

THE SUSTAINABILITY AND STORYTELLING LAB
@UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

ANNUAL REPORT MAY 2025



Prepared by
Phaedra C. Pezzullo, PhD
Director of SAS Lab & Professor

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Be Boulder.



University of Colorado **Boulder**

Photography by Prof. Phaedra C. Pezzullo,
unless noted otherwise

BY THE NUMBERS: YEAR AT A GLANCE

Although we only signed paperwork in December 2024 with an official launch in January 2025, we have had an exciting beginning . . .



1 award for civic engagement

1 poster session

2 courses offered with SAS Lab options

2 social media platforms launched

5 public events

6 podcast episodes aired

8 collaborations & partnerships

10 logos submitted
with 1 student created winner

11 students participating in the SAS Lab
(& many more engaged!)

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The idea of the the Sustainability And Storytelling Lab (SAS Lab) was born in Fall 2024 in an effort for the College of Media, Communication and Information (CMCI) to make more visible and accessible high impact learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students at CU Boulder in sustainability and storytelling. It also is an affirmation of my own diverse record of involvement in environmental justice and communication praxis, including sustainability service and research. By November 2024, multiple students majoring either in Environmental Studies or Communication expressed excitement about the opportunities this new initiative might provide.

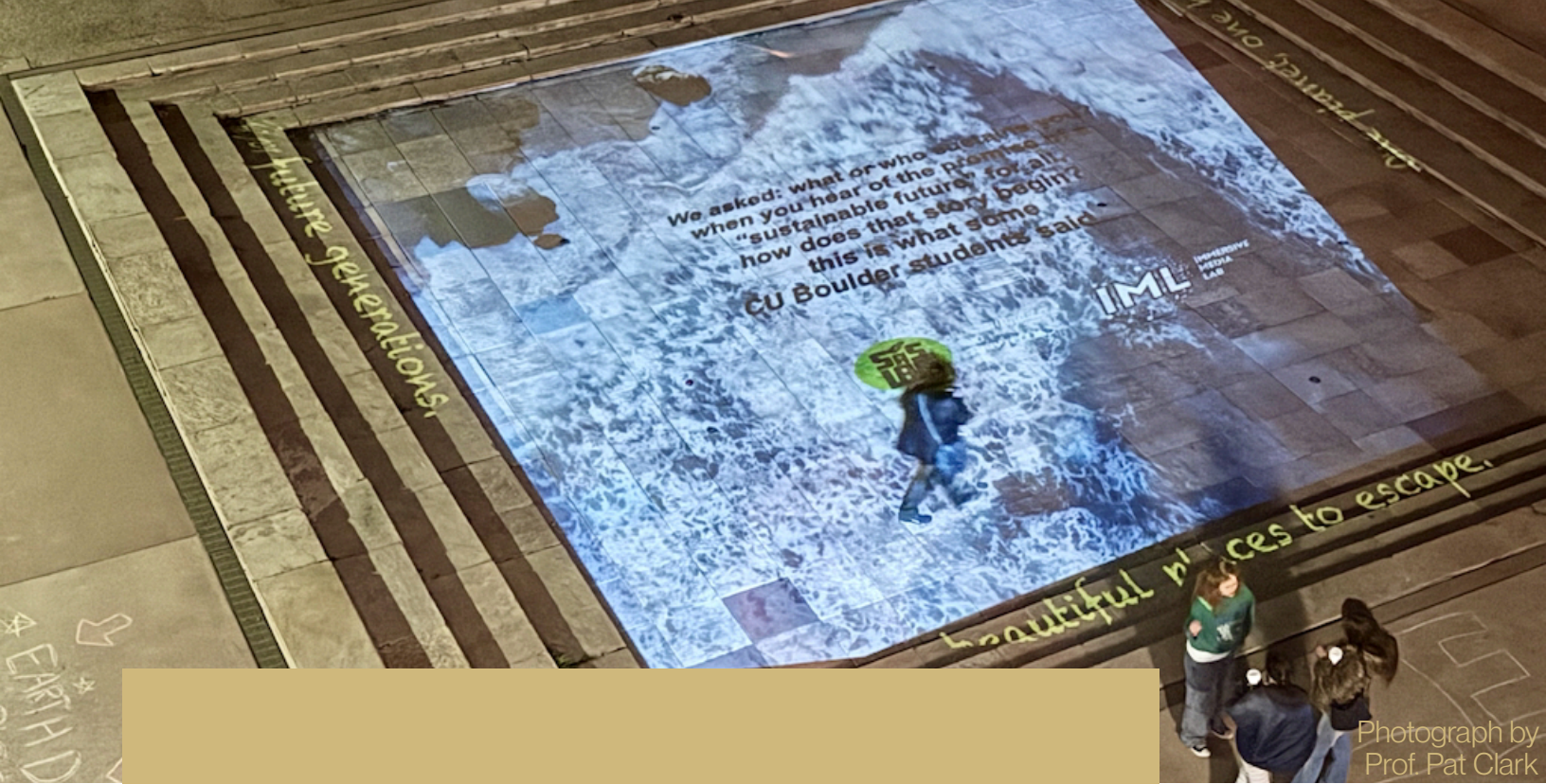
Before the DocuSign paperwork was completed, we were fortunate enough to catch the attention of CMCI journalist, Joe Arney, who wrote a story about the lab (["The Stories that Sustain Us,"](#) March 10, 2025). The year before, he had highlighted my latest monograph (which won three national book awards in Fall 2024); this time, Arney interviewed multiple people with whom I've worked, including Emy Kane (IntIAf '13), now managing director of an ocean conservation NGO, Lonely Whale, who shared: **"What inspired me most about Phaedra is her commitment to sharing stories borne from empathy and action. I'm thrilled to see my alma mater support her platform and research so that the next generation of leaders are equipped with the stories they need to reimagine the systems that run our world"** (["Recycle, reuse—rethink?"](#)).

