



# IMPACT REPORT



January - December 2025

[CitSci.org](https://CitSci.org)



NATURAL  
RESOURCE  
ECOLOGY  
LABORATORY

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*From left: Stacy Lynn (Director of Research and Education), Brandon Budnicki (Lead Full-stack Developer), Greg Newman (Co-Founder and Director). Courtesy of Caroline Nickerson*



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on this past year, I am proud of what we've built together. When we launched CitSci in 2007, we never could have imagined that, nearly two decades later, we'd be hosting over 1,000 projects and empowering the collection of more than 180 thousand observations encompassing over 2.4 million scientific measurements of water pH, bald eagle behavior, and perennial crop germination rates, as examples. Nor could we have anticipated communities leveraging CitSci to launch projects that engage the public in the search for extreme microorganisms or the study of seagull diets.

As a free online platform (app and website) and global community, we support and host citizen and community science projects and provide tools for collecting, managing, visualizing, and sharing data so anyone, anywhere, can do great science. In this report, you'll read some of your stories, and see how your participation has made such a difference.

This has been our most impactful year yet. We've seen record-breaking participation, site visits, media coverage, and — most importantly — scientific and community outcomes. Our award-winning developers and graduate students have launched powerful new features that make data collection easier while upholding privacy. Our directors gave hands-on support to projects, helping teams deepen their community engagement. And our communications team has cultivated partnerships to amplify impact through action-oriented storytelling.

Looking ahead, we're more energized than ever. We're proud to be launching the new Participatory Science Center at Colorado State University, which will anchor our mission and work at CSU. We're also growing our portfolio of project clients and expanding tools like hubs to support networks of related projects. We continue to invest in the free version of CitSci to ensure broad, equitable access, while at the same time scaling thoughtfully to meet the evolving needs of communities and initiatives. Thank you for being part of this journey. The best is yet to come for CitSci and participatory science!



**GREG NEWMAN**

Co-Founder & Director  
CitSci

*Gregory J. Newman*



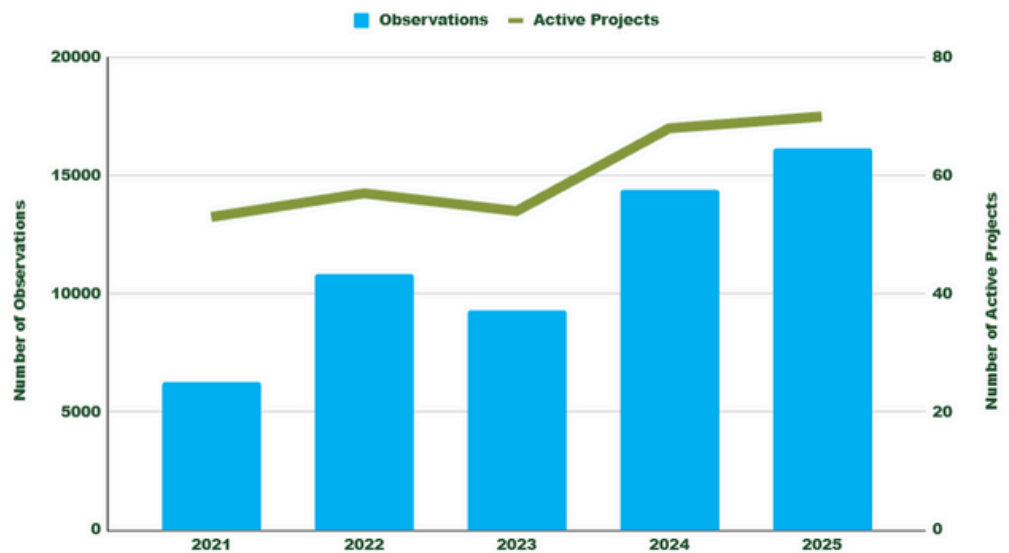


# MORE PARTICIPATION THAN EVER

2025 marked CitSci's highest activity year, with nearly 16,500 observations logged for 70 active citizen science projects.

The rate of observations for active projects was also the highest ever, with 2025 boasting on average 231 observations per active project on the platform, a marked increase from 119 observations on average per active project back in 2021.

