Behavioral Economics to illustrate key concepts and encourage active learning.

Guest Lectures






- **ECON 316: Behavioral Economics** (Fall 2023), Colorado State University Delivered two lectures covering hyperbolic discounting, the role of salience in decision making, and the endowment effect.
- **ECON 101: Economics of Social Issues** (Fall 2024), Colorado State University Gave a guest lecture on the legalization of sports gambling and its potential effects on young people.

Professional Memberships and Skills

North American Regional Science Council, American Economic Association, Southern Economic Association, American Clean Power Association, Solar Energy Industries Association

- **Coding:** R, Stata, L^AT_EX

Media

- *Why wildfires are getting larger, more unpredictable in Colorado*, **CBS4 Denver**, feature interview, September 2025. [Link](#) 
- *Report finds Colorado wildfires are larger, more frequent and increasingly unpredictable*, **Denver7**, TV segment, August 2025. [Link](#) 
- *Colorado wildfires are bigger, burning faster*, **Colorado Public Radio (CPR News)**, featured as expert, August 29, 2025. [Link](#) 
- *Report: Colorado wildfires bigger, more frequent*, **Kiowa County Press**, interview, August 2025. [Link](#) 
- *Colorado wildfires have become larger, more unpredictable*, **The Source at CSU**, feature interview, August 2025. [Link](#) 

References


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