Although my praxis tends to begin on the ground, listening to those most impacted by environmental risks about what they care about, this past year has underscored for me how significant leadership is to the ways a public university can deliver its mission every day. Globally, while environmentalism perhaps has never been more popular, topics such as plastics and climate remain under contested negotiation through diplomatic treaties. Nationally, many words, stories, and policies affiliated with this lab have come into question with new leadership. On the state level, the work of protecting communities in Colorado from environmental pollution has remained consistent. And on our campus, our new Chancellor has energized sustainability as an existing strength worth championing, which has been reflected in the Dean's and my department chair's decision to support this lab.

The SAS Lab—our community partners and our own work—exists in relation to these leaders across many scales. Some of these changes led to challenges and pivots from the original plans for the year. Due to an increased sense of precarity, we heard from community partners about increased concern over whether or not they should share images of minors in their social media, or if we should interview people living in mobile home parks. I also spoke with students not born in the US about their growing uncertainty. Nevertheless, moving between leaders at many scales, students, and community partners, I believe we had a successful launch.

I am grateful for the opportunity to direct the SAS Lab and for those who joined or collaborated with us in this first year. All labs are spaces of experimentation, and we have had our share of trial and error. Next year, I hope to learn from my ambitious enthusiasm and continue to find new ways to actualize our mission. (More details on the future on page 15.)

Phaedra C. Pezzullo, PhD
Professor and SAS Lab Director



Photograph by
Prof. Pat Clark

SAS LAB

SUSTAINABILITY AND STORYTELLING LAB

VISION

Communicating care for environmental, economic, & social justice

MISSION

Care for the environment, economy, and social justice converge in sustainability, an international and interdisciplinary ideal that shapes a range of ethics, practices, and systems. Through studying, hearing, amplifying, and co-creating stories in ways that are attuned to power, culture, and ecology, the Sustainability And Storytelling Lab aspires to hold unsustainable acts accountable and to make sustainable futures possible.

NOTE ON OUR NICKNAME: WHY SO “SASSY”?

In North American cultures, “sass” can imply disrespect by the status quo, but the root of the word also signifies garden vegetables grown for food, as well as audacious and bold speech or behavior. Affectionally called the SAS (pronounced “sass”) Lab by students right away, one might say the SAS lab encourages nourishing attitudes—as well as challenging the status quo—through smart, lively, and courageous acts in the face of complex and often stressful challenges. As carelessness currently abounds, sass offers an expression of playful care—for ourselves, others, and the planet.

BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

Launched in January 2025, the SAS Lab draws on interdisciplinary expertise in Rhetoric & Culture (including narrative theory), Ethnic Studies (engaging rich cross-cultural traditions of weaving stories), Environmental Studies (drawing inspiration from nonhuman life and systems thinking), and Media Studies (analyzing not just the production of texts but also how they circulate). We also partner with storytelling experts and initiatives within the College of Media, Communication, and Information (CMCI), including documentary filmmakers and journalists, as well as exceptional creative climate storytelling scholars and practitioners with whom we work across and off campus. The SAS Lab supports—and learns from—students across campus and our off-campus partners who provide us with opportunities to have more meaningful impacts.

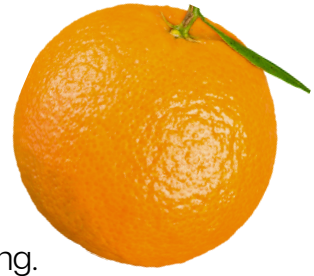
Objectives:

- Advocate for sustainability and storytelling opportunities as vital to environmental, economic, and social justice, as a matter of procedure, distribution, care, and repair
- Increase sustainability knowledge and cultural imaginaries, including impacts of climate disasters, toxic pollution, public health vulnerabilities, and just transitions
- Create, collect, assess, chronicle, and publicize sustainable and unsustainable stories
- Mitigate communication's capacity for harm by encouraging ethical relations
- Develop praxis (theory/practice) about storytelling as constitutive of cultural, ecological, and power relations, whether in person (in situ) or through multi-media
- Demonstrate critical thinking and analytical skills to interpret meaning through researching, editing, publishing, teaching, learning, collaborating, and creating stories
- Foster capacity building for all involved in or with the lab, such as improved written and oral communication performance, digital media development, and problem solving
- Grow trusted networks among people dedicated to sustainable storytelling, including faculty, staff, students, and partners off-campus
- Contribute to the public good, on campus, in the state, nationally, and internationally
- Communicate care for ourselves, others, and the world

What We Do: The SAS Lab documents, co-creates, researches, consults, and shares stories that matter to sustainability. We enact our mission through collaborations across campus, as well as with communities and institutions. We co-create storytelling across media, including a podcast, ArcGIS StoryMaps, and community engagement face to face, as well as archival research and analysis of texts. Reflecting our interdisciplinary expertise, our work involves a range of research approaches and practices to communicate unsustainability and sustainability, including:

- document tours of waste/wasted infrastructure hosted by workers & communities mapping their expertise about everyday life
- listen to & amplifying the voices of communities most impacted by unsustainability, as well as advocacy, governance, & operations experts that have made an impact
- co-create storytelling opportunities across digital media platforms, social networks, and academic research publishing venues to foster our collective capacity to imagine and enact just transitions
- consult with and increase the capacity of governments, NGOs, and media and legal institutions to assess cultural politics and achieve sustainability goals
- critically interrupt unsustainability, particularly environmental and climate injustices, and speak up for more sustainable principles and actions to the best of our abilities
- network across faculty, students, staff, and administration at CU Boulder and globally to catalyze sustainable education, research, and public engagement

TRAINING & CURRICULUM FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



In Spring 2025, the SAS Lab undergraduate interns meet weekly for an hour to discuss our collaborations, including barriers and aspirations for both sustainability and storytelling. We read work on desire versus damage centered narratives and environmental justice policy. After a month, I began using Calendly to provide weekly one on one meeting options for lab members. At the request of students, I also brought clementines and popcorn weekly, along with a variety of other healthy snack options.