Active Projects and Observations



## YEAR RECAP, BY THE NUMBERS

### UNDERSTANDING IMPACT – VISITORS FROM 100+ COUNTRIES!



These numbers reflect major growth in CitSci's online presence over the past year.

A 67% increase in views shows more people are engaging with project pages and resources. The 102% rise in sessions suggests visitors are exploring the site more deeply and returning more often.

Most significantly, a 153% jump in total visitors highlights CitSci's expanding reach, with over **51,000 unique individuals** using the platform to learn about, participate in, or lead community science.



# PROJECT OUTCOMES



*CSU students Jacob Hall and Emma Lopez  
Courtesy of SeedLabs*

## THE EXTREMOPHILES CAMPAIGN

After extensive media attention from NPR & others, over 85 observations were made of microbes – living everywhere from household dishwasher slime to hot springs – that could help address climate change.



*University of Florida students. Courtesy of  
Caroline Nickerson*

## LEAVE NO TRASH

In April 2025, 11 universities in the United States and 7 universities in Nigeria participated in the Leave No Trash University Challenge run by Leave No Trace, recording 2,200+ gallons of trash picked up.

Plus, CitSci's own Director of Operations Sarah Newman received the "Service & Recognition Award" from Leave No Trace for exceptional outreach.



*Gull eating stuff. Courtesy of Alison Deegan*

## GULLS EATING STUFF

In 2025 alone, 493 observations revealed unique gull dietary preferences, with urban gulls chowing down on street food and gulls worldwide preying on creatures like worms and moles.

# NEW FEATURES

## PLATFORM INNOVATIONS

This year, CitSci introduced many new tools that give project leaders more flexibility in how data are collected, organized, and shared. Updates include new ways to build datasheets (including multiselect dropdowns) and more precise privacy controls (allowing leaders to choose visibility settings at the project, datasheet, question, or even organism level). Spotlighted are some of our favorites.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

With this feature, projects can email pertinent updates to all participants and also place a banner on their project page that all visitors can see. Leave No Trash used this tool to announce time-sensitive event resources for university organizers.

## MULTI-PHOTOS

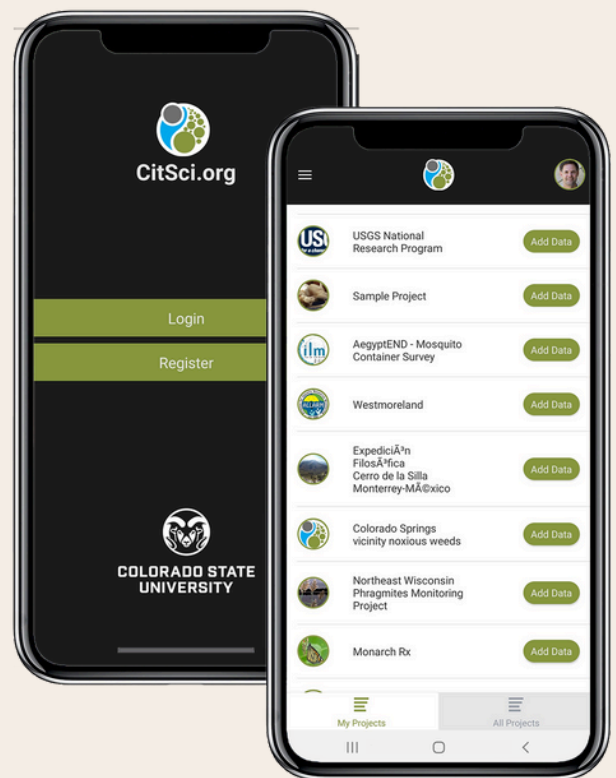
With the multi-photo feature, participants can upload multiple pictures of the same observation, perhaps from different viewpoints. The Town of Superior uses this feature to empower understanding and conservation of native species, including coyotes!

## FORUM

A project's forum facilitates dialogue between participants and provides a record of updates from project leaders. The Extremophile Campaign used their forum to get feedback about new project initiatives, like their hot water heater testing kit.

## PRIVATE DATASHEETS

Private datasheets ensure that data submitted is only visible to the participant and project leadership. The Land Institute creates private datasheets to collect data about sensitive information, like program evaluation.



