ESF Alumni Improve Urban Environments

A survey of ESF alumni working in major cities across the country, conducted in late 2017, reveals the strength of ESF’s contribution to the science, planning, design, and management of urban environments. Identified through LinkedIn and the ESF Office of Alumni Relations, 113 alumni participated in the survey. Survey respondents are graduates of Landscape Architecture (23%), Environmental and Forest Biology (20%), Environmental Resources Engineering (9%), Forest and Natural Resources Management (15%), Environmental Science(13%), and Environmental Studies (15%). (The remaining 5% received degrees from more than one department.)

A selection of responses and interpretations are provided in this document. Where helpful, responses are broken down by ESF department.

In what field are you currently employed?

Field cross-over/overlap is apparent in the responses.

Landscape Architecture alumni work in land conservation, urban planning, and ecological restoration, as well as landscape architecture.

Environmental and Forest Biology alumni work in land conservation, environmental consulting, and park nonprofits, as well as ecology, fisheries biology, wildlife biology.

Environmental Resources Engineering alumni work in environmental consulting, river restoration, and stormwater management, as well as environmental engineering.

Forest and Natural Resources Management alumni work in parks, water resources, environmental planning, as well as urban forestry and utility forestry.

Environmental Science alumni work in engineering consulting, stormwater management, and stream restoration, as well as environmental science.

Environmental Studies alumni work in natural resources management, urban planning, parks, outdoor education, and urban forestry, as well as environmental policy.

What is the highest degree you have received (at ESF or another institution)?

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More master’s degree alumni from Environmental Studies and Environmental Science responded to the survey. For every other department, bachelor’s degree-holding alumni were the majority of respondents.

Years in the Field and Income

People with 10 years or more of work experience in their fields comprised 48% of the total respondents (54 of 113). Twenty percent (23 of 113) had 3 years or less experience. Thirty two percent (36 out of 113) had 3 to 10 years of experience.

The median salary range for alumni with 3 years or less employment experience was $40,000 to $60,000. The median salary range for alumni with 4 to 10 years experience was $60,000 to $80,000.

Just over 20% (23 of 113) earn over $100,000 per year. Seventy-eight percent (18 of 23) of the respondents making over $100,000 per year have been working for more than 10 years. The highest percentage of alumni earning over $100,000 come from Landscape Architecture (35%, or 8 of 23), with Environmental Studies coming in second (22%, or 5 of 23). Alumni with less than 10 years of experience who reported earnings over $100,000 are working in fields such as public health, wastewater treatment, and public transportation.

Work contributing to the quality of the urban environment

The initial inquiry to alumni via LinkedIn asked if the alumnus considered his/her work to be “urban environmental.” Alumni self-selected to send their email addresses based on their own perception that their work fit the urban environmental description and based on their interest in participating in a survey for the CUE. It is not surprising, then, that over 97% of respondents said that their work contributes to the quality of the urban environment. Some also point out the connections between rural, suburban, and urban environments.

How does your work address the urban environment?

A sample of ten responses from each ESF department is provided below. The scale of alumni work ranges from national to state and local levels. Public, private, and nonprofit sectors are represented.

Landscape Architecture Alumni

Our firm specializes in designing high-performance landscapes which provide embedded ecosystem services.

My work continually strives to enrich the Smithsonian experience through exceptional gardens, horticultural exhibits, collections and education.
My firm focuses on zoological design and master planning. Many exhibits/master plans we create integrate green infrastructure, BMPs in stormwater management, native planting, etc. along with an educational component that teaches these lessons to the environmental stewards of tomorrow.

[We apply] sustainable practices and designs to better the environment. We work to create a harmonious relationship between the density of human structures and the surrounding landscape in these urban areas. By incorporating multi-use corridors for different modes of transit within our streetscapes and stressing the importance of the sequencing of spaces at different scales within each design we can further encourage the public to interact with one another and the surrounding landscape.

I plan for the budget and scope of roadway reconstruction. As part of this scoping process, I incorporate improvements to pedestrian spaces, ADA accessibility and safety overall, as well as green infrastructure and long-term resiliency needs.

I review development activity, which has a direct impact on the physical urban environment. Additionally, I write policy documents (most often the County Comprehensive Plan) that affect the urban environment. I conduct housing studies and write housing and economic development policies, specifically.

We work to advance best practices, leveraging our members’ expertise and experience, in five key areas: housing affordability, sustainability and resilience, real estate finance and investment, the practice of real estate development, and public-sector leadership to create successful cities and regions.