For SAS Lab participants and the broader CU Boulder student body, in Spring 2025, we co-hosted five educational events.



* In our largest event of the semester, Dr. Angela A. Aguayo was **co-hosted by the SAS Lab and the Department of Critical Media Practices faculty, offering a VAST (Visiting Artist & Scholar Talks) Lecture** on February 20, 2025, titled: “Community Engagement and Sustainable Storytelling: Youth Media Production in the US.” Aguayo examined youth-led documentary production in the United States as a case study for sustainable storytelling, exploring how collaborative, bottom-up approaches to engagement can disrupt hierarchical traditions, foster shared knowledge production, and create meaningful, cross-cultural connections that empower communities. Gratitude to DCMP faculty, Prof. Eric Esmail, Prof. August Black, and Prof. Thorsten Trimpop, for co-hosting this insightful guest and publicizing the opportunity with so many enthusiastic students.

**EVENT 1
DR. ANGELA
AGUAYO**

EVENT 2 DR. CONSTANCE GORDON



Dr. Constance Gordon, CU Boulder alumna (COMM 2018) and assistant professor at San Francisco State University, gave a SAS Lab workshop on February 26, 2025, on movements as stories, as well as guest lectured Prof. Pezzullo's graduate course on environmental justice. Her visit financed through an endowed **co-directorate initiative of the SAS Lab, Inside the Greenhouse, which is supported on campus through CIRES, the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences.** Gratitude to Michelle Gabrielloff-Parish for sharing time and pho with us.

Race and Climate Storytelling Workshop

Location: "The Loft" Theatre Building Room C570
Date: Thursday April 24, 2025, 9:50-11:15 AM

Inside the Greenhouse

Opening remarks from Janet Mendler de Suarez

Conversation with Bettany Bell Surratt

Race and Climate Workshop that helps storytellers incorporate racial diversity in their climate stories!

Open to all Free admission! Refreshments to be served! Extra credit opportunity!

EVENTS 3 & 4 ORGANIZED VIA CO-DIRECTORATE ORGANIZATIONS

DELUGED: INUNDATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF LAND, PLACE, AND SPACE

A TALK BY DR. ANGELA PARKER (MANDAN, HIDATSA, CREE)
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19TH, 2025:

- 5PM lecture in Eaton Humanities, room 250
- FREE
- Registration required - scan QR code to get started or email centerwest@colorado.edu

Sponsored by:

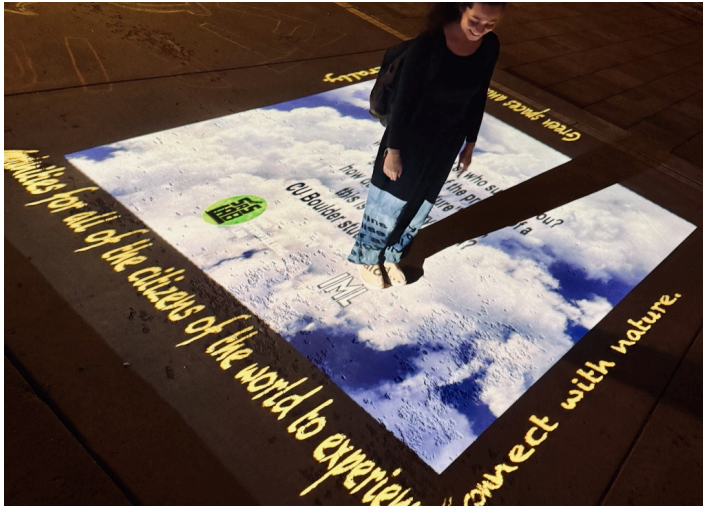
CNAIS Center of the American West University of Colorado Boulder

Ethnic Studies University of Colorado Boulder

Environmental Studies University of Colorado Boulder

History University of Colorado Boulder

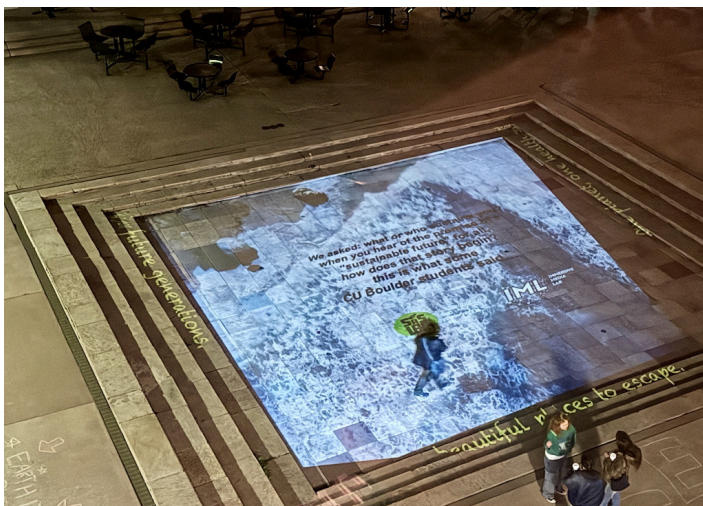
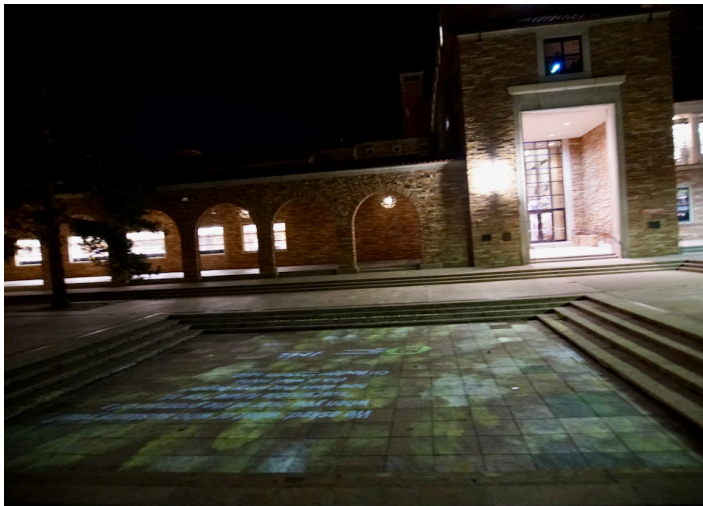
EVENT 5 EARTH DAY EVE: PROJECTION MAPPING



