# MICHAEL STONE

**Visiting Media Specialist, White Oak Conservation**
**May-July 2013**

Graduate Student in
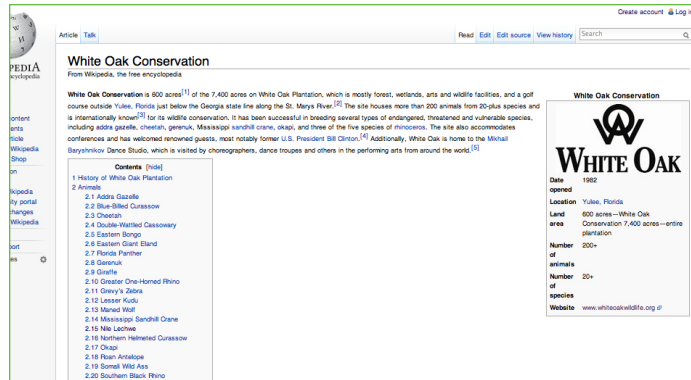Environmental Communications
University of Florida
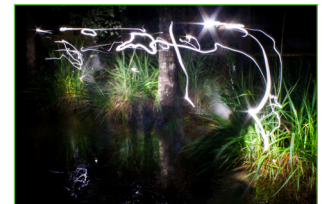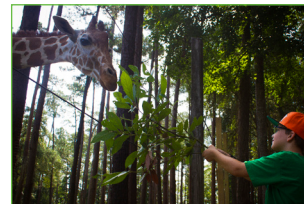
*Summary of Projects*



## WIKIPEDIA

After researching White Oak, Michael wrote and constructed the Wikipedia page "White Oak Conservation". The sections included are an opening summary; History of White Oak Plantation, which dates back to 1768; Animals, which includes a summary of each species and how they pertain to White Oak; SEZARC Partnership; and Other Features of White Oak Plantation, which highlights the dance studio, golf course and hospitality complex.

He also researched and put notes of White Oak's work on each individual species' Wikipedia page. Everything is sourced and objectively written so readers and Wikipedia editors don't view the entries as "promotional."

## WEBSITE WORK

White Oak's website is run through a WordPress template. With expanding public outreach programs and an upcoming rebranding, staff is preparing for a website overhaul. Michael made recommendations regarding navigation and content. He also produced extensive content for two sections:

**Meet Our Staff:** Michael interviewed each member of the conservation staff to write mini profiles and took candid photos of them working with animals.

**Native Species:** White Oak also works to conserve and educate on its 7,400 acres of diverse habitats and the species naturally living in them. Michael extensively researched these mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians and wrote educational information on them.

## OVERVIEW

With a background in print and online media, Michael began graduate school to specialize in conservation communication—and White Oak is an optimal place for growth in the field. White Oak doesn't have anyone carrying out media work full time, leaving many areas that Michael was able to develop during his time as the center's first visiting media specialist. He analyzed the conservation center's media presence and set out his own goals for the internship, which were approved and prioritized by the conservation coordinator. Here are examples of his work at White Oak.



## PHOTOGRAPHY

Michael snapped thousands of pictures to document the exotic animal collection, many of the native species on site, staff members, visiting artists, tours, and special events. He then edited the photos in Photoshop and utilized them in social media and for other marketing purposes.
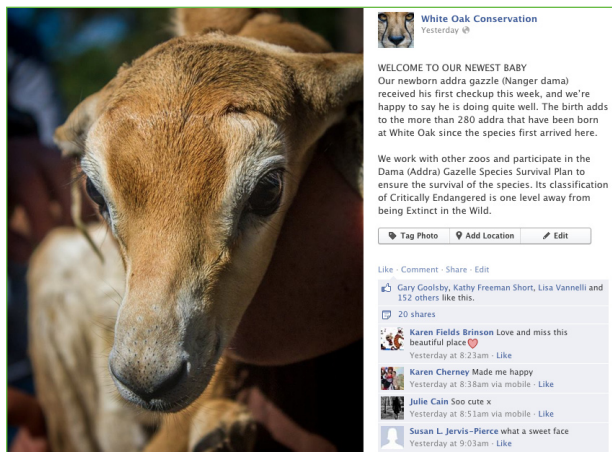
Some of his favorite photographs are of a child feeding a giraffe; interns Sara Greene and Sarah Kaufman herping at night; the always-photogenic cheetahs; and a rare rainbow snake, a sighting that made bird specialist and avid herper Andrew Schumann quite envious.