Landscape and site design in urban projects directly relates to urban environments, especially in public spaces where materials and stormwater design can impact the quality of the space and overall experience. Likewise, material selection and proper design can also impact the urban habitats and environment.

A lot of my work incorporates habitat restoration, wetland restoration or stormwater design into parts of urban redevelopment projects.

We steward, protect, transform, beautify and activate the urban environment by creating new and revitalizing existing public space. We take a holistic view of the site and work to understand geological, hydrological and vegetative conditions as well as the human needs of each location.

Environmental and Forest Biology Alumni

The projects I work on restore wetlands in coastal Great Lakes cities. They also provide shoreline protection that incorporates wildlife habitat while providing erosion control in cities and nearby populated areas.
I am involved in planning, assessing status, engaging the community, and addressing challenges to urban forests throughout the western US.

My job is to ensure reliable electrical service is provided to customers in urban, suburban, and rural environments while protecting the environment.

We provide wastewater treatment services for 1.6 million people in greater Seattle metro area, protecting public health and the environment. We collect, treat, and recycle resources from the waste stream. We support urban communities by ensuring clean waters for swimming, fishing, recreation, providing recycled water for use, creating renewable energy (reducing carbon emissions). We land apply biosolids, reducing use of chemical fertilizers. We implement green stormwater infrastructure, providing community benefits. We build facilities that integrate into community needs. We have a robust education program offering classes and tours to thousands of children and families in highly urban area. I could go on for a long time... Essentially quality of life and environment in urban areas couldn't exist without wastewater treatment.

I research the impacts of impervious cover on biological communities of watersheds.

We work to connect youth, adults, families and community members to engage with their natural neighborhoods.

As director of a Federal fisheries science center, our research focuses on providing science to address complex and broad scale ecosystem level issues facing our nation's fisheries resources. Science pertaining to fish passage, aquatic ecology and fish health as well as the capability to develop decision support tools. Our center's science capabilities are used to help natural resource policy decision makers make science-based decisions to best meet societal needs.

My section encourages tidal wetland awareness in the local community as well as teaching methods and protocols to students and teachers on measuring and understanding changes in their environment. We also assist in outside projects with other agencies.

I study plant-animal interactions in urban landscapes. Specifically I study how yard management practices (e.g. landscaping, nonnative ornamental plants) influence behavior, populations, and community patterns in urban wildlife.

I work to write NEPA environmental assessments for programs which address human-wildlife conflicts in mostly agriculture, but also in the urban environment, such as threats to human health and safety or to prevent disease spread from wildlife that are in an urban setting or come from rural areas into urban areas in search of food.

Environmental Resources Engineering Alumni

Cleanup of contaminated soil and groundwater, also mitigation of vapor intrusion in urban buildings

Modeling river flows, flooding, contaminated sediment movement through urban areas
I review designs for urban development within the City of Seattle and ensure that what is proposed satisfies the City’s obligation to comply with our Municipal Stormwater Discharge National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, issued by the Washington State Department of Ecology. Much of my work aims to reduce CSO events.

Help developers clean their site/property, whether soil, groundwater and soil vapor contamination, that represents a threat to environmental and public health.

We work on urban drainage improvements. Some projects focus on fish passage (headcuts, culverts), fish habitat improvement, sedimentation issues, and local flooding within the built/urban environment. A two sided approach is necessary for a beneficial human/environment interaction.

Stormwater management in urban areas for flood control, stormwater treatment addressing pollutants generated by urban environments.

Much of my work deals with elevation and land cover data in water quality, urban forestry and visual impact analysis. I also manage aerial photography acquisition and distribution for other GIS users to use in mapping projects.

Restoring urban drainages by increasing and managing fish passage, fish habitat, water quality, and water quantity.

I provide engineering services to protect public drinking directly through water treatment and indirectly through watershed management.

Implementation and construction of large scale capital improvement projects for NYC’s water supply including LEED certified, sewer infrastructure, and water distribution based projects.

Forest and Natural Resources Management Alumni

My work directly manages the urban forest for a large city seeking to balance 2 things: 1) providing the highest quantity of environmental, economic and social benefits to the community and 2) public safety. Tree canopy is viewed in many areas as green infrastructure and/or a quality of life indicator and contributing professionally toward the maintenance, planting, regulation and general management of trees and tree canopy directly impacts the urban environment. I work closely with professionals, residents and stakeholders from many fields in both public/private scenarios: planning, landscape architecture, engineering (civil/structural), utility, storm water, non-profit, government (local, state, federal), development, etc.