IN 2026, CU BOULDER IS LAUNCHING A CURRICULUM FOCUS ON SUSTAINABLE FUTURES...

SAS Lab Intern Alysia Abbas (COMM) won the Department of Communication Civic Engagement Award this year. We nominated her for many reasons (more below), but one was she took the lead on interviewing students about how a “sustainable future” story might start and who/what sustains them.

We then partnered with the Immersive Media Lab to project those responses on campus to encourage public discussion in an age of censorship. Gratitude to the IML’s Director, Prof. Pat Clark (DCMP), for sharing his expertise, skills, and time to co-ideate and execute this event.





EVERYTHING ELECTRIC
RECYCLING AND COMPOST
GARDENING
TAKING FARM TO TABLE LITERALLY
MORE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL OF THE CITIZENS OF THE WORLD TO
EXPERIENCE AND TO CONNECT WITH NATURE

HARMONY
GREEN SPACES AND BLUE SKIES
A FEELING OF HOPE

THE END OF THE LORAX WHERE THEY PLANT THE TREE

NOT TOXIC TO ANYONE
NO WORRIES ABOUT WATER SECURITY OR AIR AND SOIL QUALITY

LESS INDIVIDUALISTIC AND MORE COLLECTIVISTIC

WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

MY MOM, SHE PUT A HOUSE & ROOF OVER MY HEAD

FLOWERS

DIVERSITY OF CULTURES, SPECIES AND PERSPECTIVES

POLLINATORS

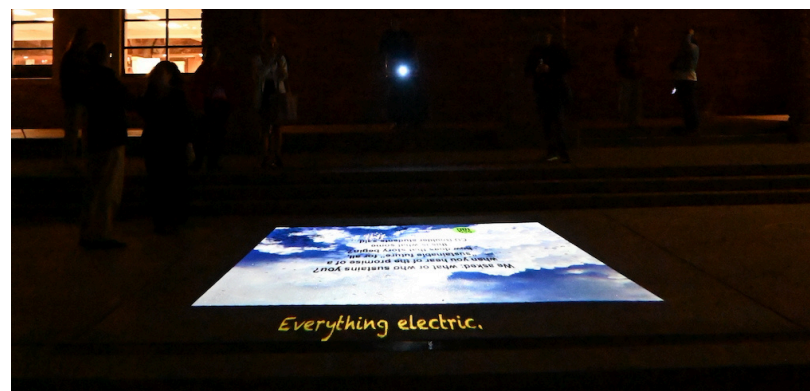
MY COMMUNITY SUSTAINS ME

A LIVABLE WORLD FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

A JUST TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGY

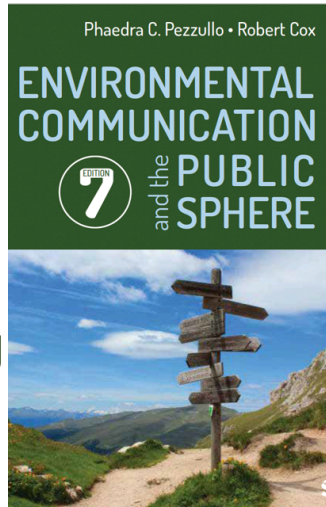
LIVING NEAR SO MANY BEAUTIFUL PLACES TO ESCAPE

ONE PLANET, ONE HEALTH, ONE LOVE



COMMUNICATION CLASSES AFFILIATED WITH THE SAS LAB

**new
textbook
edition
completed
this year!
Forthcoming
August 25**



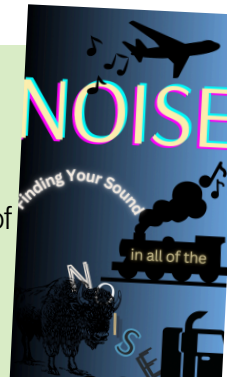
COMM 3370 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION!

Introduces the growing field of environmental communication, including historical events, key concepts, legal landmarks, technological developments and public controversies at the intersection of the environment, economics and social justice. Focuses on persuasive communication in the public sphere, as well as the constitutive power of communication to name and redefine what has been and might become possible in our environmental imaginations.

(Will be offered Fall 2025. Ideally offered every fall semester.)

