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## Archbold celebrates Pride Month

By ARCHBOLD BIOLOGICAL STATION

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A beautiful double rainbow over Red Hill.

COURTESY/REBECCA WINDSOR

VENUS — June is Pride Month, and this year marks the 41st anniversary since the first Pride Parade was held in New York City to commemorate the historic Stonewall Uprising, a turning point in the Gay Liberation movement in the U.S. Pride is a time of visibility for the LGBTQ+ community, where everyone can be proud to be their authentic selves and celebrate self-worth. It is also a time to recognize and honor the contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals within our science and conservation communities and throughout the world, including pioneering scientists like Alan Turing, a British mathematician who was a code breaker during WWII, and Sally Ride, the first

American woman to fly in space.

While progress has been made towards equal rights and treatment of the LGBTQ+ community, there is still much progress to be made until everyone is truly treated fairly and equally. Representation and inclusivity in the workplace, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics) fields, is lacking. LGBTQ+ undergraduate students pursuing degrees in STEM are less likely to remain in STEM after graduation than non-LGBTQ+ students. According to a 2021 article in the journal *Science Advances* by the authors Erin A. Cech & Tom J. Waidzuanas, LGBTQ+ STEM professionals are more likely to be harassed and find it more challenging to advance in their careers compared to non-LGBTQ+ peers.

Discussing his experience in STEM, Archbold staff Dr. Zach Forsburg said, “I’ve faced micro aggressions in previous jobs and during graduate school because I’m openly gay, and I’ve heard many accounts of others being openly discriminated against because of being LGBTQ+. Sadly, many LGBTQ+ STEM professionals make the choice to not be ‘out’ in the workplace due to fear of harassment or discrimination, a clear indication that organizations and society need to do better.”

Archbold Biological Station proudly celebrates and supports our LGBTQ+ colleagues and friends. Archbold’s Executive Director Dr. Hilary Swain emphasizes, “Archbold strives to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment and understands that we can do more to promote a more diverse workplace. Archbold’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee works to identify and remove internal barriers that hinder diversity and inclusion, and to increase opportunities, accessibility, and meaning for all. It is important for Archbold to address LGBTQ+ opportunities as an employer and a workplace in Highlands County. We also want to ensure that people of all backgrounds, including the LGBTQ+ community, feel welcome here. Once Archbold is fully open to the public post-COVID (please stay tuned), we want to ensure that our nature trails and other environmental opportunities are available to all, and that all are welcomed.”

Dr. Zach Forsburg said of working at Archbold, “I am out and proud at Archbold because I think visibility and representation are important. I am fortunate to work at a place where I feel safe to be my authentic self and where I am supported by my colleagues.”

Forsburg works closely with Director of Philanthropy Deborah Pollard, who says of Zach, “It is my utmost privilege to work with Zach. He brings wholeness to the Philanthropy and Communications programs and thus, to the organization. He helps us to understand better how

to consider all audiences when crafting a message and reaching audiences when we share the impact of our Science with others. Zach is thinking of everyone, and that is inclusivity. I am so grateful he is on our team.”

To quote the Reverend Eston Williams, Archbold would “rather be excluded for who we include than included for who we exclude.”