I develop models to predict water quality fluxes from urban streams using high-frequency water quality information (sensors). I also assess the effectiveness of urban BMPs and urban stream restoration for improving water quality, restoring flow regimes, and restoring stream biodiversity.
The organization I work for now administers a grant program for urban agriculture conservation. To date, we have awarded a total of $3 million in grants to 61 conservation districts in 30 states through this initiative. We also conduct monthly webinars specifically on urban conservation topics, and curate and develop resources for urban conservation districts.

I manage 20,000 acres of Watershed Forestland that provides drinking water to the City of Boston and about 13 surrounding towns.

I manage the street tree planting for all of the Bronx and Staten Island, reaching a constituency of about 2 million.

I provide support for local and regional canopy cover and storm water requirements in land development. I also monitor and use IPM to control invasive insects and provide forest ecology and watershed education for elementary and middle school students.

My work addresses solid waste management and recycling.

Parks and trails in the urban and suburban environment provide immediate and accessible exposure to nature and a natural environment. This provides all the benefits of being exposed to nature without requiring them to leave their city or even their community.

I currently work in an urban/suburban setting, mostly doing work related to development/land use issues, flooding issues, watershed protection, citizen water quality testing/assessments, public/volunteer engagement and educating municipalities (planning boards, etc.).

Utility line clearance pruning has a large impact on public and private roadside trees. We also talk with a large number of homeowners and can influence or educate them to adequately take care of their trees. We can also educate towns on creating a tree care group or ordinances and encourage them to think about a sustainable urban forest with regard to the coexistence of power lines and street trees.

**Environmental Science Alumni**

I monitor annual salmon abundance, return timing, and spawning distribution in and near urban streams. Information I collect helps inform habitat acquisition and recovery efforts within the urban environment.

I work to protect and restore natural areas and waterways in NYC.

Design project management for LID stormwater management. Previous position involved LID maintenance inspections and permitting plan review in an urban location.

Data that I collect directly contributes to flood modeling, monitoring and warnings in both rural and urban environments. Our work is also used to model pollutants in rural environments and to assess the safety of drinking water.
I develop modeling tools to investigate the climate and land use impact on urban streamflows, stream temperature and water quality.

My efforts help protect local water resources by preventing and/or minimizing pollution discharges to the storm drain system.

1) Work in environmental monitoring for "smart cities" and more efficient use of resources (especially water). 2) Supporting native plantings through landscape design / contracting work.

I work for the NYSDEC in New York City. My job involves reviewing permit applications for work to be done in or adjacent to wetlands within New York City. We apply state regulations to help protect the wetlands. As I'm sure you're aware, wetlands serve many purposes, both aesthetic and more practical. In NYC, people rely partially on coastal wetlands to help protect their homes from storm surges.

I solve localized flooding issues through traditional grey stormwater infrastructure (pipes) as well as through innovative green infrastructure (bioswales, vegetated basins, permeable pavement etc).

I perform waste assessments (i.e., solid waste, hazardous waste, universal waste, and medical waste) at regional and international airports, manufacturing facilities, military bases, and hospitals to identify waste streams generated; analyze types, quantities, and current waste management practices; and provide recommendations for waste diversion, cost avoidance, and revenue generation.

Environmental Studies alumni

We work on landscape-scale issues that affect drinking water provided to urban and rural communities.

I work with 14 federal agencies in 19 urban communities across the U.S to reconnect communities with their waterways and watersheds to promote their economic, environmental and social benefits.

I work to manage invasive plant populations in both across urban and rural landscapes. The urban environment is an important link in the pathway chain acting both as source and staging area for many introduced plant species.

I work as a naturalist and animal care coordinator for an urban county park. I educate local kids and adults on the cultural and natural history of the park, helping them appreciate and act as stewards of their backyards and other areas of their urban environment.

I am a city planner/town planner. I help our clients plan for the future based on land use and community needs.
I work on remedial projects, cleaning up brownfield sites in the NYC tristate area.

I plant and preserve trees all throughout New York City. This helps with air quality, water filtration, green infrastructure and carbon sequestration.

I am a management consultant for public transit, advising agencies on how to use resources more effectively and provide a better service for their cities.