COMM 3380 ADVANCED TOPICS IN STORYTELLING, CULTURE & CLIMATE JUSTICE

Examines how we communicate about the intersections of climate change and social justice within specific cultural contexts, as well as how we can change narratives about climate justice through a culture-centered framework. Will focus on storytelling topics, such as food justice or energy justice. *(Was offered Fall 2024 by Pezzullo for first time. Ideally offered every spring semester.)*



Class guest highlight: TV producer Corinna Robbins (credits include NatGeo, Netflix, HGTV) shared how storytelling has changed on TV over the decades. Insightful advice on how stories matter, job hiring operates, and finding meaning in one's work as a lifelong journey.



ENVS/COMM/GEOG/PSCI 7118 FOUNDATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Examines environmental justice movements, policies, institutions, objectives, and scholarship. Identifies factors that contribute to environmental inequality, and efforts to reduce it. *(Was offered Spring 2025 by Pezzullo. Offered every spring, associated with SAS Lab every third year.)*

“Phaedra’s course helped give me the confidence to go beyond the government numbers and explanations and find the real story.”

-Anthony Albidrez (2025, Journalism, qtd in “The Stories that Sustain Us”)

WE CARE ABOUT CAMPUS

As an interdisciplinary CU Boulder lab

"The University of Colorado Boulder is a global research and education leader that transforms lives. We transform the lives of our students by enabling leadership, innovation, and impact. We transform human experiences through comprehensive research and creative work. We transform communities in Colorado and across the globe through our faculty research partnerships and alumni networks. And we transform ourselves in service to a sustainable, inclusive, and just world."

- CU Boulder Chancellor Justin Schwartz, September 2024



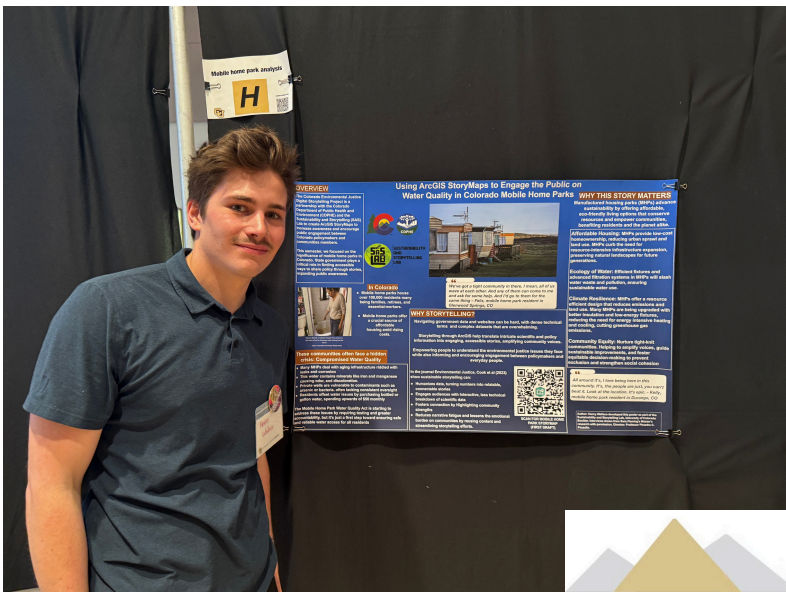
A succulent from Vice Chancellor of Operations, Chris Ewing, for 4 years service on the Chancellor's Sustainability Council

Fall 2024-Spring 2025, as a campus leader on sustainability and storytelling, Pezzullo served on the following committees:

- one of three faculty on the hiring committee of the inaugural Vice Chancellor of Sustainability
- one of three faculty representatives on the Chancellor's Sustainability Council
- one of four faculty on the Steering Committee of the campus-wide Sustainable Futures Curriculum
- met with all job candidates to provide feedback for the new Director of the Center for Environmental Journalism
- met with all job candidates to provide feedback on the new Executive Director of Sustainability Research Initiatives
- faculty steering committee of Center for Humanities and Arts (CHA), including chair of the CHA Director's reappointment review

Note: this is not all of Prof. Pezzullo's service. For her department this year, she also served on the Undergraduate Working Group Graduate Committee Personnel Committee CMCI Faculty Council

SAS Lab Research Fellow
Henry Wallace presenting at the
CU Environmental Center's
annual Sustainability Summit



**CAMPUS
SUSTAINABILITY
SUMMIT**

**Building Resilience,
Accelerating Impact**
April 22-23 • University Memorial Center

WE CARE ABOUT COLORADO

As part of the flagship public university of Colorado



Background: The primary research project of the SAS Lab is a partnership with the **Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)**. The Colorado Sustainability and Digital Storytelling Project is a partnership between the SAS Lab Director, CDPHE, and CU Boulder students. In 2022, we produced five Arc GIS StoryMaps, which qualitatively supplement (with interviews and secondary research) quantitative data identifying the communities most disproportionately impacted by environmental harms:

<https://cdphe.colorado.gov/colorado-enviroscreen-storymaps>. The San Luis Valley StoryMap was featured by Colorado Resiliency Office, Annual Progress Report 2022 as a Community Spotlight for Supporting Strategies that “develop & deploy community engagement and civic capacity tools,” “strengthen local resilience planning,” and “integrate equity” (p. 12). We also benefitted by publishing an academic article, receiving CU News coverage, and receiving a 2023 Civic Achievement Award from the CU Boulder Environmental Center.

This project is a collaboration to create public scholarship publicizing the challenges and aspirations of communities in the state of Colorado facing the greatest environmental and public health risks. We research and design creative stories based on these community needs to improve access to information and resources. Further, we collaborate with the CDPHE to jointly define problems, goals, and methods, including interviews.

This year, with peer and director feedback, students: updated previous StoryMaps for language access and improved infographics; constructed two new StoryMaps (one focused on Mobile Home Parks and another on Supplemental Environmental Projects), and created K-12 evidence-based creative resources. Pezzullo presented in December 2024 for the CDPHE and will create a website showcasing the student work once the semester is over and work can be finalized in dialogue with CDPHE.