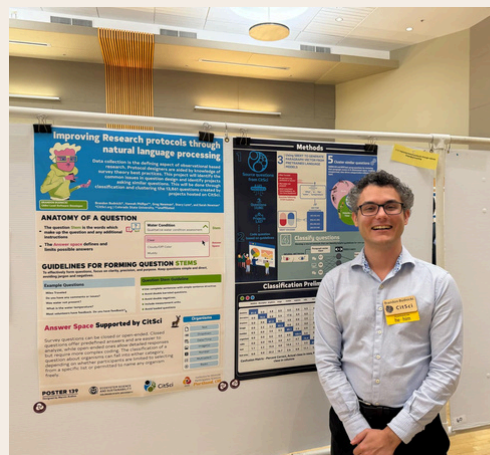
*CitSci is available as both an app and website. Courtesy of CitSci*



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

## BRANDON BUDNICKI

Brandon Budnicki, CitSci's Lead Developer, is a PhD candidate at CSU. In 2025, he won the "Rising Star of the Year Award" at the Science Gateways Center of Excellence Conference, and a best poster award at the Conference for Advancing Participatory Sciences.



*Courtesy of Brandon Budnicki*

## MADISON STROKER

Madison Stroker is an intern at CitSci and an undergraduate student studying Ecosystem Science and Sustainability at CSU. She led a CitSci project focused on beaver restoration (with support from Extension, Friends of the Lower Blue River, Colorado Parks and Wildlife), and in summer 2025, she advanced engagement and outreach efforts at CitSci.



*Courtesy of Madison Stroker*

## SEAN GEER

Sean Geer, a graduate student at CSU, has worked with CitSci for multiple years on many projects, including a teaching internship and an op-ed published in a newspaper.



*Sean Geer instructing students during his teaching internship.  
Courtesy of Sean Geer*



## IN THE NEWS

CitSci received major media attention this year, including highlights in NPR's All Things Considered, Grist, and The Guardian. NPR described CitSci as a "global citizen science support platform" and featured its role in the Extremophile Campaign, where the public collects home microbiome samples for climate research.

The Smithsonian Magazine highlighted Space Cloud Watch, a new NASA project on CitSci that invites participants to submit observations of where night-shining (noctilucent) clouds are and aren't. The Guardian spotlighted CitSci in a story about gull diet research, featuring the "Gulls Eating Stuff" project hosted on CitSci.

## AS SEEN ON...

Smithsonian  
MAGAZINE



Grist



Discover  
SCIENCE FOR THE CURIOUS

The  
Guardian

In each case, media outlets not only covered the science, but also linked directly to project pages on CitSci, helping drive traffic, recruit volunteers, and raise the visibility of community-led research.

# SUPPORT OUR MISSION

## FREE PLATFORM FOR ALL

With the free features of CitSci, you can manage a successful citizen science project from start to finish. Project leader can: (1) Host unlimited participatory science projects, (2) Use our intuitive datasheet creator, (3) Visualize data with maps and graphs, (4) Manage and communicate with volunteers, and (5) Export project data anytime.



## DONATE

We're committed to keeping CitSci free and accessible for everyone. Your support helps us: (1) Cover infrastructure and hosting costs, (2) Fund student developers and contributors, (3) Maintain platform security and data privacy, and (4) Continue building new features for the public good. \$6,000 funds a summer internship for a student researcher. \$40,000 supports a full year of graduate student work.

Visit [citsci.org/donate](https://citsci.org/donate) to support!

## WORK WITH CITSCI

Need something more customized? We offer professional services to help you scale, design, and professionalize your participatory science project.



Technical services include: (1) Custom hub development: Feature multiple projects on the same page, and (2) API integrations: Connect CitSci with other websites and databases

Program services include: (1) Project design and facilitation – Get start-to-finish support with research questions, logistics, recruitment, and more; (2) Training and webinars – Virtual or in-person capacity building for your team; and (3) Outreach and content creation – From in-person engagement to press releases.

Visit [citsci.org/services](https://citsci.org/services) to get started!



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COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY IS A LAND-GRANT INSTITUTION. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE LAND WE ARE ON TODAY IS THE TRADITIONAL AND ANCESTRAL HOMELANDS OF THE ARAPAHO, CHEYENNE, AND UTE NATIONS AND PEOPLES.



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