I work for the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport). Massport operates Logan Airport in Boston, small regional airports in Worcester and Lexington, Conley Terminal in South Boston as well as numerous industrial and commercial properties in the Boston area. My work addresses the urban environment by ensuring that facilities operated by Massport meet or exceed environmental regulatory standards and strive to minimize impact to the local communities. Massport operates high impact facilities but also has invested heavily in green space and parks as well as an alternative fuel vehicle fleet at Logan Airport.

In my role as Sustainability Coordinator, I work with every single department in the City, including the City Manager’s Office and the City Commission, in order to integrate sustainability/resiliency related programs and policies into their daily activities. Examples include creating long-range sustainability planning documents with the input from staff members from every department, ensuring that sustainability language is included in strategic planning and comprehensive planning documents and educating staff to make sure that they are aware of the sustainability programs that the City offers in order to convey this information to our residents and businesses. The City (which is located in coastal South Florida) is currently built out and is undergoing a rapid redevelopment, so it is imperative that sustainability resiliency principles are prioritized by the City if it is to succeed in the future. My position also allows me to work with other local, county and regional networks in order to collaborate and identify opportunities for synergy.

What are the most exciting opportunities you see for your field going forward?

International

- Urbanization in developing countries
- Water security will be paramount in the coming decades; Emerging field of water conflict resolution
- Integrated water management - Utilities across country and world are embracing concepts of full resource recovery - recycled water, renewable energy, beneficial biosolids, nutrient recovery, and overall integrated water management ONE WATER.

Energy

- Alternative fuel vehicles - transitioning vehicle fleets and setting up support infrastructure
- Advances in the renewable energy sector
- The implications of changing hydrologic signatures (including water temperature) on energy production, including renewable resources, e.g. hydropower.
Technology

• Internet of things (IoT) and sensor networks producing data that informs environmental decisions and actions
• Continuous data from sensors in remote locations in realtime - As this technology becomes more commonplace, there will be a lot of exciting opportunities for analyzing the massive amounts of data produced.
• Advances in mass transit, new fare payment technology and automation / driverless vehicles

Waste Management

• Many clients are establishing zero waste goals and developing programs and initiatives to achieve the goals.

Organizational/Institutional

• Capacity building, Integrated strategic city planning
• The field of sustainability planning as a whole has the opportunity to be a much needed bridge between science and society.
• Conservation of larger connected natural areas while consolidating urban habitation
• Lots of opportunity to bridge ecological theory with on the ground conservation action. Also tremendous way to connect science and conservation with the general public via outreach and citizen science.

Climate Change

• Landscape resiliency as it related to natural disasters
• Pursuing GHG reductions will continue to become more challenging. Most reductions to date have involved increasing efficiency. To achieve substantial reductions moving forward, real innovation and capital investment will be required.

Urban Ecosystems

• Sensor technology, assessing green infrastructure, scaling / cumulative effects of urban BMPs, ecological resilience / resistance in urban ecosystems
• Transmission ROWs are wildlife corridors, areas for endangered species and not many realize that. They only see the wires and not the vegetation on ground.
• Working with federal, state, and local agencies to develop improved best management practices for protecting wetland and stream resource areas and rare and endangered species

Urban Agriculture

• Growing recognition of the value in small- and large-scale urban agriculture
Pollution Abatement

- Developing and implementing new techniques and methods for cleaning up contaminated sites
- Water conservation and treatment of emerging contaminants

Resource-Specific - Water

- Evolving technology and practices to reduce stormwater runoff and reduced pollutant loading, urban stream restoration, improved methods for tracking sources of pollutants such as bacteria, stormwater retrofitting / implementation of green infrastructure incorporating native plants.
- Living shorelines; Restoring shorelines for better habitat, public access and sea level rise resilience; floodplain reclamation
- Tidal wetlands restoration / preservation has come to the forefront of coastal communities as a method to mediate wave action and storm surge
- Aging water and sewer lines and the need for better stormwater management
- Integration of stormwater design with larger initiatives at the community level
- Developing new, restorative methods for flood control and water storage to replace traditional methods, such as dams
- Reducing water use in public open space

Resource-Specific - Forests

- Improvements in technology enabling better wildland firefighting responses such as drone, satellite, and other emerging technologies
- The increased focus on collaborating with other disciplines / fields to manage tree canopy in a more holistic / sustainable way that is equitable across all community types.
- Storm resiliency work related to tree health and branch reduction. Storm resistant tree species and a more resilient urban forest. LiDAR technology and real time damage assessment using UAV.
- The increased use of trees and vegetation to solve stormwater management in new and innovative ways and to further explore and utilize the link between trees and personal and public health.