Additional competitive grants funding this work, for which we are grateful:

 University of Colorado **Boulder**

Office for Public and Community-Engaged Scholarship
DIVISION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

 University of Colorado **Boulder**

College of Media, Communication and Information

 [About](#) [Academics](#) [Admissions](#) [Research & Creative Work](#) [News & Events](#) [People](#)

de Castro Research and Creative Work Award

Gratitude to our community partner



And thanks to one private donor of \$500
(paying an intern stipend,
beyond 3 student credit hours)

WE CARE ABOUT THE WORLD

As an international lab with global reach

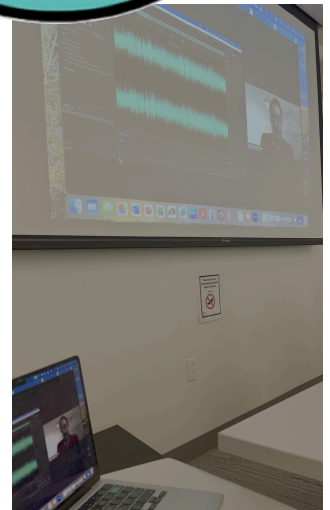


Inside the Greenhouse

Supported through endowed funds from **Inside the Greenhouse (ITG)**, which is an initiative housed in **CIRES (the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences)**, the SAS Lab hired hourly student workers edited the podcast *Communicating Care* and assisted on the **International Environmental Communication Association's journal, Environmental Communication**.

As a co-director of ITG, Pezzullo is grateful to be working with interdisciplinary and international scholars in the environmental sciences and arts.

Pezzullo will be presenting on her editorship in Tasmania in June 2025 and on her research related to care, sustainability, and storytelling in Hong Kong in August 2025.



With funding from a **de Castro Creative Research and Work Award**, the SAS Lab was able to hire an undergraduate student as an hourly paid social media intern to have an experience working with the **Just Transition Alliance**, a California-based NGO. The student co-developed a social media fundraiser and two social media campaigns. She said she drew on examples from the internship in the job interview she landed after graduation.

REFLECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

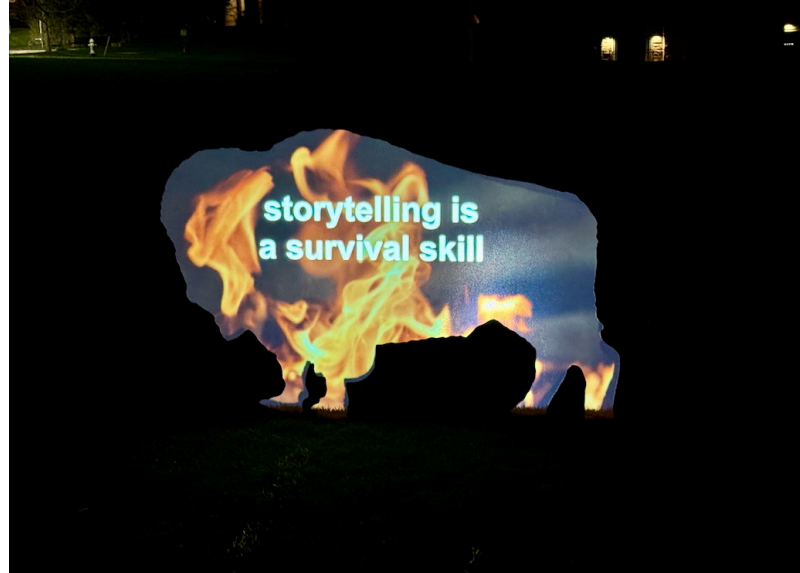
Going into summer, our story-based projects will need to be finalized and shared publicly both online and at community meetings. This year was full of exciting experimentation. I have improved my management workflow, learned which collaborators are excited to support the lab, and was fortunate to work with many flexible, good-natured students willing to pivot in these traumatic times; but, the workload is unsustainable. Honestly, I hope to **do less** in year two.

Next year, the SAS Lab should be able to support **two guest speakers, six interns, and one hourly student worker for podcast editing.** It also will be my **last year as journal Editor of *Environmental Communication***, which has exploded in submissions and downloads during my editorship, and see the completion of the campus planning for the **Sustainable Futures Common Curriculum.** We will have an opportunity to better share our research on storytelling and sustainability, which took a backseat to student experiences this spring. With two research presentations forthcoming in Tasmania and Hong Kong this summer, year two may involve a **book chapter** and will see the seventh edition of my **coauthored textbook.**

Potential collaborations include perhaps working again with the local NGO Once and Future Green, with whom we co-wrote a grant this semester that we did not receive, and revisiting the collaboration with the Immersive Media Lab for Earth Month 2026. We are committed to **continuing my co-directorate work with ITG** and **continuing the partnership with CDPHE**, for which I have applied for another PACES grant.

Limitations include: de Castro grants are being awarded to new recipients; so, we will not have that funding next year when grants are even more scarce in higher education. While some CMCI labs have more than one meeting space, **we have no dedicated space.**

Nevertheless, **we have hit the ground running**, as they say, and I'm moved by the student affirmations, support from campus leadership, and possibilities for the future...



Pezzullo won three national book awards in November 2024.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: PEOPLE

Signing up for the SAS Lab was a big leap of faith this first year. Gratitude to all the good-natured and passionate students who joined the lab and to the many more that helped actualize our objectives.

