

Introduction

>> Hi, I'm Paulette Ford.

I'm a Research Ecologist with the Grassland, Shrubland, and Desert Ecosystem Program with the Rocky Mountain Research Station.

What drew me to this kind of research was that as a kid I grew up in the outdoors of Morocco,

and there was no T.V., because we were on a base.

My dad was in the military, and all I did was play outside

Background

in the fields, and read encyclopedias.

Then, when I came back to the states, as an undergraduate I was pre-med

because I thought that's what you had to do with a biology degree was be pre-med.

But, I took my first field trip down the coast of Baha, Mexico trapping mammals for a month.

It was a blast.

And so, I have quite an extensive background doing field work in the southwest now.

And when I was at the field station, Chamela, in Mexico,

I realized that the forest I was in was being destroyed.

Career

And so I thought, wow I'd like to go more applied.

Because [inaudible] because I love the discovery, but I want to help out more.

I'm most excited about my work in the Great Plains because it is essential to restore fire as an ecological process to the shortgrass steppe grasslands.

And I get to do my research all over the world, I have over the years, and I get to present at international conferences, and that's just exciting to me.

Every step of my career I've had a mentor, as an undergraduate, as a Masters student, as a PhD student, and as a scientist with the Rocky Mountain Station.

And I just want to say, it is so important to get a mentor

because they will help you in ways you can't imagine.