Additionally, he filmed and edited video on two events: the Rhino Lunch and Learn, which introduced White Oak's three species of rhinos to about 50 guests, and the first-ever summer camp for 7- and 8-year-olds, which highlighted some of their hands-on activities and included staff and child interviews. Both are being used in social media and for marketing purposes.
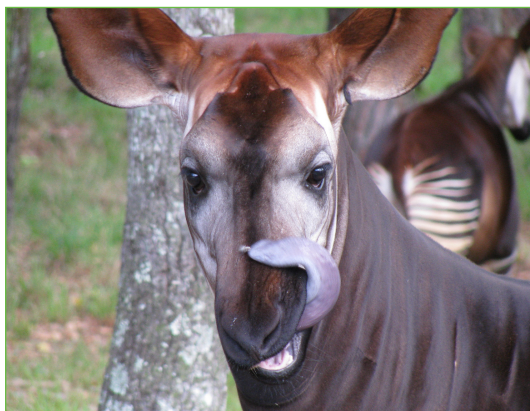
# ANIMAL CARE

Two days a week, Michael worked with White Oak's wildlife staff in managing cheetah, okapi, giraffe, rhinoceros, Florida panther, and various endangered hoofstock and bird species. His duties included assisting in medical procedures, moving animals from one enclosure to another, attending staff meetings and presentations, observing and documenting animal behavior, feeding, cleaning, mowing, weed-eating, transporting animal and yard waste, and other various tasks.

This time familiarized Michael with the species and the day-to-day operations of White Oak, and it gave him a better understanding the conservation work being done to save them. It also allowed for shots of staff members working with the animals.



Michael poses with a week-old addra gazelle (critically endangered) after helping animal specialist Mary Minotis take its temperature.





White Oak Conservation
Yesterday

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST BABY
Our newborn addra gazzle (Nanger dama) received his first checkup this week, and we're happy to say he is doing quite well. The birth adds to the more than 280 addra that have been born at White Oak since the species first arrived here.

We work with other zoos and participate in the Dama (Addra) Gazelle Species Survival Plan to ensure the survival of the species. Its classification of Critically Endangered is one level away from being Extinct in the Wild.

Tag Photo    Add Location    Edit

Like · Comment · Share · Edit

Gary Goolsby, Kathy Freeman Short, Lisa Vannelli and 152 others like this.

20 shares

Karen Fields Brinson Love and miss this beautiful place
Yesterday at 8:23am · Like

Karen Cherney Made me happy
Yesterday at 8:38am via mobile · Like

Julie Cain Soo cute x
Yesterday at 8:51am via mobile · Like

Susan L. Jervis-Pierce what a sweet face
Yesterday at 9:03am · Like

# PRESS RELEASES

Michael wrote detailed press releases under these headlines:

- **Florida Panther Raised at White Oak Gives Birth in Wild**
- **White Oak to Have Lunch with the Rhinos**

# SOCIAL MEDIA

Michael created posts for the White Oak Facebook page, resulting in hundreds of likes, comments, shares and additional subscriptions. Some of the more popular posts included news about a newborn gazelle, asking users to identify a species from a picture, launching the photo contest, and showing a Google Earth screenshot of the giraffes.

# NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Michael wrote updates for the newsletter, incorporating quotes and information from interviews with staff members and research on each subject. The articles that resulted have the headlines:

- **Endangered Species Lays First Fertile Egg in 4 Years**
- **White Oak Welcomes Jacksonville University Dancers**
- **Gopher Tortoise to Have New 'Homes' at White Oak**
- **3 Gerenuk Born So Far in 2013 at White Oak**
- **Picture of Okapi Takes the Cake in First Photo Contest**

# PHOTO CONTEST

Michael organized the first-ever White Oak photo contest, which brought in hundreds of visitor submissions that will be used in various media outlets. Winning photographer Adriene Bailey—unanimously chosen by staff for her picture of an okapi swatting a bug with its tongue (below)—received a White Oak prize pack. From this Michael organized another photo feature—the Photo of the Week. These pictures, many of which were carried over from the contest, are published to White Oak's Facebook audience of nearly 5,000 users.



# T-SHIRT DESIGN