- **Alysia Abbas** (SAS Lab Intern, COMM)
- **Anthony Albidrez** (SAS Lab Senior Journalism Editor, Master's student, JRNLSM)
- **Bolor Batgerel** (SAS Lab Intern, ENVS)
- **Warren Cook** (SAS Lab Associate Director, ENVS Assistant Teaching Professor, PhD Candidate, COMM)
- **Thomas Doherty** (SAS Lab Intern, ENVS)
- **Millicent Elewosi** (SAS Lab Graduate Research Fellow, PhD student, COMM)
- **Leila Gurland** (Social Media Intern, APRD)
- **Mel Hanby** (Journal Manager, Master's student, COMM)
- **Lainey Parrott** (SAS Lab Intern, ENVS)
- **Corrina Schell** (SAS Lab Intern, ENVS)
- **Henry Wallace** (SAS Lab Research Fellow, ENVS)

IT TAKES THE PATIENCE, EXPERTISE, AND SUPPORT OF SO MANY PEOPLE TO DO ANYTHING. GRATITUDE ALSO TO:

Dean Lori Bergen (CMCI) for supporting the vision of this lab without hesitation

Joe Arney (CMCI) for helping us write our own story

Lara Aumann & José Toscano Bravo (Just Transition Alliance) for your openness co-mentoring our social media intern

Laura Burfield and **Max Boykoff** (ENVS/CIRES/ITG) for accounting support, publicity, and encouragement

Monica Carroll (COMM) and **Deborah Schaftlein** (CMCI) for accounting, space management, and common sense

Sonia K. Fraser (COMM) and **Brandi Bradshaw Reyes** (CMCI) for Handshake platform navigation

Emilie Johnson (CMCI) for podcast booth management

Rani Kumar, Diana Flores, and more at CDPHE for collaborating with us with expertise, trust, and ethical accountability

Jeanne McDonald (PACES) for grant application advice and support

Becca Safran (EBIO/ITG) for lab advice & giving an Earth Day kick off talk when Pezzullo was attending a family funeral

Sophie Wade (Sage/Taylor & Francis) for onboarding our journal manager

Cindy White (COMM) for supporting the lab as Department Chair and helping imagine how we can actualize its goals

Regan Widergren (APRD) and **Amanda J. McManus** (CMCI) for CU Boulder website design & execution



Dr. Catalina de Onís gave a guest lecture to the fall 2024 class on climate justice storytelling. A published academic author, children's book coauthor, public intellectual, former journalist, and documentary filmmaker, she shared valuable insights into how various media reach different audiences and the ethics of what we do and do not share.

APPENDIX: TESTIMONIALS ON CDPHE PARTNERSHIP

Rani Kumar (CDPHE) wrote (April 15, 2025): "When Dr. Pezzullo first heard about the development of Colorado EnviroScreen, our state's environmental justice mapping tool, she approached our agency to recommend the inclusion of qualitative data in the map. While we know communities are much more than just numbers and colors on a map, there had been neither time nor resources for us to dedicate to any qualitative data in the tool's first version. However, our luck and the state's trajectory changed when Dr. Pezzullo stepped up to provide the capacity, trusted partnership, and expertise we needed to make the inclusion of community voices and perspectives in our mapping tool a reality. Now, not only has her team created a platform for community experiences to be included in state-level decision-making and conversations, but Colorado EnviroScreen is currently the only state-level environmental justice mapping tool in the U.S. that includes qualitative data. Her leadership and ongoing commitment to this project both enhance the quality of work we can provide to all Coloradans and serve as a model for other state and national EJ counterparts looking to incorporate qualitative data into their mapping tools. We are proud and thankful to be partnering with Dr. Pezzullo's team on this project. We look forward to continuing the good work and seeing what comes next for this collaboration!"

Students (undergraduate and graduate) involved in the project have been given anonymous Google Form opportunities for feedback and all has been overwhelmingly positive. Open-ended feedback on the value of this grant supported work to: 1) their studies; 2) their plans after graduation; and 3) the state of Colorado included comments such as:

- I am working on a story map for mobile home parks around Colorado. I am applying skills when I am finding research on my topic. I am formulating a project with a community in mind that is environmentally valuable.
- The work that I've done this semester has helped me think about environmental justice themes in a different light. To explain environmental justice themes to elementary aged students it's pushed me to think about these themes with different vocabulary. I've also had to think about how to best explain ideas of sustainability and climate change to a elementary school student through a positive lens to ensure that my work wasn't evoking climate anxiety.
- I am reviewing and finding scientific information that helps mitigate air pollution within an environment such as getting house plants. I am also presenting the information that I am finding in a way that is digestible for a middle school to high-school-level audience.
- I am learning how to convey complex information and ideas through storytelling. I am also learning how to navigate giving communities a voice without painting them in a negative light.
- I am trying to create a story map to help people better understand an issue and for people involved in that issue, have a place with resources and countless links to help. I think helping people, especially those who are disproportionately effected, is very important to CU boulder as it is to me.
- The work that I've done this semester is important to a public university like CU Boulder because educating different generations will play a role in future students' knowledge. If younger children learn about issues in their community what plays a role in those issues they will develop skills at a younger age that are beneficial later in life when they attend public universities.
- This helps with community engagement for all ages within the community. The zine I created gives a platform for middle school to high-school ages people to share their visions of a sustainable future. It ensures that everyone has a voice in advocating for climate justice.
- This helps with community engagement for all ages within the community. The zine I created gives a platform for middle school to high-school ages people to share their visions of a sustainable future. It ensures that everyone has a voice in advocating for climate justice.
- CU Boulder has a strong presence in America and has a lot of money to create change. We need to use the resources we have to create a positive impact in the world in all disciplines.
- I am trying to help mobile home park communities, members of are communities, essential workers. people should be able to live somewhere affordable. my project is going to help with this and in achieving a more sustainable future.
- The work that I'm doing is directly relevant to public engagement of our younger generation. The coloring sheets have the goal of teaching the younger generation about environmental issues and how it could be related to their community.
- I am finding resources within the North Denver/Commerce City community that people can use to fight for sustainability and environmental justice. I am also giving space for community members to pitch their visions of a sustainable future within my zine.
- I am finding resources within the North Denver/Commerce City community that people can use to fight for sustainability and environmental justice, such as Green Latinos. I am also giving space for community members to pitch their visions of a sustainable future within my zine.
- We are helping communities who are often suffering in silence have a voice. We are also helping CDPHE better understand the needs of impacted communities and where to allocate money.

