

#### Application Related Information

---

Application:	Application Verified	Iteration Name:	202510_GR_G
Grad Program Applying To:	MES	Program Name:	MES

#### Recommendation Information

---

Recommended By:	Matthew Clark	Recommenders Title:	Professor
Recommenders Institution:	Sonoma State University	Contact Name:	Taylor Stephens
Waive Access to Recommendation Ltrs:	I do not waive my right to review this recommendation.	Recommendation Waiver Choice:	
Recommendation Form Submitted:	✓	Recommendation Status:	Received
Received Date:	12/18/2023 01:41 PM	Recommender Assessment:	I recommend this applicant without reservation.
Recommendation Type:	General	Recommender Form:	Letter of Recommendation
Recommendation Entity ID:	1024000112045976	Recommendation Owner:	Josephine Bernier

#### Recommender Form Questions

---

How long have you known applicant:	Applicant ability as self-directed learner:
Time since last contact with applicant:	Applicant as productive member of group:
Relationship with Applicant:	Applicant most significant strengths:
Ability to complete rigorous grad program:	Responsibility/reliability:
Communication Skills - Oral:	Communication skills - written:
Service Orientation-sensitivity/empathy:	Ability to work independently:
Ability to handle stress:	Ability to think critically:
Ability to analyze/problem solve:	Ability to think creatively:
Openness to feedback:	Potential for leadership:
Ability to work in a team:	Personal/professional reflection:

#### Description Information

---

Description:	Form URL:	<a href="https://evergreenstatecollege.radius">https://evergreenstatecollege.radius</a>
--------------	-----------	---

#### Other Information

---

Created Time:	11/02/2023 10:54 AM	Created By:	Josephine Bernier
Modified Time:	12/18/2023 01:41 PM	Modified By:	Josephine Bernier



CENTER FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY GEOSPATIAL ANALYSIS (CIGA)  
Department of Geography, Environment, and Planning  
3503 Stevenson Hall, Sonoma State University  
1801 E. Cotati Ave, Rohnert Park, CA 94928  
Office: 707-664-2558

Dr. Matthew Clark  
(707) 228-0641 cell  
matthew.clark@sonoma.edu  
December 18, 2023

To whom it may concern:

This letter is to recommend Taylour Stephens for the Master of Environmental Studies program at The Evergreen State College. I am a professor in the Geography, Environment, and Planning department at Sonoma State.

When I first met Taylour, I was principal investigator for a NASA-funded project called Soundscapes to Landscapes (S2L). This project was focused on monitoring bird diversity in Sonoma County, CA, and we partnered with citizen scientists to deploy sound recorders around the county over multiple years. Our main project coordinator, employed by Point Blue Conservation Science, went on maternity leave and we were in need of a part-time coordinator. Taylour was already volunteering in S2L and had shown great promise as a field technician. She also was very interested in birds! Through an open interview process, we chose Taylour as our temporary project coordinator.

Taylour was very effective in managing our Spring 2019 and 2020 field campaigns. Her tasks included ensuring all field permits were in place, volunteers were recruited and trained, sound recorders were efficiently deployed and retrieved by teams, and large volumes of sound data were properly organized for analysis. Throughout her position, she was effectively communicated with the S2L science team as well as volunteers through emails, text messages and Slack. She also helped us with our soundscape analysis through a series of in-person "bird blitzes" at Point Blue. In these sessions, her passion for birds was evident and infectious. Many participants were avid "birders", and she was able to connect with them through her love of birds. One innovation she brought to these events was to show an example sound recording and have the volunteers try to identify the bird species by both sight in the spectrogram as well as by ear. This was an excellent ice breaker and way to build rapport among the volunteers.

After her position was over, due to the return of our original project coordinator, Taylour volunteered her time on the project, mainly by using her keen avian identification skills to help us collect reference vocalizations for target bird species in our sound archive. These data were ultimately used by our science team to train an artificial intelligence algorithm to detect bird species in our sound data. We valued Taylour's contributions to our project and she participated in our publication that described our workflow based on citizen science ([Snyder et al., 2022 DOI: 10.5334/cstp.391](#)).

In summary, I believe that Taylour has the aptitude and passion for graduate school at Evergreen. She is an organized, thoughtful, and dedicated person who is passionate about birds, conservation and science. Please feel free to contact me if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Matt" and last name "Clark" clearly distinguishable.

Professor  
Director of Center for Interdisciplinary Geospatial  
Analysis (CIGA)