Resource-specific - Wildlife and Fisheries

- Managing fish resources for the effects of climate change. Understanding the effects that changing ocean conditions can have on salmon populations in the Pacific Northwest.
- As urban sprawl continues to encroach on wildlife habitat, there are some exciting educational opportunities to help the public understand how to discourage wildlife from causing damage and also understand threats to people’s safety in the urban-wildland interface.
Urban Planning and Design

• With many roadways at the end of their engineered lifecycle, urban infrastructure is at a critical transition period. Cities need planners who can think both big picture about climate change and resiliency as well as site specific needs for ADA cross slopes and green infrastructure.
• As people move back to city centers, we need more human-centered designs that make people want to live in urban environments.
• Providing parks and recreation services in under-served communities
• More emphasis on pedestrian and bike planning in cities.
• Community involvement and interest in urban projects seems to be increasing. Being able to interact with different groups and users and facilitate meaningful discussions to support various urban projects would be a good skill that could provide growing opportunities.
• Opportunities associated with LEED-certified buildings and neighborhoods
• Landscape as infrastructure...landscapes that perform necessary tasks for the public good such as flood mitigation, stormwater filtration, carbon sequestration.

Public Health

• How public health actually is about equity and we need to look at housing, employment and the urban environment to improve healthcare.
• Disease ecology as a whole and tick-borne disease ecology in particular are expected to change rapidly as a result of climate change. It is likely that disease vectors such as blacklegged ticks will expand both their range and infectiousness, and research into the ecology of these diseases and practical methods for their prevention is extremely important.

Environmental Education

• Connecting youth to nature
• The opportunity to reconnect people to the unique place they live in by marryng the social and economic attributes of their neighborhood to the ecology of place through education, art and ecological design.
• To see the impact of what we do circle around...as the children we teach grow into nature-aware adults.

Social Equity and Diversity

• Advancing inclusion and social equity through environmental work is the next challenge and a big opportunity
• Growth in cultural and racial diversity of program participants and leaders, navigating new ways to help people recognize their connections to their environment, including diverse perceptions of nature with program planning and implementation.
• Continued efforts to encourage a diverse user base for parks
Career Advice and Key Moments in Career Trajectories

A survey question asked what advice alumni have for current students, and the results are 107 bits of wisdom, each of which really deserves to be digested on its own. These may be displayed on the CUE website, perhaps on a rotating basis. Examples include:

“Learn to communicate with non-scientists! The general public needs to know how science works and how it affects them. Your work will do the most good for the most people if you make opportunities to expose people outside your field to the work that you do. This includes people who don’t agree with you as much as it does people who do agree but don’t understand!”

“Network and volunteer in your field of interest. Develop mapping (GIS), conflict management, and strong communications skills. A significant part of natural resource management / environmental protection is people management and civic engagement - you must be able to effectively communicate and convey your message to people with different backgrounds and levels of understanding.”

In a non-anonymous portion of the survey, approximately 40 alumni answered a question about a “key moment in their career trajectory.” A few examples are provided below. These personal stories can be shared with current students with details that are not possible with anonymous survey results. If any are shared with names included, however, permission would again be sought from the alumnus/alumna who provided the story.

“During the first year of my master’s program at ESF, I received a small grant from the Pack Institute towards travel to Mexico City, in order to pursue preliminary research on my thesis. This support was modest, yet valuable, as it showed me there was value in my chosen topic, which was related to building clean-burning public transit internationally.

I consider the process of researching and writing my thesis, together with the New York MTA College Aide program which I highly recommend and where I forged the first connection between the MTA and the ESF Career Office, as my start in the field of public transportation.”

“My career has included quite a few transitions between companies. These transitions have helped me tremendously since I have been exposed to many disciplines and areas of environmental practice. During one transition I moved from primarily working in site remediation and waste handling to air quality, this allowed me to move from being reactive in terms of environmental preservation to being more proactive. Additionally, this transition allowed me to specialize in a smaller and more specialized area of the environmental industry.”
“That moment was the moment I had my son. Having to make a choice between being a mom and having a “professional” career makes you reevaluate what “successful” means, as well as what meaningful, whole and complete means. I loved my work as an LA and I also knew that I wanted to be home during my son’s 1st year. 11.5 years and two kids later, I have designed a career I love and its totally unique.” And the details of that career are also described.