APPENDIX: UNDERGRADUATE INTERN & FELLOW FINAL REFLECTIONS

Alysia Abbas- “The Sustainability and Storytelling lab has given me a new perspective on the type of work crucial in climate justice research and opened me up to potential future career goals in working with sustainability from a communication lens. Something that’s been made clear throughout the internship is that amplifying disenfranchised voices and community engagement/ involvement is key in climate justice. Creating educational work products and conducting interviews related to people’s visions of a sustainable future made it clear that diverse perspectives and approaches are necessary to operationalize sustainability effectively. This internship has made me optimistic about a future that will amplify community voices and value/prioritize sustainability and the environment as a whole.”

Bolor Batgerel- “Working with SAS Lab expanded my knowledge and skills to an extent I wouldn’t have reached on my own. Integration of diversity, research, and storytelling to support communities facing environmental issues has been a fulfilling experience for my ethical and moral values. Learning how to communicate and translate technical information to children of the communities was more than a helpful skill to attain for my career goals. SAS Lab also showed me different ways to spread community voices that are important for a successful decision making”

Thomas Doherty - “Being an intern at the SAS Lab has given me a new perspective on the power of storytelling and its role in environmental justice. I learned that data on its own is not enough to create change; we also need to hear from the people being most affected. This internship has also given me skills that I will carry with me throughout my career, and working with other students who are passionate about making the world more just and sustainable has given me hope for our future.”

Leila Garlund: “My experience as the Social Media Intern for the SAS Lab in collaboration with the Just Transition Alliance has been both inspiring and transformative. Over the course of the internship, I developed a wide range of professional skills from effective communication and active listening to the ability to adapt quickly, pivot strategies, and maintain alignment with an organization’s mission and brand values. I gained valuable insight into what it means to collaborate with a purpose-driven team and create content that resonates with diverse audiences while honoring the organization’s integrity. It was an absolute joy to work closely with Professor Phaedra Pezzulo and Lara Aumann from JTA, whose mentorship and openness made the experience all the more fulfilling. This internship not only strengthened my creative and technical abilities but also deepened my understanding of environmental and social justice work. I’m incredibly grateful to have been part of a team that is truly committed to driving systemic change.”

Lainey Parrott - “Since joining the SAS Lab, I have never felt more connected to the broader CU climate conscious community. Collaborating with undergraduates in different majors as well as graduate students has made me hopeful for the future of the school in its creative climate communications efforts. Our semester long projects have amplified community voices while highlighting the strengths in each town across the state.”

Corrina Schell- “Interning at the Sustainability and Storytelling lab allowed me to expand the way I think about sustainability by showing me the importance of amplifying diverse community voices in a multitude of ways. I now have a deeper appreciation for education as a form of communication and the role it can play in communities. The skill set I gained during this internship will make me a better climate educator and steward in the future.”

Henry Wallace - “Working with the Sustainability and Storytelling Lab has helped me gain crucial understanding of how storytelling can be used as a powerful tool to challenge systems of injustice, amplify marginalized voices, and drive sustainable change. This lab has taught me that creating meaningful environmental solutions starts not just with data, but with the lived experiences of the communities most affected. This work has strengthened my commitment to using narrative as a means to foster accountability, inspire action, and contribute to the creation of more just and resilient futures.”

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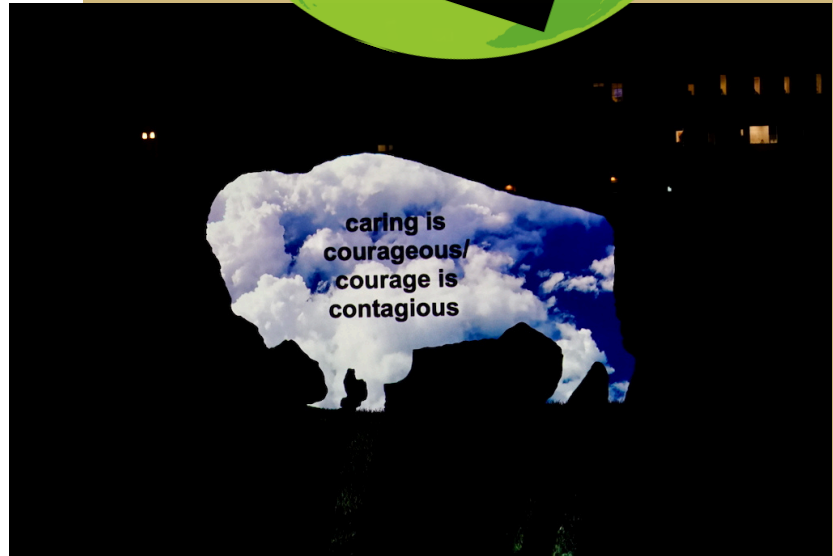


LINKEDIN

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/sustainability-and-storytelling-lab-at-university-of-colorado-boulder-ab6370344/>

WEBSITE

<https://www.colorado.edu/lab/sas/>



Student artwork by
Nicole Sansglyph
Fall 2024
COMM 3380

