



LeadAR

Member **SPOTLIGHT**
Class 19

UofA
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System



Bridgit Rollins

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Brigit Rollins began her life in Sonoma County, in the heart of California's wine country. Growing up, she was surrounded by small farms, dairies, and wineries, which ultimately led to a passion for agriculture and the environment. She attended Sonoma State University where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in environmental studies, and a minor in studio arts. While at Sonoma State, Rollins studied different types of agricultural methods and how those methods could be used to promote environmental sustainability. After graduating from Sonoma State in 2015, she started as a law student at Lewis & Clark Law School in Portland, Oregon. While at Lewis & Clark, she worked as a student clerk for the Western Resources Legal Center, where she worked on cases assisting small ranches, farms, and municipalities. During her time at Lewis & Clark, she also interned with the California Farm Bureau Federation, and worked as a law clerk for the Sacramento-based environmental law firm Somach Simmons & Dunn. In 2019, Rollins graduated from Lewis & Clark and joined the National Agricultural Law Center as a staff attorney. At the Center, her primary area of research and scholarship is environmental law as it intersects with agriculture. She maintains an interest in promoting sustainability and environmental health through agriculture and resource use. In her free time, she enjoys sewing, reading novels by Ursula K. Le Guin, and spending time with her three cats.

Why did you apply to the LeadAR program? What motivated you?

The LeadAR program was recommended to me by someone within the Division of Agriculture who thought I would be interested in the program. After reviewing the goals and values of the LeadAR program, I was motivated to apply. Few programs offer students the opportunity to learn how to be an effective leader, while also providing an in-depth education on how to be a resource to their state. Those attributes, combined with the opportunity to develop and implement a project that will help the local community, convinced me to apply.

What leadership quality do you admire most in others? Why?

The ability to communicate effectively is the leadership quality I admire most in others. No one wants to work with leadership that does not communicate ideas, engage in dialogue with community members, or incorporate feedback. In my experience, the most effective leaders are those with strong communication abilities.

What is something people would be surprised to learn about you? Why is this surprising?

As a kid, I went to a lot of Society of Creative Anachronism (SCA) events because my parents were heavily involved with our local chapter. For those who don't know, the SCA is a medieval re-enactment

group where everyone dresses in costume, there are knights and kings and queens, and camping trips involve big canvas pavilions. Before the age of 10, I knew more about medieval heraldry, and costuming than I did about popular cartoons! It's mostly surprising because it's not a group that many people have heard of, despite having chapters all over the world, and it's not a very common way to have spent childhood weekends. But I wouldn't trade the experience for anything.

What are your top three ingredients necessary for success?

1. Communication
2. Perseverance
3. Flexibility

What are your top three ingredients necessary for happiness?

1. Confidence
2. Stability
3. Comfort

Describe your personal leadership style.

I try to lead, first and foremost, by asking others what they need from me. If I am leading a project, I ask everyone involved what their ideal outcome is, what they're hoping to gain from the project, and what do they need from leadership to be successful. From there, I do my best to make it happen.

What is something you hope to gain from your LeadAR experience?

I hope to learn more about other styles of leadership, how to be successful in a variety of different circumstances, and the experience of bringing a larger community project to fruition.

How can effective leadership help move the state of Arkansas forward?

By encouraging and supporting avenues of leadership in often unseen, under-served areas, such as local community aid and outreach. Additionally, by helping individual Arkansans feel connected to and empowered by leadership and the process by which leadership is selected.

You are stranded on a desert island. What are your three MUST HAVE items?

1. The Wizard of Earthsea series by Ursula K. LeGuin
2. A sturdy hiking staff
3. A fluffy towel

What is something that was difficult for you six months ago but easy for you now?

Meal-planning! Six months ago, I was very lackadaisical about my meal-planning, usually deciding what I wanted day-of and stopping at the grocery store on my way home from work. Because I now work from home, I've been ordering all my groceries for the month online. At first it was difficult to plan what I would eat and what I needed to buy, but now I'm a pro.

What else do you want others to know about you?

Often, the quickest, most effective way out of a difficult situation is to confront it head-on instead of ignoring it and hoping it goes away. It may not be the most appealing option, or the easiest course of action, but it's the only way I know to really solve a problem. Whether it's something small in your personal life, or something that affects the world at large, nothing goes away unless we purposefully confront it.