“After graduating from ESF with a degree in Environmental Studies, I struggled to find the right path that would bring together my educational experience and passion for environmental stewardship. It was not until I started working at a national nonprofit tree planting organization in 1998 that I was able to find that path. While at the organization, I was able to manage a national tree planting program that engaged local grassroots communities and volunteers. Through this experience, I was able to make the connections between community engagement and community transformation. This breakthrough experience has been a driving force throughout my professional career and remains with me to this day. While I knew intuitively that community involvement is critical to making social and environmental change, having direct experience and bearing witness to the power of community engagement internalized its importance for me.”

Experience in Multidisciplinary Work Environments

Over 96% of the survey respondents report regular interactions with people from other disciplines in their work. A follow-up question asked if there are particular skills that are needed in multidisciplinary settings. Communication skills topped the list of suggestions. Statistics, project management, and GIS were also common recommendations.

Ways Alumni Want to Connect to ESF

Several questions probed the interest of alumni in engaging with ESF.

Would you be interested in Continuing Education opportunities through online courses from ESF? 79% said yes. The respondents then specified what they would like to see in terms of course content, and there is a wide range of topical areas, covering the breadth of ESF departments.

Would you be interested in:
Providing ESF with information about internships sponsored by your firm, agency, or organization 57% said yes

Attending ESF-sponsored alumni get togethers if sponsored in your region 71% said yes

Learning about employment opportunities from other ESF alumni 59% said yes
Concluding Thoughts

The survey ended with an open-ended question asking for any additional thoughts, comments, or ideas. A sample of responses is provided here.

This survey is a great start. I think the key is targeted communications specific to either a field (PM, land manager, park professional) or a region (Urban, rural, federal lands), as this is. That is, I will respond if I feel I have something specific to contribute.

This survey was great! It could be worthwhile to pair ESF seniors with alumni in a mentoring type program.

I love the idea of continuing ed online learning for alumni, potentially ones that could even carry credits for LA licensing, LEED or SITES continuing ed requirements as well. Additionally I would be glad to discuss my experiences with anyone who is interested to hear it, be that on an individual basis with students or in a larger setting. I love what I do, and I love ESF for giving me the opportunity to do it.

I think that students should be able to (and want to!) reach out to those who have the same degree and have been in the work force for a couple years. Graduating and starting a career can be daunting but having a mentor or someone to talk with who had been at it for a few years could be really helpful. I can see the value in that.

Provide an online message board for alumni and students to list possible work and intern opportunities.

For each discipline I think it would be helpful to create a spreadsheet of alumni, where they currently work, where the firm/business is located, and some sort of contact information for graduating ESF students. I think this would not only establish a better relationship between student and alumni but also encourage those entering the work force to use connections and use their school as a connection to find employment and other opportunities and encouragement from those already in the professional world!

It would be great to get a bi-annual list of alumni in a particular area, to foster connection.

I think it would be great to have alumni list the models/software/technologies they are using in their current fields as part of an alumni survey to help students select courses.

So pleased to see the emergence of CUE, and look forward to learning more. I hope the website or other online tools have some interactive capacity.

If career services had a series on alumni in unique careers, i.e. other than NYS DEC or an environmental services firm, I’d be glad to come up and give a talk. The alumni network is very deep in forestry and environmental agencies and across Upstate, though not in areas that I was interested in, urban transit, policy, and in NYC. My undergraduate major hosts a bus trip to NYC and to DC each year with planned visits to employers and invites alumni to meet the
current students, capped off with a dinner. ESF could start something like this to encourage students to look farther afield. I’d also be interested in starting an informal quarterly meet-up of local ESF alumni to start or maintain a network here in NYC.

I think universities need to do a better job preparing students for non-academic careers both in undergrad and graduate school. Connecting students with visiting researchers from NGOs, policy, state and federal agencies, private industry, etc. so they can learn about what backgrounds/experiences are desirable in that sector would be especially helpful.

A database of alumni by careers would be helpful so current students can contact and discuss career goals or simply ask questions of professionals in fields they are interested in. ESF can help alumni by providing support for alumni in their scientific endeavors be it with publications or research opportunities post education. I would like to see research professors reach out to professionals to complete research in real work situations.

This survey is an excellent idea.