

2024 winner of the Marianne Schmink  
Outstanding Dissertation Award  
'My interdisciplinary journey'

**Dr. Vanessa Luna**

Tropical Conservation and Development Program  
University of Florida



## BIO

**Vanessa Luna** is a Peruvian ecologist with experience in research and practitioner work in conservation and development in Latin America. Passionate about community-based management of natural resources, and transformative and just environmental governance. During her career, Vanessa has promoted multiple spaces for knowledge sharing between scientists, park rangers, Indigenous groups, and government environmental regulators. Her doctoral research focused on community-based fire management and stakeholder perceptions of the effectiveness of current and potential fire-related solutions. She is currently a postdoctoral associate at the UF Power of Connections project, whose main aim is to connect people and collaboratively advance pathways for enduring Pan-Amazonian conservation.

## SUMMARY

Her research journey has been shaped by an exploration of interdisciplinary connections, beginning with the study of Amazonian large mammal ecology and expanding into the realms of fire management and governance. After years of working with environmental nonprofit organizations dedicated to conservation, and collaborating with Indigenous communities across Latin America, she felt compelled to return to academia for graduate studies. This decision stemmed from recognizing the need to better understand the social dimensions of natural resource management. At the University of Florida, she has undertaken coursework on Indigenous cultures, community-based forest management, fire ecology, and environmental governance. These experiences have broadened her perspective, exposing her to research and practical methodologies that bridge anthropology, ecology, political science, and geography. She has been an active and proud member of the TCD community for the past eight years.



**Tuesday - November 04, 2025**

**12:45 - 1:45 pm**



**Grinter Hall 376 or  
Zoom link**

Tropilunch is a seminar run by graduate students from the Tropical Conservation and Development (TCD) Program. It provides a forum for a range of discussions and presentations related to TCD work and research. Special guests, visiting scholars, and practitioners also participate. It happens weekly around lunchtime.



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